https://doi.org/10.31819/9783968694689_005

Judeo-Spanish Proverbs and Expressions Related to Passover

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Abstract

The holiday of Passover (*Pésaḥ*) commemorates the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt and their salvation from slavery. Because of its importance to the Jewish tradition, many proverbs and expressions in Judeo-Spanish adhere to this holiday. This article focuses on three issues: (a) Passover as a cultural asset of the Sephardic communities; (b) Judeo-Spanish proverbs and expressions which employ the word *Pésaḥ*; (c) special and unique Judeo-Spanish expressions which are rooted in the Passover Haggadah. Logically, most of these proverbs and expressions have no parallels in other languages.

Keywords: Passover, *Pésaḥ*, Sephardic tradition, proverbs, Ladino, Judeo-Spanish.

Resumen

La festividad de la Pascua judía (*Pésaj*) conmemora el éxodo de los judíos de Egipto y su salvación de la esclavitud. Debido a su importancia para la tradición judía, muchos proverbios y expresiones en judeoespañol están relacionados con esta festividad. Este artículo se centra en tres temas: (a) la Pascua como patrimonio cultural de las comunidades sefardíes; (b)

proverbios y expresiones judeoespañoles que emplean la palabra *Pésaj*; (c) expresiones judeoespañolas especiales y únicas que tienen sus raíces en la *Hagadá* de Pascua. Lógicamente, la mayoría de estos proverbios y expresiones no tienen paralelos en otras lenguas.

Palabras clave: Pésaj, tradición sefardí, proverbios, ladino, judeoespañol.

Introduction

Passover (*Pésaḥ*) is a holiday of great importance in the Jewish tradition. The miraculous salvation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt is considered to be one of the most significant events experienced by the Jewish people. The Exodus from Egypt is repeatedly mentioned throughout daily prayers, in the Kiddush on the Sabbaths and major holy days, during the blessings said after a meal, in the special prayers on the major holy days, and, of course, it is the predominant theme of the Haggadah, which is read aloud during the Passover Seder itself.

Several preparations and rituals are required both before and during the celebration of Passover, and Sephardic communities perform these in a very traditional way. This article focuses on three issues: (a) Passover as a cultural asset of the Jewish people in general, and of Sephardic communities in particular; (b) Judeo-Spanish (hereinafter JS) proverbs and expressions which use the word *Pésaḥ*; (c) special and unique JS expressions which are solely rooted in the Passover Haggadah.

Passover as a cultural asset of Jewish communities

According to the biblical story in Chapter 12 of the Book of Exodus, the Israelites prepared themselves to leave Egypt on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month of the year; a month which was later named Nisan (March-April). They were instructed to slaughter and roast a lamb and eat it that same night along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, all while they were dressed up for their imminent departure from Egypt. Moreover, at this point in the text, Moses instructs the Children of Israel that in the future this event should be celebrated for seven days in which the first and seventh are to be holy convocations, and that no leav-

ened products should be eaten during this time[1]. In order to commemorate this highly significant occasion, each member of the community must take part in reciting the story of the Israelite salvation from Egypt and passing it down the generations from father to son.

The seven-day holiday was called *Pésaḥ* (*pésax*[2]) because on the fourteenth day of the month of Nisan, God passed over (*pāsaḥ* in Hebrew) the houses of the Jews, while only the Egyptians were smitten by the final plague, *makkaṯ bĕḵoroṯ*, i.e., the death of the first-born son in every family.

Since that time, *Pésaḥ* has been celebrated for seven days in every Jewish community all over the world[3]. Over time, the instructions in Exodus 12, as discussed above, eventually developed into various traditional Passover customs: unleavened bread, Matzah (*masá*), must be eaten on the first night of the holiday, and no leavened food (*ḥameṣ* [*xamés*]) is permitted during the entire holiday. This is the reason why Jews clean their houses thoroughly before *Pésaḥ*. Special care is taken to meticulously clean all areas where food is generally eaten. The commandment to tell the story of the salvation from Egypt from generation to generation is executed annually on *Seder* night, the evening of the 14th of Nisan (and also on the 15th of the same month outside Israel), through the communal reading of the *Haggadah* which retells the story of the Jewish people and their redemption from Egypt. All family members —including children— actively participate in the Seder in order to hear the story and maintain the ancient tradition.

As part of the ritual festivity, a special plate containing various symbolic foods is set on the table in addition to three pieces of Matzah. In Sephardic communities, lettuce leaves represent *maror,* i.e., bitter herbs[4]. The lamb mentioned in Exodus 12 is represented by the *zeroaᶜ*, a piece of roasted meat bone. The *zeroaᶜ* also symbolizes the strength by which God saved the people of Israel, *bizroaᶜ neṭuya* ('with an outstretched arm'). The

1. The holiday lasts from the 15th to the 21st of Nisan, but the celebration itself begins on the evening before the 15th, because, according to the Jewish calendar, the new day starts at sunset.
2. From here on Hebrew terms are transliterated according to the Hebrew spelling. The Sephardic pronunciation of Hebrew words follows the following phonetic transcription: *x* represents *ḥet* or Spanish *j*, *š* – *shin*, *ǰ* – [ž], *ś* – [z], *y* – Spanish *ll*, and *ź* – [s].
3. The addition of an extra day of celebration for people who do not live in the Land of Israel is a late rabbinical ruling, and it also applies for the other major religious holidays.
4. The word *maror* in Hebrew is derived from the root *m-r-r* which implies bitterness. In Ashkenazi tradition *maror* is usually represented by horseradish.

hardboiled egg on the Seder plate symbolizes both the sacrificial lamb and mourning for the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem[5].

Besides the *zeroaʿ*, the egg, and the *maror*, it is customary to add *karpas* and *xaroset* to the Seder plate. *Karpas* is a vegetable, usually celery or parsley in the Sephardic tradition, which is dipped in vinegar or salted water and eaten immediately after the Kiddush[6]. *Xaroset* is a mixture of ground nuts, fruits, spices and wine which sweeten the bitter herbs. The texture of the *xaroset* is supposed to remind us of the clay that the Israelites had to work with in Egypt while building the cities of Pithom and Raamses.

The *Haggadah* developed gradually during the Middle Ages, and differences between Sephardic and Ashkenazi versions slowly became more prominent. Texts from the Cairo Genizah dating from the end of the first millennium show that the *Haggadah* was at one time considerably shorter than it is today (Kasher 1967, Goldschmidt 1981, Shinan 1991, Tabory 2007 & 2008).

Judeo-Spanish proverbs and expressions using the word *Pésaḥ*

Because Passover and the *Haggadah* were of huge significance to Sephardic Jewish life, proverbs and special expressions in JS refer to Passover more than to any other holiday[7]. For example, the name *PeSaḤ* [פסח] was used as a humoristic acronym for "**P**arás **s**in **x**ašbon/**x**ešbon"[8] ('Money without calculation'), referring to the high financial cost of the holiday. The same acronym is also comically used as "**P**enar **s**in **x**ašbon" ('Working without an end'), referring to the sheer amount of physical hard work needed to clean the house and do all the cooking both before and during

5. In the Jewish tradition, an egg is served to mourners upon returning home from the funeral.
6. The explanations for this tradition are numerous. It seems that beginning a meal with a small vegetable appetizer has been most likely adopted from Greek culture. In the Ashkenazi tradition, potatoes or radishes are dipped in salted water.
7. The examples were given by first-hand interviewees or from the following written sources: Angel-Malachi (1967), Nehama (1977), Saporta y Beja (1978), Moscona (1981), Alkalay (1984), Benveniste (1984), Gaon (1989), Bunis (1993), Alexander-Frizer (2004), Alexander-Frizer & Bentolila (2008), Bentolila (2015).
8. I have followed the original spelling of the proverbs as they appear in the sources mentioned in footnote 7.

the holiday. Women in Sephardic communities would sometime employ this acronym as "**F**urcha, **s**cova y **x**andraǰo"[9] ('A brush, a broom, and a rag'), referring to the items used to clean the house.

Several Sephardic proverbs include the name of the holiday and refer to various Passover traditions. The first two relate to its date.

Purim Purim lanu, Pesax en la mano[10].
('Purim is for us, Passover is at hand').

This proverb means that if Purim is celebrated on the 14th of Adar, a month before the 14th of Nisan, Passover is approaching soon. As a result, preparations for Passover need to begin at that time. The following proverb compares the proximity of the holidays to that of close friends:

Purim es xaver de Pesax.
('Purim is a friend/partner of Pésaḥ').

Two other proverbs connect the two holidays in a different way:

Quen a Purim veló su tiempo perdió; quen a Pesax — más vale su madre que non lo pariera.
('Whoever failed to observe Purim, wasted his time; [but] whoever failed [to observe] Passover, better not to have been born').

A person may neglect and overlook Purim, but neglecting and ignoring Passover is considered a disgrace.

De Purim a Pesax — meǰor que mi madre no me pariera.
('From Purim to Passover it would have been better if my mother had not given birth to me'[11]).

Because the time between Purim and Passover is so stressful, it is not the best time to give birth to children. The following examples, however,

9. *Xandraǰo* is a JS word derived from Hispano-Arabic, *ḥaṭrač*; *andrajo* in modern Spanish.
10. The word *mano* is pronounced *manu* either in some JS dialects such as the Bosnian one, or for rhyming purposes (*lanu* – *manu*).
11. This proverb was told to Pilar Romeu by an informant from Rhodes (Greece). Romeu cited it during her talk at the International Conference on Sephardic paremiology, held on 2 & 3 March 2020 at the CCHS of the CSIC (Madrid).

refer to *Pésaḥ* in the context of another holiday, Sukkot (the Feast of Tabernacles):

Cada Pesax y Suko(t).
('Every Passover and Sukkot').

Pésaḥ and Sukkot are important holidays, each lasting seven days. They take place six months apart. When mentioned together in an expression, it is implied that an event occurs yearly, very seldom, or only every few months.

Primeros de Pesax y traśeros de Suko(t).
('The first days of Passover and the last days of Sukkot').

There is also a proverb that states that the first days of Passover are more important than the last days of Sukkot, but not vice versa: the first days of Sukkot are not as joyous as those of Passover, as cited in the periodical *Aksyón* (10: 2797):

Los primeros de Suko no tenían el brío de los primeros de Pesax.
('The first days of Sukkot did not have the same shine as the first ones of *Pésaḥ*') (Bunis 1993: 382).

The cleanliness required for *Pésaḥ* is referred to in the following proverbs:

Bendicha sea la limpieza para noche de Pesax.
('Blessed be the cleanliness for Passover night').
Bendicha la limpieza de noche de Pesax.
('Blessed [be] the cleanliness of Passover night').
Bendicha sea la limpieza y la regla para noche de Pesax.
('Blessed are the cleanliness and orderliness for the Passover night').

In all three versions of the proverb the same idea is expressed: blessing the cleanliness on Seder night. As mentioned earlier, the preparations for the holiday involve cleaning the house thoroughly. The last example of the three proverbs refers to the Seder itself and the order in which it is conducted, as Spanish *regla* ('order') means *séder* in Hebrew.

References to various aspects of Passover also appear in the following proverbs:

Cada coŝa en su tiempo y el guevo en Pesax.
('Everything should be in its time and the egg on *Pésaḥ*').

Of course, eggs can be eaten all year round; however, the hardboiled egg on the Seder plate is of special symbolic ritual importance, as stated earlier. Likewise, any other commandment must be performed in its own time. A similar proverb replaces the egg with the Matzah:

Cada coŝa en su tiempo y la masá en noche de Pesax.
('Everything should be in its time and the Matzah on Passover night [the Seder night]')[12].

A few other proverbs relate to the holiday and its customs:

Ni Pesax sin masá ni [h]iĵa sin caŝar.
('Neither Passover without Matzah nor a daughter without marriage').

Another more generalized version of the proverb states:

Ni Pesax sin masá ni [h]iĵos sin caŝar.
('Neither Passover without Matzah nor children without marriage').

Namely, all sons and daughters will eventually get married. A few proverbs compare the efforts to prepare Passover to those needed to raise daughters:

La [h]iĵa y el Pesax nunca se atema.
('[Worrying about] the daughter and Passover has no end').

This proverb means that the care for a daughter to marry and concerns over Passover never end. Other versions of this proverb are:

La [h]iĵa y el Pesax no se escapan fin noche de Pésax.
('[Worrying about] the daughter and Passover do not cease until Passover evening').

and,

12. The commandment is to eat Matzah on Seder night. There is no requirement to eat it at any other time during the seven-day holiday.

La [h]iĵa y el Pesax [h]asta la [h]ora [h]orrada[13].
('[Worrying about] The daughter and Passover until the last minute').

These proverbs suggest that one cannot stop worrying for one's daughter or finish Passover preparations until the very last minute. In all these proverbs, daughters seem to be considered as much a burden as Passover with all its special provisions and customs.

When a baby would start to smile voluntarily, Sephardic Jews would often use a specific expression referring to the fact that Passover occurs in the spring, the time of year when flowers and trees begin to bloom and the weather starts to get warmer[14].

Ya rio Pesax[15].
('*Pésaḥ* has already smiled').

Another version of this proverb can be interpreted differently:

Ya rio Pesax, ya metió la meśa.
('*Pésaḥ* has already smiled, the table is already set').

The face smiles when food is placed on the table; namely, we are happy to see food and drink laid out on the table in the same way that we are ready to eat and drink on *Pésaḥ* (Seder) night.

Cara de Pesax.
('*Pésaḥ*'s face', 'smiling face').

Here the metaphor compares a smiling face to *Pésaḥ* because the latter is a celebration of freedom and delight. This contrasts with *cara de Tiša Beav* ('a face of the 9th of Av', i.e., a sad face), because the 9th of Av is a day of mourning for the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.

The next two proverbs relate to delayed reactions. Although Passover could have been replaced by any other holiday or special occasion in these examples, the expressions given here were formulated using the holiday *Pésaḥ* because of its special status in the Jewish calendar:

13. The following is a variant of the same proverb: "El Pesax y la fiĵa fista la [h]ora [h]orrada".
14. Since medieval times, *Pésaḥ* has also been called *ḥag ha'aviv* ('the holiday of the spring').
15. In another version Purim replaces *Pésaḥ*.

Pesax lo jarvaron, alxad yoró.
('He was bitten on Passover, but he only started crying on Sunday').
Pesax lo jarvaron, Purim yoró.
('He was bitten on Passover, but he only started crying on Purim').

The latter proverb not only indicates a late reaction, but also describes an improper time for crying, as Purim is a joyous holiday filled with laughter.

There are a few more expressions connected with *Pésaḥ* which are unique to the Ḥaketía tradition of North Africa:

Con bien pasis el Pésaḥ.
('May you have a happy Passover').
Buenas salidas de Pésaḥ.
('Greetings during *Pésaḥ*') [in other words: may the end of Passover find you in good health].
Echar hasta la massá de Pésaḥ.
('Vomit until the Matzah of *Pésaḥ* is also out') [namely, to vomit violently until everything has been vomited out].
Bueno como la massá de Pésaḥ.
('As good as the Matzah eaten on *Pésaḥ*') [meaning very good] (Bentolila 2015: 90, 114).

In eastern Mediterranean Sephardic communities, this last proverb relates to bread and not to Matzah: "Bueno como el pan" ('As good as bread') [i.e., very good].

Pésaḥ chiquito/ Pésaḥ šeni.
('The small *Pésaḥ*/ the second *Pésaḥ*').

In the Ḥaketía tradition, *Pésaḥ chiquito* refers to the celebration of Passover on the 14th of Iyar (the month after Nisan) for those people who were unable to arrive home in time to celebrate the festival on its correct date. This contrasts with *Pésax rišon* 'the first Passover' which is celebrated at the proper time.

Péssaḥ en Tetuán, Purim en Gibraltar y Tiš'abe'ab en Alcázar.
('*Pésaḥ* in Tetuan, Purim in Gibraltar and the 9th of Av in Alcazar') (Alexander & Bentolila 2008: 354; Pinto-Abecasis 2015).

In Ḥaketía folklore, Tetuan was considered to be a clean, learned and serious city, which makes it an appropriate place to celebrate *Pésaḥ*, the holiday symbolized by effort, thought, and cleanliness. Gibraltar, a British Spanish city with an eclectic mixture of cultures serves as an appropriate place to celebrate the fun holiday of Purim. Alcazar[quivir] was thought of as a simple, dull city, and would, therefore, have been considered a suitable place to commemorate the 9th of Av, the long fast which takes place in the middle of summer.

As can be seen from the number and variety of examples given here, many Sephardic Jewish proverbs and expressions feature the word *Pésaḥ*. Some of the proverbs and expressions relate to two other important holidays, Purim and Sukkot, while others directly relate to Passover preparations and the substantial efforts needed to properly follow the strict religious laws associated with the festival. The rest of the expressions which include the word *Pésaḥ* compare the holiday to specific human traits and could have been replaced by the names of other holy days or annual events.

Special Judeo-Spanish expressions rooted in the Passover *Haggadah*

As stated at the beginning, the *Haggadah* is the text read aloud on Seder night(s). It includes fourteen parts, ten of which are ritualistic[16]. For example, hands are washed twice: once before eating a piece of vegetable (*karpas*) without a blessing, and once before starting to eat the main meal, this time with a blessing. All Seder participants are required to dip the *karpas* in vinegar or salted water and then dip a lettuce leaf (*maror*) in *xaroset*. The Seder plate features various symbolic foods, and three hidden pieces of Matzah are placed on the table in front of the person leading the Seder.

The major textual part of the *Haggadah* is Maggid which tells the history of the Israelites from the time of Abraham until their salvation from Egypt and ultimate redemption in the Land of Israel. It also incor-

16. The parts are: *urḥaṣ* (washing the hands), *karpas* (eating a small piece of vegetable), *yáḥaṣ* (cutting the middle Matzah and hiding it), *roḥṣa* (washing the hands before the meal), *moṣi* (saying the blessing *Hamotzi* over the Matzah), *maṣá* (saying a special blessing over Matzah), *maror* (eating bitter herbs dipped in *xaroset*), *koreḵ* (eating Matzah and *maror* together), *šulḥan ʿoreḵ* (eating the festive meal), *ṣafun* (eating the Afikoman).

porates several interpretive Midrashic texts which are connected to this story. Maggid starts with a short text in Aramaic which invites everybody to join the Seder table, but the rest of it is in Hebrew. The other textual parts of the *Haggadah* include Kiddush (*kaseš*), Birkat Hamazon (*bareḵ*), and Hallel (*halel nirṣa*). Kiddush is the ritual blessing over wine, and it is also recited on the Sabbath and other holy days. *Bareḵ* refers to Grace after the meal. Hallel is comprised of Psalm chapters 113-118 that praise God's goodness and is also recited at the beginning of every Jewish month and on the other major holy days. On Seder night Hallel is recited immediately after *Bareḵ*. Each of these three textual parts (*kaseš*, *bareḵ*, and *halel*) which are not specific to this holiday, include short references to Passover[17].

Having been recited repeatedly each and every year by all the members of the family in both Hebrew and Ladino, many expressions from the *Haggadah* became integrated into everyday JS through literal translations of the liturgical text into JS. In this section I shall only refer to JS expressions from the Haggadah which were used by JS speakers, most of which are based on Ladino translations of the Haggadah. Some of these expressions also feature Hebrew words. The examples given here are presented in the same order in which they appear in the *Haggadah*.

Faćer/(h)aćer kal xamira/kol xamira.
('Do Kal Ḥamira').
Día de kal xamira.
('The day of Kal Ḥamira').

Kal xamirá features twice in the *Haggadah* but is recited many hours before the Seder begins. *Kal xamirá* are the first two words of two Aramaic expressions that are said after searching for the remains of *ḥameṣ* ('leavened products') on the evening of the 13th of Nisan, and after all remaining *ḥameṣ* is burnt on the morning of the 14th of Nisan. No

17. The Hebrew poetry at the end of the *Haggadah* is an addendum to the core parts of the *Haggadah*. It was added to Sephardic Haggadot only after 1800 but was attested in Ashkenazi Haggadot already in the sixteenth century. The JS songs *Quién supiense*, the equivalent to *Eḥad mi yodeaʿ* 'Who knows one', and *Un cavretico* ('A little lamb'), which corresponds to *Ḥad gadya* ('One kid'), were appended to some Ladino Haggadot only in the middle of the twentieth century (Schwarzwald 2017).

ḥameṣ is permitted to be eaten from this moment until the end of the holiday. The expression *(f)aćer kal xamira* means to search for *ḥameṣ* and burn it. However, although the words *kal xamira* are recited on two different occasions, the above cited expressions are only associated with the search for *ḥameṣ* on the evening of the 13th of Nisan. When used metaphorically, this means to look for something that is hopelessly lost.

Meldar la alaxmanya.
('To read the Ha Laḥma ʿanya').

The phrase *Ha Laḥma ʿanya* ('This is the bread of affliction') appears at the Aramaic beginning of Maggid. Although the expression here literally means to only read this section of the *Haggadah*, it denotes reading the *Haggadah* in its entirety.

Pan de afreisión/ afrisión.
('Bread of affliction').

This expression is taken from the Ladino translation of the first Aramaic paragraph of Maggid which refers to Matzah. It is also used to refer to a small piece of bread or a small amount of food obtained through hard work.

Asentar bene xorin/ xurin.
('To sit as free men').

Bene ḥorin ('free men') is the final phrase in the Aramaic section of Maggid and expresses the wish that in the year to come the Jews will be free in the Land of Israel. The Ladino translation of this phrase is *(f)iĵos forros*, but this expression never became integrated into the spoken language[18]. The above expression means "to sit comfortably and enjoy".

Se lavarán las manos y no dirán beraḵa.
('They will wash their hands and will not recite the blessing').

18. The JS word *forro* (Sp. *horro*) 'free' originates from the Arabic *ḥúrr*. Both the Hebrew *ḥorin* and JS *forro* stem from the same Semitic root *ḥrr*, but their development in both languages was quite different.

This is the instruction said during the *Urḥaṣ* part of the Seder, which is recited before eating *karpas*. The instruction is unusual because in general after washing hands it is customary to say a blessing. In JS this expression has come to be a term for describing a crook.

Immediately after the four questions, *ma ništana* 'what is the difference', the person leading the Seder says *ʿaḇadim hayinu leFarʿo beMiṣrayim* ('We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt'). The Ladino translation was ironically used in the following expression:

¿Siervos fuimos a Paró en Ayifto?
('Were we slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt?'[19]).

The expression means that we are not slaves anymore, therefore help is recommended in the house.

Paro no (a)sentensió salvo los machos.
('Pharaoh only sentenced men to death').

This proverb refers to the story in the Book of Exodus in which Pharaoh ordered the killing of all male babies. In the *Haggadah* this edict is compared to the acts of Laban the Aramean who wanted to destroy all of Israel. The expression implies lessening an exaggerated bad proposal.

Salidura.
('Leaving for freedom')
Salidura de Ayifto/ Eğipto/ Ağifto.
('The Exodus from Egypt') [particularly used in this context].

The standard word used to designate 'exit' is *salida*. However, in the context of the Exodus from Egypt, the JS term is *salidura*, as this features in Ladino translations of the *Haggadah*.

Kafró en el ikar/en la raíz.
('Denied the essence') [H. *kafar baʿiqar*].

19. Marie-Christine Varol drew my attention to this example and another one, "Estó con mano fuerte…" during my oral presentation at the international conference on Sephardic paremiology organized on 2 & 3 March 2020 at the CCHS (CSIC, Madrid).

The Hebrew expression meaning 'heretic' originates in rabbinic literature and appears in the *Haggadah* when describing the wicked son. The Hebrew verb *kafar* has been adapted into the JS verb *kafrar* and appears as such in most of Ladino translations of the *Haggadah* as well as in the press. The Hebrew word *ʿiqar* ('essence') remains the same in translation and was also commonly used in both spoken and written language[20]. It is also translated as *raíz.*

Siñales y maraviyas.
('Signs and wonders') [H: *ʾotot* umoftim].

This expression appears in the Maggid part which describes the miraculous salvation of the Israelites. This expression is used when something catches one by surprise or if something unusual happens. It is also used ironically to express a lack of belief in something deemed baseless. In the spoken language several more expressions can be found in this context of the description of the way God saves the Israelites:

Estó con mano fuerte y braźo tendido.
('I have a strong hand and an outstretched arm [for punishing you]').

A mother would warn her child of a punishment using the translation of the Hebrew expression *beyad ḥazaqa uḇizroaʿ neṭuya* ('with a strong hand and an outstretched arm').

Las makas de Paro.
('Pharaoh's plagues') [H: *makka*, *Parʿo*].
Escuridad y ferida de mayores.
('Darkness and the smiting of the firstborns') [H: *ḥošeḵ makkat bĕḵorot*].

The former expression refers to the plagues and implies severe disasters. The translation of the latter mentions the last two of the ten plagues and is used to designate terrible disasters experienced by an individual.

20. See Schwarzwald (2012: 67-68, 71) on the use of these words in the Greek press. Only in Leghorn and Ferrera (1552) is this translated as *niegó en el principal* ('Denied the essence') (Schwarzwald 2008: 23).

Dan, sefardea, kinim.
('Blood, frogs, vermin') [H: *dam, ṣĕfardeaʿ, quinim*].

The Hebrew word *dam* 'blood' refers to the first plague. It is pronounced *dan* in JS, which can also be understood as the verb *dar* ('to give') in its present indicative plural conjugation: 'they give'. This brought about the ironic use of the first three of the ten plagues to indicate the giving of many gifts which are viewed by the recipient as plagues.

Por [h]oras en dayenu.
('Right now [we are] in Dayenu').

Dayenu ('that would have been enough for us') is a paragraph in Maggid that starts with the question: *kama maʿalot ṭoḇot lamaqom ʿalenu* ('How many acts of kindness has God done for us?'). The answer is given as a list of historical events that occurred from the moment the Israelites left Egypt until the entrance of the Jewish nation into the Land of Israel and the building of the Temple. Each verse in this paragraph is built using the following formula:

ʾillu	*VERB*	*X*	*ve-lo*	*VERB*	*Y*	*dayénu*
If [God]	had done	X	and-not	done	Y	enough for us

For instance, *ʾillu hoṣiʾanu mimmiṣrayim velo ʿaśa bahem šĕfaṭim — dayenu* ('If He had brought us out of Egypt but not executed judgments against them, that would have been enough').

The word *dayenu* appears fourteen times in the *Haggadah* in this list of acts of kindness, and this section occurs approximately halfway through Maggid, thus giving Seder participants the notion that they are still in the middle of something and that there is still a long way to go until food is served.

Estamos en los dayenus.
('We are in the Dayenu-s').

Dayenus in this context is used to denote the opposite of the expression "Por [h]oras en dayenu": we are approaching the end of a difficult and arduous process.

Cuanto más y cuanto más.
('All the more so') [H: *ʿal aḥat kama veḵama*].

Cuanto más is a common expression in both JS and Spanish, but its repetition is a JS reflection of the Hebrew expression which is said immediately after *dayenu*.

Una vida de maror.
('Life of Maror') [meaning a bitter life].

Maror symbolizes the bitterness of life in Egypt; hence all suffering is like *maror*.

Al šefox oyemos las boćes[21].
('At Shefokh, we hear the voices').

Shefokh is the citation of two verses from Psalms 79: 6-7 which are told after the post meal blessings when the front door is opened just before Hallel is recited[22]. After hearing this, it is still incumbent upon everyone present to continue reading the *Haggadah* until its end, as the obligation to read until the end of *Haggadah* is not yet complete. This expression means that after completing initial activities it is important to continue and finish the tasks at hand.

Although some expressions also occur in the Bible, I believe that their use in JS stems from the Ladino translation of the *Haggadah* because of its popularity. The number of translated expressions listed here does not seem particularly large, but it is certainly impressive given the length of Maggid in the *Haggadah*. Even if we only look at the expressions which stem directly from the Ladino translations of the text, it is clear that the *Haggadah* has had an unusually significant impact on JS expressions, as I show in the conclusion.

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21. Another version of this proverb reflecting the same structure is: "Al šofar oireredeš las voćes" ('Upon [sounding] the Shofar, you will hear the voices'), referring to Rosh Hashana, i.e., the Jewish New Year.
22. Elena Romero comments that North African speakers formed the word *šefojitos* in the phrase "ya vienen los šefoxitos" ('here come the frightening creatures') upon hearing *Shefokh*, because of the small creatures found in the picture of the same page in some Haggadot from Venice and Livorno.

Conclusions

Judeo-Spanish proverbs and expressions which include the word *Pésaḥ*, in addition to others which originate from Ladino translations of the *Haggadah*, demonstrate the importance of Passover and the strength of its familiarity and traditions to Sephardic Jews. Unlike many other JS proverbs of which one can find equivalents in either Spanish or other languages, proverbs and expressions relating to Passover and the *Haggadah* are unique to Sephardic Jewish discourse. These proverbs and expressions gave Sephardic Jews a sense of inclusion and belonging to their inner, special speech communities.

There are many Hebrew expressions that are taken directly from the *Haggadah*, and which are used regularly by various Jewish communities. Here are a few examples: *seder* ('Seder'), *(h)agadá* ('Haggadah'), *šulxan orex* ('Shulḥan Orekh' [i.e., set the table]), *masá* ('Matzah'), *(h)alel* ('Hallel'), *ma ništana* ('what's the difference'), *masá šemura* ('guarded Matzah', [i.e., the Matzah for which wheat was safeguarded from the moment of harvest])[23], etc.

The examples given in the preceding sections incorporate several Hebrew words used contextually in JS. In some cases, Hebrew expressions suggest additional connotations in JS.

The example below demonstrates the Hebrew integration of an expression from the *Haggadah* in Sephardic speech:

> Kama laku besba/ bezba[24].
> ('How many [plagues] were they [the Egyptian] smitten by [God's] finger?').

This question is sarcastically asked when referring to the price of an item, i.e., how much does it cost?[25]. A sharp response by the seller is *Elu eśer makot* ('These are the ten plagues'), or *eser makot* ('ten plagues'), showing that s/he recognizes that the *Haggadah* is the source of the question. The responses are from a different section of the *Haggadah*.

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23. This expression is used to refer especially to kosher Matzah used at the Seder table, but among JS speakers it also refers to an honest, dignified, trustworthy person.
24. *Bésba/bézba* is the pronunciation of Hebrew *be-ʾeṣbaʿ* ('by finger'). It is pronounced like *bezba* ('bee') in JS.
25. The expression *laku besba/bezba* ('were struck'), and *dar laku besba* ('to strike') are also used, both based on the text from the Haggadah.

Vexol amarbe are ze mešubax.
('And whoever elaborates is praiseworthy').

The expression above is a shortened version of the Hebrew sentence *vekol hamarbe lĕsapper biṣi'at miṣráyim hare ze mĕšubaḥ* ('and whoever elaborates in telling the story of the Exodus from Egypt is praiseworthy').

Kazayit.
('Like an olive') [meaning small amount].

The halakhic term *kazayit* refers to the minimum amount of Matzah that must be eaten during the Seder. It is used to signify a small quantity in JS.

Afikomin.
('Afikoman') [i.e., the last piece of Matzah eaten at the Seder].

Aficomin is used metaphorically in two contexts: (a) an enjoyable dessert at the end of the meal; and (b) it is also something that has come too late, a missed opportunity.

Xad gadya.
('One kid').

The name of the last song at the end of the *Haggadah* is used to metaphorically signify 'masses'.

It is very clear that Passover and the *Haggadah* greatly influenced the discourse of Sephardic communities in terms of the integration of Hebrew and Ladino expressions into JS everyday speech. The centrality and symbolism of this holiday is the reason for the incorporation of so many proverbs and expressions in JS.

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