

## **“ON THE WILLOWS THERE WE HUNG UP OUR LYRES” : REFLECTIONS ON THE ROLE OF GEOGRAPHY AND EXISTENTIAL SPACE IN THE SONGS OF THE IRISH AND SEPHARDIC DIASPORA**

*Kateřina García*

The theme of this year’s Colloquy, as well as some of the circumstances on non-musical character that accompany it, have given me a unique opportunity to reflect more deeply on what, in essence, connects the two seemingly very different musical traditions to which I have dedicated myself, on a variety of levels, from the very beginning of my musical and professional career. When choosing this rather unusual theme, I was motivated both by a general interest, as well as by a need to decipher the hidden parallels that interlink the two main spheres of my song repertoire. In other words, I wished to at least partially explain the personal interest underlying my choices when seeking new song material, as well as the deep sense of fulfilment experienced as a result their interpretation.

Eventually, I came to the unequivocal, and quite unsurprising, realisation that the main link between these two musical traditions (two distinctive and very popular genres within the so-called World Music genre) is the experience of life in the diaspora, i.e. in perpetual exile, and a lasting, deeply-rooted bond with the territory which the community was forced to leave. In time, the place of origin emerges in the collective imagination of the exiled community as a land both idealised and revered. Both the Sephardic and the Irish diasporic traditions cling to this image: it determines their cultural anchorage as well as their spiritual direction it is a symbol of their spiritual transcendence.

The histories of both the Jewish and Irish nations are defined by Diaspora. In the case of the Jewish nation it is an age-old and well-established characteristic (after all, the very term *diaspora* has been until recent times understood primarily in the context of Jewish history). In the case of the Irish tradition, we can date

the beginnings of diasporic identity to the 17th century AD. In the Irish context, the concept of diaspora is a far-reaching cultural phenomenon which is however not generally understood outside of most English-speaking countries, at least not in its full historical and socio-cultural scope.<sup>1</sup>

Before I focus in detail on the issue of the influence of diaspora on song composition, my main point of interest, I will refer briefly, and in rather general terms, to the significance of the term in relation to the cultural realities of both nations.

### **The Sephardic diaspora**

I will focus in the first instance on the Sephardic diaspora (this Jewish context is a relevant area for me not only artistically, but also professionally), whose history begins *sensu stricto* in 1492, but in fact began much earlier, after the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD. After this date we identify the earliest documented Jewish settlements in the Iberian Peninsula, at least if we consider material, archaeological evidence.<sup>2</sup> According to the Sephardic tradition, however, the Jews reached the Iberian Peninsula at a significantly earlier date, in Biblical times, around the 6th century BC (Díaz-Mas 1992: 1).

In 1492, after the expulsion of all Jews from the lands of the Kingdom of Castile and Aragon, a Sephardic diaspora emerged in the true sense of the word: the Jews of Iberia settled in all the main centres of the Mediterranean basin and established

1. As a matter of interest, let us consider the following demographic data: The world's Jewish population currently numbers about 14,606,000 people, of which 6.5 million live in the state of Israel (after 1948). Approximately 2.5 million, i.e. about 10-15% of the world's Jewish population, are of Sephardic descent (Kern 2015, see also Della Pergola 2018: 5). According to some sources, the Irish diaspora numbers up to 70 million people of Irish descent. In contrast, „only“ 4.8 million Irish people live in the Republic of Ireland today. Interestingly, the United States is home to 36 million Irish-Americans, and approximately 14% of Canada's population, i.e. 4.5 million Canadians, claim Irish descent (*Global Irish. Ireland's Diaspora Policy* 2015: 16-17).
2. The experience of diaspora and exile has of course accompanied the Jewish nation since Biblical times and literally formed the framework and background of its historical narrative until the establishment of the modern State of Israel in 1948.

communities that retained their linguistic and cultural identity throughout the following centuries. This development occurred especially in places belonging to the Ottoman Empire, thanks to its administrative, religious and socio-cultural organization. The Mediterranean Sea thus naturally becomes the fundamental area of reference which determines both the geographical distribution of the Sephardic diaspora as well as its subsequent cultural and linguistic development.

Due to the particular factors that determined its history, the Sephardic diaspora, and thus its musical tradition, is shaped by the intersection of numerous cultural influences. Above all, it is deeply rooted within context of Judaism. One of the basic postulates of Judaism is the promise of a return to the Holy Land, contained in the well-known verse „*este anyo aki, a el anyo el vinyen en tyerra de Israel*“ (this year here, next year in the Land of Israel) of the Sephardic Passover Haggadah.<sup>3</sup> This recurring proclamation is, of course, interpreted by most Sephardim not literally, but rather as a symbolic reminder of the fact that their present homeland is a place of temporary residence and that their true home awaits them in the land of their forefathers. The Jewish, and therefore the Sephardic, nation is thus reminded of its geographical and spiritual origins and its place among the other nations of the world. In every other sense, the existence of the Sephardim remains firmly rooted in the Mediterranean region and evolves within the backdrop of their Hispanic linguistic and cultural heritage.

Thus it is precisely the Hispanic element of Sephardic culture which makes the Sephardic diasporic experience unique in the context of Jewish history. The expulsion from Spain affected all strata of the Jewish population, but it so happened that in Spain a number of Jews had achieved considerable economic and political influence, as well as unprecedented cultural prosperity. Therefore both the common Jewish population, as well as their economic and

3. Sephiha, Haïm-Vidal (n. d.): “Le judéo-espagnol.” *Séphrardes du Levant* [online] [accessed July 15, 2020]. Available at: <<http://sepharadesdulevant.fr/le-judeo-espagnol-par-hai%CC%88m-vidal-sephiha-professeur-emerite-universite-sorbonne-nouvelle/>>.

cultural elites (scholars, rabbis, financiers – in other words, persons enjoying an influential position in the social order of the Crowns of Castile and Aragon), were forced into exile. This fact, together with an official invitation sent to the expelled Jews by Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II, who hoped to profit from the actions of Spanish monarchs Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon, fostered in the collective consciousness of the Sephardim a sense of cultural exclusivity within Judaism itself. From this self-awareness later developed their cultural prestige, economic influence and, in some cases, their privileged position in the Ottoman community of nations.

It is a generally known fact that the cultural experience of the Sephardic diaspora is articulated primarily through the medium of the Spanish language. Spanish is a link to the lost homeland on the Iberian Peninsula, where the Sephardim established remarkably deep roots over the many centuries of their presence. The songs composed by the Sephardim in the diaspora and preserved to this day maintain and honour Hispanic literary and composition forms and imagery. By maintaining the Spanish language, the bond with the territory in which the Sephardim experienced a period of remarkable cultural prosperity persists. Although the famous Medieval *Spain of the three cultures* is to a great extent a myth constructed by Jewish (Ashkenazi) intellectuals and Orientalists of the 19th century (Efron 2016), at least part of the Sephardic diaspora has since embraced this myth, and many contemporary Sephardim hold a rather positive view of Spain, imbued even with a sense of nostalgia (Romeu Ferré 2011: 98-101).

It is remarkable, and to some extent of course understandable, that within traditional Sephardic songs we generally don't find many direct references to Spain or the specific places that the Sephardim were forced to abandon. This can be interpreted as a certain negation of any explicit relationship to the country from which they were collectively and ruthlessly expelled. The reference to the Hispanic roots of their culture is present rather on an abstract level, it is the framework within which Sephardic culture is circumscribed and it is precisely the Spanish language in its Sephardic variant which becomes the real *homeland* of the Sephardic nation.

Specific geographical mentions can be found mainly in songs directly derived from old Spanish ballads and Medieval epic poetry. In newer songs, which originated in the Sephardic diaspora after 1492, these geographical references are no longer present. Only at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century do we find modern, authorial songs connected with a specific place and imbued with nostalgia for what it represents in the collective imagination. A remarkable example of this material is the now practically historical anthology of songs from Thessaloniki recorded by local singer David Saltiel (Oriente Musik 1998), accompanied by an ensemble of Greek instrumentalists playing historical instruments from the Thessaloniki Museum of Historical Musical Instruments.<sup>4</sup>

Contemporary songs composed by Sephardic authors also mention Spain, which corresponds with the increased interest in their own history and its Hispanic dimension, characteristic of Sephardic intellectuals since the last third of the 19th century (Díaz-Mas 2017: 235-241). Similar examples can be found in the so-called Second Sephardic Diaspora, where the Sephardim transferred from the Mediterranean area in the late 19th and in the course of the 20th century. Probably the most prominent personality in this respect is the singer and composer Flory Jagoda, who lives in the United States and whose song memories of her native Sarajevo became immensely popular, thus substantially enriching the Sephardic song repertory (Jagoda 2008).

However, even songs at first glance unrelated to the subject of exile may be interpreted through the experience of the diaspora and in the context of its geography. Let us consider the example of the well-known song *En la mar ay una torre* (There is a Tower on the Seashore), which narrates the plea of a young girl longing

4. Let us mention, for instance, the historical narrative romance of the cycle *Romances del cerco de Zamora* (Ballad of the siege of Zamora), which tells of the assassination of the Castilian king Sancho II, allegedly planned by his brother Alfonso VI and sister Urraca during the siege of the Castilian city of Zamora. Or the ballad cycle *Romances del Cid y Jimena* (Ballads of Cid and Jimena), centered on fictional episodes from the life of Castilian hero Cid and his wife Jimena, the drama *Gerineldo*, or the popular song *Al pasar por Casablanca* (As I rode through Casablanca).

for her sailor from the window on a tall tower. According to some interpretations, the tower in question may be the White Tower or *Lefkos Pyrgos* in the port of Thessaloniki, or even perhaps one of the magnificent Sephardic villas (*torres* in Spanish, literally “towers”) that adorned Thessaloniki’s seafront until the first half of the 20th century. I include verses 1 to 3 of the song:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Si la mar era de leche,<br>los barkitos de kanela,<br>yo me mancharía entera<br>por salvar la mi bandera.        | If the sea were made of milk,<br>An the boats were of cinnamon,<br>I would immerse myself indeed,<br>To save my honour’s banner.                            |
| 2. Si la mar era de leche<br>yo me aría un peshkador<br>peshkaría los mis dolores<br>kon palavrikas de amor.        | If the sea were made of milk,<br>I would become a fisherman,<br>And I would catch my deepest sorrows<br>With lovely words of love.                          |
| 3. En la mar ay una torre,<br>en la torre una ventana<br>i en la ventana una ninya<br>ke a los marineros ama. [...] | There is a tower by the seaside,<br>And on the tower there’s a window<br>And by the window sits a maiden,<br>Waiting for the seamen to come to shore. [...] |

If we adhere to the interpretation proposed by Philip Bohlman (2008: 50-52), who highlights the importance of the Mediterranean as the fundamental space within which the Sephardic diaspora is established and which also offers the hope of a definitive liberation from diasporic scattering, then the sea horizon towards which the girl’s gaze is fixated may be understood not only as an impending promise of love and passion on a lyrical level, but also as a spiritual symbol, representing the relief from the rule of foreign nations and the possibility of a return to the Holy Land.

### **The Irish diaspora**

In the second part of my contribution, I will focus on the Irish diaspora, which arose for very disparate reasons and under diametrically different historical circumstances. It is generally considered that the beginning of Irish emigration took place in the early Middle Ages, when Irish monks and missionaries set out for the islands of present-day Britain and the European continent to

establish monasteries and monastic communities, such as the famous monastery on the island of Iona, on the West coast of Scotland, founded by Irish Abbot Columba in 563 AD; or Lindisfarne Abbey, founded in 635 AD by Irish missionary Aidan on the island of Lindisfarne in what was then the Kingdom of Northumbria, now the county of Northumberland in the north-east of England.

The next – and for our discussion more relevant – phase is the 17th century, when members of the Irish Catholic aristocracy travelled to Europe in order to study at Catholic universities (a Catholic education was banned by the British colonial power) and subsequently, after a wave of emigration known as *The Flight of the Earls*. Members of the exiled Gaelic nobility took refuge in European Catholic countries and devised diplomatic strategies through which they hoped to gather international support and return to Ireland in order to liberate her from British rule.

During this period, poems and songs are written mainly in the Irish language. A particularly relevant genre is the *aisling*, or “dream vision”, an elegiac poetic composition wherein the poetic subject falls asleep on the seashore or river bank and encounters a *spéirbhean*, or “heavenly woman”, a creature of otherworldly beauty yet sorrowful. The *spéirbhean* generally represents the image of enslaved Ireland and she usually predicts the imminent uprising and liberation of the Gaelic nation. A similar theme was employed in the 19th century, during the Irish National Revival, for instance by the Irish writer James Clarence Mangan (Séamas Ó Mangáin), whose English language poem *Dark Rosaleen* was a translation of the well-known 16th-century Irish political song *Róisín Dubh*. under the title *Dark Rosaleen* (1847) and later still by the great Irish poet William Butler Yeats in his drama *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* (1902). It is not without interest that the figure of a beautiful yet grieving woman, symbolising oppressed Ireland, was depicted on Irish banknotes until the adoption of the common European currency, the Euro (Appendix, image 1).

Within this historical period, i.e. from the second half of the 17th and especially during the 18th century, we also find the first Irish settlements in North America, particularly on the Canadian island

of Newfoundland and on the East coast of the USA. Irish people, mainly from County Waterford, sailed to Newfoundland for seasonal cod fishing. They established several colonies here, in which Irish culture has preserved to this day, including a distinct south-east of Ireland accent. And it was here that one of Ireland's most famous and beautiful patriotic elegies was composed: *Bánchnoic Éireann Óighe* (The Fair Hills of Ireland) by poet Donncha Rua Mac Conmara (1715-1810) from County Clare (Ó Liatháin 2020). To this day, the poem remains a symbol of the long history of the Irish diaspora, of exile and of a deep longing for a home left on the other side of the Atlantic. I reproduce here the poem's first and third verses:

1. Beir beannacht ó m'chroí go tír na hÉireann  
Bánchnoic Éireann Óighe  
Chun a mhaireann de shíolra Ír agus Éibhir  
Ar bhánchnoic Éireann Óighe  
An áit úd 'narb' aoibhinn binn-ghuth éan  
Mar shámh-chruit chaoín ag caoineadh Gael  
'Sé mo chás a bheith míle, míle i céin  
Ó bhánchnoic Éireann Óighe
  
3. Scaipeann an drúcht ar gheamhar agus féar ann  
Ar bhánchnoic Éireann Óighe  
Is tágaid ann úlla cúmhra ar ghéagaibh  
Ar bhánchnoic Éireann Óighe  
Biolar agus samhadh i ngleanntaibh ceoigh  
Is na srutha sa tSamhradh ag labhairt ar nóin  
Agus uisce na Siúire ag brúcht ina shóghaidh  
Ar bhánchnoic Éireann Óighe

\*\*\*

1. Take a blessing from my heart to Ireland  
The fair hills of pure Ireland  
Where the descendants of Ír and of Éibhear live  
On the fair hills of pure Ireland  
The place where the sweet voices of the birds would be beautiful  
As a soothing harp lamenting the Gael,  
Woe is me to be one thousand miles away  
From the fair hills of pure Ireland

3. The dew is scattered on cornfield and grass  
On the fair hills of pure Ireland  
And fragrant apples grow on boughs there  
On the fair hills of pure Ireland  
There is cress and sorrel in hazy glens  
And streams in summer speaking at noon  
And the Suir's water swelling into whirlpools  
By the fair hills of pure Ireland

The second, better known wave of emigration from Ireland took place immediately after the Great Irish Famine which ravaged the island between 1845 and 1849. During this period, the vast majority of the domestic potato harvest, at the time the main source of livelihood and sustenance of the Irish population, was destroyed by the potato mildew *Phytophthora infestans*, probably imported in cargo ships from North America. The human and cultural tragedy that followed was unparalleled in Europe at the time and was further exacerbated by the reluctance of the British colonial government to alleviate the suffering of the starving population. According to various estimates, 0,5 to 1,5 million people died as a result of the famine, and another 2 million emigrated, mainly to the United States and Canada. Large numbers of Irish emigrants also settled in Australia and New Zealand. Ireland, home to approximately 8 million people before 1845, never recovered from this demographic catastrophe,<sup>5</sup> and the spectre of the Great Famine, *An Gorta Mór*, is present in Irish folklore to this day.

Emigrant songs of this period are composed mainly on American and Australian soil and are characterized firstly by a linguistic departure from the original Irish language and a transition to English, and secondly by the expression of a sincere and open sentimentality and longing for a lost homeland. These songs make up a very significant proportion of the traditional song repertory, which is sung to this day not only in Ireland but wherever the Irish have settled, and are also a hallmark of what is internationally considered as typically Irish. The texts of the ballads from this period are often rich in concrete

5. By comparison, the current population of the Republic of Ireland is 4,9 million. See *Population and Migration Estimates April 2020*.

topographical information, including mentions of local customs and more or less important figures of local and national history. In song Ireland is depicted as an island endowed with dazzling natural bounty and populated by hospitable people characterized by both physical beauty and purity of spirit. Mostly forgotten are the many hardships, religious and political oppression, and above all the extreme poverty and lack of opportunities that caused the Irish to emigrate. In the collective memory of the Irish diaspora, the Emerald Isle emerges as a land of milk and honey, a true Promised Land. Such songs are, for example, the well-known ballads *Spancil Hill*, *Paddy's Green Shamrock Shore*, *Old Skibbereen*, *Goodbye Muirsheen Durkin* about the journey of an Irish emigrant to California during the Gold Rush, *Galway Bay* or *Cragie Hill*, among others.

It is not without interest that although the literary and musical tradition of the previous period was largely forgotten, mainly due to the decline of the Irish-speaking population and the gradual transition to the English language, we still sometimes find remnants of old literary forms and motifs overseas, albeit expressed in new terms. This is the case of the American ballad *Ireland's Green Shore*, made famous by Bluegrass bard Tim O'Brien on his album *The Crossing* (O'Brien 1999), which maps the vicissitudes of Irish emigrants in the harsh environment of the Appalachian Mountains. The song is a modern *aisling* of sorts, in which the poet falls asleep on the bank of a crystal-clear stream and in his dream he meets a dazzlingly beautiful maiden, akin to the aforementioned *spéirbhean*, who walks mournfully along the green coast of Ireland and is undoubtedly a personification of Ireland herself. I include here the first two verses of the song:

1. One evening for pleasure I rambled  
On the banks of some cold purling stream  
I sat down on a bed of primroses  
And I gently fell into a dream  
I dreamt that I saw a fair female  
Her equal I never saw before  
And I sighed for the laws of our country  
As we stray there on Ireland's green shore

2. Her cheeks were like two bloomin' roses  
Her teeth were like ivory so white  
Her eyes shone like two sparkling diamonds  
Or the stars on some cold and frosty night  
She was dressed in the richest attire  
And green was the mantle that she wore  
All bound down with the hemlocks and the roses  
As we stray there on Ireland's green shore.

### **The Irish and the Jews in the New World**

Through the Appalachian song *Ireland's Green Shore*, we finally reach a geographical area where both Jews and Irish found a common home, from the mid-19th century onwards, the United States. North America became one of the main destinations for the so-called *Second Sephardic Diaspora*. Immigrants from North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean arrived from the second half of the 19th century, establishing communities in New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and other major cities (Harris 1994). Although within American Jewry the Ashkenazi diaspora became more important culturally and demographically, the American Sephardic communities succeeded in maintaining their cultural identity and musical traditions to this day.<sup>6</sup>

The Irish, for their part, arrived in great numbers to the shores of the United States in the years following the Great Famine, establishing distinctive enclaves that have retained their Irish identity to the present. At the same time, they decisively contributed to the forming of a new, local, hybrid Irish-American identity. And so it happened that these two nations, culturally distant yet connected by a shared diasporic experience, came into contact in an effervescent environment of freedom of religious creed and enterprise, and their encounters and subsequent cooperation bore quite extraordinary fruits.

6. Evidence of the popularity of Sephardic music in the USA is, among other things, the existence of specialized music festivals, such as the eclectic The Sephardic Music Festival in New York ([www.sephardicmusicfestival.com](http://www.sephardicmusicfestival.com)) or The American Sephardi Music Festival ([www.americansephardimusicfestival.com](http://www.americansephardimusicfestival.com)).

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the journeys of the Irish and Jews in America intersected in the bustling environment of the multi-ethnic melting pot of Lower Broadway in Manhattan, New York City. Here emerged the musical community and later musical genre known as *Tin Pan Alley*, *tin pan* being a slang term for a cheap decrepit piano. This district eventually became the epicentre of show business which determined the development of American popular song at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. During this period, *Tin Pan Alley* composers released thousands of hits as a response to the high demand for song material from the growing music industry, thus supplying the numerous New York dance halls. These dance halls, originally run by the Irish for Irish and wider American audiences, were modelled on similar establishments existing in Ireland. They were a quintessential part of the social life of Irish immigrants in New York well into the 1960s, and thus contributed to shape the musical tastes of several generations. In doing so, they contributed decisively to the shaping of the image that new generations of Irish-Americans (although not exclusively Irish-Americans) formed of Ireland, and thus played a key role in the consolidation of their diasporic identity

In the feverish atmosphere of *Tin Pan Alley*, a number of remarkable Irish-Jewish collaborations emerged. Their song narratives were based on the stereotypical depictions of Irish emigrants in America and accounts of their daily joys and sorrows, including their longing for a largely romanticised homeland. At the same time, however, they document Irish-Jewish relations in New York in the first decades of the 20th century and are evidence of the real intertwining of cultures on Broadway. Representatives of the famous *Tin Pan Alley* were, for instance, the composer Irving Berlin, whose real name was Israel Isidore Baline, who wrote songs as far removed from Jewish themes as *God Bless America* or *It's a White Christmas*, or the Irishman George M. Cohan, who for sixteen years collaborated with the Jewish composer Sam Harris. The duo released countless cabaret songs, making a significant impact on the history of the musical genre (Bornstein 2001: 149-153). The most remarkable example of Irish-Jewish collaboration,

however, was the famous authorial duo William (Billy) Jerome (formerly William J. Flannery) and Jean Schwartz, the son of Hungarian Jewish immigrants (Appendix, image 2), who, through popular Irish song forms, expressed their shared experiences of emigration, exile and nostalgia, and wrote genuine Irish-American hits, such as *My Irish Molly O* (1905) or the ingenious celebration of Irish-Jewish collaboration *If It Wasn't For The Irish And The Jews* (1912; Appendix, image 3). This song became an enormous success, not only because of its witty and good-humoured lyrics, but also because it was recorded by one of the most important American singers of the time Billy Murray, he himself a son of Irish immigrants.<sup>7</sup>

## Conclusion

The Sephardic and Irish diasporic experiences and cultures are markedly different. Therefore, the concepts of geography and existential space are defined in the traditions of both nations by diverse cultural, historical, and religious circumstances, as well as expressed by different means. The Irish turn their gazes in song towards the land of their forefathers which is found on a small island in the Westernmost part of Europe. Its specific geography has, however, gained global notoriety due to the influence of Irish music on the formation of American folklore and popular culture. By contrast, in the songs of the Sephardim, a nation bearing the collective trauma of repeated expulsion, and for most of its history lacking a territory it could call its own, direct geographical references usually do not appear until the end of the 19th century. However, their formal and linguistic framework clearly invokes the land which the Sephardim were forced to leave. At the same time, the spiritual content and symbolism of Sephardic songs indicate the direction in which they are heading. Both song traditions share a common spirit of exilic existence, an awareness of global dispersion and longing

7. An anthology of the greatest hits of the Irish-Jewish collaboration from the *Tin Pan Alley* era was released by Irish-American musician and ethnomusicologist Mick Moloney on his album *If It Wasn't For The Irish And The Jews* (Compass Records, 2009).

for return to their lost homeland. These motifs permeate the cultural traditions of both ethnic groups. I posit that Irish and Sephardic songs resonate with the experiences of modern exiles and global nomads, and can thus become both a source of inspiration, as well as a tool for the self-expression of the multi-cultural generations of our time.

### Sources and Bibliography:

- BOHLMAN, Philip. 2008. *Jewish Music and Modernity*. Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press.
- BORNSTEIN, George. 2011. *The Colors of Zion: Blacks, Jews and Irish, from 1845 to 1945*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Population and Migration Estimates. April 2020. Dublin: Central Statistics Office. [online] [accessed October 25, 2020]. Available at: <<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/pme/populationandmigrationestimatesapril2020/>>.
- DELLA PERGOLA, Sergio. 2018. “World Jewish Population, 2018.” In *The American Jewish Year Book, 2018* (Volume 118), edited by Arnold Dashefsky and Ira M. Sheskin. Dordrecht: Springer. 361–452.
- DÍAZ-MAS, Paloma. 1992. *Sephardim: The Jews from Spain*. Chicago–London: Chicago University Press.
- DÍAZ-MAS, Paloma. 2017. “The Hispanic Legacy and Sephardic Culture: Sephardim and Hispanists in the First Half of the 20th Century.” In *Sepharad as Imagined Community: Language, History and Religion from the Early Modern Period to the 21st Century*, edited by Mahir Saul and José Ignacio Hualdo. New York: Peter Lang. 231–255.
- EFRON, John M. 2016. *German Jewry and the Allure of the Sephardic*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Global Irish. Ireland’s Diaspora Policy*. 2015. Dublin: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- HARRIS, Tracy. 1994. *Death of a Language: The History of Judeo-Spanish*. Newark: University of Delaware Press.
- KERN, Soeren. 2015. “Spain’s Law on Citizenship for Sephardic Jews ‘Does Not Right a Wrong’.” *Gatestone Institute. International Policy Council* [online] [accessed November 11, 2020]. Available at: <<http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/6010/spain-citizenship-jews>>.
- Ó LIATHÁIN, Pádraig. 2020. “An tan do bhídh Donchadh Ruadh a tTalamh an Éisg” [The Time That Donncha Rua Was in Newfoundland]: An Eighteenth-Century Irish Poet in the New World.” In *North American Gaels: Speech, Story, and Song in the Diaspora*, edited by Natasha Sumner and Aidan Doyle. (= Volume 2, McGill–Queen’s Studies in Ethnic History). Montreal: McGill–Queen’s University Press. 73–91.
- ROMEUFERRÉ, Pilar. 2011: «Sefarad, ¿la “patria” de los sefardíes?». *Sefarad* 71, no. 1: 95–130.
- SEPHIHA, Haïm-Vidal. (n.d.). “Le judéo-espagnol.” *Sépharades du Levant* [online] [accessed July 15, 2020]. Available at: <<http://sepharadesdulevant.fr/le-judeo-espagnol-par-hai%CC%88m-vidal-sephiha-professeur-emerite-universite-sorbonne-nouvelle/>>.

## **Cited discography:**

JAGODA, Flory 2008: *Memories of Sarajevo*. Altaras Recording.

MOLONEY Mick 2009: *If It Wasn't for the Irish and the Jews*. Compass Records.

O'BRIEN, Tim 1999: *The Crossing*. Alula Records.

SALTIEL, David 1998: *Judeo-Spanish Songs from Thessaloniki*. Berlin: Oriente Musik.

## **Summary**

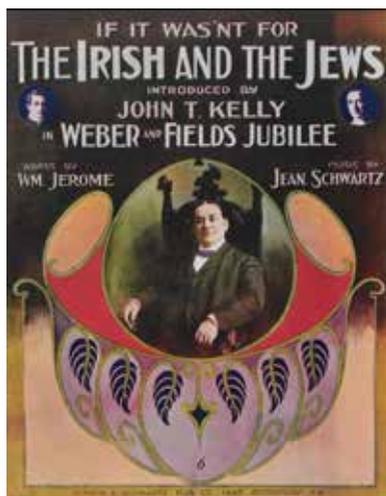
It is the purpose of this contribution to reflect on the artistic representation and significance of both geographical place and existential space in the traditional song repertoires of two nations whose history, culture and musical traditions have been shaped by demographic dispersion, that is, by diaspora. The Irish and Sephardic Jewish musical traditions, at first glance differing in many ways, share nevertheless a common characteristic, in the form of more or less concrete references to the places and geographic areas from which the communities were displaced. Due to very specific historical circumstances, both diasporic communities maintained very tight cultural links with their places of origin. Traditional song became the medium through which these ties were articulated and reaffirmed, and thus represents a key element in the establishment and perpetuating of the imagery and myths of diaspora.

**Key words:** Diaspora; Sephardic traditional song; Irish traditional song; emigration; world music.

## Přílohy / Appendix:



1. Irská desetilibrová bankovka s portrétem Hazel, Lady Lavery coby perzonifikaci Irska / Irish ten-pound note with a portrait of Hazel, Lady Lavery, as a personification of Ireland (1975)



2. Autorské duo William Jerome a Jean Schwartz / Wiliam Jerome and Jean Schwartz. *New York Star*, 16. 1. 1909. Wikimedia Commons ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:William\\_Jerome-Jean\\_Schwarz.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:William_Jerome-Jean_Schwarz.jpg))

3. Obálka sešitu s písní *If It Wasn't For The Irish And The Jews* (1912) / Sheet music cover of the song *If It Wasn't For The Irish And The Jews* (1912). Baylor University. Digital Collections (<https://digitalcollections-baylor.quartexcollections.com/Documents/Detail/if-it-wasnt-for-the-irish-and-the-jews/45615>)