

# ETHNIC SEPHARDIC IDENTITY IN THE POETRY OF COLOMBIA\*

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**Abstract:** This essay focuses on the poetry of Porfirio Barba Jacob, Gregorio Gutiérrez González, and Jorge Isaacs, who in the second half of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries from their place of enunciation in Antioquia, Colombia, produced a counter-discourse within the framework of the Catholic culture. This analysis underlines the dynamic character of the authors' poetry as it relates to ethnic, individual, and collective identity and national-cultural differentiation. History and literary theories contribute to the understanding of a Spanish/Sephardic continuum.

**Key words:** Ethnic Sephardic Identity, *Converso*, Language.

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## IDENTIDAD SEFARDITA ÉTNICA EN LA POESÍA DE COLOMBIA

**Resumen:** Este ensayo se concentra en la poesía de Porfirio Barba Jacob, Gregorio Gutiérrez González, and Jorge Isaacs quienes en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX y al principio del siglo XX desde su lugar de enunciación en Antioquia, Colombia, produjeron un contra-discurso dentro del marco de la cultura católica. Este análisis subraya el carácter dinámico de la poesía de los autores en lo que atañe a la identidad étnica, individual y colectiva y a la diferenciación de la cultura nacional. La historia y las teorías literarias contribuyen al entendimiento de un continuo hispano sefardita.

**Palabras clave:** Identidad étnica sefardita, *Converso*, Lenguaje.

## IDENTITÉ ETHNIQUE SÉFARADE DANS LA POÉSIE COLOMBIENNE

**Résumé :** Cet essai étudie la poésie de Porfirio Barba Jacob, Gregorio Gutiérrez González, et Jorge Isaacs qui dans la deuxième moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle et au début du XX<sup>e</sup>, depuis leur lieu d'énonciation en Antioquia, Colombie, on produit un contre-discours dans le contexte de la culture catholique. Cette étude souligne le caractère dynamique de la poésie de ces auteurs en ce qui concerne l'identité ethnique, individuelle et collective et la différenciation de la culture nationale. L'histoire et les théories littéraires contribuent à comprendre un continuum hispanique séfaraide.

**Mots clés :** Identité ethnique séfaraide, *Converso*, Langage.

### 1. Introduction

The works of Porfirio Barba Jacob, Gregorio Gutiérrez González and Jorge Isaacs aim at constructing an ethnic individual and collective identity based on difference. The authors, each one in his own way, introduce a language that challenges the ideal construct of the Catholic culture. Despite the differences among these poets, they agree that language is a way of developing a distinctive identity. The Antioqueño identity is characterized by the communal language, which is identified with the language and metaphor of the Sephardic people. The concept of identity for the poets discussed here has the practical goal of establishing wholeness and stability. Wholeness for them is to experience meaning as explained in Derrida's terms, where the poet gives himself to the absence of the desert, that is the poets articulate themselves by leaving behind the former fixed formulations of language

in order to access meaning and experiencing the moment. From this perspective, language frees them to experience reality. Whether language is experienced as spiritual loneliness, anguish or hope by Barba Jacob or as wrenching pain of exile by Gutiérrez González or as rejection of Iberian goals and aspirations by Isaacs, these authors are able to free themselves from the historical Catholic frame of thematic reference. They build their language on a matrix of Jewish culture and traditions, and introduce Antioquia as a symbol of hope and return and as a principle of resistance to the dominant Catholic culture. It must be noted that *conversos* or new Christians are persons of Jewish ancestry. Among them there were those who were forced to convert in 1391 and after and others who decided to convert by their own choice.

## **2. Porfirio Barba Jacob's poetry, use of language and sense of identity based on self-exploration, self-realization and self-confidence<sup>1</sup>**

Barba Jacob's poetry came to fruition chiefly at the beginning of the twentieth century. He was born in Antioquia, Colombia and lived in a number of Central American countries. Barba Jacob's prose poem "Claves-II, Prólogo del Volumen Canciones y Elegías" (1992) [Prologue to the volume Songs and Elegies" "Keys II"] aims to keep language as free and open as possible. The poet uses language to gain free access to new perceptions of experience. Jacques Derrida says that it is through absence that freedom of speech can be achieved: "For to write is to draw back. Not to retire into one's tent, in order to write, but to draw back from one's writing itself, [...] To be a poet is to know how to leave speech" (1978a: 70)<sup>2</sup>. The author further states that the "revelatory power of true literary language as poetry is indeed the access to free speech" [...] to him poetry "has the power to arouse speech from its slumber as sign" (1978b, 12). Barba Jacob shares this view as he describes his experience as a poet. He is reluctant to accept any philosophy that claims to have defined the meaning of our experiences as the ultimate truth and chooses to define our own individual experiences. Barba Jacob is able to lay aside all preconceived ideas and express the meaning of his experiences. From this new perspective the poet achieves freedom of language and sense of identity:

I was, then intuitively, a metaphysical man, even though I lacked any organized culture and structural system. I felt a great urgency to absolve very important philosophical

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1 This paper does not consider the range of meanings that the words identity and self have in different fields of thought, but with their implications. While the two terms are intimately related, identity always implies the individual and the collective, the self implies the process of achieving identity, as in this case, ethnic identity.

2 The translation of the selected poetry and citations in this paper is mine.

issues so I could bring later the basis of my own Ethics. *NECESSITY TO BE Yourself, TO BE, and OWN NATURE OR DISPOSITION*. For professional Philosophers this defines clarity and method for exposition. For poets this Ethics determines storm, danger and self-absorption of thought. Reading is supposed to be the consolation of the insatiable. I immersed myself in reading with exemplary commitment but it didn't bring me any consolation. The books where I looked for solutions appeared schematic, without fluidity, and without affective endearment or were purely mystical: they appeared to me beyond the conflict, outside space and time. Besides they were books "in European" and I am shaped with the clay of America, maybe in that clay in its pristine coarseness. If by that time the Metaphysics of José Vasconcelos would have had the form that it has today, where for the first time I have felt that one talks to the dignified men –no slavish men– of my own race, calling them to find in the *I Am* the point of departure, a reality which is only possible by explaining the intimate world and the outside world, how all my torments would have been resolved in peace and euphoria! They continued there as a burning fire that devours without ever going out (73: 17).

The role of the poet is significant since the poet strives to achieve freedom of language to express his unique experience. With this statement *I Am*, it would seem that Barba Jacob does not see language as functioning by symbolizing God above language but by expressing our individual meaning of experiences. Derrida refers to this process as the pre-meaning of language: "to comprehend the structure of a becoming, the form of a force is to lose meaning by finding it" (1978b: 26). Like Derrida, Barba Jacob is critical of conventional formulations of language and as a result chooses a philosophy of language that allows him to decide which direction to take.

Barba Jacob explores the philosophy of Vasconcelos, in which he highlights the remarkable and original way of his development of ethics and epistemology. José Vasconcelos formulates epistemology as "evidence of being that is in common with all beasts, but also with all the spiritual beings, as well as the angels. Every principle must be based on such evidence, including the logical principle of identity. Thus, when I think and feel I must refer it to the primary fact of my own existence in the bosom of the Cosmos"<sup>3</sup>. Vasconcelos presents a point of view that relates to Derrida's understanding of experience. He shifts from the Cartesian concept of *Cogito ergo sum* [*I think therefore I am*] to *ergo sum* [*I am*]. This shift to the concept of *I am* brings self-awareness as a possibility of an individual to achieve identity and is in essence the core of our consciousness. What is essential for Vasconcelos is that "the conscious /I/ perceives primordial and immediately as evidently fact of his own existence" (241). In this sense, Vasconcelos detaches himself from the Greek logos

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3 José Vasconcelos, *Lógica Orgánica*, in *Obras Completas* 1961: 629, quoted in Carreras (1970: 194).

that governs the truth of our experience by privileging conceptual oppositions such as presence of being over identity and good over bad and proposes to move into an ethical relationship. For the author “the quintessence of ethics will be also the existence as much as it is action, only that the action assumes now a finality, which will be action with purpose” (241) Vasconcelos implies that ethics impels us into action and that language participates in a dynamic interrelatedness with the cosmos, which carries within vitalizing energy of purpose. This energy can be rendered powerless by our self-centered creation of concepts, which we identify as absolute (conscience of superiority). For both Derrida and Vasconcelos language possesses power of action. However, both authors define action quite differently. It would seem that while for Vasconcelos requires the total transcending of language, for Derrida action is manifested in the dynamics of language. But for Vasconcelos language is ambivalent. For Vasconcelos the final goal is to transcend language and action and to realize the direct knowledge of the Absolute. Carreras summarizes Vasconcelos’ mechanism of epistemological theory in three phases: Thesis→I →exist→Subject; Antithesis→Exists the no-/I/→Object; Synthesis→Exists the Absolute→The Transcendent (Francisco J. Carreras, 1970: 203). Although it is clear that for Vasconcelos the absolute is a primary manifestation of experience, Derrida rejects any metaphysical theory and focuses on difference as enabling language to function.

In *La Divina Tragedia: El Poeta Habla de Sí Mismo*, (1992) (*Divine Tragedy: The Poet Speaks About Himself*), Barba Jacob writes about his linguistic experience, which is not mystical or supernatural but the result of endeavor and accomplishment. “To live is to strive! How the solar impetus vibrates at the breaking of the dawn. In this exclamation, which has the highest invigorating force of my spirit, is the virtue that represents me in the chorus of the poets: to live is to strive!” (73: 22-23). The linguistic experience of the poet in his isolation is parallel with consciousness, that is, trace or writing. But it is also dangerous and anguishing because one does not know where it is going. Barba Jacob expresses his anguish as he reaches freedom of speech: “[...] The nave of my lyrical vocation as if a black wind wished to make her sink, knocked down by rise and fall of the sea and from violent tumbles to lightning!” (73: 22-23). The poet provides a description as clue or commentary of consciousness: “I brought from the fields of my native land, in the very rough Antioquia, my frail body with full energy of my will to labor—honor of my Jewish race” (73: 22-23), proudly identifies himself with the Jewish nation and honors to belong to the “Jewish race.” He experiences freedom of language and expresses his difference. This difference is also apparent in “innocence like a vision of perfect whiteness on the inaugural spark of my future burning thoughts!” (73: 22-23). Derrida calls the experience of the poet “inaugural in the fresh sense of the word that is dangerous and anguishing. It does not know where it is going, no knowledge

can keep it from the essential precipitation toward the meaning that it constitutes and that is, primarily, its future.” (Derrida, Jacques, 1978b:11). Yet this inaugural poetic writing embodies meaning. As Derrida says, “meaning is not that which is called God [...] if writing is inaugural it is not so because it creates, but because of a certain absolute freedom of speech, because of the freedom to bring forth the already-there as a sign of the freedom to augur.” (1978b:11-12) Thus language is without a beginning and simultaneous with consciousness.

Barba Jacob is aware of some personal characteristics that may become problematic. He recognizes that by trusting his consciousness good will come from him, his awareness: “there in the rugged grounds, where there are no more doctors than the stubbed land, the night, the wind... and the peasants who are in native innocence” (73: 22-23). The poet gives expression to his vision of Antioquia as a metaphor of Israel. Priests function in both places, mothers have many children, and the social and physical environment is much the same: “In my Antioquia Israelite, entombed in my native Antioquia [...] where the priest “harvest honey” and threatens the “people who do not follow God’s laws.”<sup>4</sup> Women bear as many children as in biblical times and “civilization is sweetness without fiction” (73: 22-23). At the end of the poem, the poet compares the “beauty and vigor, moral health and hope, intelligence and loyalty” with the “flowers fallen” from the “mantel of Jesus Christ” (73: 22-23). It would seem that Barba Jacob uses this simile for the peace and harmony that seemed to permeate the culture. This is understandable by the fact that the poet grew up in Antioquia and has been isolated from the rest of the Jewish world. This is one of the similes that he has possibly internalized. Michael Bakhtin explains in his book *The Dialogic Imagination*, that in the process of achieving consciousness we slowly learn to set apart “authoritative persuasive” discourse from “internally persuasive” discourse: “When thought begins to work in an independent way, experimenting and discriminating way, what first occurs is a separation between internally persuasive discourse and authoritarian enforced discourse, along with a rejection of those congeries of discourses that do not matter to us, that do not touch us. Internally persuasive discourse—as opposed to one that is externally authoritative—is, as it is affirmed through assimilation, tightly interwoven with ‘one’s own word’” (Bakhtin, Michael, 1981: 345). Barba Jacob’s literary text reflects the contention of Bakhtin that the emergence of the self is a conscious process that seeks to destabilize the “authoritative discourse” in language.

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4 See about the role assumed by the Regular Diocesan Tribunals of Envigado after the abolishment in 1812 of the Tribunal of the Inquisition. The main goal of the government was to “preserve the Catholic religion in its purity” in Gloria Mercedes Arango, *La Mentalidad Religiosa en Antioquia Prácticas y Discursos 1828-1885*, (1993: 32-33) quoting ADA, Auto de Visita de Fray Mariano Garnica, parroquia de Envigado, 7 de Agosto de 1830.

In the inner monologue developed in *Fragmentos Prologales de la Diadema libro inedito*, (1992) (*Prologue Fragments* from the unpublished book *Diadem*) Barba Jacob expresses his intrinsic history, conscious realization and contentment of having a Jewish heritage and embraces a Sephardic ethnic identity. Barba Jacob is content of belonging to the Jewish race; however, he suggests the further development of his consciousness in a fragmentary way. The poet's consciousness is a part of a whole, but also there are elements of instability and vagueness: "I am Antioqueño, I am from the Jewish race, great producer of melancholy according to the expression of Ortega and Gasset, and I live as a gentile who is not waiting for the Messiah to come, or as a bitter pagan in the decadent Rome" (73: 1-3). Barba Jacob speaks explicitly of his own spiritual tragedy where he experiences the hopelessness of life. The distressing vision of a "Catholic without belief and a Jew without knowledge"<sup>5</sup> influences the consciousness of the poet: "A rational analysis tells me that what I am hearing and seeing is a lie. Everything I know from metaphysics and theology does not change my consciousness and regardless of how you beautifully phrase it the pain remains. The Universe could perhaps be explained in some way that will give us peace and tranquility. For me the rights of the individual consciousness cannot be preempted. If an individual consciousness is denied there is nothing left" (73: 4-11). For Derrida language must be unburdened of aesthetic values to identify the work as original writing (Jacques Derrida, 1978b:13). Similar to Derrida Barba Jacob rejects the language of reason or unity of logos which hinders the individual's experience. It is in the revelatory power of true literary language as poetry that the poet can find meaning.

The following poem from Barba Jacob entitled *Lamentación Baldia*, (1944) (*Vain Lamentation*) illustrates how the poem forms part of a cultural discourse where questions of identity become visible. In the poem Barba Jacob discloses the very core of his experience: The poet reflects on his lonely past, the uncertainty of his origins, but all he can do is to write of his spiritual anguish. Barba Jacob is aware that spiritual loneliness brings suffering: "My suffering is to walk alone with my history/To recall the past tortures me/ But all are cherished efforts/ Evanescent in the lonely night" (Lines 5-8). Barba Jacob questions his identity: "and to come without knowing, perhaps from somewhere in the Orient" (Line 9). Here, Barba Jacob connects his situation with the experience of some writers of the Antioqueño intellectual elite who had expressed over time the psychological and

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5 Miriam Bodian (1997: XI) explains that Jewish historians refer to this oft-quoted phrase to define the marrano identity. Bodian cites I. S. Révah's article "Les Marranes", 1959-60: 53, in which Révah assesses "the Marrano identity as a function of religious loyalties (or lack thereof)".

social pressure of the imposed ethnic and fervent religious identity.<sup>6</sup> Ethnic identity is the object of the poet's individual search and is reformulated by connecting it to the past.<sup>7</sup> Barba Jacob did not have a complete sense of the nation and developed a sense of connection with the Jewish nation.

In poem IV *Acuarimántima (Clairvoyance)* (1944) Porfirio Barba Jacob's experience of anguish and hope is replaced by elation for his love of Antioquia, which becomes a metaphor for the Promised Land. This metaphor was a helpful source for the Spanish *conversos* in exile to express their identity.<sup>8</sup> The poem illustrates the unconscious collective, which many Antioqueños feel toward their province. Divided into five stanzas, Barba Jacob's poem provides fertile ground for a study of identity. In the first three stanzas Barba Jacob expresses his praise to the province of Antioquia and we are immediately struck with another aspect of the poet; his joy, passion and sense of fulfillment. "I left my home in Antioquia/Proud of my ancient lineage/Content and at ease, eager/And the clear suggesting force of the rising sun/ Joyously tuned and freed the strings of my lyre" (Lines 1-5). When Barba Jacob enunciates, "I left my home in Antioquia/Proud of my ancient lineage/Content and at ease, eager" (Lines 1-3), he seems to be expressing the aristocratic pride of the Spanish Jews in medieval Spain, where they had important responsibilities at court. The Spanish Jews in court were so outstanding that in time many other Spanish Jews developed an

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- 6 Daniel Mesa Bernal (1997: 91-92), Luis Eduardo Agudelo Ramírez (1986: 171), and Gustavo Patiño Duque (2006: 284) explain why many Antioqueño historical sources in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries persisted in fashioning the Antioqueños' background as Basque. The authors argue that the authors' preoccupation with associating the Basques with the Antioqueños has been to legitimize a genealogical ascendancy which is most traceable to a background "limpios de sangre" ["purity of blood"]. Daniel Mesa Bernal further states that the fanatic religiosity in Antioquia was a Semitic inheritance until the Inquisition Tribunal started to demand a pure blood's certificate. The author quotes Francisco Silvestre who documents in his book *The Descripción del Reyno de Santa Fe de Bogotá in 1776* (ed.1950): "those who were ordained are many because it is like the rationale of the State that each family have a priest" cited in Mesa Bernal, 1997: 340.
- 7 According to Yitzhak Baer in Medieval Spain the conversos and the Marranos were identified as Jews by the Catholic Church and by most historians, therefore they maintained their identity as Jews based on their ethnicity rather than just their religion. Baer states that "the majority of the conversos and the Marranos were Jews [...] conversos and Jews were one people, bound together by ties of religion and fate, and messianic hope". Yitzhak Baer's *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 1959: 464, quoted in Netanyahu Benzion, 1966: 2-3. It would be understandable that this is where ethnic Judaism came about as opposed to religious Judaism.
- 8 See John E. Longhurst about the *aluminados* (forerunners of the *alumbrados*) and *alumbrados* (illuminist movement) of the 1520 and 1530 many of whom were conversos. In their mind "God was building a wonderful city where all the conversos would live forever in the land of milk and honey". Longhurst, John, 1964: 85 (Ch. I) quoting Francisco Lopez de Villalobos' *Sumario de la Medicina* reprinted in vol. XXIV of the publications of the Sociedad bibliofilos españoles, Madrid 1886.

aristocratic sense of self.<sup>9</sup> In the following verses: “And the clear suggestions force of the rising sun/ Joyously tuned and freed the strings of my lyre” (Lines 4-5) Barba Jacob points to the richness of his self that is able to express the life force experienced within and its connection with the cultural life of the *Conversos*. Central to Jacob’s fulfillment is his identification with the Antioqueños as a social group. Antioquia becomes a metaphor in which the *conversos* recognize themselves as such, acquiring identity through their existence and culture. The verses “Passing through the maize harvest, / which brings forth its fruit/ from enthusiastic toil” (Lines 8-10) narrate the work ethos of Antioqueños. The prominent use of the words “enthusiastic toil” brings to mind the farmers in intimate, physical communion with their own work. In contrast to the belief that the *conversos* in Spain and the New World engaged only in certain specific professions and activities such as commerce or money lending, the *conversos* were involved in all kind of activities. Barba Jacob’s poetic utterance of “enthusiastic toil” represents a strong element of the character of the *conversos*. Thus, “work brings joy and fulfillment”<sup>10</sup>

Barba Jacob continues to build on a matrix of Jewish traditions. The poet experience of Antioquia as a delightful and “indescribable spring season” relates to his love for Jerusalem. Barba Jacob’s self-identification in verses (17-18), “and transports me/ to the/ Peace and harmony of the distant city of Jerusalem” introduces an inexorable moment of connection with the Holy Land, and renders problematic the ethos of the Catholic world. The poet presents his vision, as Derrida would have imagined it at the birth of writing and as expression of the self.<sup>11</sup>

In the following verses the vague characterization of the city of Jerusalem as a distant city is turned into a recognizable culture that specifies the economic, cultural, religious and mythological components of Antioquia: “To the celebrated and flamboyant city of my dreams,/ A city of history, of pride and beauty,/ Alive in my dreams, hopes and heart/Crowned by the blue sky/ Anchored to the core of the earth,/ Thee

9 Miriam Bodian, 1961: 15 citing H. H. Ben Sasson, “The Generation of Spanish Jews on itself” (Hebrew). *Zion* 26, (23-64).

10 Tomás Carrasquilla, Antioqueño writer of the late nineteenth century states: “Very few families (in Antioquia) had slaves or servant Indians working for them. Those who were our white ancestors, who acted so meticulously, used to do all the work. The adults were in the sugar mills or cultivated the land as others carried the water on their hips or excavated the mines or sand pits. The women kept busy with lactating and bringing up the progeny and also intervened in all kinds of occupations from the millstone to cotton spinning”. (Tomás Carrasquilla, *Obras Completas*, 3 vols, 1994: 803), quoted in Daniel Mesa Bernal, 1997: 370.

11 For Derrida the poet, by his absence, allows language free access to his unconstrained potential “[...] freedom, break with the domain of empirical history, a break whose aim is reconciliation with the hidden essence of the empirical, with pure historicity” (1978b:13).

my Jerusalem” (Lines 20-25). The poet delineates the intrinsic relationship of Antioquia to Jerusalem the exalted and vibrant city of his dreams. The poet’s identity is shaped by a language where the possibility of a collective Sephardic identity emerges. Barba Jacob gives expression to the hardship of the Spanish Jews who suffered the imposition of the Catholic social values, who were forced into exile from the Iberian Peninsula and are still in the twenty century in search of the “captive city” the city of their dreams: “Paying no heed to Death/I revel in the immensity of my passion” (Lines 29-30). The *converso* struggle is always liberating as it seeks to restore the poet to his ancestral Jewish origins and past. In this sense, Barba Jacob perpetuates the continuity of the Jewish nation.

In the poem *Iomena*, (1992) Barba Jacob is inspired by the Jewish traditions and celebrates with pride his Sephardic heritage and his love for Israel. Barba Jacob expresses the nature of joy with the image of his Muse, “[...] the tender girl/An Antioqueño flower of Israel” (Lines 16-17). The “tender girl” serves as a metaphor of Israel and influences every emotion of the poet. Barba Jacob feels happy when he reaches freedom of speech but experiences frustration in his confrontation with the overwhelming circumstances of his alienated condition: “She wipes his forehead, as the poet is frustrated with his efforts/ With his muse life is pleasant! Tranquil and cherished wish! / Perhaps the inspiration will still come/An Antioqueña girl with mouth of honey [...]” (Lines 18-21). His praise to the desired land of Israel emphasizes his “arduous vigor,” and youthful passionate nature, as he describes the fertile land, which emanates honey and luring beauty: “Brunette ringdove, which falls asleep at daylight/ Incautious Iomena arduous vigor, my youth!/ The starry wave dissolved/ Inebriated with honey in the tender spring full moon” (Lines 1-4). In the following verses, (9-13), Barba Jacob thinks of Israel as his spiritual guide and without it the poet experiences loss. The poet acknowledges that without the connection of his heart to the land of Israel, his quests are fruitless: “I turned my eyes in a sudden caring look/ And saw things [...] that were in all silent/And Oh madness! Oh madness! I sighed/ Vain specters empty molds/ That one has to move like chess pieces”. The madness that the poet is letting speak for itself may be read as the result of his overwhelming experience of alienation; however, there is hope of gaining control over the situation. The poet enters into an ongoing process of self-exploration through connection to the past, present, and hopes for the future, and begins to give expression to his Sephardic ethnic identity.

The yearning for Israel in Barba Jacob’s poetry written in the twenty century indicates a struggle to achieve meaning and identity. The poet produces a discourse based on self-confidence and self-knowledge of the Antioqueño Sephardic heritage. It must be noted that the enquiring of identity which has been a constant for more

than two hundred years in the writings of Antioqueño authors could be identified as a process of signification toward the difficult emergence of the “nation”.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. Gregorio Gutiérrez González’s prose and poetry, use of language and sense of Identity fluctuates between love and hate for the Jewish nation

Gregorio Gutiérrez González was born in Antioquia, Colombia. His family thought to be of Hebrew descent emigrated from Medellín of Extremadura in Spain.<sup>13</sup> Aspiring to see Colombia as a nation that is vast and varied, he concentrated on the typical Antioqueño. His poems were composed in the nineteenth century. Like Barba Jacob, Gutiérrez González addresses the problem of identity by building his language on a matrix of Jewish traditions, and introduces other elements of his linguistic experience in the process of self-realization. In this process of self-realization the poet unveils the fragmented conception of his self in which the Sephardic culture is portrayed as negative. Among the *conversos* the concept of self can be also portrayed as negative primarily because they were subjected to assimilation by the Catholic culture. The Catholic Church’s political project was to enter deeply into the mindset of Sephardic people with a zealous Catholic cultural and religious identity. The following analysis of the literary text *Felipe* will show how Gutiérrez González relates to the story from the character’s perspective. While in the literary text, the character Felipe formulates the Antioqueño collective identity by building his language on a matrix of Jewish mysticism. However in the poem, Felipe rejects any relation with the Sephardic culture by expressing his hate of the Jewish race. At the end of the poem, the poet withdraws from the entire situation.

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12 I borrowed the term from Homi K. Bhabha. The author touches on national identity when attempting to formulate “the complex strategies of cultural identification and discursive address that function in the name of ‘the people’ or ‘the nation’ and make them the immanent subjects of a range of social and literary narratives” (1994: 139). See Jaime Jaramillo Uribe about the problem of modern historiography. The author describes the immense gap between the social abstraction of nation and political practice of nationalists who ignore the immediate concerns of the region (1982: 1-16). See also Belisario Betancur about multilayered analysis of the Antioqueño as a social group based on the concept of region. The author lays two important points related directly to the Antioqueño’s individual and collective identity. (1) The individual needs of the Antioqueños have not been considered as their needs are being manifested not only in the economic autonomy, but also in their regular behavior. The Antioqueño’s behavior proceeds from the “ancestral culture that is told by its troubadours” and provides them with a close-knit social group. (2) National aims need to be adapted to regional concerns (1991: 12-13)

13 For more detailed bibliographical data on Gutiérrez González see “Prologue” to *Obras Completas*, 1958:42-43.

Similar to Barba Jacob, Antioquia serves Gutiérrez González as a metaphor of the Promised Land and as a mystic experience. Felipe describes his spiritual experience within the sacred and enchanting power of a mystical experience: “The morning was magnificent. The sky was clothed in a rigorous blue, covered with a modest simplicity the charming valley of Medellín [...]. And all that magnificent landscape was surrounded by a luminous and tremulous atmosphere that seemed shaped by the noise and upsurge of infinite particles of light; it happened that Medellín was palpitating because of the kisses of the sun of December” (Gutiérrez González, 1958: 374). The poet uses Felipe to express his longing for Israel while resisting the restricted and static force of a catholic collective identity: “It would be wonderful to live in Medellín. I had dreamt of the Orient and now I am able to see it [...] there must be a spell over the land. Let’s go fast to the Promised Land!” Gutiérrez González encounters the power dimension of culture and characterizes it as an input for Sephardic collective identity.

The second part may deepen the understanding of the literary text and help us to better appreciate the way in which Gutiérrez González manages to redress his poem. The poet sees in Medellín the perfect place to pawn his heart but also he sees hopelessness, usury and materialism. The discussion between Mr. Lucas, Felipe, and Rosa reveals the tension between the Catholic and Sephardic cultures. The plot resonates to the widely held myth that the Jews are driven by an obsession for money. Mr. Lucas is looking forward to increasing his wealth, even though the source of wealth comes from planning his daughter’s marriage to Braulio, a wealthy man from Antioquia (Gutiérrez González, 1958: 377-383). Mr. Lucas’s comment: “Without doubt, I will not be able to reject him [...] you can see in me a father!” brings to light the economic and political aspect of the marriage. Rosa’s wealth can only be collected through Braulio, who is Antioqueño and rich. In Rosa’s case her wealth is transformed into position of control and influence. In addition, it seems that Felipe is drawing a line between Jews and Catholics when he separates the “civilized Spaniards” from the issue of the Jews’ usury. The fact that Felipe is from the city of Bogotá and is being rejected creates a great deal of tensions in cross-cultural relationships. The difference between the Jew and the non-Jew is marked by ethnicity and race. The Jewish aspects of Mr. Lucas stand in a relation of difference to the Catholic culture. It should be noted that Mr. Lucas’s behavior represents the surviving cultural strategies of *conversos* to cope with race and ethnicity issues. Mr. Lucas has a sense of duty toward ethnic solidarity and is obviously anxious to isolate his daughter from himself and the Antioqueños.

In the poem, Gutiérrez González’ rewriting of the myth of “Jewish values” represents the desire of the Catholic culture to preserve cultural homogeneity. This involves to work against any preserved identity and Jewish traditions:

Of a city, of crystal sky/ Shining blue like the wing of a cherub/ And from its soil like heaven/ Up to the skies the aroma ascends;/ Over that soil one doesn't see a thorn tree/ Under that sky one doesn't see a cloud.../ And in this charming land lives.../ The infamous race by God damned/ Race of merchants who speculate/ With all and over all Impious race/ Through which veins without warmth circulate/ The vile blood of the Jewish nation;/ And bill over bill accumulates/ The price of its honor, its merchandise,/ And as only personal needs one pays attention/ All is here bought and sold/ There the husband enslaves the wife/ Neither love receives nor pleasure enjoys/ And subject to her covetous father/ The innocent daughter... (Lines 1-20).

One element of the Jewish culture that repelled the character Felipe was usury. The historical pressure of the Catholic Church profoundly affects the behavior of Gutiérrez González. Felipe describes the Antioqueños with contempt, hatred and a heap of shame. In this perspective it is important to note that the poet's language originates in the history of the Jews in medieval Europe. It is also critical to consider that his culture formed along the same process as his consciousness and became evident to Gutiérrez González through the telling of his own story. The poet's love and hate for the Jewish nation is an illustration of Bakhtin's concept of the "word". For Bakhtin the individual consciousness is on the borderline between oneself and the other: "The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own'" (1981: 293-294). Neither the poet nor the narrator reveal the city that Felipe was referring to in the poem as Medellín. The city of the Jewish framing context must be located in the distance (Bogotá) and deprived of any familiar contact. In conclusion, the poet's identity is achieved through a contradictory dialogic process within him and mirrors the inner tension of the Catholic culture.

In the poem *Super Flumina Babilonia* (1959) (*Innermost Cleansing Experience in Babylon*), Gutiérrez González refers to the conflict between the Sephardic traditions and the Catholic culture in a typical situation of most Jews in exile where they link their experiences with the memory of exile from Israel. The predominant language of Gutiérrez González in the poem is couched in terms that allude to biblical sources, similar to the practice of the Jews in the Diaspora. The poet echoes Jeremiah's letter to the captives of the Israelites in Babylon.<sup>14</sup> Derrida states that "writing is [...] experienced in solitude by human responsibility; experienced by Jeremiah subjected to God's dictation" (Take thee the roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken into thee" (1978b: 9).

14 In Jeremiah's letter to the captives, the God of Israel would smite indiscriminately vengeance for the Babylonians who carried the Jews from Jerusalem, e.g., Verse 17: "Thus says the Lord of hosts; Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so bad. Jeremiah 29: 17. בתוא יתתנו רבדה תאו בערה תא ברהה תא מב הלשמ יננה תואבצ היהי רמא הכ". "ערמ הנלכאת אל רשא מיריעשה מיענתכ ז"י קוספ ט"כ קרפ הימרי

In the poem Gutiérrez González expresses his attitude toward the entire process of the event including the ecstasy of agony and their yearning to return to Judea: “In Babylon at the bank of the river/One day in captivity we sat/And our miserable faith we cried/Lamenting the absence of Zion” (Lines 1-4). It would seem that the poet’s purpose is to bring to our consciousness the longing for wholeness and stability that is only possible through a connection with Israel. Gutiérrez González achieves the effect of elevating the pain of humiliation in captivity into the hope that future generations will witness the destruction of the city of Babylon and the annihilation of those who robbed their freedom: “[...] Unfortunate daughter, city of Babylon! / Such ruin awaits you and such devastation/ Revenge will appease me/ For what you did to us today [...]” (Lines 29-32). The poet’s most decisive move is to set the experience of Jewish exile as the framework of his poem. Thus, the poem’s perspective relies mainly on the experience of being exiled. The poet’s technique is significant in that it indicates the adaptability of biblical Hebrew sources to the poet’s personal experience, a familiar technique among *conversos* who felt the need to cling to their roots.

#### **4. Jorge Isaacs’ poetry and sense of identity an indicative of resistance and struggle for recognition of ethnic and cultural diversity**

Jorge Isaacs’ poetry came to fruition in the nineteenth-century. He was born in 1837 in Cali. Isaacs’ father was a successful English Jew from Jamaica and had to convert to Catholicism in order to marry his wife, Manuela Ferrer Scarpetta, who was of Catalanian origins (Carvajal Mario, 1973: pp, 25-26). Isaacs was buried in Medellín according to his wishes. Bringing Isaacs’ ossuary to Medellín was only possible after the Antioqueños initiated a campaign that lasted ten years (Londoño de Franco, 1989: 360). Isaacs was perhaps more conscious of his Jewish origins than Barba Jacob and Gutiérrez González, and this awareness contributed to his attempts to construct a sense of Sephardic ethnic identity among the Antioqueño people. Isaacs believed firmly in the Sephardic heritage of the Antioqueños of his day. In the poem “*La Tierra de Córdoba*,” (1890) (“*The Land of Córdoba*”), written in honor to the General Córdoba,<sup>15</sup> Isaacs gives expression to his consciousness, which draws from his knowledge of the people and land of Antioquia.

In “*The Land of Córdoba*”, Isaacs’ language expresses his own reality and struggles to formulate what is meaningful for him. The poet’s language has a double function: First, Isaacs sees the struggle for liberty of the Antioqueño heroes as a

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15 The General José María Córdoba was born in Rionegro, Antioquia in 1799. In December 9, 1824 Córdoba's victory in Ayacucho sealed the American independence (Bronx, 1974: 270).

vestige of the Sephardic identity. Second, the poet weaves together the Antioqueños' way of life with intricate biblical allusions on the basis of that he considers was the point of departure of the Antioqueños' way of life. While Barba Jacob, Gutiérrez González describe the experience of the Antioqueños as yearning for meaning, Jorge Isaacs makes it possible to experience the history of Antioquia from a historical Jewish perspective in terms radically different from historians of the Latin America Catholic tradition of his day.<sup>16</sup>

First, the poet questions the heritage of the Antioqueños: "from which lineage do you descend proud people?" –and then reflects the cultural characteristics of the Sephardic Jews upon them. This demonstrates the Antioqueños' "pride" in their Sephardic heritage; they are productive like a "laborious Titan," and they "render in orchards the empires of the condor" (I.1-4). Isaacs questions the past and greatness of the Antioqueños and compares their behavior with that of men with a new vision of man and liberty: "Legion of Honor were your Gracos/<sup>17</sup> Córdoba was your Cid" (I. 8). In the verses "noble ancestry line of the hero of Ayacucho/ worthy of Praise" (I. 9-10), Isaacs describes the Sephardic lineage of Córdoba as an element that establishes the Antioqueño character. The poet expresses that the American continent has the blessing of freedom carried on from father to son: "And the sons of your sons carry the oil of the free/To die fighting, yes; to live enslave, no!" (I. 15-16).<sup>18</sup> Isaacs

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- 16 Luis Agudelo Ramirez, among other Antioqueño historians and researchers, contributes in a technical way to experience the history of Antioquia from a new perspective. The author expresses disapproval of the Official Historiography for having silenced the participation of the various Portuguese men who were under the orders of Heredia, Vadillo and Jorge Robledo in the conquest of Antioquia in 1537 and 1539. Agudelo Ramirez argues that it is time to recognize that the Conquest of Antioquia was a Hispanic-Portuguese effort. For the author "the Conquest of Antioquia was initiated as a dissident adventure by César and Vadillo, behind the back of Governor Heredia. The adventure was continued by Marshal Robledo also behind the back of Belalcázar". The author states that this historical omission could have been made due to political, economic or religious fears. "The Portuguese were taken for Jews; in fact, for the old guard Christian population the designation Marrano and new Christian was an epithet of worthiness and praise" Luis Alberto Sánchez, *Historia de América*, 1943: 225 cited in Agudelo Ramirez, 1986: 143-144.
- 17 Graco was a famous Roman tribune, born in 153 BC. He was ordered by his brother Tiberius to distribute the conquered lands. After Tiberius' death he became quaestor in Sardinia, promulgated an agrarian law and gave to the Italian people the right to suffrage. He took the land from the Senators and Justice Authority and gave it to the knights. He embellished Rome, created many colonies and used his rhetoric and virtues to gain the public sympathy (Roque Bárcia, 1881: 2: 999). Antioquia in the eighteenth century was a pioneer in Latin America's abolition of slavery. See Luis Eduardo Agudelo Ramirez about slaves' manumission initiated by Javiera Londoño (1757) and Lorenzo de Agudelo (1781) and the progressive active position of Antioquia about abolition of slavery in the early nineteenth century (1986: 142).
- 18 Humberto Bronx states that Córdoba the Hero of Ayacucho is valued for being an exemplary custodian of the democratic institutions which were founded with his efforts. The author also refers to the thoughts that stood out in the book which visitors signed on behalf of General Córdoba's hundredth death anniversary in

goes on to suggest that the fulfillment of liberty accomplished by Córdoba enhances the economic prosperity of the Andean region. The Andean region is portrayed as a “vestibule of Arcades” (II. 20) a realized democratic space which prospers in freedom. Isaacs charts a different approach in the Sephardic and Iberian shared history. While Iberians had despoiled the natives of their richness, the Sephardim gave “rich and noble sap to the native soil” (II, 28). This is an example of how Isaacs cherishes the Sephardic people’s love of liberty. The Antioqueños paved their way by sustaining and maintaining democratic practices and the essential being of the “nation”: “your labor is neither his, nor your beauty” (VI. 23). Isaacs attributes these accomplishments to their “daughters,” which are the “pride of Israel” (VI. 24). Isaacs believed that Spain was an influential power and a center of intellectual activity because of the outstanding contribution of the Spanish Jews. Therefore, the poet is suggesting that the Jews continued to give their share in the development of the Andean region.<sup>19</sup> Thus, Isaacs is removing Spain from the center of the world stage. For Isaacs, the ancestry of Antioqueños represent these ideas: “there is not trace [in them] of the Spanish Goth ancestry,”/ which when it had victory over Boadbil/ threw out of its domains the powerful race/ that made of Spain a world famous nation and a spring of civilization” (VII. 25-28). By ending the stanza with the image of the “fertile swarm of persecuted people” (VI. 31) and with the heroic contributions of Antioqueño heroes “Girardot<sup>20</sup> and Córdoba”, to the liberation of the American land from the Iberians, Isaacs places Antioquia outside the Iberian’s political and religious aspirations, “implacable cruelty” (VI.29), and as a community in which the Sephardic heritage is maintained. In exile, the *conversos* share a history of hardship, as is the case of Antioqueños who have been struggling since the beginning of their settlements to make the Andean region a home.

Second, Isaacs describes the Antioqueños in a manner that they recognize themselves as carrying on a Sephardic cultural tradition. The poet describes their natural world, which evokes the peace and harmony of a verdant biblical city. Isaacs draws attention to the “fertile lowlands” and the “beautiful hut” which lie “on the banks of the torrent of peaceful rumor” and are filled with the “joy of children” (IV. 1-4).

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1929. Bronx describes the one written by Jesús Ma.Giraldo Ramírez. In this entry Giraldo Ramirez stated: “Oh Great Córdoba you are the most distinguished example of the Antioqueños in whose veins flows the genuine oriental blood” (1974: 268).

19 See about the contribution of the Spanish Jews in expanding the intellectual life and economy of Spain in Paloma Díaz. (1997). *Los Sefardies Historia, Lengua y Cultura*.

20 Atanasio Girardot was born in Antioquia in 1791. He fought with Simon Bolivar in the Campaña Admirable and other battles. See Londoño de Franco about Girardot’s battle on the Mountain Bárbula, in Venezuela, where he fought on the side of Simón Bolívar, against the Royal Iberian Army for the liberation of the American land (1989:308).

In biblical times, Jews settled on the banks rivers where agriculture was possible. Water is an important symbol of fertility and spiritual birth.<sup>21</sup> For Isaacs, the Antioqueño environment has such grandeur that it reminds him of his Sephardic heritage and the biblical tradition. Isaacs evokes with vivid detail the Jewish customs of the Antioqueño women. They ensure the integration of the family with their “maternal caresses” and their “indulgent voices” (IV. 17-19). The poet compares the women from Antioquia with the daughters of Jesse, the father of the house of David: “beautiful and shy like the daughters of Jesse”<sup>22</sup> (IV. 21-22). Isaacs further compares the behavior of Ruth, a Jewish woman, to the behavior of the Antioqueño women dealing with chastity and modesty. Antioqueño women reflect the spiritual life of Ruth: “they are blessed seeds forbidden to the vile vice” (IV.28). The Antioqueños welcome the stranger into their homes with “open doors” (V. 3). They are known by the sense of community and democratic solidarity for they don’t hope to “get any recompense” (V. 4). They feel obliged to the community, not the government or the Church; Women live within the patriarchal system of the Jewish culture. Women are the ones who keep the family going. Ironically, women seem content since their sense of self is strengthened by their struggle: “they bring to the homes of your peasants, happiness and delight/ and help their husbands unwaveringly in the harvesting of the fields” (V. 5-7). Through the women’s solidarity to their husbands and their love for the elderly, Isaacs sees in women the “radiance of virgins” and “peace” (V. 8). The Antioqueños take pride in their hard work that is rewarded by an increase in their “flocks” and their “riches” (V. 11). The hard work that is rewarded hints at the second section of the Shema (Hear, O Israel: Adonai is our God, Adonai is One!) in which the Jews accept the Yoke of the commandments in exchange for survival blessings.<sup>23</sup> In the poem the hard work is a trace of Sephardic identity of the Conversos in exile. The Antioqueños play a major role in ensuring the continuation of their cultural community by helping those who “suffer hunger and thirst” (V. 12). In

21 The “torrent of peaceful rumor” also evokes Derrida’s concept of going into the desert so the poet can find freedom of experience. For Derrida, poetic inspiration can only occur in the absence of common language patterns and of logo-determined language, “thus lacking the prescription of truth’s rigor” (1978a: 68).

22 Jesse (Yishay) [...] David was the son of the Efratí of Bet-lehem-Yehuda, whose name was Yishay "בן דודו" (The first book of Samuel 16:12). ב"י קס"ז"ט קרפ, א לאומי-ישי ומשו הוהי סחל תיבמ הוה יתרפא שיא

23 “If you hearken diligently to my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in its due season, the early rain and the late rain, that thou mayst gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thy oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for their cattle, that thou mayst eat and be full”. רשא תוצמ לא ועמשת עמש מא היהו תפסאו שוקלמו הריו ותעב סכצרא רטמ יתתנו מכשפנ לכבו סכבבל לכב ודבעלו מכיהלא הוהי תא הבהאל מויה סכתא הוצמ 'יכנא תעבשו תלכאו תמהבל דדשב בשע יתתנו: דרהציו דשריתו. (Deuteronomy 11: 13-15) דנגד

the last verses of the stanza, Isaacs alludes to the Jewish tradition of loving their children and marrying within the group to reference the Antioqueño value system of his day.<sup>24</sup> Antioqueños will pass on the history and culture by multiplying like the “grapevine of Matpo [place] that vine shoots/extend at its surroundings” (V. 13-14). Isaacs praises the victory of Antioquia over the Spanish colonizers with a biblical simile, “Antakieh Antakieh,<sup>25</sup> redeemer Edessa” (VII.21). Isaacs identifies Edessa as the infant name of the Jewish woman Esther.<sup>26</sup> Just as Edessa is an infant name for Esther, who became very important in Jewish history, Isaacs considers the Antioqueños in their infancy. Esther interceded for the Jewish people before the Persian King against Haman. Haman was second in command, adviser of the Persian king, and author of a royal anti-Jewish edict.<sup>27</sup> Antioquia mirrors Edessa’s role and later the role of Esther as the redeemer of the captive Jewish nation: “Edessa was a servant like Agar”<sup>28</sup> (VII. 22) but after killing Haman the captive Jewish nation was liberated. In this perspective the liberation of Antioquia also meant freedom to the “blessed progeny” (VII. 23). Isaacs compares the liberation of Antioquia from the “cruel Iberians” with the struggles in the ancestral land. Isaacs compares Medellín the capital of Antioquia with a “Christian Sunamite,” (VIII. 4): Abishag Virgin of Shunam, who “attended King David [in his old age] and ministered to him”.<sup>29</sup> Isaacs associates Medellín with the historical experience of the Jewish people and with the dominant themes and images of Antioqueño

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- 24 See Gloria Mercedes Arango about endogamy. In Antioquia “one important reason to get married with blood relatives was the preservation of the property in the hands of a family group” (1993: 212).
- 25 Isaacs recalls the name “Antakieh” in memory of the oriental Diaspora community of Antioch where the Christians later transferred their loyalty. For a reference on the name Antioquia see (Carl H. Kraeling, 1932:132). Pedro Cieza de León recollects naming the province. “I remember when we founded it. Robledo said that he wanted to name it Antioquia and I answered him: Antioquia would be at peace in a place that was not plagued by wars like those in Syria” Lewin Boleslao, *La Inquisition in Hispanoamérica*, (n.d.), p.141, quoted In: Mesa Bernal, 1997: 179.
- 26 Edissa was the infant name of Ester "And he (Mordekhay) brought up Hadassa, that is, Ester, his uncle's daughter "דוד תב רתסא איה, הסדה תא נמוא יהיו" Ester, (Ch. 2), V. 7. The king Ahashverosh [...] set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti "(his wife) V. 18-19.
- 27 "[...] Haman had promised to pay to the kings treasuries for destroying the Jews. Also he gave (Hatakh) a copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them [...]"(Esther 4:7-8) "הסכה תשרפ" חי-זי קוספ'ג רתסא: "תדה בתכ נגשתפ תאו: מדבאל מיהוהיב קלמה יזניג לע לוקשל נמה רמא רשא ודימשהל נששב ותג רשא
- 28 Agar ( Hagar) "And Saray Abram's wife took Hagar, her maid, the mizrian, after Abram have dwelt ten years in the land of Kena'an [...]"(Genesis 16:3)"ירש הקתו" "ז. ט קרפ'ג קוספ תישארב [...]"[ענכ קראב
- 29 "והתרשתו תנכוס קלמל יהתו". Melakhim, Ch. 1. V. 3-4.

emancipation from the yoke of bondage; Medellín compared symbolically with Aholibah,<sup>30</sup> avoided falling into depravity by abhorring the “infamies and vices” (VIII. 16) committed by the Christian Iberians. Today Medellín delivers judgment just as Deborah did<sup>31</sup> when sitting in her tent “under the shade of the old palm tree” (VIII. 17-18). Through the image of the “Mount Tabor” (VIII. 20), from which Deborah summoned her army to defend Jerusalem, Isaacs commemorates the great deliverance brought by General Córdoba. Isaacs’s compares the deliverance by General Córdoba to Deborah’s referred as the “mother of Israel”.

The poetry of Porfirio Barba Jacob, Gregorio Gutiérrez González and Jorge Isaacs is a typical representation of the creative writing developed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when the writers were becoming aware of and embracing their Jewish heritage. Their poetry is indicative of the historic representation of the Antioqueño experience, provides powerful associations with the *conversos*’ experience in exile, and is representative of their Sephardic ethnic individual and collective identity. For these poets, history begins with the recognition of their connection with their own individual Sephardic heritage. The poets basically rewrote history with knowledge of both the relationship between Antioqueños social history and Jewish culture and the land of Israel. These authors continued the Sephardic struggle for emancipation and renegotiation of their ethnic individual and collective identity. Language as understood by Derrida and Bakhtin provides illuminating information about the interrelationship between Barba Jacob, Gutiérrez González and Isaacs and the Antioqueños. Derrida sees poetry as having a special function in maintaining the freedom of language. Thus for Derrida the poet’s access to free speech occurs when going into the desert, that is, by isolation, absence, and by separation from fixed formulation of language. Bakhtin establishes that language is social and not private. Thus, the poet’s utterance is more than mere depiction and may be valued for echoing his experience and also reflecting the tension between the Catholic and the Sephardic culture. However, the importance of their discourse should not be understood just as tension between Iberian nationalism and the Spanish *converso* culture but as an indicative of resistance and struggle for recognition of cultural diversity.

30 Isaacs execrates the vices of Aholiba and Ohola: "I will bring up an assembly upon them Aholibah (Jerusalem) and Oholah (Samaria) "הבהילהא פלשוריו הלוהא נורמוש ותומשו" (Ezequiel 23:4-5, 46.) "ו'מ קוספ ג'כ ג'כ קרפ לאקוזי": "זבלו הועזל והתא ותנו להק מהילע הלעה".

31 "And Devora a prophetesses, the wife of Lapidot, judged Israel at that time. And she dwelt under the palm tree of Devora [...] And she called and sent Barak [...] and said to him, Has not the Lord God of Israel commended, saying, go and gather your men to mount tabor [...] Judges 3: 4-6." איה תודיפל תשא האיבנ השיא הרובדו". Judges 3: 4-6. "הרובד רמת תחת תבשויו איהו: איהה תעב לארשי תא תתפש לארשי יהולא היחי הווצ אלה וילא רמאתו [...] קרבלארקתו חלשתו [...] הרובד רמת תחת תבשויו איהו: איהה תעב לארשי תא תתפש ד'ו-ד' קוספ ג' קרפ מיטפוש: "רובת רהב תכשמו ד'ל".

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