

Jewish History as “Historia Patria”: José Amador de los Ríos and the History of the Jews of Spain

Michal Friedman

ABSTRACT

This article describes the pioneering work of José Amador de los Ríos, author of the first modern history of the Jews of Spain. Through discussion of his life and work, the article illustrates how Spain’s Jewish past became an object of debate in the nineteenth century, as Spanish scholars and politicians placed historiography at the service of rival political causes. It also explores some of the ways in which the Sephardic past figured into emergent questions of national identity and the so-called Jewish Question in Spain and elsewhere in Europe. The recovery of the Jewish past in Spain was marked by deep ambivalence, as the debate concerning Jewish absence and presence in Spain was marked by a nationalism that, though liberal, remained firmly Catholic.

Key words: José Amador de los Ríos, Spain, historia patria, Jewish Question, historiography, Jews of Spain

On May 19, 1918, a day of “intense joy for the *patria* [nation],” members of Spain’s Royal Academies of History, Fine Arts, and Language gathered in Madrid to pay homage to historian and literary scholar José Amador de los Ríos on the centennial of his birth. Among the accomplishments cited as qualifying him as a “national hero of *saber patrio* [patriotic knowledge]” was his scholarship on the Jews of Spain, to which those honoring him in speeches made frequent reference that day.¹

Michal Friedman, “Jewish History as ‘Historia Patria’: José Amador de los Ríos and the History of the Jews of Spain,” *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society* n.s. 18, no. 1 (Fall 2011): 88–126

The celebration of Amador de los Ríos and discussion of his scholarship on the Jews in some of Spain's most prestigious scholarly institutions suggest that both Amador de los Ríos's work and Spain's Jewish past had come to hold a prominent place in conceptions of *historia patria* (official national history) in Spain. This article examines how Amador de los Ríos and the history of the Jews of Spain attained such standing. Through a close reading of his work on the Jews, I illustrate how Amador de los Ríos pioneered a process of recovering Spain's Jewish legacy and how Spain's Jewish past became a subject of debate in nineteenth-century Spain, as scholars and politicians placed historiography at the service of rival political causes. Moreover, I seek to explain why Amador de los Ríos sought an alternate way of writing *historia patria* and why he chose the Jews as a vehicle through which to write this kind of history.

It is my hope that this close reading of the work of Amador de los Ríos will fill lacunae in both Spanish and Jewish history. Scholarship on the relationship of modern Spain to the Jews has tended to focus on Franco and the Jews, framing this relationship in positive or negative terms; Spanish antisemitism and philo-semitism generally have been studied in a similar vein.² Much attention has also been paid to the historiographical debate over the place of the Jewish and Muslim past in Spanish history, centering on the figures of Spanish philologist and literary historian Américo Castro and historian Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz in the 1940s and 1950s.³ Through the example of Amador de los Ríos, I demonstrate the deeper roots of these debates over the question of the "Jewishness" of Spain. Moreover, I illustrate that the recovery of the Jewish past in Spain was significantly more ambivalent than has generally been portrayed, suggesting that this ambivalence might have been a defining feature of Spanish Liberalism. Finally, I argue that an appreciation of the work of Amador de los Ríos proves essential for an understanding of some of the major intellectual currents and ideologies that took hold in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Spain, from orientalism, regenerationism, neo-Catholicism, and Hispanism to Spanish fascism.⁴

Interest in and debate over the place of the Jews in Spain and Spanish history certainly predated Amador de los Ríos. In the late medieval and early modern periods, Iberian universities dedicated chairs and professorships to the teaching of Hebrew in support of Christian theological training. Throughout the eighteenth century, historical narratives documenting the origins of the Jews in Spain presented accounts largely based on legends and narratives rooted in Christian mythology.⁵ Where the Jewish past appeared as a topic of historical or political

[89]

Jewish History
as "*Historia*
Patria"



Michal
Friedman

debate, however, it served as an occasional point of reference in works addressing wider issues, rather than being a central theme.⁶ Jewish history along with the study of Hebrew as modern subjects only emerged in Spain in the late eighteenth century, intensifying through the last quarter of the nineteenth century.⁷ Modern Jewish studies in Spain, including Amador de los Ríos's work, thus took shape within the context of the emergence of historical and literary studies as scientific disciplines in Spain and as corollaries to the construction of a modern Liberal Spanish nation-state.⁸

Finally, although there are many studies on the construction of the Spanish nation and the importance of history and historical writing in this process,⁹ these works in the main refer to the place of the Jewish past only in a cursory way.¹⁰ In the field of Jewish history, historians have considered how the modern historical enterprise appealed to Jews engaged in the struggle for political emancipation and how the Iberian-Sephardic past loomed large in this pursuit.¹¹ The present study of Amador de los Ríos expands on such work, however, by illustrating the importance of modern Spain and modern Spanish historiography in the emergence of modern Jewish studies.¹² In addition to elaborating and demystifying what historian Ismar Schorsch termed the "Sephardic mystique," this study illuminates some of the ways in which nineteenth-century Jewish and Spanish historians and intellectuals built on each other's work and came into conflict.¹³ Here, I will suggest we consider the debates over Jewish history in Spain generated by the work of Amador de los Ríos as a Spanish variant of the so-called Jewish Question, albeit paradoxically in the absence of a significant contemporary Jewish population.

Constructing Patria in Nineteenth-Century Spain

Born in Baena, Córdoba, on April 30, 1818, José Amador de los Ríos was touched by the political upheavals of the period at an early age. In the aftermath of the French Revolution, Spain's ancien régime had become increasingly unstable, eventually coming to an end after the French invasion and installation of Napoleon's brother Joseph as king in 1808. Although some Spaniards favored French rule, the majority opposed it and united in defeating the French in what is known in Spain as the War of Independence (1808–14). In 1810, Spanish Liberals convened a sovereign *cortes* (parliament) in the southern city of Cádiz, and over the course of two years they drafted what would become the first constitution in the history of Spain. The new Liberal

constitution was issued on March 19, 1812, and became the cornerstone of the future Liberal Spanish state.¹⁴ Once the war was won, Spaniards immediately plunged into a struggle between the absolutist supporters of the restored monarch, Ferdinand VII, and the Liberals who had authored the Constitution of 1812. The conflict lasted for nearly 25 years and was only settled after a seven-year civil war, the First Carlist War (1833–40), in which the Liberals defeated the supporters of Ferdinand VII's brother Carlos.¹⁵

Beyond the dynastic conflict between Carlos and the king's declared successor, the war represented an ideological struggle. Though the Liberals did not question the Catholic identity of Spain, they believed the power and wealth of the church needed to be curtailed. The Inquisition was thus abolished, church lands were disentailed and sold, limits were placed on the numbers of religious orders and regular clergy, and the state challenged the church's role in education and welfare provision. The Carlists, monarchists, and Catholic reactionaries engaged in a crusade against the assault of Liberals on the church, the monarchy, and the local-government privileges granted by medieval charters or *fueros*.¹⁶ Although the Carlists were defeated, this ideological divide characterized Spanish politics well into the twentieth century.

The other major schism in nineteenth-century Spain occurred among Liberals themselves. Although Liberals agreed on the need for a constitutional polity, they were divided into two principal factions: the democratic Progresistas and conservative Moderados. Much of the rest of the century was marked by the struggle between these two groups, often by means of *pronunciamientos* (literally, public "pronouncements" of rebellion), which became the main instrument of political change during this period.¹⁷ After several unsuccessful attempts to share power, the Moderados sought to consolidate their power by closely allying themselves with the crown as well as with some of the more conservative elements in Spanish society.

Interest in writing Spanish national history intensified as a corollary to the perceived need to define a Spanish "way of being," inspired by the broader trends of European nation building and literary romanticism. Furthermore, between 1835 and 1845 French, English, and German historians published a significant number of histories of Spain, which tended to foster exoticized and orientalized images of Spain, relegating it to the realm of decadence and barbarism. Spanish political exiles, namely Liberals who fled to France and England after the restoration of Ferdinand VII in 1814, responded by writing their own histories. These histories built upon the mythological and chivalresque accounts of medieval historians and chroniclers and the historiographic tradition of

[91]

*Jewish History
as "Historia
Patria"*



Michal
Friedman

the Enlightenment, affirming Spanish national unity and independence.¹⁸ The nationalist mythology constructed in these histories served as a way of rallying support for the Liberal Spanish state by inculcating “patriotic virtues.”¹⁹

Within this nationalist mythology, Spain’s medieval history, more than that of any other period, played a central role. According to its proponents, Spain’s national identity was forged during the Middle Ages, along with its political institutions, national literature and language, art, and music. Nonetheless, Spain’s history of religious intolerance presented particular difficulties for nationalist historians who attempted to establish Spain’s national unity while reaffirming a Liberal agenda. Thus, although these works fully embraced the Christian identity of Spain, they condemned the religious intolerance of the church and the Inquisition and to a somewhat lesser extent that of the Catholic Kings, Isabel and Ferdinand, emphasizing the spirit of tolerance and cultural ingenuity fomented by the likes of Alfonso X (“the Wise”).

Another difficulty posed by this history was Spain’s multiethnic past, marked by a Muslim presence of over 800 years and an even longer Jewish presence, as well as by the *convivencia*, or coexistence, of these two groups with Spanish Christians.²⁰ The contributions of Spanish Arabists and Hebraists proved fundamental in engaging these tensions and thus in the ideological and cultural construction of Spanish nationalism under the auspices of the Liberal state.²¹ Indeed, the Liberal state encouraged and supported the work of these scholars and disciplines by subsidizing the recovery of medieval Hebrew and Arabic manuscripts from Spanish libraries, in addition to the recovery and preservation of Muslim and Jewish artistic and archaeological monuments as symbols of Spain’s origins and national patrimony.²²

When Amador de los Ríos was nine years old, his family fled Baena for the provincial capital to escape the persecution of Liberals during an absolutist backlash after the restoration of Ferdinand VII. During this period he also began to dedicate himself to the study of Spanish history and was particularly inspired by the medieval Spanish historical chronicles and Spanish Jesuit historian Father Juan de Mariana’s patriotic *Historia general de España*.²³ Nonetheless, the most significant influence on the future of Amador de los Ríos’s scholarly interests was Liberal literary scholar and former exile Don Alberto Lista. Between 1836 and 1837, Amador de los Ríos attended a class Lista offered on Spanish drama at the Athenaeum of Madrid, a hub for Liberal literati and the dissemination of Liberal cultural and political values. Lista frequently lamented that “in the midst of the wealth of documents Spain possessed, it found itself dispossessed of a literary history, a dignified

monument to the fame of its illustrious sons,” and he decried the absence of a national historian to take on such a project.²⁴ Inspired by his new mentor, Amador de los Ríos communicated to Lista his wish to write such a work, a mission Lista enthusiastically encouraged.

When further political turmoil erupted following the institution of the Liberal Constitution of 1837, Amador de los Ríos and his family left the capital for Seville. Amador de los Ríos, who was 19 at this time, spent most of his days at Seville’s Biblioteca Colombina, a library and literary academy, researching and reading original documents, codices, and local histories. Amador de los Ríos proved central to the life of the Colombina, publishing poetry as well as articles and essays on Spanish literature and history in its publication *El Cisne*. He further integrated himself into Seville’s intellectual life by becoming an associate in 1839 of the Academia Sevillana de Buenas Letras, where he organized public lectures on Spanish culture and history.²⁵ Amador de los Ríos’s interest in recovering Spain’s national past extended to the field of historical preservation, and in 1844 he was appointed secretary of the newly founded Central Commission for the Conservation of Historical and Artistic Monuments in Madrid.²⁶

Amador de los Ríos’s interest in historical monuments led to his earliest research into Spain’s Jewish past. In his study of Toledo, *Toledo Pintoresca* (1845), Amador de los Ríos dedicated a section to Toledo’s two extant medieval synagogues, Santa Maria la Blanca and del Tránsito. In the same year he presented to the Spanish public the first installment of a work that would bring Spain’s Jewish past to the fore of Spanish scholarship and historiography. Between November 17, 1845, and February 16, 1846, Amador de los Ríos published a series of articles entitled “De los judíos en España” in the weekly *Revista del Español*.²⁷ At the end of this series he announced to his readers that *Revista del Español* was not an adequate venue for such an involved study and that he would resume it in a more appropriate forum.²⁸

In 1847, even before Amador de los Ríos fulfilled his promise, however, Cádiz native and literary scholar Adolfo de Castro published a monograph on the history of the Jews of Spain, *Historia de los judíos de España*.²⁹ Adolfo de Castro was an active member of the Liberal Union party and deeply involved in the local and regional politics of Cádiz.³⁰ He held various political appointments while he wrote and researched as an independent scholar. A self-declared *exaltado* (fervent) Liberal and freethinker, de Castro claimed to have written his history of the Jews “without passion or artifice,” providing the disclaimer that he was neither a Jew nor descended from Judaizers. Rather, he insisted, he only sought to “sustain the truth, unlike nearly

[93]

Jewish History
as “*Historia*
Patria”

●
Michal
Friedman

all of the authors who had written on the topic up to this point,” who were “corrupted by the hatred of everything pertaining to the Jewish people, a hatred they imbibed at their mother’s breast.”³¹

To distinguish himself from these other authors, de Castro declared he would demonstrate how the Jews had contributed to Spanish culture and how the Catholic Kings committed a grave injustice by expelling them. Though he discussed the contributions of the Jews, the focus of his history remained their persecution. According to de Castro, the history of the Jews in Spain was not a history “full of illustrious victories, distinguished feats and noble aims” but rather one of “calamities, conflicts, persecutions, mob violence, assaults, arson, expulsions, immolation, public gallows, infamy of lineages, incarcerations, opprobrium, and other harsh punishments.”³² De Castro’s choice of focus on the persecution of the Jews may be read within the context of his wider interest in denouncing the Spanish monarchy, the church, and by extension the Inquisition, for espousing and fomenting religious intolerance. Far from representing an example of dispassionate scholarship, such denunciations suggested a political agenda connected to de Castro’s Liberal affiliations.

In 1848, Amador de los Ríos fulfilled his promise to the readers of his articles in *Revista del Español* and responded to the appearance of de Castro’s history of the Jews with the publication of *Estudios históricos, políticos y literarios sobre los judíos de España*.³³ In a “Note to the Reader” in *Estudios*, he reminded readers of his earlier articles on the Jews in *Revista del Español*, commenting on the great deal of research involved in their writing. He even suggested that far from being the one to have taken the idea from “Sr. de Castro, . . . one could very well say that my articles were available to him when he designed his study.”³⁴ Though both men sought to establish their claims over Spain’s Jewish past, in ensuing years that history would become a subject of wider and contending claims.

Jewish History as Redemptive History

In the introduction to *Estudios*, Amador de los Ríos emphasized the novelty of his subject. He wrote that only with great difficulty “could one find among us a work that attempts to study the descendants of the prophet king during their long tenure in Spain” and that takes into account “their laws, customs and their relations with the Christian people.” This work, he indicated, “has yet to be attempted, and still offers the attraction of its novelty, inviting the learned and the experts to a field

in reality full of flowers with thorns; but where the aroma of the former seduces, making one forget the anguish of the latter.”³⁵ Amador de los Ríos attributed the absence of serious Spanish studies of the Jews of Spain to two misguided perceptions that in his view warranted serious revision: the unwillingness to accept the Jews as “men of literature,” because of negative perceptions of their alleged financial dealings; and the notion that the literary and scientific scholarship of Spanish Jewry was inaccessible, since it was written in Hebrew. Primarily concerned with this second perception, he accused the majority of earlier “Spanish scholars” of “brute ignorance,” contending that they never troubled to verify this false perception yet nonetheless held Jewish scholarship in contempt. He thus admonished his fellow Spaniards for their ignorance of an important part of their national patrimony and for taking “a multitude of works that would have brought glory to the Spanish nation and burying them in the dust.”³⁶

Based primarily on published sources, *Estudios* is over six hundred pages in length, stretching from the arrival of the Jews in the Iberian Peninsula through their expulsion from Spain in 1492 and subsequent dispersion throughout the Sephardic diaspora. The work is divided into three parts, called “essays.” The first essay is a “historical-political” study of the Jews in Christian Spain, whereas the second and third essays are dedicated to studies of the “scientific and literary” works of Spanish Jewry. The Jewish literary material Amador de los Ríos explored is almost solely confined to works in Spanish, a focus Amador de los Ríos claimed was essential to understanding Jewish-Christian relations in the Iberian Peninsula. The comparative study of mutual literary influences would thus best illuminate the “progressive march of Spanish civilization.” Nonetheless, Amador de los Ríos acknowledged Hebrew’s importance for “every scholar who aspired to examine the elements of culture that agitated in our land and as a result gave birth to modern civilization” and referred to its study as the “key to valuable juridical and historical codices, such as the ones gathering dust in our libraries.”³⁷ Although Amador de los Ríos’s own engagement with Hebrew sources was limited, his words would resonate as a focus on Hebraism ultimately came to characterize Sephardic studies in Spain.³⁸

Though *Estudios* covered some of the same material and topics as Adolfo de Castro’s history, Amador de los Ríos presented a very different vision of Spain and its Jewish past. Whereas Adolfo de Castro had made use of the Jewish past to attack church and monarchy and to defend Spain’s constitutional liberalism, Amador de los Ríos placed Spain’s Jewish history in the service of a vision of a unified Spanish Catholic nation. He did so through a narrative that celebrated Jewish

[95]

*Jewish History
as “Historia
Patria”*



Michal
Friedman

contributions to “Spanish civilization” and the “extraordinary” influence and privileges he claimed the Jews had attained in Spain, while also describing their persecution by Christians in part as a response to “transgressions” the Jews had committed. Amador de los Ríos thus noted:

The chronicles of kings, the histories of cities, the annals of families, are full of events in which the proscribed nation has taken a more or less active part; at times appearing with the torch of civilization in its right hand and at other times appearing as the object of fierce hatred; perpetually suffering the bitter fate the heavens had in store for the expiation of its sins.³⁹

His invitation to brave with him a field filled with “flowers with thorns” thus entailed embracing the “anguish” of persecution and suffering as well as the overpowering “seduction” of Jewish cultural efflorescence.

Amador de los Ríos insistently wove a story about the troubled relationship between the Jews and an emerging Spanish patria into his narrative, exploring this relationship through a reading of some of the more persistent themes in Spanish historiography and literature. One of these themes was that of the loss or fall of Spain to the Muslims in 711.⁴⁰ Nearly all of the existing historiographical and literary narratives involve the dishonoring of Spain by a morally corrupt Visigothic monarchy, though the Jews also often figure in these narratives as agents whose alleged conspiracy with the Moors facilitated Spain’s downfall. According to these narratives, Spain is subsequently redeemed and resurrected with the so-called Reconquista (the conquest of much of the Iberian peninsula from the Muslims, culminating in the conquest of Granada in 1492). On the surface, Amador de los Ríos’s rendering of this historical moment appears to follow this tradition. A closer examination, however, reveals that Amador de los Ríos’s narration of Jewish betrayal is more involved: he implies that this betrayal was contingent upon an ethical and moral responsibility of the Jews toward the patria and suggests that the patria’s “fall from grace” paralleled the Jews’ “fall from grace.”

Amador de los Ríos concluded that the logical course of action expected of the Jews in this decisive historical moment would have been to assist their patria in its struggle against the Moorish invaders:

Love of the patria, that is, the love of the land where they were born, and the gratitude toward the final disposition of the Visigothic kings, would have required from that people that they join their forces with

those of the Spanish nation, in order to reject the foreign invasion and at the same time open their coffers in order to attend to the pressing needs of the state.⁴¹

[97]

In addition to blaming the Jews for the loss of many great cities to the Moors and accusing them of disloyalty and of harboring a profound hatred toward Christians, Amador de los Ríos accused them of neither understanding nor respecting the idea of love of patria. This principle, as understood by Amador de los Ríos, transcended this particular historical moment and came to represent an important theme for him in his discussion of the Jewish presence in Spain.

*Jewish History
as "Historia
Patria"*

●
Michal
Friedman

Nonetheless, in Amador de los Ríos's rendering of Spanish history, the Jews' betrayal of the patria by aiding the Moors in 711 was subsequently compensated for by the aid they provided to the Christians in the "sacred undertaking" of the Reconquista. In the craggy mountains of northern Spain, the Asturian king Pelayo gathered the remnants of the Gothic kingdom, and together, "energized by patriotic memories and religious sentiment, they laid the foundations for the new monarchy that would later emerge, big and powerful, filling with terror all those who initially viewed it with absolute contempt."⁴² Although this description romanticizes and mythologizes the inauguration of the Reconquista, Amador de los Ríos also admitted that this period was hardly characterized by tolerance. What is more, he insisted that it was during this period that the Jews were indispensable to Spain; too busy fighting the Moors, the Christians left the work of generating commerce and culture to the Jews.

In addition to his discussion of their active participation in the Reconquista, through actual battle or the provision of funds, Amador de los Ríos viewed the Jews as playing an essential role in cultivating the spiritual and intellectual character of Christian Spain. Amador de los Ríos claimed the Jews "enlightened" the Christians, whose preoccupation with battling the Muslims created, he argued, an intellectual and spiritual void. The ongoing Jewish cultivation of the arts and sciences, according to Amador de los Ríos, proved essential for the patria to evolve and achieve greatness. Thus, Amador de los Ríos legitimized the role and existence of the Jews as a crutch or buttress to Christian Spain, as the Jews helped to place the patria on the road to redemption by "civilizing" it.

Throughout the narrative of *Estudios*, the Jews and the Jewish past are vehicles through which Christian Spain is redeemed. Amador de los Ríos described the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212), which marked the permanent turning of the tide of the Reconquista in

favor of the Christians, as “determining Spain’s liberty.” It was the following period, about which he waxed poetic, that, “announcing its arrival everywhere as the epoch of restoration, like the dawn of the magnificent day that would shine for modern societies, appeared to broadcast good fortune for the Iberian Peninsula.”⁴³ This accolade to the thirteenth century as a period of regeneration and a harbinger of Spain’s future prepares the reader for Amador de los Ríos’s introduction of the figure he takes as the consummate hero of the Spanish patria during this period: King Alfonso X (ruled 1252–84).⁴⁴

Amador de los Ríos sought to recover Alfonso X and his legacy for the “cause of Spanish civilization,” redeeming him from the inadequate portrayal he believed the “wise king” had received in Spanish historiography.⁴⁵ Amador de los Ríos attempted to restore Alfonso to his proper place through his examination of the king’s relationship with the Jews, which paralleled Alfonso’s larger politics and designs for an idealized Christian patria. Amador de los Ríos argued that “in order for the biblical scriptures to be fulfilled; in order for the Hebrew nation to atone for its crime of deicide . . . it was necessary that it wander throughout the world, *without a patria, home or temple*, leading a precarious existence and living under the yoke of all peoples.” Alfonso’s role as a good Christian was to tolerate them:

The tolerance of Don Alfonso, and the respect he manifested a propos the religious rituals of the Jews, had its origin in the respect he professed toward the Christian religion. . . . [H]e fulfilled one of the most sacred duties, according to his conscience, and rendered the most dignified tribute of his faith and his admiration toward the great work of the Crucified.⁴⁶

Thus, Alfonso’s tolerance of the Jews proved a token of his righteousness as a Christian and the Jews’ “wandering” a testimony to the truth of Christianity.

Amador de los Ríos depicted Alfonso X as possessing and enacting the qualities that made him eligible to engage in the redemptive work of “civilizing” the Spanish patria. Amador de los Ríos identified these ideals as a righteous and humanistic Christianity, coupled with a high degree of cultural productivity. What is more, this historical “recovery” may be understood as the projection of an ideal of governance Amador de los Ríos espoused for contemporary Spain. At the same time, Amador de los Ríos portrayed the Jews as serving Alfonso, their steward and potential redeemer, as a vital cultural resource. It was under Alfonso X’s rule, Amador de los Ríos contended, that the participation of the Jews in the development of Spanish culture reached

its apogee. Jewish membership in a Catholic patria was then possible (whereas it was not in a Muslim one),⁴⁷ as long as the Jews allowed the Christians to redeem them. Amador de los Ríos's redemption was thus a dual redemption: the Jews' dedication to intellectual pursuits and commerce helped replenish and "civilize" the vanquished patria, at the same time allowing for the possibility of their own redemption as members of a Spanish patria.

Through discussion of Alfonso X's famous law code (the *Siete Partidas*), Amador de los Ríos attempted to demonstrate that although Alfonso used the Jews to build and fortify his cultural enterprise, he also kept them in check, making them answerable for the "abuses they continually committed" and "reminding them of their errors."⁴⁸ Nonetheless, despite his admiration for Alfonso's attempts, Amador de los Ríos indicated his ambivalence regarding the possibility of Jewish redemption: "Although Don Alfonso tried (to the extent he was able) to improve the miserable condition of the proscribed nation . . . he was unable to extract the yoke that hovered above them."⁴⁹ Such an understanding seems to parallel Amador de los Ríos's greater ambivalence regarding the position of the Jews in the Spanish patria, resonating with contemporary debates about Jewish emancipation beyond the Pyrenees.

Amador de los Ríos's ambivalence regarding Jewish redemption also raises the question of his position regarding the conversion of the Jews. Did he look favorably upon conversion? Did he believe Christianity was a condition for membership in a Spanish patria? Though Amador de los Ríos certainly advocated tolerance toward the Jews, he also viewed conversion as an ideal, with Christianity essential for full-fledged membership in a Spanish patria. Nonetheless, Amador de los Ríos argued that Jewish conversion should only have been accomplished through persuasion. He regarded forced conversion not only as antithetical to the very spirit of Christianity but also as a form of religious extremism and sectarianism that was detrimental to the welfare of the patria.

Amador de los Ríos's thoughts about forced conversion are best illustrated in his account of the massacres and mass forced baptisms that swept Spain in 1391 and in his discussion of the role of the archdeacon of Ecija, Ferrán Martínez, in these events. Amador de los Ríos expressed horror at the violence perpetrated against the Jews and presented Martínez as the main villain. He argued that Martínez transgressed and undermined the Christian faith as well as the rules of good citizenship by advocating forced baptism and inciting violence against the Jews. As such, he described the archdeacon as "neither

[99]

*Jewish History
as "Historia
Patria"*



Michal
Friedman

saintly nor good” and contended that the “councils of Toledo, the laws of the Partidas, and the maxims of the Gospel prohibit forcing the Jews to accept baptism against their will.”⁵⁰

Though Amador de los Ríos strongly condemned forced conversions, his view of conversion through nonviolent means was markedly different. He thus counterposed what he termed “proselytism by terror,” practiced by the likes of Ferrán Martínez, with “proselytism by preaching.” The latter form, he contended, was upheld by preacher Fray Vicente Ferrer during the massacres of 1391.⁵¹ Distinct from Jewish chroniclers who portrayed Ferrer as an archenemy of the Jews and blamed him for much of the violence of 1391, Amador de los Ríos glorified him. He called Ferrer’s intervention during the massacres of 1391 “miraculous,” maintaining that Jews begged him to baptize them and that Ferrer successfully converted numerous distinguished Jews.⁵² For Amador de los Ríos, these conversions were the ultimate “Jewish contribution” to Spain, as they helped to strengthen its Christian nature.

The final chapter of the history of the Jews of Spain consisted of their expulsion in 1492. Amador de los Ríos wrote of the services provided by the Jews to King Ferdinand during the conquest of Granada, inquiring sarcastically whether banishing the Jews from Spain presented a “dignified reward for their services.” On this account, he refused to provide excuses for the king (noticeably, Queen Isabel is absent from his critique), as he believed his ingratitude was inexcusable: “No one can absolve the Catholic King from the charge of ingratitude struck against him, nor can anyone attempt to present his conduct as a model worthy of imitation.”⁵³

Nonetheless, Amador de los Ríos ultimately justified the decision of the Catholic Kings to expel the Jews, claiming it was inevitable. Amador de los Ríos argued that political unity was contingent upon religious unity:

The idea of the political *unity* of Spain was born, and it was born, as it could not have been in any other way, enveloped in the idea of religious *unity*. The latter was essential in order to create and sustain the former . . . because all possible human efforts collide with the impossibility in the nonexistence of uniformity of ideas and unity of interests.⁵⁴

Moreover, Amador de los Ríos represented the Catholic Kings as saintly patrons and redeemers of the patria, as “it was decreed that the century of great crimes and defiance would also be the century of expiation and of reparations; and Doña Isabel I and Don Fernando V were called to carry out Providence’s just decree.”⁵⁵

Amador de los Ríos did not understand the expulsion as representing the complete exclusion of the Jews from the Spanish patria. Rather, he considered the expelled Jews to have remained inextricably linked to Spain's destiny, endowing even the expulsion with a redemptive quality. As a result of "an inexplicable mystery of Providence," he explained, the Jews "scattered throughout the world, to proclaim Spain's power and bring to all peoples the traditions, the customs, the literature and the language that would later be immortalized by such sublime geniuses as Calderón and Cervantes."⁵⁶ Amador de los Ríos understood the Sephardim to be the bearers and transmitters of Spain's cultural legacy, charging them with a Spanish civilizing mission, as witnesses and advocates of a greater Spanish patria beyond Spain's borders.

What emerges from *Estudios* is a particular vision of a united Catholic Spain contingent upon recovery of the patria's Jewish past. Amador de los Ríos constructed and upheld that vision through a Christian redemptive narrative, in which the Jews and the Jewish past served as a vehicle through which to redeem Spain from its afflictions. In turn, Amador de los Ríos's understanding of the relationship of the Jews to the patria paralleled Christian conceptions of the place of the Jews in Christianity. Though the emergence of Christianity involved a radical breach with Judaism, the Jews continued to hold an important place in its development and self-perception: the Jews were to be witnesses to the truth of Christianity and serve as a buttress to the newfound faith, while the Second Coming would only take place if a certain number of Jews were present (the rest having converted). Thus, for Amador de los Ríos, just as a Christian redemption was predicated on the Jews and Judaism, the Jewish presence in the Iberian Peninsula supported and sustained the Spanish patria and held the potential of redeeming it from its perceived decay. Amador de los Ríos aimed to render Jewish history essential to the task not only of writing but of redeeming Spain's historia patria for Christian Spain, in the same way that the Jews and Judaism were essential to the story of Christianity.

The Jewish Past as an Object of Debate

The publication of *Estudios* in 1848 earned Amador de los Ríos broad national acclaim and brought about his appointment to the much-coveted position of numerary academic at the prestigious Royal Academy of History.⁵⁷ On February 18, 1848, upon accepting the appointment, and in accord with academy ritual, Amador de los Ríos delivered a lecture to the members of the academy. He stressed the

[101]

*Jewish History
as "Historia
Patria"*



Michal
Friedman

importance of studying Spain's Jewish and Muslim past, contending that "the history written until our day is only an imperfect history of the Christian people, and all the efforts to recognize and appreciate the influence exercised by the Hebrews and Arabs upon Spanish civilization, have yet to be made."⁵⁸ For Amador de los Ríos, one could not fully understand Christian Spain without studying the place of these groups in Spanish history.

Amador de los Ríos's decision to focus on the legacy of Muslim Spain in his inaugural speech is indicative of the close connection he perceived between Jewish and Arabic studies. For him, both were key elements of a Spanish orientalism in the service of a Catholic-Spanish patria and "a Christian people."⁵⁹ Nonetheless, unlike many of his Spanish orientalist predecessors and successors, Amador de los Ríos was technically neither an Arabist nor a Hebraist, even though he had some working knowledge of both languages. His admitted linguistic limitations may thus have influenced the course of his study. Whether language served as a factor or not, Amador de los Ríos self-consciously positioned and viewed himself as a chronicler of Spanish historia patria above all (what scholars today would refer to as a Hispanist); his orientalism essentially served as a buttress to what he regarded as a complete understanding of this national history.⁶⁰

The Royal Council for Public Instruction unanimously approved the appointment of Amador de los Ríos as chaired professor of Spanish literature in the recently reconfigured Faculty of Philosophy and Letters at the University of Madrid.⁶¹ *Estudios* had secured his entrance into Spanish academe: the concluding report submitted by the council asserted that *Estudios* "presents indisputable interest and merit, combining erudition, hard work and the illustration of new data" and recommended that the government grant his petition for the chair "as a just award" for his work on Spain's Jews.⁶²

Amador de los Ríos entered the faculty at the University of Madrid during a period of intensive reform of the Spanish university. In 1845, a new Moderado constitution had been instituted and for the following 25 years, with minor interruptions, Moderados consolidated their power and took control of Spain's political machinery. The reform of the educational system figured prominently among their designs. During the final months of 1845, a new national plan of studies known as the Plan Pidal mandated the creation of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters and included a stipulation that made authors of scientific or literary works approved by the Council of Public Instruction eligible for vacant professorships.⁶³ This reform made Amador de los Ríos eligible for his position at the university, and he joined the corps of government

servants who were actively involved in the implementation of the Moderado government's educational reforms.⁶⁴

Further reform of the Spanish university took place on September 9, 1857, with the Moyano law of national education (named after Moderado Liberal Claudio Moyano). Under the new legislation, responsibility for public instruction was assigned to the Ministry of Development, which was given authority to regulate personnel, curricula, textbooks, examinations, and degrees at all educational levels. Moreover, it restructured the public university system, which was now definitively reorganized to include faculties of natural sciences and philosophy in addition to the traditional schools of theology, law, and medicine.⁶⁵ The new education reforms proved quite favorable to Amador de los Ríos, and his standing and influence continued to grow. In 1857, he was appointed dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters and in June of the following year he was sent by the government to visit schools of philosophy and letters abroad in order to observe advances in education, with the goal of later introducing them in Spain.⁶⁶

As a result of the Liberal educational reforms, the study of Hebrew, traditionally the domain of theological schools, officially became part of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters and a central subject in the official curriculum of the major in letters.⁶⁷ This change in the status of Hebraic studies paralleled the importance now placed on Arabic studies, which included the study of the literature and history of Muslim Spain. In addition to their teaching duties at the university, Hebraists and Arabists thus became involved in state-sponsored research to recover Arabic and Hebrew sources.⁶⁸ A royal decree of March 21, 1855, appointed Arabist Pascual Gayangos and Hebraist Severo Catalina of the University of Madrid to a commission formed by the government to examine Hebrew and Arabic manuscripts at the National Library, and in 1860 Arabists and Hebraists at the University of Madrid founded the first Spanish oriental society, the Sociedad Histórica y Filológica de Amigos del Oriente.⁶⁹ Amador de los Ríos took an interest in the study of Hebrew and developed a friendship with Antonio María García Blanco, a Liberal cleric who served as the first chair of Hebrew under the discipline's new configuration, and studied Hebrew under García Blanco's direction.⁷⁰

Although *Estudios* had enjoyed a warm reception in Spain and guaranteed Amador de los Ríos's ascent in Spanish academe and politics, the work also attained international reach, including among Jewish readers, and became the focal point of public debate. One Jewish reader was Ludwig Philippson, a prominent leader of German Jewry and editor of the distinguished *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*. In

[103]

Jewish History
as "Historia
Patria"

●
Michal
Friedman

1854, two months after a Progresista Liberal pronunciamiento, Philippson presented a petition to the recently reassembled Spanish Constituent Cortes (constitutional assembly). The petition, tendered in the name of German Jewry, demanded that Spain institute the principle of *libertad de cultos* (freedom of religious worship) and that it repeal the expulsion decree of 1492.⁷¹ Philippson reckoned the moment of 1854 a promising one for his endeavor, as he anticipated the Liberal pronunciamiento would bring about new liberalizing measures and create an auspicious climate for greater religious tolerance. In his appeal Philippson recalled Spain's Jewish past, in order to illuminate Spain's presumed indebtedness to the Jews, as well as exemplary precedents of religious tolerance. Interestingly, Philippson did not draw upon the works of Jewish or foreign writers in his reconstruction of this historical narrative. Rather, he cited the "entirely impartial" work of a modern Spanish author, none other than Amador de los Ríos's *Estudios*.⁷²

In Germany, Philippson was at the fore of Jewish attempts to achieve political emancipation and, like many other German Jews of his time, he viewed the Sephardic past as an ideal model of Jewish acculturation into the non-Jewish environment.⁷³ Nonetheless, Philippson's initiative in Spain was unique, as it connected scholarly engagement with an idealized Spanish past to the contemporary political reality of the modern Spanish nation-state by placing concrete demands on Spain. Philippson's reading of *Estudios* focused on the material that would help support the myth of "Sephardi ascent,"⁷⁴ while it ignored the readily available narrative of Jewish persecution and suffering found in the same study. In his appeal, Philippson, drawing heavily on *Estudios*, thus recalled the many contributions of the Jews to the development of Spanish culture and society and the presumed legacy of tolerance the Jews had experienced under Spanish Christian rule as clear precedents for the notion of *libertad de cultos*. Moreover, he claimed that freedom of religious worship served as a measure of "civilization" and called upon Spain to establish her place among the other "civilized" and "humane" European nations that had already instituted this freedom.⁷⁵ As far as the edict of expulsion was concerned, Philippson argued that the decree was an extralegal measure that violated a long-standing Spanish tradition of tolerance and argued that the Catholic Kings proved ungrateful to the Jews who had served them in many capacities.

Amador de los Ríos did not respond favorably to Philippson's efforts at the Cortes, particularly his appropriation of Spanish history for his cause. Perhaps he feared that Philippson's presentation of his work might link him to the cause of the Progresista radicals whose program

he opposed as a Moderado. Amador de los Ríos issued his response to Philippson's appeal in the form of an article in *Revista española de ambos mundos* in January of 1855.⁷⁶ He challenged Philippson's reading of *Estudios* by revisiting his own text in order to establish his opposing political position on the issue of freedom of religious worship. Although Philippson's reading of *Estudios* focused on the favorable situation of the Jews in Spain, Amador de los Ríos's reading of his own text in the context of the debate completely ignored this narrative. Rather, Amador de los Ríos now insisted that *Estudios* should be read as a narrative of Jewish incompatibility with Spain, thus excluding the possibility of Jewish redemption and denying the Jews a place in a contemporary Spanish patria.

Amador de los Ríos's ideal of a united Catholic Spanish patria clearly stood in conflict with Philippson's agenda. Amador de los Ríos understood the concept of freedom of religious worship as completely alien to the interests of Spain. Rather than guaranteeing the "intellectual, moral and religious good" for which Philippson had advocated, Amador de los Ríos argued this liberty would sow the most terrible discord: "not a single hour would go by without one group vying for power and control over the others, instigating a tenacious struggle for power, which could only end with the defeat and perhaps the extermination of the less fortunate." History, "the guide of life" (*maestra de la vida*), had proven this time and again, and for this reason modern nations had been "salvaged" from *libertad de cultos*, which he called a "terrible plague."⁷⁷

Just as potentially destructive to Spain's integrity, according to Amador de los Ríos, was the idea of repealing the expulsion decree. In his response to Philippson, Amador de los Ríos now argued that rather than warranting the reproof of historical criticism, Isabel and Ferdinand merited the "highest praise for having founded the great Spanish nation with such generous efforts." The Catholic Kings acted, he contended, in accord with the will of the Spanish people and in the interest of Spain's political and religious unity. Amador de los Ríos asked rhetorically if it would be "wise conduct to destroy, exclusively for the sake of appeasing the rabbi from Magdeburg, the religious unity of the Spanish monarchy" and if this were a matter worthy of "agitating and incinerating a Catholic society par excellence, like the Spanish nation."⁷⁸

In his response, Amador de los Ríos seemed to suggest that full Jewish assimilation, in past, present, or future, was untenable. He considered *libertad de cultos* unfeasible even among men of the same "race" and of shared origins and argued that it was even more absurd to

[105]

*Jewish History
as "Historia
Patria"*

●
Michal
Friedman

conceive of its possibility when applied to the Jews. The Jews, he claimed, had been “ordained by Providence to live as strangers dispersed among the nations until the end of days” and, he argued, were “outside of common law,” constituting a “separate race.” Given this situation, Amador de los Ríos inquired, “how is it then possible to reconcile their religious and material interests with those of the rest of the nations?”⁷⁹ Moreover, Amador de los Ríos challenged Philipppson’s use of Spanish history to demonstrate precedence for *libertad de cultos* and thus reclaimed his authority over the use of Spain’s Jewish past for contemporary politics and for his greater project of writing Spain’s *historia patria*. Amador de los Ríos proceeded to counter Philipppson’s historical examples by referring back to *Estudios*, from which Philipppson had derived authority for his argument. Amador de los Ríos presented the text of Alfonso X’s legislation regarding the Jews from the *Siete Partidas* in order to demonstrate that even during their period of greatest prosperity and cultural efflorescence, though the Jews and their religion were tolerated, this tolerance did not by any means approximate *libertad de cultos*. He explained that the only tolerance the Jews experienced in medieval Spain derived from royal authority and did not extend to the rest of Spanish society.⁸⁰ Rather, he claimed, in contrast to what he called Philipppson’s “mystification” of the Sephardic past, the history of the Jews in Spain was one marked by persecutions and religious and racial antagonism, one that “placed a bottomless abyss between Jews and Spaniards when Isabel and Ferdinand rose to the throne of Castile.”⁸¹ Amador de los Ríos concluded that this “abyss” served as yet another reason it would be impossible to “grant the Jews *libertad de cultos*” even in the present.

Finally, as Amador de los Ríos defined Spain as a Catholic nation above all, he suggested that only a Catholic Spaniard like himself was qualified for the task of engaging with Spanish history and its contemporary implications. Thus, Philipppson, “a man who does not even bear a Castilian surname” and “who does not even speak in the name of the descendants of the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492,” was unfit for such an endeavor.⁸² Philipppson’s Jewishness, he noted, was an impediment to a balanced rendering of Spanish history.⁸³

Although Philipppson’s efforts proved ineffective in achieving the reforms he sought, they generated considerable debate. The newly formed Democratic Party embraced Philipppson’s proposal and proposed the immediate establishment of *libertad de cultos*, occasioning reaction from across the political spectrum. Supporters and detractors of the proposal expounded upon Spain’s Jewish medieval past in their presentations at the Cortes. The majority of both Progresista and Moderado liberals viewed this moment as an occasion to condemn the intolerance of the

church and the Inquisition, as well as the decision to expel the Jews, though stopping short of actually approving the establishment of *libertad de cultos*. National historian Modesto Lafuente, a proponent of this position, described how religious intolerance had redounded to the detriment of Spanish civilization, and he expressed some of the same reservations as had Amador de los Ríos regarding the legality of the expulsion, while conceding that the Catholic Kings had little choice, as they acted under pressure of popular hatred of the Jews. Like Amador de los Ríos, however, he opposed *libertad de cultos*, arguing that destroying Spain's religious unity would result in social upheaval and threaten the traditions, beliefs, and needs of the country. Meanwhile, on the right, the Carlist and neo-Catholic press defended Spain's medieval measures against the Jews and warned the Spanish public of an imminent threat of Protestant and Jewish immigration if *libertad de cultos* was instituted.⁸⁴

Although the Democratic proposal was narrowly defeated, by a vote of 103 to 99, article 14 of the new constitution enacted in 1856 recognized liberty of conscience regarding religious ideas while designating that Catholicism remained Spain's official religion.⁸⁵ However, the constitution never quite went into effect, as the *Progresistas* soon lost power and the Constitution of 1845 was reinstated, along with other *Moderado* institutions. Nonetheless, the issue of religious freedom remained a contentious one, as *Progresistas* and Democrats continued to view its role as central in the struggle against Spain's reactionary forces. Such debates also resonated with the debates on the viability of Jewish citizenship beyond the Pyrenees. Although Spain did not contend with a tangible Jewish Question as did other European nations, the discussion of *libertad de cultos*, much of which centered on Amador de los Ríos's work, demonstrates the way Jews may have figured into the emergent question of defining Spain and Spanishness, just as it did in emerging debates over national identity and the so-called Jewish Question elsewhere in Europe.

The issue would resurface several years later, in 1859, when Spain invaded Morocco. During the invasion, which came to be known as the African War (1859–60), Spanish soldiers and journalists encountered Morocco's Judeo-Spanish-speaking population. These Jews, according to Spanish accounts in newspaper articles, memoirs, and literary texts, greeted the Spaniards as liberators and rallied around the Spanish troops. In these accounts, the Jew is generally cast as an intermediary between Spaniard and Muslim who dwells on the fringes of the *patria*, vying to affirm his membership in it. Moreover, the Muslims are represented as a common enemy and the Spaniards as the paternal liberators of the Jews, who had come to redeem them

[107]

*Jewish History
as "Historia
Patria"*

●
Michal
Friedman

from their oppressive and “barbarous” hosts. The North African Sephardim were thus shown to have eagerly embraced the Spaniards and Spain as their lost “mother patria.”⁸⁶

As various scholars have argued, the war in Africa was part of a greater effort to “restore” honor to the Spanish patria and resuscitate its imperial glory. Moreover, the war must be understood against the contemporary backdrop of the exponential growth of European colonial possessions and activity and Spain’s attempts to recast itself as an imperial contender.⁸⁷ Interestingly, the official discourse about the war often took shape in the form of historical claims concerning not the more recent Spanish empire in the Americas but rather the Reconquista of Spain from the Muslims in the Middle Ages. Spain’s African war proved an undertaking that inspired many intellectuals, including Amador de los Ríos, to rally around this nationalizing, evangelizing, and colonialist venture.⁸⁸

Amador de los Ríos’s support for Spain’s colonial involvement in North Africa is most clearly apparent in an ode he composed upon the occupation of Tetuan in 1860.⁸⁹ The ode presents an image of an eternal Spain whose historical destiny and trajectory may be traced back to her medieval past. Calling upon Spain to “Arise alas, Oh my sweet patria! . . . from the shameful dream, in which your breath has drowned” and to reclaim her “heroic stature,” Amador de los Ríos cast Spain as the liberator and redeemer of a “sorrowful Africa, condemned to perpetual barbarism,” just as it had “liberated” Granada, “the object of its envy,” from the Muslims in 1492.⁹⁰ He depicted the African War as a direct extension of the Reconquista, portraying Queen Isabel II as the direct successor of Isabel the Catholic, redeeming Spain by reclaiming the glory her ancestor had earned Spain upon the conquest of Granada in 1492:

Rejoice, Queens, rejoice! . . . You who redeemed
Granada from the Muslim yoke;
And you who restored to the Iberian *pueblo*
Its heroism of ages past.⁹¹

He affirmed the belief that divine providence had ordained that in Africa, Spain, “the downtrodden patria,” would “realize” a new “golden age.”⁹²

But the unifying appeal of the African War for politicians and intellectuals did not prevent renewed domestic political conflict, particularly stemming from the divide between Progresistas, Democrats, and Moderados. The University of Madrid increasingly became a

forum for political conflict. In 1864, Emilio Castelar, a leading Democrat and one of the leading advocates of religious liberty, published an attack on the queen, and First Minister Ramón María Narváez responded by removing Castelar from his professorship of Spanish history. When the faculty and students protested, demanding academic freedom in the classroom (*libertad de cátedra*), Narváez sent in the civil guard, with the result that nine students were killed and 100 wounded. To add insult to injury, all professors were required to take an oath of loyalty to the monarchy and the Catholic religion; those who refused lost their positions.⁹³

Moderado repression came to a halt with the Liberal revolution of 1868, also known as La Gloriosa, and the issue of *libertad de cultos* and Spain's Jewish past came to the fore yet again. On September 28, 1868, General Juan Prim, military champion of the Progressives, in alliance with Liberal Unionist General Francisco Serrano and Admiral Juan Bautista Topete, landed at Cádiz and issued a pronunciamiento against the queen and in favor of the reestablishment of a constitutional monarchy. Isabel fled to France and revolutionary juntas took over the large cities. In Madrid, the Democrats coerced Prim and Serrano into satisfying their demands for a constituent cortes elected by universal suffrage and for the proclamation of freedom of religion and the press.⁹⁴ Petitions similar to that of Philippon once again were made by French, German, and British Jews who anticipated the gains to be made on the issue of religious tolerance.⁹⁵ A new constitution was proclaimed by the Cortes on June 6, 1869, with article 21 establishing *libertad de cultos* under the condition that the state continue to finance the Catholic religion.⁹⁶

Although the decision to institute *libertad de cultos* now passed by a majority of 164 to 40, with 76 Republicans abstaining, it did so only following heated debate.⁹⁷ The debates over the Constitution of 1869 featured the disparate visions of Spain that had developed over the course of the century: a semisecular liberal vision on one hand and a Catholic-conservative vision on the other. As in 1854, Spain's medieval past played a central role in these political debates and the Jews once again became a subject of contention. On April 12, 1869, during a widely publicized debate at the Cortes between the leading Republican politician of the day and chair of Spanish history at the University of Madrid, Emilio Castelar, and the Carlist senator Vicente Manterola, the work of Amador de los Ríos once again served as a point of reference. Manterola argued against *libertad de cultos* in defense of Spain's Catholic unity. Spanish identity was indelibly marked by Catholicism, he argued, and the Liberal constitution was "not

[109]

*Jewish History
as "Historia
Patria"*

●
Michal
Friedman



Catholic enough,” for the “Spanish pueblo, oh, the Spanish pueblo was the most Catholic pueblo in the world.” Castelar, in contrast, defended the constitution in the name of the liberal battle cry of the French Revolution, “liberty, equality, and fraternity of all mankind,” as well as in the “name of the Gospel.” Nonetheless, for both Manterola and Castelar the linchpin of Spain’s identity resided in Spain’s medieval past. Castelar condemned the intolerance of the medieval church and Inquisition but also evoked a contrasting medieval Spanish tradition of enlightened tolerance. He argued that the persecution of the Jews had impoverished Spain and that “in depriving herself of the Jews, Spain deprived herself of an infinity of names who might have been the luster and the glory of the country,” naming Spinoza and Disraeli as examples.⁹⁸

In his retort to Castelar, Manterola rushed to defend Spain’s medieval intolerance and particularly the actions of the church and its champions. Though he condemned anti-Jewish massacres, he explained the persecution of the Jews by citing passages from the Talmud that, he alleged, called for the deception and extermination of Christians. In his defense of Vicente Ferrer, whom Castelar blamed for inciting the massacre of thousands of Jews through his incendiary preaching at the pulpit of the cathedral of Toledo, Manterola referred to Amador de los Ríos’s writings. Manterola alleged that Amador de los Ríos had demonstrated how Vicente Ferrer’s sermons neither directly nor indirectly caused the massacre of the Jews.⁹⁹ Just as Ludwig Philippson had invoked the work of Amador de los Ríos as an authority on Spanish medieval history in 1854 in order to demand the institution of *libertad de cultos*, Manterola now invoked the work of Amador de los Ríos in order to attack the implementation of *libertad de cultos* and to defend his own vision of a Catholic Spain.

Jewish History as *Historia Patria*

In 1867 and 1868, Amador de los Ríos’s credentials and Moderado affiliation won him prestigious appointments, first as vice-rector of the University of Madrid by a decree of October 29, 1867, and then as director of the National Museum of Archaeology on February 2, 1868. But despite such accomplishments, and his frequent citation as an authority in the political debates of the 1868 revolution, his academic position was jeopardized when his chaired professorship at the university was suspended on December 4, 1868. In the two years during which his university position was suspended, Amador de los Ríos

completed his definitive work on the Jews of Spain, *Historia social, política y religiosa de los judíos de España y Portugal*.¹⁰⁰

On the surface, *Historia* simply appears to be an expanded version of the historical section of *Estudios*. The 1,109-page work is divided into three volumes of 10 chapters each, including a final section of illustrations and documents. The first volume recounts the period from the arrival of the Jews in Spain until the deaths of kings Jaime I of Aragon and Alfonso X of Castile in 1284. The second volume discusses the situation of the Jews during the late thirteenth century, the devastation experienced by the different Jewish communities as a result of the massacres of 1391, the aftermath of the preaching of Vicente Ferrer, the anti-Jewish legislation of the early fifteenth century in the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile, and the Disputation of Tortosa (1413–14). The final volume considers the situation of the Jews in the kingdom of Juan II of Castile and the expulsion of the Jews from Aragon and Castile in 1492 and from Navarre in 1498. It also surveys the travails of the Conversos in Spain and Portugal in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Amador de los Ríos concluded this volume with a chapter in which he described Spain's relationship with the descendants of expelled Jews, particularly the different attempts to legally readmit them to Spain.

Despite the similarities between the two texts, a shift in tone in *Historia* is apparent, as is a change in Amador de los Ríos's motives in writing the history. Though writing *historia patria* remained Amador de los Ríos's main objective, his understanding of how exactly one should write *historia patria*, as well as its urgency, had changed. By 1876, he appeared more emotionally invested in the writing of this history and considered its writing a moral obligation, as he claimed it "might teach us important lessons for the present and future."¹⁰¹ Amador de los Ríos contended not only that the Jews were protagonists in the development of Spanish civilization, as he had in *Estudios*, but that Spain was greatly indebted to the Jews for this role. His earlier conception of his work as providing an important contribution to the understanding of Spanish civilization had thus evolved into a more committed and even personal form of paying homage to the place of the Jews in the Spanish patria.

Amador de los Ríos indicated in *Historia* that, above all, the imperative of writing national history entailed upholding the values of impartiality and justice and refraining from any form of political partisanship. This idea stemmed from Amador de los Ríos's arguments regarding the use and misuse of Spain's Jewish history by Jews and non-Jews alike

[111]

*Jewish History
as "Historia
Patria"*



Michal
Friedman

and the partisan politics that continued to divide Spaniards. He assured readers:

[112]

*Jewish
Social
Studies*



Vol. 18
No. 1

We have never believed that it is licit for the historian to separate his heart and his intelligence from the inflexible staff and faithful scales of justice; therefore, upon publishing *Estudios históricos* in 1848, . . . and now, upon sketching *Historia social* . . . with a larger volume of documents and with greater rigor, we have refrained, at all costs, from covering our head with the tefillin of the Jews, as we have from covering our chests with the crest of the Holy Office.¹⁰²

Amador de los Ríos now espoused writing Spanish history as a sacred mission that placed history in the service of the patria, rather than partisan politics. He understood history as serving a higher purpose, one committed to the forging of a sense of cohesive Catholic nationhood or patria in Spain. As such, writing history entailed upholding the concepts of justice, objectivity, reason, and faith or passion for the patria all at once. Moreover, although he distanced himself from both Jewish and Christian partisanship, Amador de los Ríos also welcomed the approval of these two groups, as he proudly declared that despite the “contradictory opinions” of his study, no one would be able to deny him the “honor of impartiality,” which “Catholic as well as most Protestant and Jewish scholars” had generally accorded him. Notably, Amador de los Ríos singled out Rabbi Ludwig Philippson of Magdeburg’s positive assessment of his *Estudios* as “entirely impartial.”¹⁰³

An examination of the historical events that transpired in the roughly 30 years between the writing of the two studies, as well as the engagement of different scholars with Amador de los Ríos’s work, may suggest an explanation for these shifts. As the narrative of *Historia* reveals, the political issue that most troubled Amador de los Ríos proved to be not *libertad de cultos* but the separatism of the Carlists. He viewed the Carlists as responsible for much of Spain’s civil strife and was even personally affected by their fighting when one of his sons was killed by a Carlist grenade in 1876.¹⁰⁴ It is therefore quite likely that Amador de los Ríos’s aversion to the Carlist brand of Catholic extremism and political partisanship compelled him to tone down some of his overt Catholic rhetoric, even as it also brought his own brand of Catholicism, one distinguished by a liberal humanism, into sharper relief.

Although Amador de los Ríos had already criticized religious fanaticism in his discussion of forced conversions and religious violence against the Jews in *Estudios*, this critique became more emphatic in *Historia*. Amador de los Ríos used the past to illustrate the dangers of

religious extremism for contemporary Spain, as he contended that in the Iberian Peninsula the nineteenth century had presented to “the face of the world a most analogous spectacle,” a reference to the Carlist war that he perceived as “one of the most unjust, bloody and cruel wars Spain had ever mourned.” The instigators of this war, Amador de los Ríos claimed, “rallied the fanaticized popular masses in the name of God,” and among them “there was no dearth of priests of the likes of a Ferrán Martínez,” who “impiously and barbarically spilled the blood of their brothers, naming them heretics.” In drawing these parallels between present and past, Amador de los Ríos believed “future generations would come to learn from the very comparison of the facts” the dangers of religious fanaticism.¹⁰⁵

Amador de los Ríos continued to view the debate over *libertad de cultos* as an impediment to Spain’s well-being and unity. In the last part of *Historia*, Amador de los Ríos reflected on the decision of the Liberal Cortes to proclaim *libertad de cultos* in the Constitution of 1869, indicating his unease with this choice: “The spectacle presented for our contemplation by the Constituent Cortes of 1869, and which Spain offered us for the last eight years, truly brings the most anguished vacillation and the most bitter uncertainty to our spirit as historians.”¹⁰⁶ For Amador de los Ríos, this issue was far from being resolved:

Sensible men, removed from any petty interest and warped passion, and free from any sort of political and religious fanaticism, contemplating the events of the present with a calm mind and a tranquil heart, do not see, nor can they see in these events any clear proof or sign suggesting that the Spanish nation has definitively resolved the problem presented by the Jews of Germany to the Constituent Cortes of 1854.¹⁰⁷

By recalling the Philippon episode of 1854 in this context, Amador de los Ríos granted Philippon and the Jews a critical place in shaping his understanding of Spain in 1869, a moment he described as one of “profound crisis for this transcendental question, which each day makes the combative spirit of the political factions more arduous and horrific.”¹⁰⁸

The question of Jewish loyalty and partisanship continued to trouble Amador de los Ríos in *Historia* as well. One example is his discussion of the Jewish role in the civil wars of Navarre and Castile. Amador de los Ríos held the Jews accountable for their participation in those conflicts and offered his unforgiving opinion of such involvement: “The Jewish people, so indiscreet, to take part in the domestic disturbances of the Christians, so unjust and imprudent as to take up arms

[113]

*Jewish History
as “Historia
Patria”*

●
Michal
Friedman



in favor of one party or another, has paid with horrible usury for its errors."¹⁰⁹ His expectation that the Jews remain neutral corresponded to his idealization of a form of citizenship that disavowed partisan conflict and sectarianism in the name of the patria. Amador de los Ríos imagined the Jews as the bearers of these ideals and values; their transgressions made them in his view guilty of disgracing the patria, in ways ultimately resulting in their exclusion.

Amador de los Ríos also extended his critique of Jewish partisanship to the present, through his reaction to the German Jewish historians who had written about the history of the Jews of Spain.¹¹⁰ He faulted Jewish authors for failing to deal dispassionately with the topic and especially for failing to address Spain's Jews' "lack of discretion, mistakes, and even the crimes they committed."¹¹¹ In his survey of the divergent views of historians about the edict of expulsion, Amador de los Ríos faulted "the Jewish narrators" for "reveling in such rude protests and bitter lamentations, that it would be useless to expect from them either an instance of impartiality, or a grain of justice."¹¹²

The Jewish historian whose challenges proved most unsettling to Amador de los Ríos was Meyer Kayserling.¹¹³ In one instance, Amador de los Ríos chided Kayserling for not indicating that the Jews took sides in the civil war of Navarre, suggesting that he was "unfamiliar with the facts." Amador de los Ríos declared:

We, who neither defend nor persecute the Jews, without suspecting that this distinguished historian would have deliberately distorted the facts, judge it to be the indispensable duty to present the facts as they are, giving them their proper significance and true coloring. . . . [O]n these, as on other occasions, it would be a lack of historical integrity to absolve the Jews of the responsibility their imprudence and intemperance brought upon them.¹¹⁴

Amador de los Ríos accused Kayserling, and by extension all Jewish historians, of partisanship that rendered them incapable of writing an objective history of Spain's Jewish past.

Amador de los Ríos's extension of Jewish sins of the past to the Jews of the present, and his claims to exclusive rights to write the history of the Jews of Spain, came to the fore most explicitly in his response to a critique Kayserling had made of *Estudios*. Kayserling had questioned Amador de los Ríos's contention that one of the underlying reasons for the decision to expel the Jews was their proselytizing activity among the Christians, an activity that, Amador de los Ríos argued, seriously hampered Spain's religious and political unity. Kayserling also

chided Amador de los Ríos for rejecting the opposing claim, expressed by sixteenth-century former Converso Isaac Cardoso, who exculpated the Jews of any proselytizing activity. This infuriated Amador de los Ríos, who responded that the “Jewish German writer M. Kayserling assaults us with the most venomous blows . . . and even accuses us of malevolent intentions.” Amador de los Ríos characterized this “inopportune” attack as “clearly born out of the most painful historical blindness.” For, he proclaimed, “Doctor Kayserling appears here, just like the relapsed Cardoso, condemned en masse by the entire history of the Hebrew generation on Spanish soil, and even more so by the testimony of all the Israelites who foreswore Talmudism during the Middle Ages.”¹¹⁵

The comparison Amador de los Ríos drew between Kayserling and Cardoso suggested an even broader analogy. The partisanship of the Jews in the twelfth century placed the patria at risk; in parallel fashion, Kayserling’s lack of historical objectivity jeopardized the project of writing Spain’s *historia patria*, rendering him unfit to partake in its writing. This analogy effectively allowed Amador de los Ríos to assert his own position of privilege in recovering the Jewish past, on the one hand, and to exclude Jewish historians like Kayserling from this process, on the other.

But even so, Amador de los Ríos’s conclusions regarding the denouement of normative Jewish life in the Iberian Peninsula indicate a shift in his thinking about the place of the Jews in the patria, as he began to identify with the object of his study to a degree that even he conceded might undermine his own ability to remain dispassionate. In the introduction to *Historia*, Amador de los Ríos confessed that writing about the persecution of the Jews and their expulsion pained him greatly and even caused him to consider terminating his project. Moreover, in what is perhaps the most significant departure from *Estudios*, Amador de los Ríos refrained from justifying the decision of the Catholic Kings to expel the Jews. He now explicitly referred to the expelled Jews as “Spaniards,” indicating that over time he had come to incorporate them more firmly in the patria: “Did the Catholic Kings, given the laws of the State, attain sufficient authority, to cast from their native soil, by means of a simple decree, so many thousands of Spanish families, who departed from Iberian soil from 1492 to 1500?”¹¹⁶ Moreover, Amador de los Ríos noted that in their exile, the Jews, “far-flung from their maternal homes, mourned their lost patria”¹¹⁷ and were “incapable of uprooting from either their hearts or their memory the love and the memory of the beloved patria, where the bones of their grandparents remained abandoned.”¹¹⁸

[115]

Jewish History
as “*Historia*
Patria”

●
Michal
Friedman

This shift in Amador de los Ríos's attitude in *Estudios* is thus considerable, ironically making his critiques more akin to those made by Ludwig Philippson in his 1854 appeal to the Cortes, whose content Amador de los Ríos had protested so ardently. Furthermore, not unlike Philippson, Amador de los Ríos scorned the ingratitude of the Catholic Kings toward the Jews, reminding the reader of the many contributions of the Jews to Spanish civilization, particularly in the areas of science and literature, and claiming that the Jews had, "in effect, stimulated in an indirect way the quest for knowledge in the Christians, even teaming up with them in the cultivation of national literature." As in *Estudios*, he endowed the expulsion with a redemptive quality, writing that "[t]he Jews of Spain and Portugal brought to all parts the customs and the Castilian language that had emerged with the literary republic, as a live and enduring testament to the ancient nationality, in whose bosom their forefathers had once flourished."¹¹⁹ In *Historia*, moreover, Amador de los Ríos extended discussion of the Sephardim beyond their initial exile, emphasizing modern Spanish attempts to reconcile with the Sephardim through his own day. Though Amador de los Ríos's concern with contemporary politics is implied throughout the text, this final section explicitly demonstrates his concern that the issues evoked by Ludwig Philippson's petition to the Cortes back in 1854 remained unresolved, with Spain continuing to confront a serious crisis involving its national religious identity. In short, Amador de los Ríos considered the question of the "Jewishness" of Spain inseparable from a resolution of its perennial divisiveness and instability.

Conclusion

During the two-year period of Amador de los Ríos's suspension from the University of Madrid, the faculty and the university appealed to the government to restore his chaired professorship in Spanish literature. In the end, thanks to the intervention of the writer and director of public instruction, Don Juan Valera, Amador de los Ríos was reinstated to his position in February 1871.¹²⁰ On November 25 of the same year, Antonio Cánovas de Castillo, the leading Conservative politician of the day and architect of Spain's restoration, extolled Amador de los Ríos's *Historia* in his speech inaugurating the chairs of the Athenaeum of Madrid.¹²¹ Amador de los Ríos quickly regained his political standing, as Valera appointed him inspector general of public education in 1874 and *Historia* was published between 1875 and 1876.

Upon publication of *Historia*, Amador de los Ríos received further acclaim. In November 1877, *Historia* was favorably reviewed by Manuel Colmeiro in the inaugural issue of the prestigious journal of Spain's Royal Academy of History, *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, as an "honor for the patria." Colmeiro lamented the state of scholarship in Spain, as "political concerns rob and perhaps even sterilize many geniuses whose work could honor the patria." He welcomed *Historia*, emphasizing its objectivity and fine caliber and calling for its recognition: In the "most cultured nations of Europe . . . barely is a good book published, the trumpets of fame resound, and extolling and exalting the name of its author to the high heavens becomes a question of national pride." In Spain, in contrast, "the best works go unnoticed, or are exclusively read and judged by a finite number of learned men." He added that if these works are to any degree esteemed, it is thanks to the "resounding praise their authors received beyond the Pyrenees." Colmeiro vowed that unlike other works of its caliber, Amador de los Ríos's *Historia* would not be overlooked.¹²²

As Colmeiro had predicted, Amador de los Ríos's success in this endeavor did not go unnoticed, as was made clear by the recognition Amador de los Ríos received upon his death on February 17, 1878. In the first pages of its February issue, the *Boletín* featured an announcement of his death eulogizing Amador de los Ríos, listing his many honors, and inviting people to attend his burial. An array of government dignitaries and public officials joined his family in signing this obituary.¹²³ Amador de los Ríos was buried in the church of the Universidad Literaria of Seville, directly under the vaults containing the remains of the renowned Hebraists Arias Montano and Rodrigo Caro, Amador de los Ríos's mentor Alberto Lista, and "other illustrious men, the honor of science and of national literature."¹²⁴

Amador de los Ríos's interment in this national pantheon signaled not only his recognition as a figure of national importance but also the incorporation of Spain's Jewish past into official versions of *historia patria*. Indeed, Amador de los Ríos's work served as an inspiration and catalyst for future generations of Spanish and Jewish scholars alike. Much of the initial modern Jewish historiography on the Jews of Spain depends upon Amador de los Ríos's early research into the topic. Moreover, Amador de los Ríos's work helped foster the expansion and institutionalization of the recovery of the Jewish past in Spain. By the late nineteenth century, in its attempts to construct a national heritage, the Spanish Liberal state had stepped up its collaboration with scholars and politicians dedicated to such acts of recovery at the Royal Academy of History and other academic institutions.¹²⁵ Furthermore, Amador de

[117]

*Jewish History
as "Historia
Patria"*



Michal
Friedman



los Ríos's understanding of the Sephardim as the bearers and transmitters of Spain's cultural legacy, and as witnesses and advocates of a greater Spanish patria beyond Spain's national borders, helped to inspire Spanish philo-Sephardic and Sephardist campaigns rooted in *Hispanidad* (the notion of the existence of a cultural and spiritual communion or "brotherhood" among all Hispanics and former colonial subjects, grounded in a shared language and religion) which took shape at the turn of the century and endured well into the twentieth century.¹²⁶

In this study of the life and work of Amador de los Ríos, I have explored some of the ways in which the Jews and Jewish history figured into the emergent question of defining Spain and Spanishness, just as they did in emerging debates over national identity and the so-called Jewish Question elsewhere in Europe. In the case of Spain, however, the existence of such debate even in the absence of a contemporary Jewish population suggests the enduring centrality of the Jewish presence in the Spanish national imagination, even four centuries after their expulsion. Moreover, the debates generated over questions of Jewish absence and presence in Spain proved unique in the contemporary European setting of secularized national ideologies; in Spain, by contrast, they were marked by a firmly Catholic ideology and religious rhetoric surrounding the idea of a united Catholic Spain. Thus we find in Spain the interplay of medieval and early modern debates over Jewish conversion to Christianity, Enlightenment debates over Jewish emancipation and readmittance to European territory, and more nefarious modern debates over the inassimilable racial character of the Jews. The example of Amador de los Ríos indeed suggests that it is in the interplay of such historically disparate debates that one may appreciate the deep ambivalence surrounding the history of Spain's recovery of its Jewish past—a history that began in earnest in the nineteenth century, intensified under Spanish fascism, and continues to the present day.

Notes

I wish to thank my advisor, the late Yosef Haim Yerushalmi, for his generous comments on an earlier version of this article. I also wish to thank Nitai Shinnan, Antonio Feros, Adam Shear, and Paul Eiss, and the journal editors and anonymous reviewers for their feedback and comments. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

- 1 *Discursos leídos en la sesión pública celebrada el día 19 de Mayo de 1918, dedicada a enaltecer la Memoria de Los Excmos. Sres. D. Pedro de Madrazo y D. José Amador de los Ríos* (Madrid, 1918), 7, 25.
- 2 Federico Ysart, *España y los judíos en la Segunda Guerra Mundial* (Barcelona, 1978); Chaim Lipschitz, *Franco, Spain, the Jews and the Holocaust* (New York, 1984); Haim Avni, *Spain, the Jews and Franco* (Philadelphia, 1982); Antonio Marquina and Gloria Inés Ospina, *España y los judíos en el siglo XX* (Madrid, 1987); Bernd Rother, *Spanien und der Holocaust* (Tubingen, 2001); Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida, *El Antisemitismo en España: La imagen del judío (1812–2000)* (Murcia, 2000); Isabelle Rohr, *The Spanish Right and the Jews, 1898–1945: Antisemitism and Opportunism* (Eastbourne, Engl., 2007). For some recent, novel perspectives on Spain and its relationship to the Jews and the Jewish past, see Daniela Felsler, Tabea Alexa Linhard, and Adrián Pérez Melgosa, eds., “Revisiting Jewish Spain in the Modern Era,” special issue, *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 12, no. 1 (Mar. 2011), and Michael Brenner, ed., “Das Neue Sefarad: Das moderne Spanien und sein jüdisches erbe,” special issue, *Münchner beitrage zur jüdischen geschichte und kultur* 5, no. 2 (2011).
- 3 Américo Castro, *España en su historia: Cristianos, moros y judíos* (Buenos Aires, 1948), and Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, *España: Un enigma histórico* (Buenos Aires, 1956). For studies of their work and discussion of the debate, see Henri Lapeyre, “Deux interprétations de l’histoire d’Espagne: Américo Castro et Claudio Sánchez Albornoz,” *Annales Économies, Sociétés, Civilizations* 20, no. 5 (1965): 1015–37; J. N. Hillgarth, “Spanish Historiography and Iberian Reality,” *History and Theory* 24, no. 1 (Feb. 1985), 23–43; and Alex Novikoff, “Between Tolerance and Intolerance in Medieval Spain: An Historiographic Enigma,” *Medieval Encounters* 11, nos. 1–2 (2005): 7–36.
- 4 See also Isabelle Rohr, “‘Spaniards of the Jewish Type’: Philosephardism in the Service of Imperialism in Early Twentieth-Century Spanish Morocco,” *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 12, no. 1 (Mar. 2011): 61–75.
- 5 See for instance, Francisco Martínez Marina, *Antigüedades hispano-hebreas, convencidas de supuestas y fabulosas: Discurso histórico-crítico sobre la primera venidad de los judios a España* (Madrid, 1796). For discussion of this work and others of a similar nature, see Nitai Shinan, “Mi-de’ot kedumot el ha-mehkar ha-mada’i: Toledot Yehudei Sefarad bi-yemei ha-beinayim be-kitvei reshit ha-historyografyah ha-sefaradit bein shanim 1759–1898” (Ph.D. diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2006).
- 6 An example of such debate appears as early as the seventeenth century in reformist *arbitrista* literature exploring the reasons for Spain’s alleged economic decline, suggesting that the expulsion of the Jews may have factored as one of the causes for said decline. The arbitristas (lit. “projectors”) were a group of reformers in seventeenth-century Spain concerned with the decline of the Spanish economy; see John Elliot, *Imperial Spain, 1469–1716* (Harmondsworth, 1970).

[119]

Jewish History
as “*Historia*
Patria”



Michal
Friedman

- 7 See, for instance, José Rodríguez de Castro, *Biblioteca española, tomo primero, que contiene la noticia de los escritores rabinos españoles desde la época conocida de su literatura hasta el presente* (Madrid, 1781). On the emergence of Hebrew as a modern rather than a strictly theological subject in Spain, see Pascual Pascual Recuero, "Gramáticas hebreo españolas en el siglo XIX," *Miscelánea de estudios árabes y hebraicos* 26, no. 2 (1977–79): 67–80. Debates over the Inquisition also brought the Jews and Conversos back to the fore around this time; see José Antonio Llorente, *Histoire critique de l'Inquisition d'Espagne* (Paris, 1817), and Natanael Jomtob (Antonio Puigblanch), *La Inquisición sin máscara, o, disertación en que se prueban hasta la evidencia los vicios de este tribunal, y la necesidad de que se suprima* (Cádiz, 1811). Though highly polemical and partisan, these widely publicized works brought renewed attention to Spanish Jews and their descendants the Conversos as iconic victims of a political system that a sector of Spanish Liberalism sought to overturn.
- 8 Aurora Rivière Gómez, *Orientalismo y Nacionalismo Español: Estudios árabes y hebreos en la Universidad de Madrid (1843–1868)* (Madrid, 2000); David Wacks, "Is Spain's Hebrew Literature 'Spanish'?", in *Spain's Multi-cultural Legacies: Studies in Honor of Samuel G. Armistead*, ed. Adrienne L. Martín and Cristina Martínez-Carazo (Newark, Del., 2008), 315–31.
- 9 See Carolyn Boyd, *Historia Patria: Politics, History and National Identity in Spain, 1875–1975* (Princeton, 1997); José Álvarez Junco, *Mater Dolorosa: La idea de España en el siglo XIX* (Madrid, 2001); Martín Peiró, *Los guardianes de la historia* (Madrid, 1997); Eduardo Manzano Moreno and Juan Sisinio Pérez Garzón, eds., *La gestión de la memoria* (Madrid, 2000).
- 10 A notable exception is Rivière Gómez, *Orientalismo*. The institutionalization of Arabism, on the other hand, has been well documented and is the subject of significant scholarly attention. See James Monroe, *Islam and the Arabs in Spanish Scholarship* (Leiden, 1970); Manuela Manzanares de Cirre, *Arabistas españoles en el siglo XIX*, (Madrid, 1971); Rivière Gómez, *Orientalismo*. For more recent work on the topic by Spanish scholars, see Eduardo Manzano Moreno et al., eds., *Orientalismo, exotismo y traducción* (Cuenca, 2000); on Spanish Arabism and orientalism from a cultural- and performance-studies perspective, see Susan Martin-Márquez, *Disorientations: Spanish Colonialism in Africa and the Performance of Identity* (New Haven, Conn., 2008).
- 11 See Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* (Hanover, N.H., 1994), 71–92; Yosef Haim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle, 1982), 81–103; and Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Los Angeles, Calif., 1993).
- 12 See also Shinan, "Mi-de'ot kedumot," and Andrew Bush, "Amador de los Ríos and the Beginnings of Modern Jewish Studies in Spain," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 12, no. 1 (Mar. 2011): 13–33.
- 13 Schorsch, *From Text to Context*, 71–92.
- 14 Álvarez Junco, *Mater Dolorosa*, 119–49, and Raymond Carr, *Spain, 1808–1975* (Oxford, Engl., 1982), 79–115.

- 15 Jordi Canal, *El Carlismo* (Madrid, 2000).
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 See Carolyn Boyd, "The Military and Politics, 1808–1874," in *Spanish History since 1808*, ed. José Álvarez Junco and Adrian Shubert (London, 2000), 64–78.
- 18 Álvarez Junco, *Mater Dolorosa*, 199–200.
- 19 Boyd, *Historia Patria*, 70–74, 80–81.
- 20 See Jonathan Ray, "Beyond Tolerance and Persecution: Reassessing Our Approach to Medieval Convivencia," *Jewish Social Studies* n.s. 11, no. 2 (2005): 1–18.
- 21 See Rivièrè Gómez, *Orientalismo*; Michal Friedman, "Recovering Jewish Spain: Politics, Historiography and Institutionalization of the Jewish Past in Spain (1845–1935)" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2012); and Martín-Márquez, *Disorientations*.
- 22 Ibid., and Eduardo Manzano Moreno and Juan Sisinio Pérez Garzón, "A Difficult Nation? History and Nationalism in Contemporary Spain," in "Spanish Memories: Images of a Contested Past," ed. Raanan Rein, special issue, *History and Memory* 14, nos. 1–2 (Fall 2002), 259–84.
- 23 See Francisco Valverde y Perales, *Historia de la Villa de Baena* (Toledo, Spain, 1903), 418–19. Father Juan de Mariana published the first 20 volumes of *Historia general de España* in Latin as *Historiae de rebus Hispaniae libri XX* beginning in 1592 and subsequently added 10 additional books by 1605. He translated the entire work from Latin into Spanish, first publishing it as *Historia general de España*. The work represents the first general history of Spain since the medieval period and spans antiquity through the accession of Charles V in 1519. Mariana's *Historia* attempts to demonstrate Spain's greatness, positing that Castile was the peninsula's unifying force. It came to serve as a model for national-history writing in the following centuries and was perhaps the most widely read Spanish historical work until the early nineteenth century.
- 24 *Expediente académico de Amador de los Ríos: Datos referentes a la Historia crítica de la Literatura Española*, Archivo General de la Administración (hereafter AGA), file 65–66, box 15.248, and Valverde y Perales, *Historia de la Villa de Baena*, 419–20.
- 25 Ibid., 422.
- 26 D. A. Ferrer del Río, "Amador de los Ríos," in *Galería de la literatura Española*, ed. D. F. de P. Mellado (Madrid, 1846), 315–16; José Amador de los Ríos, *Memoria* (1845), cited in Valverde y Perales, *Historia de la Villa de Baena*, 423.
- 27 José Amador de los Ríos, "De los judíos de España," *Revista del Español: Periódico de Literatura, Bellas Artes y Variedades* 25–39 (1845–46).
- 28 Amador de los Ríos, "De los judíos de España," *Revista del Español* 39 (1846): 5–9.
- 29 Adolfo de Castro, *Historia de los judíos de España* (Cádiz, 1847).

[121]

*Jewish History
as "Historia
Patria"*

●
Michal
Friedman

- 30 See Yolanda Vallejo Márquez, *Adolfo de Castro (1823–1898): Su tiempo, su vida y su obra* (Cádiz, 1997), 25, and Manuel Ravina Martín, *Bibliófilo y erudito: Vida y obra de Adolfo de Castro (1823–1898)* (Cádiz, 1999), 36.
- 31 Adolfo de Castro, *Historia de los judíos*, 8.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 7.
- 33 José Amador de los Ríos, *Estudios históricos, políticos y literarios sobre los judíos de España* (Madrid, 1848), XI–XII; see also *Expediente académico de José Amador de los Ríos*, Real Academia de la Historia (hereafter RAH), Secretariat, file 101, circular of June 6, 1847.
- 34 Amador de los Ríos, *Estudios*, XI–XII. That Adolfo de Castro kept careful track of Amador de los Ríos’s articles and strategized to publish his work before the appearance of *Estudios* is confirmed in a letter he sent to his friend Luis María Ramírez on September 24, 1847 (published in Ravina Martín, *Bibliófilo y erudito*, 21).
- 35 Amador de los Ríos, *Estudios*, XV–XVI.
- 36 *Ibid.*, XVIII.
- 37 *Ibid.*, XXIII, 244–46.
- 38 Hinting at his restricted proficiency in a field still in its infancy in Spain, Amador de los Ríos acknowledged the assistance of José María García Blanco, professor of Hebrew language, with whom he studied at the University of Madrid, in preparing the original Hebrew translations in *Estudios*.
- 39 Amador de los Ríos, *Estudios*, XV–XVI.
- 40 See, for example, Collin Smith, *Christians and Moors in Spain* (Oxford, Engl., 1988–92); Daniela Flesler, “El Rodrigo de Pedro Montegón: La leyenda de la ‘pérdida de España’ entre la Ilustración y el Romanticismo,” *Dieciocho* 24, no. 1 (2001): 1–14; and Patricia E. Grieve, *The Eve of Spain: Myth of Origins in the History of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Conflict* (Baltimore, 2009).
- 41 Amador de los Ríos, *Estudios*, 18.
- 42 *Ibid.*, 21–22.
- 43 *Ibid.*, 29.
- 44 See Robert I. Burns, ed., *Emperor of Culture: Alfonso X the Learned of Castile and His Thirteenth-Century Renaissance* (Philadelphia, 1990), and idem, ed., *The Worlds of Alfonso the Learned and James the Conqueror: Intellect and Force in the Middle Ages*, (Princeton, 1985).
- 45 Amador de los Ríos, *Estudios*, 44.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 35.
- 47 In his very brief discussion of the Jews under Muslim rule, Amador de los Ríos explains the status of the Jews as *dhimmi* (non-Muslim people who were protected under Islamic law) and concludes that this legal status would always prevent them from becoming “members” of the Muslim “nation,” as he would later expound; see José Amador de los Ríos, *Historia social, política y religiosa de los judíos de España* (Madrid, 1875–76; repr., 1960), 289.

- 48 Amador de los Ríos, *Estudios*, 34. See Dwayne E. Carpenter, *Alfonso X and the Jews: An Edition of and Commentary on the Siete Partidas*, “De los judáios” (Berkeley, 1986), 7: 24.
- 49 Amador de los Ríos, *Estudios*, 31–32.
- 50 *Ibid.*, 60.
- 51 Amador de los Ríos also applauded Alfonso X’s success in having drawn “the most illustrious rabbis” into the fold of Christianity (*Estudios*, 35).
- 52 Amador de los Ríos, *Estudios*, 84, 119, 141, 362.
- 53 *Ibid.*, 183.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 153.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 139.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 202.
- 57 See Amador de los Ríos, *Historia*, 4.
- 58 José Amador de los Ríos, *Discurso pronunciado por D. José Amador de los Ríos en su solemne recepción de Académico de número de la Real Academia de la Historia sobre la influencia de los árabes en las artes y literatura españolas* (Madrid, 1848), RAH, box 11.8132.
- 59 *Ibid.*
- 60 Interestingly enough, like Amador de los Ríos, Américo Castro, the Spanish scholar who would become most central to efforts to illustrate the importance of Spain’s multicultural past in twentieth-century Spain, was neither a Hebraist nor an Arabist.
- 61 Amador de los Ríos would occupy this position for the rest of his life, with just a few short interruptions. *Expediente académico de Amador de los Ríos: Hoja de servicios*, AGA, file 65–66, box 15.248.
- 62 Session of June 28, 1848. Amador de los Ríos, *Historia*, 4–5, n. 3.
- 63 See Boyd, *Historia Patria*, 3–40, and Mariano Peset Reig and José Luis Peset Reig, *La universidad española (siglos XVIII y XIX): Despotismo ilustrado y revolución liberal*, (Madrid, 1974).
- 64 The establishment of institutions of secondary education and the promotion of fine-arts schools and academies figured among Amador de los Ríos’s main responsibilities in this capacity. Valverde y Perales, *Historia de la Villa de Baena*, 423.
- 65 On the Moyano law, see Boyd, *Historia Patria*, 3–40.
- 66 Valverde y Perales, *Historia de la Villa de Baena*, 423.
- 67 Hebrew, along with Arabic language instruction, was accorded nine weekly hours in the new curriculum. See Rivière Gómez, *Orientalismo*, 15.
- 68 See Rivière Gómez, *Orientalismo*, and Friedman, “Recovering Jewish Spain.”
- 69 Rivière Gómez, *Orientalismo*, 47–48.
- 70 Valverde y Perales, *Historia de la Villa de Baena*, 424. On María García Blanco, see Pascual Pascual Recuero, “Un ilustre Uransoense: El Dr. García Blanco,” *Miscelánea de estudios árabes y hebraicos* 21, no. 2 (1972): 87–122, and Enrique Martínez Ruiz, “La actuación del hebraista

[123]

Jewish History
as “*Historia*
Patria”



Michal
Friedman

- García Blanco en las Cortes Constituyentes de 1837,” *Miscelánea de estudios árabes y hebraicos* 20, no. 2 (1971): 89–117.
- 71 Cesar Aronsfeld, *The Ghosts of 1492: Jewish Aspects of the Struggle for Religious Freedom in Spain, 1848–1976* (New York, 1979), 4–6.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 See Carsten Schapkow, “The Debate on Sephardic Jewry in German-Jewish Literature in the 19th Century,” in *Les sépharades en la littérature: Un parcours millénaire*, ed. Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue (Paris, 2004), 11–15.
- 74 Schorsch, *From Text to Context*, 71–92.
- 75 Aronsfeld, *Ghosts of 1492*, 4–6.
- 76 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,” *Revista española de ambos mundos* 3 (1855): 189–212.
- 77 Ibid., 194.
- 78 Ibid., 210, 212.
- 79 Ibid., 194–95.
- 80 This idea, inspired by accounts of sixteenth-century Iberian Jewish chroniclers such as Ibn Verga, was later explored by contemporary Jewish historians, notably Salo Baron, and further elaborated by Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, as the “royal alliance.” See, for example, Yerushalmi, *The Lisbon Massacre of 1506 and the Royal Image in the Shebet Yehudah* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1976).
- 81 Amador de los Ríos, “Consideraciones histórico-políticas,” 205. Amador de los Ríos also reproached Philippson for not listing among what he deemed “contributions of the Jews to Spain and Spanish culture” the many Jewish converts who contributed to the science of Christianity (190–92).
- 82 Ibid., 211.
- 83 Ibid., 190. This tension would resurface in Amador de los Ríos’s dealings with other Jewish historians who were to engage with his work. See Amador de los Ríos, *Historia*, 258, 728, 759.
- 84 See also Álvarez Chillida, *El Antisemitismo en España*, 120–22, and Aronsfeld, *Ghosts of 1492*, 6.
- 85 Richard Herr explains that the article may in part be understood as a diplomatic move to curry favor with British public opinion, as the British Foreign Bible Society had been proselytizing for Protestantism in Spain since the 1830s, and this legalized their situation. Herr, *An Historical Essay on Modern Spain* (Berkeley, Calif., 1971).
- 86 Álvarez Chillida, *El Antisemitismo en España*, 122–31; Rohr, *Spanish Right*, 19–25; Martín-Márquez, *Disorientations*, 110–11, 132–34, 137–38; Pura Fernández, “La literatura del siglo XIX y los orígenes del contubernio Judeo-Masónico Comunista,” in *Judíos en la literatura española: IX Curso Cultural Hispanojudía de Castilla-La Mancha*, ed. Iacob M. Hassán and Ricardo Izquierdo Benito (Cuenca, 2001), 301–51.

- 87 Martin-Márquez, *Disorientations*; Sebastián Balfour, *Deadly Embrace: Morocco and the Road to the Spanish Civil War* (Oxford, 2002).
- 88 Martin-Márquez, *Disorientations*, and Rivière Gómez, *Orientalismo*.
- 89 José Amador de los Ríos, *Victorias de Africa: Oda de D. José Amador de los Ríos, y canto en octavas, con motivo de la toma de Tetuan por D. Juan de Dios de la Rada y Delgado; Composiciones leídas á SS. MM. en presencia de SS. AA. los sermos. infantes Duques de Montpensier* (Madrid, 1860).
- 90 *Ibid.*, 3–4.
- 91 *Ibid.*, 10. The term “pueblo” here refers to the idea of “the people” as an imagined collectivity that evokes a primordial connection to Spain that precedes the Spanish nation-state. For further discussion of the multiple meanings of the term, see Paul Eiss, *In the Name of the Pueblo: Place, Community, and the Politics of History in Yucatán* (Durham, N.C., 2010), 1–13.
- 92 *Ibid.*
- 93 See Herr, *Modern Spain*, 104.
- 94 Demetrio Castro, “The Left: From Liberalism to Democracy,” in Álvarez Junco and Shubert, *Spanish History since 1808*, 86–90.
- 95 For discussion of these petitions, see Aronsfeld, *Ghosts of 1492*, 8–10.
- 96 Don Antonio Piralá, *Historia Contemporanea: Anales desde 1843 hasta el fallecimiento de Don Alfonso XII* (Madrid, 1895), vol. 1; Herr, *Modern Spain*, 53.
- 97 Aronsfeld, *Ghosts of 1492*, 12.
- 98 *Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes Constituyentes*, sesión de lunes 12 de Abril de 1869, N 47: 976–77. See also Álvarez Chillida, *El Antisemitismo en España*, 133–34; Álvarez Junco, *Mater Dolorosa*, 433–36; Aronsfeld, *Ghosts of 1492*, 12.
- 99 *Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes Constituyentes*, sesión de lunes 12 de Abril de 1869, N 47: 978–79.
- 100 Amador de los Ríos, *Historia*; on this period, see *Expediente académico de Amador de los Ríos: Hoja de servicios*, AGA, file 65–66, box 15.248.
- 101 Amador de los Ríos, *Historia*, 4.
- 102 Amador de los Ríos, *Historia*, 7–8.
- 103 *Ibid.*, 4.
- 104 Further tragedy struck Amador de los Ríos in the very same month and year, when his oldest son, Gonzalo, was killed while working as a physician attending patients in a military hospital in Havana, Cuba.
- 105 Amador de los Ríos, *Historia*, 485–86.
- 106 *Ibid.*, 852.
- 107 *Ibid.*, 852–53.
- 108 *Ibid.* It is perhaps no coincidence that around this time Benito Pérez Galdós, Spain’s most celebrated nineteenth-century novelist, wrote his novel *Gloria*, addressing, like Amador de los Ríos’s *Historia*, the question of libertad de cultos and Spain’s Jewish past. Benito Pérez Galdós, *Gloria* (Madrid, 1877; repr., 1984).
- 109 Amador de los Ríos, *Historia*, 258.

[125]

Jewish History
as “*Historia*
Patria”

●
Michal
Friedman

[126]

*Jewish
Social
Studies*

●

Vol. 18
No. 1

- 110 Meyer Kayserling, *Die Juden in Navarra, den Baskenlaendern und auf den Balearen* (Berlin, 1861); idem, *Sephardim: Romanische poesien der Juden in Spanien; Ein beitrage zur literatur und geschichte der spanisch-portugiesischen Juden* (Leipzig, 1859); Heinrich Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden von der ältesten Zeit bis auf die Gegenwart, in dreizehn Bänden* (Leipzig, 1853).
- 111 Amador de los Ríos, *Historia*, 64.
- 112 *Ibid.*, 759.
- 113 Kayserling, *Die Juden in Navarra*, and idem, *Sephardim*.
- 114 Amador de los Ríos, *Historia*, 258, n. 1.
- 115 Amador de los Ríos, *Historia*, 728, n. 1. See also *ibid.*, 656, n. 2, for Amador de los Ríos's response to Kayserling's challenge to his discussion of the influence of the events of 1391 on the future of the Jews of Navarre.
- 116 *Ibid.*, 761.
- 117 *Ibid.*, 758.
- 118 *Ibid.*, 754–55.
- 119 *Ibid.*, 772.
- 120 *Expediente Académico de Amador de los Ríos, Hoja de servicios*, AGA, file 65–66, box 15.248. Perales also writes of the intervention of Valera on behalf of Amador de los Ríos in *Historia de la Villa de Baena*, 429.
- 121 Amador de los Ríos, *Historia*, 6. *Historia* was first presented to the Spanish public in 1870.
- 122 Manuel Colmeiro, review of *Historia social, política y religiosa de los judíos de España*, by José Amador de los Ríos, *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 1 (1877): 59–67.
- 123 “Necrologías: Don José Amador de los Ríos,” *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 2 (1878): 107–8. Among the signers were the minister of development, the general director of public instruction, the president of the Royal Council of Public Instruction, the rector of the University of Madrid, as well as the directors of the Royal Academies of History and Fine Art of San Fernando.
- 124 “Necrologías,” 109.
- 125 See Manzano Moreno and Pérez Garzón, “A Difficult Nation?”
- 126 See Isidro González, *El retorno de los judíos* (Madrid, 1991); José Antonio Lisbona, *Retorno a Sefarad: La política de España hacia sus judíos en el siglo XX* (Barcelona, 1993); Rohr, *Spanish Right*, 10–37; and Michal Friedman, “Reconquering ‘Sepharad’: Hispanism and Proto-Fascism in Giménez Caballero’s Sephardist Crusade,” *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 12, no. 1 (2011): 35–60.