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RECONQUERING “SEPHARAD”: HISPANISM AND PROTO-FASCISM IN GIMÉNEZ CABALLERO’S SEPHARDIST CRUSADE

On September 1, 1929, Ernesto Giménez Caballero, a pioneer of Fascism in Spain and founder and editor of *La Gaceta Literaria*,¹ Spain’s leading vanguard literary and cultural journal, embarked on what the *Gaceta* referred to as a “largo y singular viaje de trascendencia nacional y literaria” [a long and singular voyage of national and literary transcendence] (Piqueras *Gaceta Literaria* 1/423).² At the insistence of nationally acclaimed scholars of Sephardic history and culture, the Spanish Ministry of State sponsored Giménez Caballero on his trip, designed to assess the situation of the Sephardic communities of Europe and Asia Minor, the possibilities for Spanish commercial and cultural expansion in the region, and the success of Spain’s prior philosephardic campaigns.

Taking this voyage as a point of departure, this article examines Ernesto Giménez Caballero’s interest in the Sephardim through a close study of the *Gaceta Literaria*, government reports documenting his voyages to the Sephardic world, and documentary film. Until recently, Giménez Caballero’s importance in Spanish intellectual history has been trivialized by his caricaturization as a sensationalist ideologue. As Enrique Selva has recently argued, perhaps more than any other Spanish intellectual of his time, Giménez Caballero fully immersed himself in the divergent intellectual tides of the interwar period, by placing himself “en el centro del huracán” [in the eye of the hurricane] (Selva *Giménez Caballero* 15). Moreover, it was precisely this posturing—which some scholars have dismissed as extravagant and histrionic—that allowed Giménez Caballero to play a seminal role in articulating and assimilating Fascist doctrine in the Spanish context, even to the point of becoming, in Selva’s words, “la mayor incarnación de la vía a través de la cual se formula la ideología fascista y se comienza a difundir en nuestro país” [the greatest incarnation of the particular path through which Fascist ideology was formulated and began to be disseminated in Spain] (15–6). As Douglas Foard argues, Giménez Caballero’s trajectory was not anomalous or eccentric, but rather representative of the volatile political and intellectual climate throughout Western Europe in the interwar period.

Most recently, other works that discuss Giménez Caballero have focused on his interest in the Sephardim. Certain authors have concluded that his “philosephardism” must be understood as “instrumentalist” and subordinate to his nationalistic and imperialistic designs and characterize him as “un fascista filosefardí que deviene antisemita” [a Fascist philosephardist who turned antisemitic] (Rohr 30; Álvarez Chillida 273). Others have discussed the importance of the imagery of “Sepharad” in the elaboration of *Hispanidad* and in the vanguard origins of Spanish Fascism (Rehrmann 51–74; Shammah Gesser “La imagen” 67–88). Shammah Gesser

demonstrates the tensions and complexities of Giménez Caballero's interest in the Sephardim, and how it cannot be easily located within the perceived dichotomies of antisemitism and philosephardism, or that of the "maniqueísmo simplista de las 'dos Españas'" [the simplistic Manichaeism of the "two Spains"] (67–8).

In a similar vein, my consideration of Giménez Caballero sets him outside the binary opposition between Spanish philosephardism and antisemitism. Instead, I identify his dedication to what he would come to refer to as "the Sephardic cause" as "Sephardism";³ I view "Sephardism" and *Hispanismo* or *Hispanidad* as parallel concepts within Giménez Caballero's designs for Spain's redemption from a state of perceived decay. Indeed, this article argues that "Sepharad" played a central role in the efforts made by Spain's political and intellectual vanguard—and Giménez Caballero in particular—to elaborate a vision of a New Spain and Hispanic identity in the wake of the loss of Empire in 1898 and shortly before the outbreak of Spain's civil war in 1936. Such efforts, and the elaboration of *Hispanidad* in this context, are connected to the reemergence of an imperial agenda in Spain and the rise of "scientific racism" and Orientalist discourse (Rohr's essay in this issue; Martín-Márquez 49–50). Thus, an exploration of Giménez Caballero's intellectual and political evolution exposes the connections, as well as the tensions, between Spanish Sephardism and Spanish Fascism.

On a broader level, I hope to illustrate how Giménez Caballero's work illuminates longstanding deliberations over the place of the Jews in a Spanish *Patria*. Such anxieties became a critical part of debates about the construction of a Spanish nation over the course of the nineteenth century (see Friedman "Recovering Jewish Spain"; Bush's essay in this issue). Finally, this article explores how Giménez Caballero's ambivalence may also be understood in relationship to the convoluted political leanings and complex attitudes of many European intellectuals toward the Jews in the interwar period. Here I will suggest that we may consider these debates over "Jewish Spain" and the place of the Sephardim in a Spanish *Patria* as an interesting variant of the so-called Jewish-Question, albeit in a country with a negligible Jewish population.

The *Gaceta Literaria*: a forum for the "Sephardism" of Spain's vanguard

Born into a *petit bourgeois* family in Madrid on August 2, 1899, Ernesto Giménez Caballero was immersed in the atmosphere of pessimism about the "Disaster" of 1898. His intellectual formation took place in the context of the political and cultural movements that emerged from the Disaster and the collapse of liberalism, and particularly Regenerationism. Regenerationism sought to explain Spain's defeat while advocating a formula of "national renewal." While all Regenerationist discourse called for change and progress, ideas about how to achieve such change assumed disparate forms corresponding to the politics of their authors. These views ranged from arguments for Spain's modernization and Europeanization to the belief that Spain must return to its traditional values (Boyd 41–64; Rohr 10–37). One factor these divergent approaches generally shared, however, was a biological determinism shaped

by the rise of scientific racism. This factor would come to play a prominent role in the elaboration of Pan-Hispanic identity, or *Hispanidad*, and in Spanish neo-imperialist discourse (see Goode 76–97; Rohr's essay in this issue).

Much of Giménez Caballero's exposure to these ideas took place in the highly politicized climate of the University of Madrid (Complutense), a nucleus of the Generation of 1898 and that of 1914. Giménez Caballero enrolled there in 1916, graduating with a degree in philology and then completing an additional year of graduate study in philosophy. In hindsight, Giménez Caballero described himself as a liberal and a socialist during this period, his ability to embrace both ideologies foreshadowing his future political ambivalence.⁴ Nonetheless, more so than his supposed political affiliations at the time, his mentors at the university, among them philosopher José Ortega y Gasset and literary historians and philologists Américo Castro and Ramón Menéndez y Pidal, appear to have profoundly informed Giménez Caballero's subsequent political and intellectual formation.

The orientation of these intellectuals represented varied responses to the Disaster and attempts at regeneration, all of which Giménez Caballero would incorporate into his particular brand of Spanish nationalism. Ortega y Gasset's call for the Europeanization and even Aryanization of Spain as a remedy to her ills proved a topic that Giménez Caballero would struggle with and attempt to reconcile with his eventual rejection of internationalism. Américo Castro, who was at the center of Republican leftist politics and with whom Giménez Caballero became very close, inspired his interest in the importance of Spain's Muslim and Jewish past in the construction of a New Spain and Spanish identity.⁵ The philologist Ramón Menéndez Pidal's patriotic attempts to define the "essence of the nation" and peninsular cultural and political unity, as witnessed in the mission of the *Centro de Estudios Históricos* (Boyd; Varela) and through the documentation of the historicity of Castilian epic poetry, including the Sephardic *romancero*, informed the linguistic and cultural aspects and reach of Giménez Caballero's version of *Hispanidad*. Perhaps most significantly, it was the tension and interplay between the recuperation of Spain's past, present-day concerns, and the projection of the nation's future—or as conceptualized by Shammah Gesser, "between essentialism and modernity" ("La imagen" 68)—in the work of his mentors that affected Giménez Caballero most decisively.⁶

Upon his graduation in 1920, Giménez Caballero accepted a teaching position at the University of Strasbourg, only to abruptly return to Spain in 1921 when conscripted for service in Morocco. It was his tour of duty there, which came on the heels of a devastating Spanish military defeat,⁷ that marked Giménez Caballero's emergence onto the *madrialeño* literary scene with his publication of *Notas marruecas de un soldado* (1923). In it, Giménez Caballero contends that a New Spain would rise from the ashes to regain its imperial glory, a hope that is at the center of his reinvention of Spanish nationalism. It was also during his time in Morocco that Giménez Caballero demonstrated an incipient interest in the Sephardim. The Sephardic Jews he encountered there captured his imagination and he generally wrote about them with patronizing admiration (*Notas Marruecas* 179–80; Rohr's essay in this issue). He also managed to record *romanceros* preserved by Moroccan Sephardim, which he sent back to Madrid to his mentors, Américo Castro and Menéndez Pidal (Foard 37; *Notas marruecas* 131–45). Soon enough, this interest in the

Sephardim and Spain's Jewish legacy assumed a focal position in the heightened nationalism and imperialism Giménez Caballero first presented in *Notas marruecas*.

The publication of *Notas marruecas* also landed him in jail as it was highly critical of the war and the monarchy. While Giménez Caballero faced the prospect of serving an 18-year prison sentence, the charges against him were dropped in the wake of General Miguel Primo de Rivera's 1923 military *pronunciamiento*. He hastily returned to his post in Strasbourg. It was during this second period abroad that Giménez Caballero began to develop an opposition to the idea, defended by his former mentor Ortega y Gasset, that the remedy to Spain's woes would come from the "Europeanization" of the country. It is perhaps no coincidence that this rejection coincided with Giménez Caballero's marriage to Italian native and Fascist sympathizer Edith Sironi Negri in 1924, a union that, alongside other developments, may have influenced his gravitation toward a new and decisive object of inspiration: Fascist Italy (Foard; Selva *Giménez Caballero* 38–60).

In 1924, Giménez Caballero returned to Spain where he elaborated a quasi-folklorist Spanish nationalism which wrestled with his elder contemporaries' pessimistic indictment of Spain's backwardness.⁸ He soon became swept up by the advent of European vanguardism in Spain, as he joined the ranks of young Spanish intellectuals committed to the new politics and aesthetics of the movement.⁹ It was in this context that he joined forces with prominent literary critic Guillermo de Torre in 1927 to create the *Gaceta Literaria*. Thought of as the principal organ of Spanish literary vanguardism, the *Gaceta* received contributions from Spain's leading writers and poets, sponsored book exhibitions, awarded literary prizes, and published books. It quickly reached a broad audience and gained international recognition (Selva *Giménez Caballero* 70–100; Foard; Tandy). Despite Giménez Caballero's affinities with the literary vanguard, however, Spanish national identity remained his central concern, notwithstanding the prevailing internationalism of the movement.

Thus, Giménez Caballero co-opted the international breadth of the movement for nationalistic purposes. Using the journal as his medium, Giménez Caballero in turn hoped to restore Spanish influence in the international arena and expand the influence of the Spanish *Patria* beyond its national borders. At home, Caballero promoted Catalan revivalism and the resurrection of Catalan influence throughout the Mediterranean, as a means of creating a pan-Hispanic empire. He fostered Portuguese–Spanish relations as part of a vision of a reunited Iberian Peninsula and worked toward renewing Spain's influence in its former colonies in the Americas. Moreover, during the late 1920s, Caballero, along with some of Spain's leading intellectuals, made frequent trips to Europe and the Americas, promoting Spanish literature and culture to academics, politicians, and the wider public.

During one such trip, Giménez Caballero and Américo Castro lectured at a conference on Spanish culture held at the University of Berlin in the winter of 1927–1928. In this context, the *Gaceta Literaria* identified Giménez Caballero as "el embajador intelectual" [intellectual ambassador] for Spain and Américo Castro as "nuestro embajador literario y maestro de la joven España" [our literary ambassador and *maestro* of the New Spain] (GL 1928, 1/237).¹⁰ Indeed, by the summer of 1928, Giménez Caballero celebrated the journal's dissemination throughout Europe, a success, he boasted, that had been the "aspiración o ideal casi inaccesible de otras generaciones y revistas . . . Y lo ha conseguido sin humillaciones serviles . . . y sin

entonar el ‘mea culpa’ de las generaciones anteriores” [the virtually inaccessible aspiration and ideal of previous generations and journals . . . and one that it has achieved without servile humiliations . . . without intoning the “mea culpa” of previous generations] (Cesareo Fernández GL 1–2/231–2). Through such means, Giménez Caballero began to advocate for a neo-imperialist agenda for Spain and elaborate a discourse of *Hispanidad* aimed at the reincorporation of all Hispanic peoples under Spanish leadership.

Giménez Caballero later claimed that he had in fact designed the *Gaceta Literaria* as an inclusive, pluralistic, and non-sectarian endeavor, one meant to gain knowledge of all of Spain and its “extensions” such as America and the Sephardic world (Selva “Autor/tema” 21–8).¹¹ While this assertion is obscured by Giménez Caballero’s subsequent political evolution toward Fascism, the appeal of the new cultural imperialism and attempts at regeneration he presented in this seemingly apolitical—or politically agnostic—forum indeed guaranteed the endorsement of influential collaborators from across the political spectrum. The *Gaceta*, at least in its incipient stages, was unique to Spain in this period; it served as a crossroads and laboratory where many political views were presented and whose contributors seemed to share a collaborative spirit and vision in the common interest of national regeneration and renewal.

Giménez Caballero looked toward the Sephardic world with similar aspirations. With the support of his influential collaborators, he placed Sephardism on center stage within the *Gaceta*.¹² Reports about cultural events in the Sephardic world, reviews of books by Sephardic authors, and historical accounts about prominent Jewish figures in medieval Spain and their contribution to Spanish culture were featured, as well as essays advocating for a Spanish rapprochement with the Sephardic world, based on the presumably shared history and lineage of the two peoples. While the Sephardism conjured in the *Gaceta* as part and parcel of an encompassing *Hispanidad* assumed particular characteristics, it also built upon earlier Spanish philosephardic campaigns (see Rohr’s essay in this issue).

In fact, formal attempts to recover Spain’s Jewish past extend back to the mid-nineteenth century and formed part of far-ranging debates over the nature, history, and future of the Spanish *Patria*. These early attempts involved the writing of professional academic histories, archeological excavations of Jewish sites, and the recovery of Hebrew manuscripts, and had a place in parliamentary debates over the struggle for a liberal constitutional polity (Friedman; Bush’s essay in this issue). By the early twentieth century, such efforts also took the form of philosephardic campaigns aimed at extending Spain’s reach within the Sephardic world, campaigns accompanied by a romantic literary and scholarly *sefardismo* particular to some of Madrid’s cultural elites (Rohr’s essay in this issue).¹³ Viewing himself as the successor to Ángel Pulido Fernández, who had brought national attention to the Sephardim through his well-documented campaigns, Giménez Caballero thus built upon his legacy by incorporating “Sepharad” into his elaboration of a neo-imperialistic variety of *Hispanidad*.

If contributors to the *Gaceta*, such as Giménez Caballero, linked their Sephardism to designs for regeneration and Pan-*Hispanismo*, the Orientalism characteristic of many Spanish Arabists of this period neatly overlapped with the interest in the Sephardism expressed in the *Gaceta*.¹⁴ For example, in 1929, a frequent contributor to the journal

and scholar of medieval Al-Andalus, writing under the pseudonym Gil Ben-Umeya (a clear allusion to Andalusian nobility), published an essay titled “*Hacia un panorama sefardi*” [Toward a Sephardic Panorama] (5/439).¹⁵ Presenting an essentialist and romanticized view of the historical connections between Spain and the Jewish people, he wrote that:

Es que el judío se fundió con el español porque el español adoptó la mentalidad judía, y el judío adquirió en España lo que le faltaba: aristocracia. Gesto. Pompa. Aun hoy el hebreo-español se distingue de los otros hebreos. . . Es un hebreo vertical. No es un hebreo diagonal, un hebreo de Ghetto. . . Israel ha hecho a España, España ha mejorado a Israel.

[The Jews melded with the Spaniard because the Spaniard adopted the Jewish mentality, and the Jew acquired in Spain what he lacked: aristocracy. Ostentation. Pomp. Even today, the Sephardic Jew is distinguished from other Jews . . . he is a vertical Jew, not a diagonal Jew, a Jew of the Ghetto . . . Israel made Spain and Spain improved Israel.] (5/439)

Such theories of racial fusion, already promoted by Pulido (Rohr, this issue), reflected the racial aspects of regenerationism and the Orientalist attitude of its author. The mystification of Sephardic Jews and the comparison drawn between them and Ashkenazi Jews, however, also serves as an indication of its deeper roots, as these ideas echo those elaborated by nineteenth-century German Jews in their crafting of modern Jewish historiography.¹⁶

In his resounding conclusion, Ben-Umeya presented the Sephardim as the critical solution to Spain’s affliction:

Tres millones de hombres, los más ricos del universo, hablan español. En sus manos está todo nuestro porvenir cultural . . . Es que el hebraísmo no es una religión ni una raza aparte. ES una variante regional del hispanismo. Es lo toledano. Como lo catalán. O lo vasco . . . Para España es cuestión de vida o muerte.

[Three million men, the richest in the universe, speak Spanish. In their hands lies our entire cultural future . . . Hebraism is not a separate religion or race. IT IS a regional variant of Hispanism. It is the Toledan, just like the Catalan, or the Basque . . . For Spain, this is a question of life or death.] (5/439; capital letters in original quote).

While Ben Umeya’s allusion to the economic benefits of engaging with the Sephardim may be understood as a tactic to garner support among the *Gaceta*’s readers, calling upon Spaniards to consider the Sephardim as Hispanic and of the same race also amounted to calling for their reincorporation into a Spanish *Patria*. The conflation of idealistic zeal and material considerations presented by Ben-Umeya would soon come to mark Giménez Caballero’s own writing and thinking about what he referred to as the “Sephardic problem.”

In the same issue, another contributor, Boris Chivatcheff, called for direct action from Spain in this regard, noting that other nations—alluding primarily to France and

to the work of the *Alliance Israelite Universelle*—had already gained a foothold among Balkan Sephardim.¹⁷ He implored:

¿Y qué hace España? ¿Cuál es su influencia cultural en el cercano Oriente?... Es casi igual a cero. Pero este hecho no debe desanimar a nadie. Le falta un sistema de propaganda . . . España se encuentra en una situación privilegiada que hasta ahora no ha sabido aprovechar. En las grandes ciudades de la península balcánica y en los puertos de Asia menor viven numerosos judíos. Son judíos españoles que han sido expulsados de España en el tiempo de los Reyes Católicos.

[And what does Spain do? What is her cultural influence in the region?... It almost amounts to zero. But this fact should not discourage anyone. What's needed is a system of propaganda . . . but Spain has a privileged situation that until this moment it has not exploited . . . In the great cities of the Balkan peninsula in the ports of Asia Minor live numerous Jews. These are Spanish Jews who were expelled from Spain in the time of the Catholic Kings.] (3/437)

Presenting the Sephardim as the bearers and transmitters of Spain's cultural legacy, a role that carried the potential to regenerate Spain, he wrote:

Estos judíos . . . han guardado el dulce idioma de Cervantes, como un triste recuerdo de su último destierro . . . Y este hecho, por sí solo, basta para demostrar, a pesar de ciertos errores, la fuerza cultural de la raza hispánica . . . Sin embargo, la España de hoy, rejuvenecida y fuerte, tiene un deber: reconquistar de nuevo a estos judíos que la España de los Reyes Católicos había expulsado.

[These Jews . . . have guarded the sweet language of Cervantes, as a melancholic memory of their last exile . . . and this fact alone is enough to demonstrate, despite certain errors, the cultural vitality of the Hispanic race . . . Nonetheless, today's Spain, rejuvenated and strong, has a duty: To reconquer anew these Jews that Spain of the Catholic monarchs had expelled.] (3/437)

Mention of a modern "reconquista" indicates that for the author the Sephardim had a role to play in a united Christian Spain despite the tensions the history behind this idea presented. After all, the actions taken by the Catholic Kings immediately following the closure of the so-called reconquest of Spain from the Muslims, namely, the forced conversion or expulsion of Spanish Jewry in 1492, were meant to complete their vision of a united Catholic Spain. Endowing the Sephardim with a Spanish *mission civilisatrice*, Chivatcheff outlined a Sephardist cultural program for Spain:

Sin duda, los sefarditas son un elemento útil. Hay que formar círculos, alianzas, más tarde librerías. Hasta fundar colegios. Sin embargo, debemos empezar desde muy lejos. Con artículos (en las revistas búlgaras, serbias, griegas . . .) sobre la literatura y el arte español. Luego dando conferencias y organizando excursiones hasta España.

[Without a doubt the Sephardim are a useful element. We must form circles, alliances and eventually libraries . . . even found schools. Nonetheless, we have to begin from afar. With articles (in the Bulgarian, Serbian, Greek periodicals . . .) about Spanish literature and art. Then we can begin delivering lectures and organizing excursions to Spain.] (3/437)

He made clear that these designs formed an intrinsic part of the Pan-*Hispanismo* of the *Gaceta*, by noting that in order for Spain to launch this program: “se precisan hombres amantes de la cultura hispánica. Se precisan hispanistas. Y si no hay tales personas, debemos formarlas.” [We need men who are devoted to Hispanic culture. We need Hispanists. If these people do not exist, we must form them] (3/437). In his elaboration of a Pan-Hispanic cultural sphere that, he maintained, extended “desde las orillas del mar Negro hasta las islas Filipinas” [from the shores of the Black Sea to the islands of the Philippines], it was the Sephardim themselves who were to become Spain’s cultural emissaries, as he advocated that the universities and academies of the largest Spanish cities open their doors to the Balkan youth and that the Spanish government grant “plazas gratuitas de estudio a los jóvenes . . . pobres y estudiosos que anhelan conocer la magna cultura de España” [scholarships to the poor and studious youth . . . who long to learn about the great culture of Spain] (3/437). For it was they, he argued, who would subsequently become “sus mejores defensores” [its best defenders] (3/437).

In 1929, on the eve of his departure to the Balkans, Giménez Caballero explained the objective of the trip in similar terms: to explore the possibilities of Spanish cultural expansion among “nuestros antiguos compatriotas que tras cuatro siglos de apartamiento casi absoluto mantienen heroicamente nuestro idioma” [our former compatriots, who after four centuries of almost complete separation, heroically maintain our language] (Piqueras GL 1/423). He praised the work of his mentors, Américo Castro and Ramón Menéndez Pidal, but while he lauded the precedent of the philosephardic campaigns of such figures as Ángel Pulido, he clearly distinguished himself from his predecessors. He emphasized that his labor was not romantic and diffuse and that he was not setting off as “un fantaseador irresponsable” [an irresponsible dreamer] or a messianist “como estuvo a punto de parecerlo Pulido” [which Pulido seemed to be on the verge of becoming] (1/423). Instead, Giménez Caballero turned to the Spanish past, claiming to be assuming the function of “los antiguos misioneros, jefes y hasta virreyes de la España de oro” [the missionaries of old, rulers, and even the Viceroy of Golden Age Spain] and projecting that “estas aventuras deben llevar un sello de sangre espiritual elegida” [these adventures might carry the seal of a chosen spiritual blood lineage] (1/423).

While such statements might be dismissed as rhetorical excess, they may actually provide the best guide to Giménez Caballero’s ideas.¹⁸ Indeed, his travel writings reveal that he assumed this legacy in earnest, since he viewed himself as playing a direct role in changing and shaping the course of Spanish history. Indicating that his mission indeed bore personal as well as national significance, he wrote in the *Gaceta* that “[l]o que me preocupa no es mi labor que pudiéramos llamar nacional, colectiva, oficial. Sino la personal, la literaria, la intelectual” [What concerns me is not the part of my task that we might call national, collective, official. But rather its personal, literary and intellectual dimensions]. He added that: “[i]ntelectualmente, me siento

intimidado y estremecido . . . Siento una responsabilidad frente a mí mismo, enorme" [Intellectually, I feel intimidated and awed . . . I feel an enormous responsibility before myself] (1/423). Moreover, in declaring in this context that "[e]l problema judío es un problema ignorado por la España de hace centenas de años" [the Jewish problem is a problem that has been ignored by Spain for hundreds of years] (1/423), Giménez Caballero suggested not only that Spain had a "Jewish problem" but also that ignoring it for centuries had proved damaging to Spain's national interests.

Giménez Caballero's use of the term "Jewish problem" must be understood in the particular Spanish context that, unlike the case of Germany or much of the rest of Europe, involved the "absence" of actual Jews, and specifically Sephardic Jews, from the national territory. However, this understanding also implied a "presence" of Jews in the Spanish national imaginary, one that remained current ever since their expulsion in 1492 and informed and problematized attempts to construct an "official" national historical narrative and reinvent a national identity that might restore Spain's glory (see Friedman; Bush's essay in this issue). Moreover, questions of Jewish "absence" and "presence" in Spain would present an unusual conflation of early modern debates over the ability of Jews to assimilate upon their conversion to Christianity, Enlightenment debates over Jewish emancipation and re-admittance to European territory, and the more nefarious modern debates over the inassimilable racial character of the Jews.¹⁹ Only a close reading of the cultural texts Giménez Caballero produced, however, reflecting his engagement with the Sephardic world and the Jewish past, allows for a deeper sense of the coherency of his perception of Spain's "Jewish problem," as well as his ambivalent stance toward it.

Documenting Spain's "Sephardic problem": Giménez Caballero's voyages to "Sepharad"

Giménez Caballero's mission took him to Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Salonica, Turkey, and Paris. In all these places, he visited Jewish schools, residential quarters, synagogues, and cemeteries, and interviewed Sephardim from community leaders and members of the cosmopolitan commercial class, to common folk. In addition to travel accounts that he published in the *Gaceta* about his 1929 trip, Giménez Caballero described later trips of a similar nature within the report that he wrote for the *Junta de Relaciones Culturales* of the Spanish Ministry of State titled *Nuevas informaciones sobre los sefardíes del próximo oriente* (1931). Moreover, having become quite prominent in the field of film (organizing Spain's first cinema club and collaborating with figures such as Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí), Giménez Caballero produced a film, *Judíos de la Patria Española* (1929), based on his travels and his involvement back in Spain in the "Sephardic cause."²⁰

Reporting in the *Gaceta* on his trip and his impressions of the Jews he encountered, Giménez Caballero declared that "[n]osotros—para la parte más selecta de la raza, la sefardí—tenemos una media solución . . . tan útil para ellos como para nosotros" [We—for the most select part of the race, the Sephardim—we have a partial solution . . . one that is as useful for them as it is for us] ("Libros" 1/465), but announced that he would discuss this solution in "another forum." This forum was

Nuevas informaciones. The report details Giménez Caballero's observations of the social and political situation of the Sephardic communities he visited, and Spain's efforts on behalf of "la causa sefardí" [the Sephardic cause] including his own "propaganda hispánica" [Hispanic propaganda] in the region (*Nuevas informaciones* 2). It also describes his designs for a resurgence of Spanish cultural expansion in the Balkans, including promoting tourism to Spain, launching Spanish book fairs, improving Spanish instruction for Sephardim of all ages, and "Hispanizing" the Sephardic press through Spanish government subsidies (55). He also advocated for granting Spanish nationality to Balkan Sephardim and for creating scholarships to train young Sephardim to become "agentes de propaganda española" [agents of Spanish propaganda] who would later serve in the role of honorary "Vice-Consuls" representing Spain throughout the Balkans (56, 59).

The presentation of his report as a "partial solution" for the "the most select part of the race" indicates Giménez Caballero's perception of the racial superiority of Sephardic Jews, a notion that reflected the reach of "scientific" notions of "race" in contemporary Pan-Hispanic discourse and which was recurrent among Jews and non-Jews alike (see Rohr's essay in this issue).²¹ That superiority seems to grant the Sephardim the potential for redemption from an undesirable state, a redemption that was not possible for the rest of the Jews. Nonetheless, his use of the term "partial" in this context seems to also suggest ambivalence about the possibility of redemption for even the Sephardim. Indeed, his use of "Sephardic problem" and "Jewish problem" and "Jews" and "Sephardim" interchangeably in the report serves to illustrate this ambivalence. Moreover, qualifying this solution as "useful" for the Sephardim and Spain alike highlights the extent to which Giménez Caballero viewed their destinies and paths to redemption as intimately intertwined. It was perhaps also meant to reassure a Spanish audience, as it implied profit in both economic and cultural terms for Spain, while for the Sephardim only their cultural redemption would appear to be guaranteed.

The report is imbued with the idealistic conviction and fervor of a missionary, while it also discloses the bureaucratic instrumentalism of a colonial official. Closer examination of the text, however, reveals how these distinct characteristics concurred with the contours of Giménez Caballero's late colonial designs and his understanding of his role as a propaganda agent. Giménez Caballero seems to have advocated for a Spanish *mission civilisatrice*, viewing the Sephardim as colonial subjects whom Spain had the duty to "disciplinarlos y emplearlos moralmente y materialmente" [discipline and employ morally and materially] in the interest of its imperialist expansion in the region (*Nuevas informaciones* 42). Giménez Caballero viewed himself as performing a similar role, one perhaps mirroring that which he had ascribed to the Sephardim. He assumed the posture of a relentless propaganda agent dutifully serving the material interests of the *Patria*, yet at the same time he embraced an expanded Pan-Hispanic *Patria* that transcended the material realm, entering the religious-spiritual terrain. For, he argued, "el problema sefardí significa para España el posible control, la posible reintegración de una provincia espiritual (y material) de más de un millón de almas" [the Sephardic problem signified for Spain the possible control, the possible reintegration of a spiritual (and material) province of more than a million souls] (89; underlining in original quote).

Examples of the reach and particularities of Giménez Caballero's colonial model and his re-evaluation of the role of the Sephardim and the imaginary of "Sepharad" in a rejuvenated Spain may be found throughout the text. In his presentation of his efforts to the Spanish government, he wards off any possible questioning of the legitimacy of his plans by insisting that his work be considered "propaganda española de primer plan" [first rate Spanish propaganda], going so far as to consider it "un deber patriótico" [a patriotic duty] (89). Giménez Caballero's exemplary "agent" of Spanish "culture" was Sephardic philologist Kalmi Baruch who is featured in the film he made during his trip. Giménez Caballero presented a passionate argument for designating Baruch as the principal "agente de propaganda" [propaganda agent] for Spain in the region as, according to him, Baruch "ES el único elemento valioso de que disponemos en el Próximo Oriente para una acción cultural eficiente" [IS the only valuable element at our disposal in the Near East for efficient cultural action] (*Nuevas informaciones* 74; original quote underlined and with capital letters as shown). In attesting to the many qualities that made Baruch the superior candidate for the position, Giménez Caballero enumerated his academic credentials yet also emphasized that "sobre todo dispone de una escrupulosidad moral digna de alentarla con todo entusiasmo" [above all he possessed a moral scrupulousness worthy of encouraging with complete enthusiasm], lauding his admirable consistency and clarity in the cause of his "servicio entusiasta de España" [enthusiastic service to Spain] (71–5). He even devised a program to cultivate Baruch for the position, a kind of preparatory course that entailed sending him to Spain to be educated in Spanish "culture" (75). Giménez Caballero clearly held Kalmi Baruch, whom he described as "mi buen amigo" [my close friend] (GL 1/423), in the highest regard, yet for him these qualities went hand in hand with viewing Baruch as a colonial subject to be employed in the material and moral interest of Spain.

The moralistic tone of the report is also evident in Giménez Caballero's observations of current Spanish policy in the region. He commented extensively and critically on the labor of Spanish teachers and other Spanish government emissaries in several of the larger cities in the region. Writing about Bucharest, Giménez Caballero displayed outrage at the neglect and even damage of the "Sephardic cause" that had been perpetrated by the members of the Spanish delegation and especially, the Spanish language professor assigned to the city, Sr Correa Calderón. Referring to the delegation's work of spreading "Hispanismo" among Sephardic and non-Jewish Romanians, he accused them of placing "los valores rumanos" [Romanian values] above "los valores sefardíes" [Sephardic values], which Giménez Caballero attributed to their submission to "la tradición antisemita y antisionista de Rumania [the tradition of Romanian antisemitism and anti-Zionism] (36). He believed that as a result, the relationship of the Spanish delegation with the Sephardim was compromised, as they generally maintained "un contacto superficial y formulario con los sefardíes. Cuando no a veces de hostilidad" [a superficial and formulaic contact, while at times outright hostile, with the Sephardim] (36).

In this moralistic indictment of Spanish Sephardist policy in the region, Giménez Caballero displayed his dual understanding of the role of Sephardism in serving the *Patria*. Clearly, for him the role of Spain's defenders transcended the material realm, as he informed his readers that the Sephardist cause represented "el primordial deber que ese puesto llevaba consigo" [the primordial duty that their positions entailed] (36). Moreover, in advising that Sr Correa, like the others, "deberá desentenderse de

todo prejuicio contrario a su labor de propaganda hispánica” [must dispense with all prejudice contrary to his labor of Spanish propaganda] (37), Giménez Caballero seems to have implied that not only would such displays of antisemitism jeopardize the entire enterprise and harm Spain’s interests but also that the “labor” of Spanish propaganda involved upholding a higher moral ground. Within this context, Giménez Caballero also transposed the labors of dutifully serving the *Patria* onto the Sephardim as he suggested (or one may say even threatened) that if Sr Correa could not comply with these conditions, “se podrían . . . conceder una beca a algún joven sefardí inteligente y trabajador que pudiera conseguir trabajar entre los suyos por España y gratuitamente para nosotros” [it would be possible to grant a scholarship to a young intelligent and laborious Sephardi to work among his brethren for Spain, in his stead and at no cost] (38–9). This admiring, yet clearly patronizing, characterization of the role of the Sephardi Jew who would work for free as a token of his loyalty to Spain suggests the colonial and Orientalist nature of Giménez Caballero’s Sephardism, one that resonated with earlier Spanish depictions of North African Jews (Rohr, this issue).

Other factors that clearly influenced Giménez Caballero’s approach in addressing the “Sephardic problem” proved to be the rise of Zionism and competing colonial entities that sought to exercise influence over the Sephardim. In fact his confrontation of these new political realities and attempts to reconcile them with his designs forced Giménez Caballero to re-evaluate and redefine the “Hispanic” identity of the Sephardim and their place in the “New Spain.” In effect, Giménez Caballero now presented Spain as a second Zion and Sephardism as a form of Zionism (28–9). This reconceptualization and political strategy is illustrated through one of his activities in his capacity as self-declared propaganda agent: delivering lectures to various Sephardic communities, as a way to help foster their relationship to Spain. In one such lecture, presented to the Sephardic community in Bucharest on “El Libro Español y los sefardíes,” he reiterated a thesis he had begun to elaborate during his previous visit to the Balkans.²² Correcting his successor Ángel Pulido, Giménez Caballero maintained that “nosotros no consideramos al sefardí ‘un español sin patria’, como erróneamente lo interpretó Púlido, sino como un ‘judío, de patria española’, cuyos padres, lo mismo que nuestros padres estaban enterrados en la misma ‘patria’” [we do not consider the Sephardi “a Spaniard without a patria”, as Pulido concluded erroneously, but “a ‘Jew’ of the Spanish patria” whose fathers, like our fathers are buried in the same “patria”]. As such, he insists, the Sephardim are “nuestros con-patriotas’ pero sin dejar de ser judíos. Al contrario, siendo ante todo, judíos” [our “compatriots” though without ceasing to be Jews. On the contrary, they are first and foremost Jews] (28). Giménez Caballero’s recognition of the essential Jewishness of the Sephardim, which, in part, was a concession to Zionists,²³ also reflected his ambivalence regarding the primary allegiance of Spain’s Jews.

Giménez Caballero’s political strategy also remained inconsistent. While declaring that “sefardismo” is a form of Zionism for the Sephardi, rather than a form of “españolismo,” and that “[n]osotros los españoles no debemos con el sefardismo ser anitisionistas. Sino complementar el sionismo” [We, as Spaniards should not be anti-Zionist through our Sephardism, but rather complement Zionism] (28–9), his conclusion appears to stand in tension with this statement. Giménez Caballero concluded that “si el Zionismo triunfa todos los esfuerzos del sefardismo habrán sido inútiles” [If Zionism triumphs, all of the efforts of *Sefardismo* would have

been futile]. While, "si no triunfa—como es lo más probable—todos los judíos se volverán reconocidos a la segunda Sion, España, que desinteresadamente ha auxiliado el ideal de Jerusalem" [if it did not triumph—as is most probable—all of the Jews would be recognized in the second Zion, Spain, which disinterestedly has assisted the ideal of Jerusalem"] (28–9). As Giménez Caballero made clear, his investment in the success of his Sephardist designs remained at odds with the success of Zionism. His conception of Spain as a second Zion, however, also implied a Christian redemptive motif in keeping with the cultural Catholicism he espoused. By embracing the Sephardim into the fold of the *Patria* as he suggests, Spain could redeem (or at least partially redeem) the Sephardim. At the same time, the Sephardim could stand as historical witnesses to the glories of Spain through their preservation of Spanish language and traditions, as well as their own historical contributions to Spanish culture. Thus, just as the Jews were meant to be witnesses to the truth of Christianity, a return of the Jews to the *Patria*, with their cultural and monetary wealth, would allow for the "Second Coming" in which Spain could finally be "resurrected."²⁴ Indeed, assuming a prophetic role, Giménez Caballero deemed it imperative to spread the word that "el problema sefardí significa para España el posible control, la posible reintegración de una provincia espiritual (y material) de más de un millón de almas" [the Sephardic problem signified for Spain the possible control, the possible reintegration of a spiritual (and material) province of more than a million souls] (8; underlining in original).

While one might argue that Giménez Caballero adjusted the tenor of his propaganda based on his audience, his ideological conviction that Sephardism could be a panacea for Spanish renewal remained consistent throughout the report. Indeed, the idea he had communicated to Bucharest's Sephardic community, of Spain as a new Zion, was not only reported verbatim in his report, but also took the form of a moral prescription dictated to the Spanish government: he insisted it was fundamental that his thesis be acknowledged by the Ministry and its delegates "de cualquier orden" [of every rank], as it had already been accepted "unánimamente por los judíos, y constituye además una realidad" [unanimously by the Jews and moreover, it constitutes a reality] (29). Whether Giménez Caballero in fact believed Sephardic Jews had already embraced Sephardism remains questionable, though his willingness to fervently endorse a potentially controversial thesis exposes his unwavering devotion to Sephardism and his conviction in its ultimate triumph.

While Giménez Caballero perceived Zionism as an imposing threat to Sephardism, the increasing influence of France over the Sephardim in reality posed a much greater threat to any competing Spanish colonial designs. Indeed, despite his reassurances that the Jews had embraced Sephardism, Giménez Caballero traveled to Paris in 1930 to examine the relations of the Sephardim with France. Placing the Sephardim and Spain on a level plain—the two as pariahs—he reported that the Sephardim's "judaísmo—su español, les avergüenza" [their Judaism—their Spanish, makes them ashamed] (83), while they viewed French as a universal language of prestige] (83). However, determined to bring about the triumph of Sephardism, Giménez Caballero sought ways to steer the Sephardim away from the "corriente francófila" [Francophile current] and toward Spain and their "orígenes patrios" [national origins] (84). He proposed that Spain revoke the edict of expulsion of 1492, recognizing the Sephardim as Spanish subjects, "cautiously" allow Sephardic

immigration to Spain, and implement Spanish propaganda in Paris, home to many Sephardic refugees from Salonica (86).

In addition to the written documentation of his travels and designs for Spain's Sephardist policy, Giménez Caballero documented these endeavors through film. In 1928 he announced the *Gaceta's* sponsorship of Spain's first "cine-club" and soon collaborated with the country's most prominent filmmakers.²⁵ Giménez Caballero's immersion in the world of film in tandem with his enduring commitment to promoting Spanish imperialism and a nationalistic agenda render *Judíos de la Patria Española* (1929) a powerful ethnographic and propagandistic short film on Spanish Sephardism. In a sense, the film captures the ideal vision of the *mission civilisatrice* Giménez Caballero had hoped for and plotted in the name of the *patria* in *Nuevas informaciones* and in the pages of the *Gaceta*. An examination of this film thus allows for additional insight into Giménez Caballero as a proponent of *Hispanidad* and propagandist for Sephardism.

The silent film (14 minutes in length) is replete with images of Jewish archeological remains in Toledo, Córdoba, and Sevilla. Footage of the street life surrounding these sites, in the old *juderías*, focuses on the individuals who inhabit these historically charged spaces and is accompanied by text indicating that, for example "Córdoba patria del gran Maimonides. Conserva indelebles huellas" [in Córdoba, birthplace of the Great Maimónides—indelible traces of him can be observed], and that "algunos pueblos Toledanos se consideran de puro origen judío como Yepes" [some villages in the province of Toledo, such as Yepes, are considered to be of purely Jewish origin] (Figure 1). Images from the life of the contemporary Jewish community in Spain are also presented, and seem to consciously feature Jews of divergent ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Footage includes Jewish "turroneiros" at work in Seville (Figure 2), a well-dressed smiling mother with her children in a Barcelona



FIGURE 1 Pueblo of Yepes (Toledo) "of purely Jewish origin." Courtesy of The National Center for Jewish Film, Brandeis University.



FIGURE 2 Jewish "Turroneiros" at work in Seville. Courtesy of The National Center for Jewish Film, Brandeis University.

interior (Figure 3), and "el rostro auténticamente sefardi del joven y conocido escritor madrileño Samuel Ros" [the authentic Sephardic features of the young and prominent writer Samuel Ros], a contributor to the *Gaceta* and prominent figure in the *madrileño* literary scene (Figure 4). Thus, Giménez Caballero reminded Spanish audiences that the "Sephardic problem" was not only a distant one but also one that



FIGURE 3 Jewish mother and children (Barcelona). Courtesy of The National Center for Jewish Film, Brandeis University.



FIGURE 4 “Authentic Sephardic features” of *madrileño* writer Samuel Ros. Courtesy of The National Center for Jewish Film, Brandeis University.

was an inescapable, even if often unacknowledged, part of their ethnic and cultural heritage.

In *Judíos de la Patria Española*, Giménez Caballero provides a concise visual and textual narration of Sephardic history before the Expulsion of 1492, avoiding engagement with the more contentious issues of pogroms, the Inquisition and Expulsion. His referral to the latter event as one of “*consolidación nacional española*” [Spanish national consolidation], however, appears to stand in tension with his interest in reclaiming the Sephardim for Spain. The film quickly turns to its main focus, the Sephardic Diaspora, recounting the destiny of the exiled Sephardim; it is in this context that Giménez Caballero introduces his “thesis” on Spain as a second Zion: “y en esta tierra de ‘galud’ (destierro), procrearon una alta civilización durante centenios. Por eso es España—tras la de Sion—su patria más sentimental. El solar de sus mejores patriarcas, cuyos descendientes son los aristócratas sefardíes o hijos de Sefarad: Los judíos de patria española” [and in the land of “Galut” they produced a rich culture for centuries. For this reason, Spain, apart from Zion, is the Sephardi’s most sentimental homeland. The ancestral home of their most respected ancestors, whose descendants are the aristocratic Sephardim ... The Jews of the Spanish homeland].²⁶

Turning to the Balkans, the film presents footage of men wearing impeccable western European clothes, noting that among the Balkan Sephardim there are “personalidades de gran valor... los políticos. Abogados y banqueros” [figures of great valor, including politicians, lawyers and bankers]²⁷ (Figure 5). One of these characters was Kalmi Baruch, his friend and exemplary “agent of Spanish culture,” with whom he met in Sarajevo. These images stand in stark contrast to ethnographic portrayals of lower-class Sephardim in footage taken in Istanbul’s working-class Haskeüi quarter, which housed a large Jewish population (Figure 6). Other images



FIGURE 5 Sephardic men of "great valor." Courtesy of The National Center for Jewish Film, Brandeis University.

feature clearly impoverished individuals whose provenance is not entirely clear (Figure 7)—though the absence of accompanying text leads the viewer to presume they too are Sephardim. These last images, in particular, seem more self-consciously ethnographic in quality, suggesting Giménez Caballero may have been inspired by "salvage ethnography," an anthropological practice dedicated to the ethnographic documenta-



FIGURE 6 Haskeüi quarter, Istanbul. Courtesy of The National Center for Jewish Film, Brandeis University.



FIGURE 7 “Salvage ethnography.” Courtesy of The National Center for Jewish Film, Brandeis University.

tion of groups under threat of disappearance, and especially by the work of Franz Boas, with which he was familiar.

The film also pays tribute to the Spaniards “que dedicaron su atención al problema sefardí [who dedicated their attention to the Sephardic problem] featuring brief clips of interviews with them. Among those featured is “el ilustre estudioso de su romancero D. Ramón Menéndez Pidal” [the illustrious student of their Romancero, Don Ramón Menéndez Pidal], Fernando de los Ríos, “[el gran político de la causa sefardí] [the great politician of the Sephardic cause], Lorenzo Luzuriaga “el secretario de la junta de relaciones culturales Sr. Luzuriaga” [Secretary of the Board of Cultural Relations], Manuel L. Ortega, “el cronista de los hebreos de Marruecos” [chronicler of the Jews in Morocco], and “sobre todos, el venerable D. Angel Pulido. Apostol de esos españoles sin patria” [above all, the venerable Mr. Pulido, apostle of these Spaniards without a patria]. While Giménez Caballero surely felt obliged to feature these individuals, for political reasons he may have hoped that their prominence could serve to enhance the prestige and authority of his cause, at home and abroad. Referring to prior philosephardic efforts aimed at repatriating Sephardim, the film concludes with the following quote taken from “el noble encomendero Joseph Moreno, enviado a Turquía en el siglo XVIII” [the noble encomendero Joseph Moreno, sent to Turkey in the eighteenth century]: “[n]uestro lema deberá ser, otra vez. . . ‘vuelve español, adonde solías’” [our motto must be, once again, “Spaniard return to where you once lived”]. Moreover, by referring to these Jews as “Spaniards”—despite his previous assertions that they were first and foremost Jews, Giménez Caballero offered a vision of an expansive Spanish *Patria*, one that might yet reincorporate Sephardic Jews into the Hispanic “race.”

The coherency of Giménez Caballero’s discourse of *Hispanidad* and vision of Sepharad as part of an expansive, Pan-Hispanic *Patria* is suggested in the first frame of



FIGURE 8 Ernesto Giménez Caballero. Courtesy of The National Center for Jewish Film, Brandeis University.

Judíos de la Patria Española, which Giménez Caballero most likely filmed last. Giménez Caballero, filming himself, appears on the roof of the Madrid headquarters of the *Gaceta*. He slowly zooms in and the camera remains focused on his facial features for several seconds (Figure 8). More than merely an act of reflexivity, it may be that the acute focus on his facial features, meant to frame the images of Sephardim in the film, represents a statement of his theories on racial mixing, one that engaged contemporary notions of Spanish racial hybridity (Goode; Rohr, this issue) and which suggests linkages between his own origins and Spain's Jewish past. Moreover, by drawing this connection, Giménez Caballero wished to encourage Spanish viewers to consider the "Sephardic problem" as one that directly affected them as Spaniards.

From Sephardism to Fascism

Updates published in the *Gaceta* while Giménez Caballero was abroad reported that large numbers of Sephardim attended his lectures and greeted him with enthusiasm. It is difficult to assess Sephardic reactions to Giménez Caballero, but it is likely they were highly ambivalent. Even if his presence aroused enthusiasm, by the time of his voyage, many Sephardim had already come under the influence of France and Britain, and some had also embraced Zionism (Rodrigue; Rohr, this issue). The appeal of culturally reconnecting to Spain, or returning to a country of little international clout, generally remained confined to philo-Spanish elites or moments when these communities found themselves in a politically vulnerable position (González 175–205). Nonetheless, the official story on Giménez Caballero's return was that the trip was a "continuo triunfo en el mundo sefardí" [continuous triumph in the Sephardic world]—that it managed to "despertar constantes simpatías y homenajes a España" [inspire constant sympathy and homages to Spain] and that it sufficed to demonstrate "cuántos lazos de parientes, lingüística y de costumbres unen a España y al próximo Oriente" [the numerous genealogical and linguistic connections, as well as the

customs, that unite Spain and the Near East” (“Viaje a Oriente” GL 6/452; “Regreso” GL 1/459).

Despite such reports, in his postvoyage writings Giménez Caballero demonstrates increasing ambivalence toward the “Sephardic Problem” as a “Jewish problem.” He informed his readers that “[l]o que más ha movido mi conciencia ante los judíos españoles es la aclaración absoluta de lo que significa *patria* [What most moved my conscience with regard to the Sephardic Jews was their complete understanding of the significance of *patria*] (“Libros”).²⁸ As he argued: “[p]atria no es nación. El judío es una nación, pero sin patria. El judío no es universalista. Es el nacionalista más acérrimo, más calvino que existe en el mundo. Sus 16 millones de hermanos están atados con ataderos de religión de raza, de lengua, como ninguna otra nación puede ostentar” [*Patria* is not a nation. The Jews are a nation, but without a *patria*. The Jew is not a universalist. He is the staunchest nationalist that exists in the world and his 16 million brothers are bound by ties of religion, race and language in ways unparalleled by any other nation]. Moreover, he reported having witnessed Jewish communists fight with Jewish capitalists—and “a la invocación secreta de “lo israelita”—callarse y unirse” [upon the secret invocation of “Jewishness”—cease their squabbling and unite] (1/465). This admiring assessment of the Jews’ bond suggested that Spaniards should emulate the Jews in this regard, while it also threw into question the Sephardim’s ability to ever become Spaniards. This suggestion also seems to inform Giménez Caballero’s conclusion that because the Jews lack a homeland, “el problema judío no tendrá, por hoy—quizá nunca—solución” [the Jewish problem will not have a solution—not today and maybe never], given that, in his view, “[al judío] le falta violencia y coraje para conquistar su patria” [(the Jew) lacked the courage and violence to conquer his *patria*] (1/465).

Giménez Caballero’s ambivalence regarding the Jews would become more intense in the course of his political evolution toward Fascism. In the spring of 1928, he traveled to Italy drawing inspiration from his perception of Mussolini’s populism and ability to rally the masses. In 1929, in an open letter in the *Gaceta*, he declared himself a Fascist, becoming a pioneer of the movement in Spain (“Carta”). Thus, his admiration of the Jews’ “staunch” nationalism on the one hand, and disparagement of their lack of “courage and violence” on the other, corresponded to his new political affiliations.

While Giménez Caballero’s admiration for Mussolini was explicit, his incipient Fascism proved more eclectic. For instance, he admired aspects of the Soviet Union and Marxism, insofar as they seemed to offer inspiration on how to mobilize the Spanish working classes and progressive groups in a new era of Spanish imperialism. Giménez Caballero’s route to Fascism may have proved complex and belabored; however, to the public his announcement of the death of Vanguardism and publication of the “Carta” not only signaled his unequivocal conversion, but served as a manifesto for Fascism in Spain. As a result, many of Giménez Caballero’s collaborators resigned from the *Gaceta*, despite his attempts to maintain the literary character of the journal, and it disbanded by 1932.²⁹ Nonetheless, “Sepharad” continued to occupy a prominent place in Giménez Caballero’s writings, and his most active work on behalf of it, as discussed in the previous section, dates from the period immediately after his conversion to Fascism. In retrospect, it may seem that Giménez Caballero’s Sephardism, just like his philo-Catalanism, simply formed part of his triumphalist

imperialist designs (Álvarez Chillida 344–45). While this may be true to some extent, such a conclusion cannot fully explain why his engagement with "Sepharad" outlived his plans for Pan-Iberian unity, and was incorporated into his Fascism.

For instance, in 1931, Giménez Caballero was thought to have published (or collaborated on) the article which appeared under the name of his fellow Fascist, the Conde de Foxá, on the front page of the *Gaceta*, which portrayed an imaginary encounter between him and the spirits of the Catholic Kings, Isabelle and Ferdinand. In response to their accusation that by embracing the Sephardim he was undoing one of their greatest triumphs, Giménez Caballero claimed he was continuing their work by completing the "Reconquista," as the Sephardim represented Spain's last "unrecovered province" (qtd. in Foard 99; GL 15 July 1931, 1). Giménez Caballero's understanding of his efforts as a continuation of the "Reconquista" provides us with an indication of how Sephardism actually formed a central part of his vision of a Catholic Spanish *Patria*. Here, as in his earlier writings and film, Giménez Caballero's Sephardism may have been predicated on a vision of an eternal Catholic Spain, rather than a more inclusive and heterogeneous Spanish *Patria*. In fact, Giménez Caballero would become a pioneer and major proponent of national Catholicism in Spain, an ideology that he elaborated in *Genio de España: Exaltaciones a una resurrección nacional y del mundo* (1932) and later in *La nueva catolicidad (teoría general sobre el fascismo en Europa: En España)* (1933).

Giménez Caballero's views on antisemitism were similarly ambivalent. While he appeared to repudiate the antisemitism of Pío Baroja ("Pío Baroja" GL, 1/99) and that displayed by his Spanish colleagues in the Balkans, his "Carta" (1929) calls on Spain to view "Russia's Christianity and universality" rather than "what it bears of Judaism and the anti-Christ" (qtd. in Foard; "Carta"). To further complicate things, in 1931 Giménez Caballero repudiated Hitler's antisemitism and drew a sharp distinction between German and Italian Fascism (Review of *Mein Kampf*, GL 1931). By late 1931, however, Sephardism became a marginal concern for Giménez Caballero, as he began to attack the Republic and moved further to the right and the *Gaceta Literaria* dissolved. Moreover, on occasion he began to embrace explicitly anti-Semitic rhetoric, evoking theories of Jewish world domination and Jewish incompatibility with Spain (Álvarez Chillida 345–47).

During the Spanish civil war, Giménez Caballero played an important role in promoting the Nationalist cause and a Fascist agenda, an agenda he continued to endorse fervently during the Franco dictatorship. While he never abandoned his Hispanic imperialism, after the success of National Socialism his designs now turned from "Sepharad" to Nazi Germany. In an interview decades later he claimed to have met with Joseph Goebbels in 1941, and to have attempted to arrange a marriage between Hitler and the sister of the founder of Spain's Fascist party, as a way of bringing to fruition the "restoration of a new Hispanic-Austrian dynasty" (Selva "Autor/tema" 21–8).³⁰ Decades later, during the years he spent in Paraguay as Spain's ambassador to the country, he became quite invested in the concept of "mestizaje" to which he dedicated his book *Genio hispánico y mestizaje* (1965), and in which he presented *mestizaje* as the "mysticism of *Hispanidad*"—a theory he understood as the attempt to unite the blood of all men in Christian and universal fraternity (5). The prominence of Sephardism in Giménez Caballero's earlier

discourse of *Hispanidad* was entirely absent from these later theorizations and designs for Pan-Hispanic unity.

Intellectually, however, Giménez Caballero remained ambivalent about Spain's Jewish past and its importance in the nation's "national resurrection." So much is clear in a pedagogical guide for high-school instructors, "Lengua y Literatura de España y su imperio" [Language and Literature of Spain and its Empire], which he authored between 1940 and 1953.³¹ While the guide by and large presents a traditional Catholic interpretation of the Spanish past, it also includes sections on Jewish authors and texts from medieval Spain, descriptions of Jewish influences in the great works of Spanish literature, and references to Judeo-Spanish as a Hispanic language. In discussing the origins of Castilian literature, Giménez Caballero indicates that Hebraic authors, such as Maimónides and Yehuda Ha-Levi, played an essential role in the formation of the "verdadero genio español" [genuine Spanish spirit]. Apparently, even within Fascist Spain, the Jews—or at least the memory of them—might occupy a distinguished place in the *Patria*.

In a world that was moving toward increasingly extreme positions, individuals often felt compelled to embrace one ideology over another and place their lives at its service. The coexistence of so many points of view including antisemitism and Sephardism in one person renders Giménez Caballero an intriguing character. Through his example, one may begin to infer the possible connections between these positions in the context of Spanish Fascism. Such positions connect to the deeper history of the question of the "Jewishness" of Spain, a history that owes much to the idea of a united Catholic Spain, an idea that reached its apogee under Spanish Fascism. Only through recovering this longer and deeper history, may one fully comprehend how attempts to recover Spain's Jewish past—whether in Giménez Caballero's time, or our own—may be marked by similar ambivalence.³²

Notes

- 1 *La Gaceta Literaria (ibérica-americana-internacional)* 1927–1929, reissued in 1980 by Ed. Turner (Spain) and Topos Verlag AG (Lichtenstein), the edition I reference in this paper.
- 2 From this point on, I cite the *Gaceta Literaria* as GL.
- 3 Giménez Caballero used this term himself (i.e., *sefardismo*) in this context.
- 4 In a 1971 letter to Douglas Foard, Giménez Caballero responded to the ambiguity of this political identification by claiming that Liberalism and Socialism were synonymous to him (Foard 29).
- 5 Américo Castro served as a witness to Giménez Caballero's marriage, contributed to the GL, and came to his aid when he was imprisoned in 1923.
- 6 For discussion of this interplay and tension in early twentieth-century madrileño intellectual circles, see Shammah Gesser's doctoral dissertation.
- 7 On this the major military defeat, known as the "disaster of Annual" in which an estimated 20,000 Spanish soldiers were killed, see Balfour.
- 8 During this period, he published a series of articles in the daily *El Sol*, which later became his book *Los toros, las castañuelas y la Virgen* (1927). He was also alleged to have written an unpublished nationalist tract titled *El fermento* (Foard 46–7; Selva Giménez Caballero 61–78).

- 9 Giménez Caballero experimented with the new art form as seen in his avant-garde novel, *Yo, inspector de alcantarillas* (1928), considered by some to be the first Spanish surrealist novel.
- 10 Américo Castro's influence in the *Gaceta* proved significant and in addition to his own contributions to the journal, including an article on the Jews ("Judíos") that appeared in the first issue of the *Gaceta*, reports on his travels abroad were frequently featured, indicating the esteem in which he was held by Giménez Caballero.
- 11 This interview was published in a volume of *Anthropos* dedicated to Giménez Caballero.
- 12 The focus on *Sepharad* may have also been enhanced by the purchase of the *Gaceta* by the Compañía Ibero-Americana de Publicaciones, created by Madrid Jewish community leader and entrepreneur Ignacio Bauer y Landauer and the biographer of Ángel Púlido and Sephardist, Manuel Ortega ("La imagen" 73).
- 13 Also see, Isidro González (*El retorno de los judíos*), Antonio Lisbona (*Retorno a Sefarad*), and Meyuhás Ginio (*España e Israel*).
- 14 It was not uncommon for Spanish Arabists to become Hebraists, as the study of Hebrew formed part of the required curriculum in the School of Philosophy at the Spanish University where Arabists were trained, under the Liberal *Ley Moyano* (1857) educational reform.
- 15 Spanish Arabists often assumed Arabic names and some even sported traditional Moorish garb such as turbans or tunics.
- 16 I am referring here to the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* scholars whose work on Spain was read by and engaged by Spanish historians writing on the Jewish past. Ismar Schorsch explored the place of Iberian-Sephardic culture and history in the imaginary of nineteenth-century German Jewish intellectuals in his important essay "The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy" (1989, 1994).
- 17 On the work of the AIU, see Rodrigue and Rohr's essay in this issue.
- 18 I thank Adrián Pérez Melgosa for his comment regarding the use of rhetoric and excess among the Vanguards as providing the strongest connection with a core reality and therefore not something that should be dismissed but on the contrary to be taken as the best guides to their actual thought.
- 19 I thank Adam Shear for his comment (provided during my presentation on "Recovering Jewish Spain: Jewish History as *Historia Patria* in Nineteenth-Century Spain" at the University of Pittsburgh European History Colloquium, 2007) on this unusual conflation in Modern Spain of historically disparate debates regarding the place of the Jews in Europe.
- 20 The film was restored and digitalized by "The National Center for Jewish Film" at Brandeis University in collaboration with the *Filmoteca Española* and its Spanish captions translated to English by Jonathan P. Decter and Fatima Serra.
- 21 See note 16.
- 22 The second part of the lecture dealt with the role of Sephardim in Spanish Literature from the Middle Ages to Present. and Giménez Caballero concluded his talk by distributing promotional Spanish tourism information (31–2).
- 23 In his report, Giménez Caballero cautioned that Sephardism should appear as supportive of Zionism rather than working against it.
- 24 Giménez Caballero would come to refer to Spain's regeneration and resurgence as "una resurrección nacional," as the title of his work *Genio de España: Una resurrección*

- nacional* (1931) indicates. His prescription for cultural Catholicism for Spain was galvanized in *La Nueva Catolicidad* (1932).
- 25 Giménez Caballero also produced the well-regarded avant-garde documentary film *La esencia de la Verbena* [Essence of Carnival] in 1930.
 - 26 The term *Galut* is the Hebrew word used to refer to the Jewish peoples' exile and Diaspora.
 - 27 See Rohr's citation in this volume of Giménez Caballero's impression of the Moroccan Jewish notable who impressed him as he dressed "impecablemente, a la europea" (qtd. in Rohr 9; *Notas marruecas* 179–80).
 - 28 This assessment was located in a subsection titled "Nación y patria. Judíos"—of the portion of the *Gaceta* dedicated to Giménez Caballero's general reflections about the *Patria* upon his return to Spain.
 - 29 Giménez Caballero went on to publish several issues under the title *El Robinson Literario* between August 1931 and February 1932.
 - 30 This encounter allegedly took place during his participation in the Congress of European Writers in Weimar. In his interview with Enrique Selva in *Anthropos*, Giménez Caballero retold this story and it also appears in his *Memorias de un dictador* (1979) and in *Historia 16* "That night with Magda."
 - 31 The first volume of his ambitious seven-volume pedagogical work for *bachillerato Lengua y literatura de España y su imperio* appeared in 1940, was concluded in 1953, and reissued in three volumes in the 1970s under the title *Lengua y literatura de la hispanidad en textos pedagógicos (Para su enseñanza en España, América y Filipinas)*.
 - 32 I thank Daniela Flesler, Adrián Pérez Melgosa, Tabea Alexa Linhard, Paul K. Eiss, and Therese Tardio for their close reading of my paper and valuable comments. I also thank Erin Graff Zivin and Patrick Zimmerman for their feedback on earlier versions of this essay. All parenthetical translations in this essay are my own.

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