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Romans in Istanbul
Part 1: Historical and Literary Introduction

This article considers several possible avenues of research arising from the systematic study of large cemeteries, and combines the resultant findings with knowledge derived from other sources. The material used in this study was assembled and processed from four cemeteries in Istanbul where Jews were buried during the Ottoman era: Hasköy, Ortaköy, Kuzguncuk, and the Italian cemetery in Şişli.[1] But the sheer abundance of that material obliged us to choose a single case study that would best serve as an examplar. The case that we selected is a specific group from the Jewish community of Istanbul, with the surname of 'Romano', and one of its branches in particular, whose members were buried in the Hasköy cemetery and were known by the name 'Roman'. 'Roman' or 'Romano' is a generic name referring to one who comes from the city of Rome. This identification of the source of the name is supported, for example, by the commentary of Immanuel the Roman ('*Immanuel Ha-Romi*, 1270–*c*. 1328) on the Book of Proverbs, which makes reference to his brother Yehuda ben Moshe Romano.[2] In several sources, the name appears as 'Roman', a shortened form characteristic of Italian surnames. Thus, the name of the well-known family of printers, Soncino, appears in Istanbul with a different spelling than the accepted form in Italy, reflecting the way it was pronounced in Istanbul, Ṣonṣino; but in the various Hebrew sources, it also appears as Ṣonṣin. In the Veneto region of Italy, such shortened forms appear frequently among the Christians, e.g., Bragadin for Bragadino, Margaran for Margarano, and the like.[3] Inscriptions in the Jewish cemetery of Venice testify to ties with the 'Roman' family.[4] The name 'Romano' or 'Roman' also appears

1 Documentation Project of Turkish and Balkan Jewry, Computerized Database of Jewish Cemeteries in Turkey (Tel Aviv: Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center, Tel Aviv University) (hereafter: TAU DP).

2 Printed in Naples in 1487, and published in facsimile by the Jewish National and University Library, and Magnes Press in 1981, with an introduction by David Goldstein; see that Introduction, pp. 9, 14, 15, 21.

3 Minna Rozen, 'Metropolis and Necropolis: The Cultivation of Social Status among the Jews of Istanbul in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in Rozen, *A Journey Through Civilizations: Chapters in the History of Istanbul Jewry*, 1453–1923, (Brepols, forthcoming).

4 Aldo Luzzato, *La communità ebraica di Venezia e il suo antico cimitero* (Milano: Edizioni Polifilo, 2000), pp. 568–71.

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among non-Jews from Rome who lived in other parts of Italy,[5] and is sometimes used simply to indicate ties to the ruling powers of the Roman Empire.[6] Since 'Roman' or 'Romano' is a generic surname, we cannot conclude that all who went by this name in Istanbul were from one family, and we should treat with caution any family-tree drawn up on the basis of material assembled from the city's cemeteries.

This being the case, what exactly can the material at our disposal tell us? To answer this question, it is necessary to supplement the information derived from the cemetery with external sources. The more plentiful the latter, the richer the portrait of the past that emerges from the cemetery. It is important to note that the picture can never be complete, for the types of sources at our disposal are not of equal quantity or quality; likewise, parts of certain sources were destroyed over time, so that the remaining material is liable to provide us with a somewhat distorted impression. It is thus imperative that we combine the knowledge derived from the cemetery with that obtained outside its walls; and though that too can yield only partial answers, these latter can certainly be instructive and bring us closer to a picture of the past.

In approaching our topic, the following questions should be considered:

- How far did the families bearing the surname Romano spread?
- From when did families with the surname Romano reside in Istanbul?
- Was there a common denominator for the locations where the Romanos resided in Istanbul?
- Can we identify the family burial plots of the Romanos?
- What can the epitaphs teach us about the values and life circumstances of the dead and those who mourned them?
- What knowledge can be gleaned from the material aspects of the tombstones?
- What can we learn by merging the information derived from the tombstones with that drawn from other sources?

Let us now examine each of these questions in turn.

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5 Thus, for example, a non-Jew named 'Piero Roman' appears in a discussion between two Jews regarding the payment of taxes in Casale Monferrato in the fifteenth century. See R. Yosef Colon, *Responsa*, D. Pines edition (Jerusalem: A. Joseph, 1970), sec. 37.

6 See, for example, the fictitious correspondence etween King Virsuris and Alphonso the 'righteous' regarding his investigations in the libraries of Rome: 'Booklet of Marcus Consul Romano who sits in judgement on the Jews in Jerusalem' (Salomone Aben Verga, *Liber Schevet Jehuda*, ed. by M. Wiener [Hannover: Carol Rümpler, 1855], sec. 64, p. 97).

1 How far did the families bearing the surname Romano spread?

The dispersal of the Romano family took place quite early, and extended beyond what later became the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire; most certainly, it followed at some point the general arrival of the Jews in Rome. In addition to the aforementioned Immanuel the Roman and his brother Yehuda Romano, from the thirteenth century, we find the following statement at the end of the *Tosefot Ha-Rosh* (*bḤul.* 141b): 'I, Mordekhai son of R. Menaḥem (may God protect and redeem him), known as Romano, have written these addenda for myself in the state of Tulitula, and completed them on the fourth day [of the week], the tenth day of the month of Shevaṭ in the year 5106'. In other words, Mordekhai ben Menaḥem of Rome completed these addenda on 12 January 1346, in the city of Toledo, Spain. It should be recalled that if the descendants of the author of these addenda found their way to Istanbul after the Expulsion of 1492, they carried the name Romano, though it is most likely that from a cultural standpoint they were by then distinctly Spanish.

If we consider the Mediterranean Basin as a whole in the late Middle Ages and the dawn of the modern era, it becomes clear that what is true of the city of Istanbul is true of the larger region as well. We have available to us two types of sources: in addition to the epitaphs, there are onomastic materials derived from the community records, Hebrew legal and other documents, poetry, homiletic literature, and commentary, as well as archival material of non-Jewish provenance. Obviously, both types of documents, separately and together, do not offer a consummate picture of the dispersion of the Jews of Rome in the Mediterranean Basin in general and the Ottoman Empire in particular, for the same reasons enumerated above concerning Istanbul.

The computerized catalogue of tombstones of Turkish Jewry, which comprises 60,000 tombstones from 1582 to 1991, includes 248 stones with the name Romano or Roman. A total of 227 of these tombstones are found in Istanbul, thirteen in Izmir,[7] three in Edirne, three in Bodrum, one in Çorlu, and one in Tekirdağ. Of 7,157 marriages registered in Istanbul between the years 1903 and

7 It is important to note that the 'old' cemetery of Izmir is in fact new and burials apparently began there only in 1880. The ancient cemetery in Bahrı Baba, which existed from the seventeenth century, was destroyed in the city's development, and it is possible that there were additional Romano family tombstones there. Shmuel Roman of Izmir is also mentioned in 1617 in Izmir. *Responsa of the Maharit* [R. Yosef ben Moshe Mi-Trani], part II (Tel Aviv, 1959; facsimile, Lemberg, 1861), Even Ha-'Ezer, sec. 43; *New Responsa of the Maharitaṣ* [R. Yom Ṭov Ṣahalon] (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute, 1981), sec. 25.

1922, 59 individuals bore the name Romano. There are numerous Romanos in the Jewish communities of Bulgaria, in particular Sofia and Plovdiv.[8] In the birth registry of the Belgrade community, which includes a total of 7,623 births from 1819 to 1941, by contrast, only two Romanos are listed. The marriage registry of this same community, which numbers 2,859 records covering the period from 1864 to 1941, contains ten Romanos. The death listings of that community, which begin in 1888 and end in April 1941, and comprise 1,574 deaths, show only two Romanos. Similarly, we find small numbers of them in Serbia, Bosnia, and northwestern Greece (Macedonia and Epirus).[9] We find one Romano in Cyprus at the end of the 16th century.[10] And in 1683, a *dayyan* (Jewish religious-court judge) by the name of Yisrael Romano is mentioned in Egypt.[11] From the late eighteenth century, we find references to members of the Romano or Romani family in Benghazi, Libya.[12] A number of the family members are buried in the Mount of Olives cemetery in Jerusalem.[13] The earliest mentions of the name that we have in our possession from the Ottoman era are from Istanbul, Epirus, Thrace, and Macedonia; in Thrace, the name appears mostly in Edirne, while in Macedonia, most of the instances are found in Salonika. If we may here generalize, it can be assumed that the majority of people bearing this surname but living in other places emigrated from the above locations. In any event, most of the examples available to us should be treated as secondary and tertiary emigrants (or beyond).

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8 Among the Jews of Bulgaria too, the common assumption was that those bearing the name Romano originated from Rome (H. Keshales, *History of the Jews of Bulgaria* [Hebrew], pt. 1 [Tel Aviv: Davar, 1971], p. 241). A few examples of such members of the Romano family are given in Appendix 1 below.

9 Romanos in these centres are exemplified in Appendix 2 below.

10 R. Eliyahu ibn Ḥayyim, *Responsa* (Jerusalem, 1960), sec. 31.

11 R. Mordekhai Halevi, *Responsa Darkhei No'am* (Jerusalem, 1970; facsimile, Venice 1697), *Ḥoshen Mishpaṭ*, sec. 56–57; see also R. Avraham ben Mordekhai Halevi, *Responsa Ginat Veradim* (Jerusalem, 1970; facsimile Istanbul, 1716), EH 3:8; R. Ya'aqov Faraji, *Responsa* (Jerusalem, 1999), sec. 23, 61.

12 See http://www.roumanifamily.co.il

13 R. Asher Leib Brisk, *Ḥelqat Meḥoqeq*, pt. I (Jerusalem, 1901), p. 7. In the section for Jews from Rouse, Bulgaria, in the Mount of Olives cemetery in Jerusalem, Sara de Romano bat Ya'aqov Medini is buried (d. 1897). The burial of Yehoshu'a (1814) is mentioned in the book's index (ibid., p. 1) (line 15, sec. 17). Also mentioned (ibid., p. 3) without a year of burial but in proximity to tombstones from 1827, and among graves of Jews from Istanbul and Bursa, are the graves of Yosef Romano, Señora de Elia Romano, and Elia Romano himself (line 17, sec. 13, 14, 15). In a group of graves of the Medina family, the graves of Rivqa de Romano and Reina de Romano are mentioned (ibid., p. 4, line 18, sec. 23 and 26). Alongside them are tombstones from the 1820s.

2 From when did families with the surname Romano reside in Istanbul?

An overview of the material before us indicates that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the majority of the Jews by the name of Roman or Romano who migrated in the direction of the Ottoman Empire settled in Istanbul, from where they spread far and wide. In relating to the findings of the Istanbul cemeteries, we must bear in mind that the ancient Jewish cemetery in Balat was built over by new construction in the 1950s, and that of Kasım Paşa seems already to have fallen into ruin in the late sixteenth century. Consequently, we are unable to date the earliest presence of the Roman-Romano families in Istanbul based on cemetery findings. In the late 15th century, even before the Spanish Expulsion, there were already Jews in the city who had come from various parts of Italy, but it is not possible to determine precisely from where.[14] The earliest Roman family tombstone that we discovered is that of Kalomira, wife of David Romano, who died on 20 Tammuz 5343 (10 July 1583). Her burial was apparently one of the first at the Hasköy cemetery, which was inaugurated by sultanic decree in November 1582. Like the other tombstones from this and subsequent decades, it is a simple stone bearing a brief inscription that reveals little about the deceased [Photograph No. 1].[15]

3 Was there a common denominator for the locations where the Romanos resided in Istanbul?

Of the 227 tombstones of people bearing the surname Romano in Istanbul, 131 are found in the Hasköy cemetery; 82, in the cemetery in Kuzguncuk (on the Asian side of the Bosphorus Strait); 13, in Ortaköy (on the European side of the Bosphorus); and 6, in the cemetery of the 'Italian' foreign community, in the Şişli quarter.

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14 See, for example, the mention of Q. Q. [Qahal Qadosh] Talian (corruption of 'Italian') in Istanbul by R. Eliyahu Capsali as quoted in the *Responsa of R. Yosef Colon* (Venice, 1519), sec. 83, p. 84b. See also M. Benayahu, *Rabbi Eliyahu Capsali of Crete, Chief Rabbi and Historian* (Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Diaspora Research Institute, 1983), pp. 28–29. The quote makes reference to anti-Jewish rioting that took place prior to 1480, the year that R. Yosef Colon died.

15 See on this topic: Minna Rozen, *Hasköy Cemetery: Typology of Stones* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University and The Center for Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania, 1994), pt. I, p. 14.

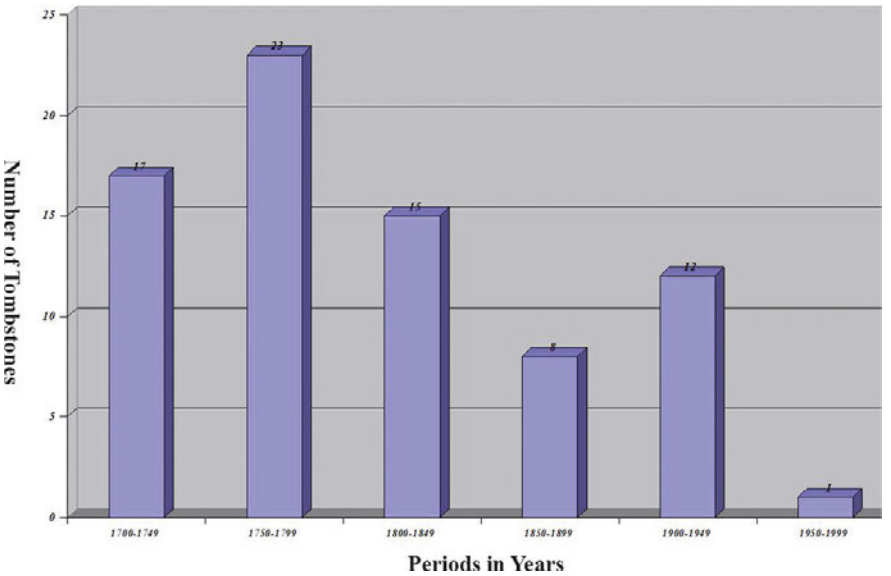


Fig. 1: Breakdown of the tombstones of Romano family in the Kuzguncuk Cemetery, by period.

The burial of individuals with the surname Romano in the Kuzguncuk cemetery apparently began at the start of the eighteenth century;[16] the earliest Romano burial there for which we have a precise date is that of Alta Donna (Italian for 'exalted lady')[17], wife of Nissim Romano, who died of the plague on 22 Ḥeshvan 5465 (20 November 1704) [Photograph No. 2]. The earliest tombstone that we discovered in the Ortaköy cemetery bearing an exact date is that of Rivqa, widow of Shelomo Romano, who died on 19 Elul 5477 (26 August 1717). The conclusion that emerges from this material is that the familial-geographical ties of the emigrants were closely connected with their area of residence in Istanbul, even generations after the migration. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the place of residence of the emigrants from the province of Rome and their descendants was clearly the Hasköy neighbourhood, and they began to relocate to other neighbourhoods only in the mid-seventeenth century at the earliest, with their new destination being primarily the Kuzguncuk neighbourhood. Ostensibly, this migration can shed light on

16 See Photograph No. 1, above.

17 The Italian origin of this name is substantiated by Shlomo Simonsohn's study *Between Scylla and Charybdis: The Jews of Sicily* (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2011), pp. 347, 400–401, 476, 478, 483, 485–86, 489.

Fig. 2: Aynalı Kavak Kasrı [The Palace of Mirrors].

the socio-economic status of these families. Until 1660, Hasköy was characterized by residents of high social and economic standing. Members of ancient families in the city, who were repelled by the overcrowding in the Jewish neighbourhood near the palace walls, built themselves spacious homes in Hasköy,[18] which was the private property of the Sultan and, as such, enjoyed favourable treatment during the early centuries of Ottoman rule. Mehmet the Conqueror ordered the planting of 12,000 cypress trees, and orchards of peaches and pears, on its hills sloping down to the Golden Horn, and Sultan Ahmet I (16032–1618) built his Palace of Mirrors, Aynalı Kavak Kasrı, near the orchards.

In the sixteenth century, the neighbourhood was described as having 3,000 splendid homes, some on the waterfront and a number of them sur-

18 See for example the actions of the family of Lady Khrisula the Karaite during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Minna Rozen, 'The Trust of Lady Khrisula of Istanbul: Urban Reality and Dynastic Continuity', in Rozen, *Journey Through Civilizations*, forthcoming.

Fig. 3: Seafront homes in Kuzguncuk, in the nineteenth century.

rounded by expansive fruit gardens, with some even boasting greenhouses where oranges and lemons were grown. The Hamon family, physicians to the Sultan, built a two-story stone house there. Following the fires that struck the ancient Jewish Quarter near Topkapı palace in 1569 and 1589, many elected to rent out their destroyed properties and build a new home in Hasköy. [19] But from 1660 onward, again after a huge fire that consumed the old Jewish quarter, Hasköy was inundated with thousands of Jews, and its character was drastically altered. Originally a village on the outskirts of the city, it became the largest Jewish quarter in Greater Istanbul, with all that that implied. For the next two hundred years, Hasköy became a place of the lower classes, and ultimately, the quintessential slum neighbourhood of Jewish Istanbul.[20]

This was, more or less, the point at which the Jews began to relocate to Kuzguncuk, on the Asian side of the Bosphorus. This now became the stylish neighbourhood where wealthy Jews resided, at first only in the summer months, and later, year-round, in magnificent villas on the seashore (*yalılar*, in Turkish). This movement of populations testifies to the social standing of the Romano families in the city.

19 Minna Rozen and Benjamin Arbel, 'Great Fire in the Metropolis: The Case of the Istanbul Conflagration of 1569 and its Description by Marcantonio Barbara' in *Mamluks and Ottoman: Studies in Honour of Michael Winter*, ed. by David Wasserstein and Ami Ayalon (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 134–63.

20 On the Hasköy neighbourhood, see: M. Rozen, *A History of the Jewish Community in Istanbul: The Formative Years, 1453–1566* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2002), pp. 216–17.

4 Can we identify the family burial plots of the Romanos?

A thorough examination of all tombstones bearing the name Roman or Romano in Istanbul's Jewish cemeteries offers some idea of the ties within this group, and between the Romanos and Jews from other places of origin, in the neighbourhoods where they resided. In Hasköy, the primary neighbourhood inhabited by the Romanos, we were able to identify several major blocs of family members. One of the first methods of identification is through burial plots. In the first centuries of the Hasköy cemetery's existence, distinguished families would purchase burial plots that would be sufficient for several generations; this was a sign of status, no less than a splendid mansion.[21]

It should be recalled that due to damage to the cemetery over the generations, tombstones were moved, washed away, relocated, or uprooted, so that the picture that meets our eyes is not an exact one; nonetheless, it can be indicative of trends. In our field work, we divided the cemetery into sections of 25 square metres; thus, the presence of a group of stones bearing the same family name within a given section can attest to chronological proximity in death, but apparently also to family ties. In many instances, this is substantiated by the inscription on the tombstone. Out of 131 Roman or Romano tombstones in Hasköy, we can see on the map before us [Map 1] concentrations of tombstones, consisting in most cases of the nuclear family only.

Of particular interest is the concentration of tombstones bearing the shortened version of the surname (Roman) in section 6-5 and in the adjacent section 5-5, which is reminiscent of the pattern of the family residences in life. This would appear to be a group whose members all have blood or marriage ties [Map 2].

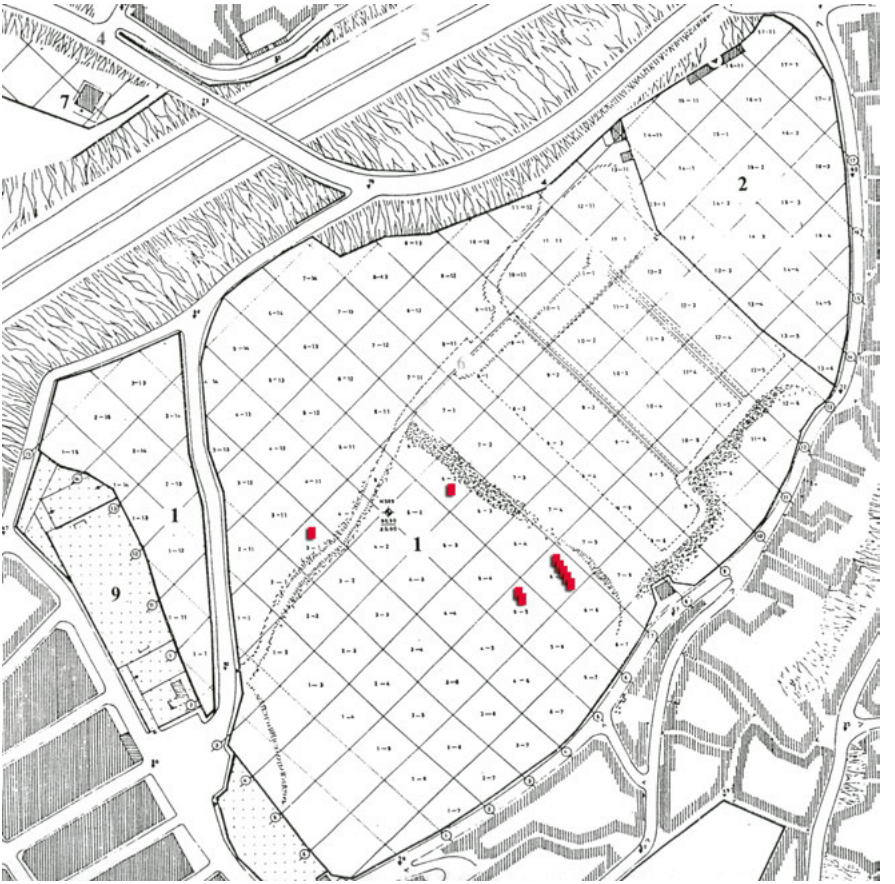
The first woman with the surname Roman to be buried in Hasköy (or at least, the earliest one whose grave we found) was Mazal Ṭov, wife of Mevorakh Roman, who died in 1641. Near her is the tombstone of her elderly husband, who died on 10 Av 5403 (26 July 1643) [Photograph No. 3]. Adjacent to them is their niece, a young betrothed woman, Mazal Ṭov bat Teshuva Roman, who was only 15 years old when she died on 22 Ḥeshvan 5404 (2 November 1643) [Photograph No. 4]. Her bereaved parents passed away not long after her. We were unable to find the father's tombstone, but we did locate that of her mother near her: Simḥa, widow of Teshuva Roman, who died on 4 Iyar 5404

21 See for example: Rozen, *Hasköy Cemetery*, pt. I, pp. 48–51; pt. II, pp. 245–52; R. Yeḥiel Basan, *Responsa* (Istanbul, 1737), sec. 21, p. 31a.

Map 1: Distribution of the Romanos in Hasköy Cemetery, 1582–1989.

(10 May 1644) [Photograph No. 5]. Four years later, on 18 Tevet 5408 (13 January 1648), Sulṭana bat Teshuva ben Moshe Roman, third cousin of Mazal Ṭov and wife of Shelomo Hamon, died [Photograph No. 8]. Near her is buried Mazal Ṭov's second cousin, Mevorakh ben Moshe Roman, d. 6 Ḥeshvan 5409 (23 October 1648) [Photograph No. 10]. Also close to her grave are those of Teshuva ben Mevorakh Roman, who died childless on 18 Adar II 5426 (25 March 1666) [Photograph No. 11], and Reina bat Yiṣḥaq Roman, who died on 18 Tishrei 5436 (7 October 1675) [Photograph No. 12].

The tombstones of two members of the Roman family are found in other sections. One is in a pile of gravestones heaped together when a section of the cemetery was flattened to make way for old-new graves transferred from the



Map 2: Distribution of the Roman family in Hasköy Cemetery, 1582–1703.

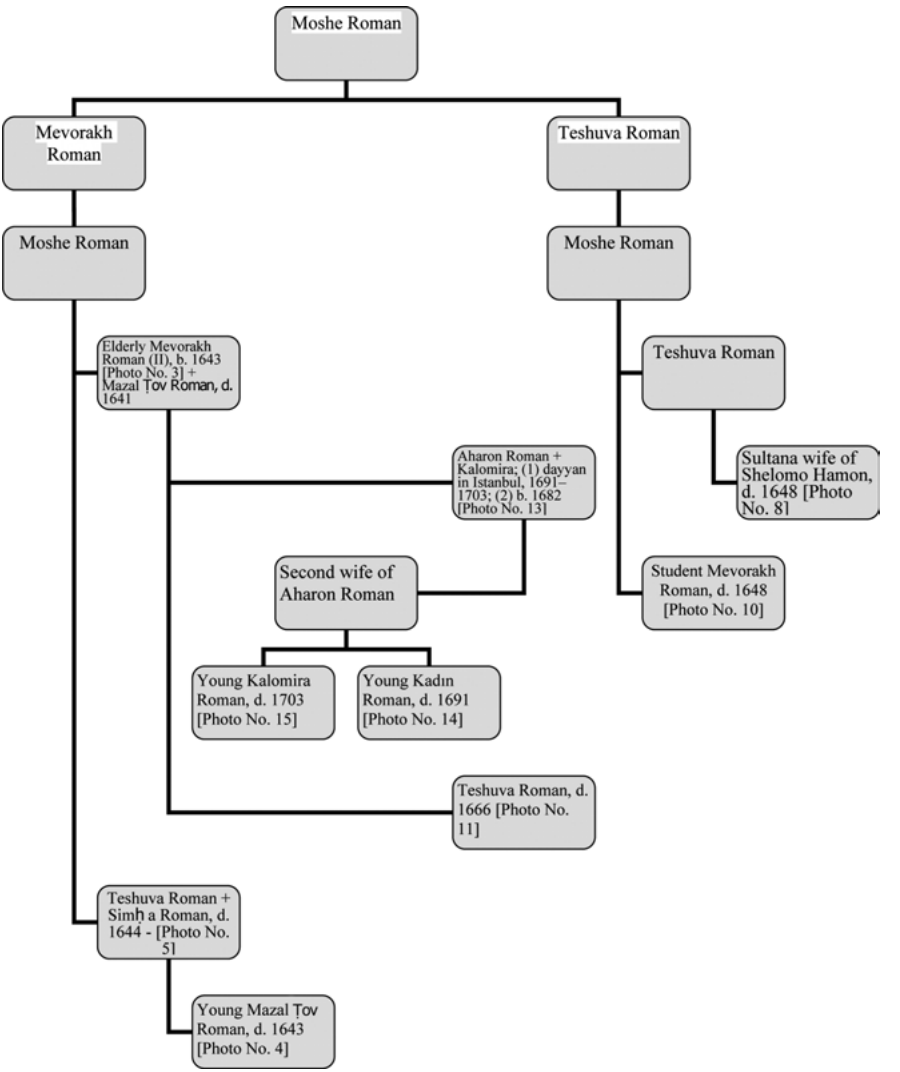
area where the ring road around Istanbul was laid (section 6-2);[22] the other is in a distant section (3-1). The latter is the stone of Kalomira, wife of Aharon Roman, who died giving birth to twins, together with the infants, on 22 Ḥeshvan 5444 (12 November 1683) [Photograph No. 13]; the former, the grave of Kalomira bat Aharon Roman, who died on 23 Tishrei 5464 (3 October 1703) [Photograph No. 15]. This indicates that the unfortunate Aharon Roman remarried after the death of his first wife, Kalomira. He had a daughter named Kadın, who did not live long, dying on Sunday, 26 Adar I 5451 (25 March 1691) [Photograph No. 14]. Subsequently, another daughter was born to him, whom he

22 *Hasköy Cemetery*, pt. I, pp. 8–11; plate 1 on p. 1, plate 2 on p. 3, plate 3 on p. 5.

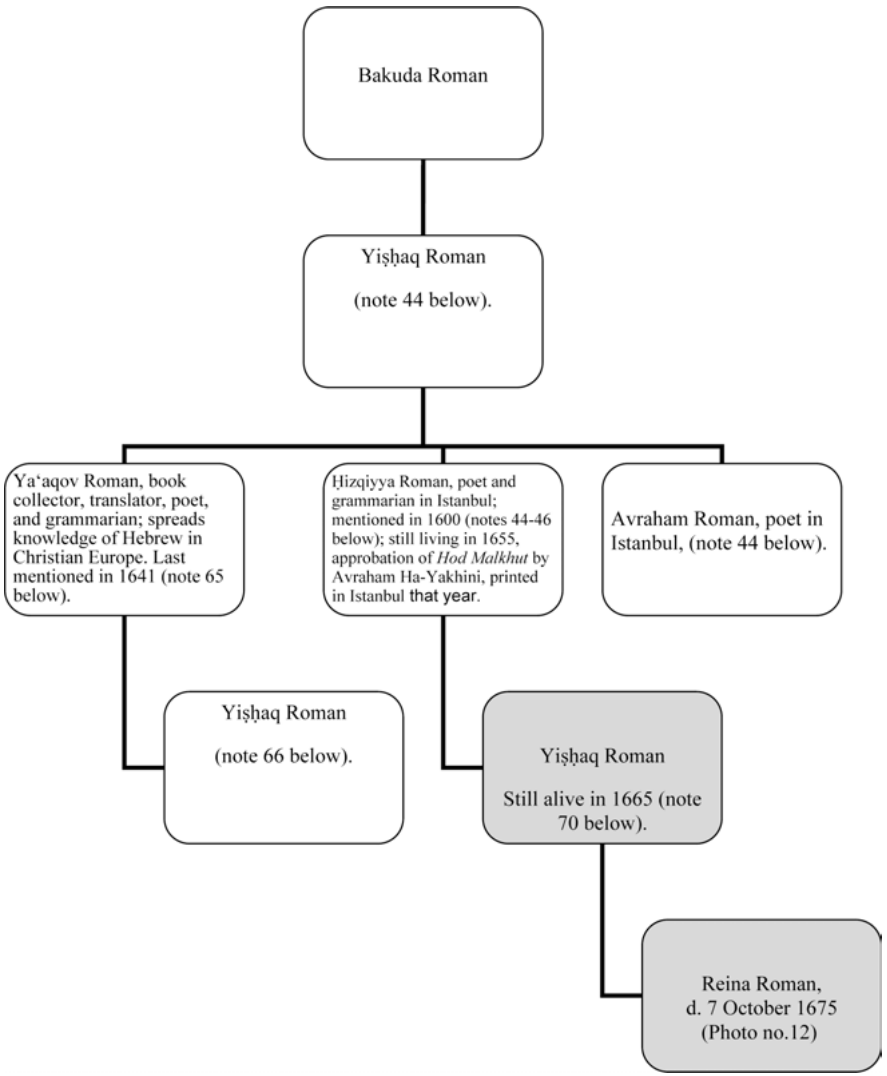
named after his first wife, Kalomira. He did not live to see her marry, dying during her lifetime.

Kalomira, daughter of Aharon Roman, is the last person in the cemetery with the shortened version of the family name. After her death in 1703, this form of the name no longer appears. It is our assumption that all those found in the Hasköy cemetery who bear the shortened family name are members of the same extended family. The repeated use of the same names, the proximity of the graves, the style of the inscriptions, and the style of the tombstones themselves draw a connection between them.

Two family trees of the Romans are presented below. The parts in grey are based on the tombstones in the Hasköy cemetery, and the individuals whose names are recorded there share marital and blood ties. The names highlighted in white represent generations who were not found in the cemetery but whose existence was reconstructed based on traditional Jewish naming patterns. The sections that have no colour appear in the second tree and are based on the literature of the period; in such instances, the connection between the individuals is sometimes not sufficiently well-established. For example, Reina bat Yiṣḥaq Roman could be the grandchild of either Ḥizqiyya Roman or Ya'aqov Roman. Moreover, the connection between the first tree and the second tree cannot be proven directly but only by circumstantial evidence: (1) location of gravestones – Reina Roman is buried near the Romans from the first family tree; (2) style of epitaphs – the epitaphs of the individuals in Family Tree No. 1 and that of Reina Roman are all imbued with the Sefardi poetry of the Golden Age, in a way that does not resemble other epitaphs in the cemetery; (3) social status – members of both branches of the family moved in similar social circles.



Family Tree 1: A. The Roman family in Hasköy Cemetery (generations highlighted in white are reconstructed).



Family Tree 1: B. The Roman family in Istanbul.

5 What can the epitaphs teach us about the values and life circumstances of the dead and those who mourned them?

An examination of the tombstones of both branches of the Roman family, as outlined above, points to the great effort and expense invested in the epitaphs. Lengthy and intricate inscriptions such as these are a sure indication of wealthy and distinguished figures. The high quality and distinctive nature of the epitaphs may also allude to a connection between the two Roman branches depicted in the two family trees; and if we take into account the information derived from external sources on the presence of poets in the family, there are grounds for speculating that the inscriptions were 'homemade'. The richness of the poetry engraved in the family tombstones is particularly noticeable when compared with the stone of Mikri, wife of Yiṣḥaq Hamon [Photograph No. 19]; Mikri was the beloved spouse of a wealthy and powerful man, but not to the extent of purchasing poetry on her behalf such as that found on the Roman family stones. In order to merit such epitaphs, one needed to belong to the Roman family.

On virtually all of these tombstones, we find original poems not seen in the cemetery beforehand, ripe with rich and eloquent images based on the skilful interweaving of biblical passages and fragments of verses, allusions to *midrashim*, and biblical commentary. In several instances, we see conventions similar, or identical, to those of the Sefardi Golden Age poetry.

The inscription on the tombstone of the elderly Mevorakh Roman [Photograph No. 3] directs the following message to passersby: 'As witness to all who will ask: Whose burial cave is this? Think of the end of each and every man, to be chiseled in stone and wrapped in a cloth shroud'; in other words, this is the human state, since we all must hearken to God. The letters inscribed in the stone have no purpose other than to instruct man to worship God. Nonetheless, passers-by will know that every man should feel the pain of his father's death, and especially a father like Mevorakh Roman, who, it is clear, was a good father, and benevolent to all his extended family. Thus the inscription combines acquiescence to the Divine decree, and the duty to uphold God's commandments, with the pain and sorrow felt by all members of his family over the death of a beloved patriarch. All these meanings are understood only when we break down the inscription into the biblical passages of which it is composed, and fully explore their interpretation.

No less elegant is the inscription on the tombstone of Mevorakh Roman's niece, Mazal Ṭov bat Teshuva Roman [Photograph No. 4]. Unlike the inscrip-

tion on her uncle's stone, there is here no acceptance of fate but a profound sense that the life of her parents has been stripped of all meaning with the death of their beautiful daughter, their first and only offspring, betrothed but not yet married when her life was cut short. The inscription begins with the words: 'This will be called a headstone', which apparently allude to the tombstone itself. But when we pursue the source of the term *even ha-rosha* [literally, 'head stone'] and the *midrashim* concerning its meaning, the expression takes on a deeper meaning. The headstone was the final stone placed at the apex of an arch or dome, as constructed before the introduction of iron. If the headstone was removed, the structure collapsed.

At the same time, according to the *Midrash Tanḥuma*, the headstone is the stone on which the biblical Jacob placed his head when he lay down to sleep en route to Haran.[23] That night, he dreamed his famous dream in which a ladder was set on the ground and its top reached the sky, with angels ascending and descending upon it. There, his inheritance, the Land of Israel, was promised to him. The stone under his head was thus the foundation of Jacob's house and his legacy. Hence, the headstone in the epitaph of the young Mazal Ṭov is the opposite of what it was intended to be. Their only daughter was supposed to be the cornerstone of her parents' existence; and now, by dying before she had fulfilled her destiny of perpetuating their lineage, she had taken from them any reason to live. Their lives had become a useless burden for them.

When the mother of Mazal Ṭov died approximately one year after her daughter's death, she was already referred to as 'the widow of the wise and exalted Teshuva Roman' [Photograph No. 5], meaning that the young woman's father had died a short time after her, and before the death of her mother. Indeed, the grief-stricken father and mother did not live long after the death of their only daughter.

For the mother's epitaph, the poet employed a series of contrasts: The woman was a daughter of kings – an allusion to her lofty origins – but her privileged status did not prevent time from digging 'a pit and a trench in place of burnt and meal offerings, and instead of clothing embroidered with gold mountings, there is a groan, and instead of beaten-work, there is a scream'. The 'burnt and meal offerings' could be referring to what should have been her lot as a daughter of kings, but also to the wedding festivities of her daughter, which did not take place. The poet uses verses that portray a king's daughter secluded in her home, dressed in a garment inlaid with gold; but she is of course concealed in the earth, and instead of clothing embroidered with gold

23 According to Zech 4:7; *Midrash Tanḥuma* (ed. Buber, Vilna: Romm, 1885), *Parashat Toledot*, sec. 20, s.v. *ketiv shir* (Gen 28).

there is a moan of grief. He goes on to allude to the fate of the beloved daughters of Jerusalem at the time of the city's destruction – instead of the upswept hair of a proud young woman comes a shriek of pain.

The use of plays on biblical phrases also continues in the next parallelism, in which the author uses the expression *sar menuḥa* [quartermaster] (Jer 51:59), that is, the king's companion for pleasure and amusement (according to the Radaq's interpretation), turning it into *sha'ar menuḥa* [a gate of rest], which collapses at the sight of the woman's tragedy. The reference is doubtless to the death of her only daughter, which caused her own demise and led to the end of the days of rejoicing, the days of her life. When the poet speaks of the woman whom God rebuked, he is referring not only to her death but also to the punishment she suffered by the death of her only daughter. Of her pain, he writes that her eyes shed 'wells and wells [of tears]', alluding to Abravanel's interpretation of the phrase *be'erot be'erot* (wells whose water cannot be contained, meaning tears without end).[24] In the case of Mazal Ṭov's death, her parents' grief was exceedingly great, since they had no other child.

In general, it would seem that the death of a young son before he had married was an even greater tragedy than that of a daughter, since he would otherwise have carried on the family name. Thus Moshe Roman mourned his son of noble countenance [Photograph No. 10], who died in the prime of life: instead of a wedding canopy, his father was compelled to prepare for him a house of stone. All that remained for him to do was to request that the soul of his son might find peace and thereby atone for the father's sins.

But on the tombstones of the Roman family, the mourning for the death of young daughters not yet married is no less intense than that for sons. It was not only the young Mazal Ṭov Roman who was the object of bitter grief on the part of her parents; the mother of Reina bat Yiṣḥaq Roman also expressed her overwhelming sorrow at her daughter's death. Her words can be understood in two ways, and she was apparently unconcerned about how the inscription on her daughter's tombstone could be interpreted [Photograph No. 12]. Echoing the words of R. Yehuda Alḥarizi, the author (apparently a family member) lamented the treachery of time, which 'drew his bow and killed a queen' – a theme that recurs frequently in Sefardi poetry. The mother decries time, which 'set a trap for my tongue and my lips'. This may be an allusion to words spoken by the mother during the daughter's lifetime, words that she now regrets; or she may be referring to words that denied the will of

24 According to Abravanel's commentary (Warsaw: Levensohn, 1862) on Deut 31, s.v. *we-hine ha-dibbur*: 'For my people have done a twofold wrong: They have forsaken me, the fount of living waters, and hewn them out cisterns, broken cisterns, which cannot even hold water'.

God and His decree, which treacherous time has caused her to utter. From the day that time, the traitor, struck her queen – her daughter – the mother's heart is broken by day and burnt by night. Particularly heart-rending are her words of love to her dead daughter, and the mother's promise to her – the selfsame promise given by a groom on the day of his wedding to recall the destruction of Jerusalem: 'If I forget thee, may my right hand forget its cunning', since 'love is as strong as death'. Likewise, the description of her tortured longings and the nightmares that haunt her sleep, as 'my soul goes to her each night, and returns each morning'.

Life without offspring, and death without offspring, were considered in Jewish society of the early modern period to be a bitter fate. A person who died childless did not fulfill his destiny on earth, and his death was more terrible than any other in that it lacked all meaning.[25]

When the epitaph of Teshuva ben Mevorakh Roman, who died without issue, was composed, the poet had him speak as if he himself were mourning his own death: 'my rivers of tears well up', he states, referring to the floods of his tears, for 'I will die without sons, there is no counsel'. It is written in the Zohar that he who dies without sons is considered dead [for eternity] (*Zohar* III, 34b). The kabbalistic notion is that the sons of a man are what grant him eternal life. If there are no sons, there is no immortality. And for this, there is no remedy, and his soul is gathered unto its Maker in pain.

The next images in the epitaph allude to nature: The heart of the deceased pounded like an endless last rain in the Garden of Eden on the souls of the sons. Sons that were unborn? Sons who were born and died? The dead person does not tell us, but those who mourned him doubtless knew. What is left to the deceased but to study Torah? Thus the author writes that the one who has died will turn his nights into days for the sake of the One who turns nights into days. But in the end, there is no fragrance like the scent of a man's offspring. There is no pain like the pain of a man who died without issue [Photograph No. 10].

For hundreds of years, until the start of the nineteenth century, the death of wives was a common occurrence. Disease was only one reason; failed pregnancies, and childbirth itself, were an additional and not infrequent cause.

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25 Rozen, *Jewish Community in Istanbul*, pp. 99–111; Minna Rozen, 'The Life Cycle and the Meaning of Old Age in the Ottoman Period', in *Daniel Carpi Jubilee Volume*, ed. by D. Porat, A. Shapira, and M. Rozen (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1996), pp. 109–75; J. R. Hacker, 'Pride and Depression: Polarity of the Spiritual and Social Experience of the Iberian Exiles in the Ottoman Empire', in *Culture and Society in Medieval Jewry: Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Haim Hillel Ben Sasson*, ed. by M. Ben-Sasson, R. Bonfil and J. R. Hacker (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Shazar Center, 1989), pp. 541–86.

Married women often died not long after their wedding, in many cases before they had managed to bring a child into the world.[26] Only 33 percent of the women's tombstones in Hasköy from the start of the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century cite a cause of death. Of these, 7 percent died in childbirth, and another 3 percent immediately after giving birth.

Death showed no pity for the young wife of Shelomo Hamon, a member of the well-known family of physicians. And the grieving husband spared no expense on her tombstone or its inscription [Photograph No. 8]. From the epitaph, one cannot deduce whether she had any children; however, it is certain that she was young, that she was not in good health, and that she died shortly after her marriage: 'in place of bridal palaces – ailments'. The images employed by the author of the epitaph are not new, but he used them in an original way and with a rhythm of his own. Thus for example, he employed the image of time as a wheel, which appears in *midrashim*[27] and among such Sefardi poets as Yehuda Alḥarizi,[28] in an intricate and lovely work that combines the notion of the wheel with that of time as traitor, another common motif in Sefardi poetry:[29] 'Spinning around, like the wheel of a wagon, days of agony and months of futility and nights and oracles of delusion and deception[30] deep in their souls, and stumbling blocks and great illnesses. Time betrays [us], its net is spread, and all it desires is to wreak evil.'[31]

Especially poignant are the epitaphs of Kalomira, wife of Aharon Roman, and his daughters by his second wife. Kalomira's excruciating labour pains and harrowing end are graphically described, and the reader can almost hear the unfortunate husband wailing along with his tortured, dying wife, one twin lying dead at her feet and the other still attached between her legs [Photograph No. 13].

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26 See on this topic: Rozen, *Jewish Community in Istanbul*, pp. 124–27; Ruth Lamdan, *A Separate People: Jewish Women in Palestine, Syria and Egypt in the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2000), pp. 83–86.

27 On the theme of the 'wheel of time', see Yehuda David Eisenstein, 'Ma'asiyot', in *A Treasury of Midrashim* (New York, Eisenstein edition, 1915), p. 335.

28 See: Moshe ibn Ezra, *Sefer Ha-'Anaq*, verses 53 and 61 (http://www.benyehuda.org/alxarizi/haanak.html).

29 Time's betrayal of man is a popular motif in Sefardi poetry and literature. See for example the poem *Zeman Boged* ('Treacherous Time') by Shemuel Hanagid (993–1056) (http://www.benyehuda.org/hanagid/index.html), and the poem of the same name by Shelomo ibn Gabirol (c. 1021–1058) (http://www.benyehuda.org/rashbag); Don Vidal Benveniste (fifteenth century), 'Treacherous Time' (http://www.benyehuda.org/benveniste/index.html); Rabbeinu Baḥya ben Asher (1255–c. 1340), introduction to a commentary on the Torah, 'Time as a Treacherous Stream' (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1994).

30 Lam 2:14.

31 Ps 141:4.

One of his daughters, Kadın, from his second wife, died during his lifetime, in 1691 [Photograph No. 14], and it would appear from the phrase 'like the mother of many who is forlorn' at the end of the epitaph that she died after other children born of the same mother.[32] Like his first wife, she was venerated with a poem on her tombstone. The poem composed by her father in her honour is not made up of fragments of biblical passages, like many of the epitaphs; it is written in a lively and totally original Hebrew. The father describes the daughter, small of stature, who broke his heart – she who was his only one and now is beyond his reach. He calls upon passersby to appreciate his love for her and his deep sorrow reflected in the stone he placed on her grave, and not to heed the fact that she was only a young girl, for his pain is great.

His second daughter from the same mother, Kalomira, was already betrothed when she died, and passed away after his death [Photograph No. 15]. She was not privileged to receive a poem at the level of those bestowed on his first wife or his daughter Kadın. The poetic phrasing used in her epitaph suggests that she might have drowned. Without engaging in undue speculation, it is worth noting that most cases of girls drowning in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Istanbul involved young betrothed women. Of a total of forty-four drownings recorded in the Hasköy cemetery during that period, thirteen were of married men; ten, of unmarried men; three, of married women; and twenty-one, of young women who were engaged to be married – leading us to ponder the possibility that this was a means, however extreme, for young girls to escape unwanted marriages.

6 What knowledge can be gleaned from the material aspect of the tombstones?

The monetary investment in the tombstones of the Roman family is also a topic that calls for discussion. A stone of high calibre was used to mark each of the graves. In most cases, the tombstone was made of choice marble from the Isle of Marmara, transported at great expense, long before regular quarrying was resumed there. In tombstones made up of two parts, one horizontal and the other vertical, the horizontal part – which was naturally much larger – was sometimes brought from a closer source, the quarries of Lala Paşa, near

32 I Sam 2:5.

Edirne. The tombstones that were cut in the shape of a prism, reminiscent of an Ottoman coffin, were all made of Marmara marble.

It is important to recall that at least until the first decade of the eighteenth century, when quarrying was resumed at the Marmara island on a regular basis, such marble was a valuable commodity in Istanbul.[33] In contrast to the epitaph, which reflects a rational understanding of death, the monetary investment in the tombstone – and even the sophistication and elegance of the inscription – may be said to indicate a dichotomy in the attitude of the mourners. The use of expensive marble in tombstones, even those of young boys and girls, shows that, while acknowledging the finality of death, there is the hope that the deceased continues some sort of existence in which he derives pleasure from this investment, coupled with an illusion of immortality. At the same time, this investment should also be seen as a means of bolstering the social status of the surviving family members.[34]

The material aspect of the burial culture of the Roman family also extends to the decorative quality of the tombstones. The majority of these stones did not boast ostentatious ornamentation; even in the late seventeenth century, when overly ornate stones were already beginning to appear, such was not the case with the Roman tombstones. Of the ten gravestones with the shortened family name of Roman, only four – dated 1641[35] and 1643 [Photograph No. 3]; 1644 [Photograph No. 4]; and 1666 [Photograph No. 11] – are made up of a vertical and a horizontal element, with the upper part often serving as a shared tombstone for a couple. But in the case of Mazal Ṭov and Mevorakh Roman, the vertical part is not unified [Photograph No. 3], and with regard to the wife, may not ever have existed. In any event, this notion, which is also found in many modern cemeteries, symbolizes the bed that the couple shared in their lifetime.[36] In the vertical part of Mevorakh's tombstone, the lines of the inscription themselves form the principal decoration; however, in the horizontal part of both tombstones, the epitaph is circumscribed within a *mihrab*-shaped frame. At the sides of the *mihrab* on the wife's stone are also niches, apparently for lighting candles.[37]

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33 Rozen, *Hasköy Cemetery*, pt. I, pp. 14–17.

34 See Minna Rozen, 'Metropolis and Necropolis: The Cultivation of Social Status among the Jews of Istanbul in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in Rozen, *Journey Through Civilizations*, forthcoming.

35 The tombstone of the wife, Mazal Ṭov Roman, is not illustrated in this article. A plan of the double monument of Mevorakh and Mazal Ṭov Roman can be found in Rozen, *Hasköy Cemetery*, pt. II, p. 79.

36 For the significance of the candle niches, see ibid., pt. I, pp. 55–59.

37 See Rozen, pt. I, p. 92, plate 133, and p. 93, table 14.

The *mihrab* shape indicates that the Muslim world of symbols had been assimilated by Istanbuli Jews of Roman origin. The image of the *mihrab* was not merely a stylistic convention but carried many meanings and associations that apparently occurred to the person commissioning the stone. The *mihrab* is the wall in a mosque that signifies the direction of prayer, facing Mecca. On the stones in question, the head of the *mihrab* points toward Jerusalem. Moreover, the Muslim worshipper prays while kneeling on a prayer rug (*seccade)* [Photograph No. 6], which is decorated precisely in the shape of a *mihrab*.[38] In this way, the stone serves as a form of 'prayer rug' for the relatives of the deceased, with the ornamentation emphasizing the notion that the dead person constitutes a bridge between this world and the next, and can influence the fate of the living. The form of the *mihrab* also recalls a gate of sorts. While in the great mosques, the entrance is in the shape of a *mihrab* [Photograph No. 7], here the association is with the gate of the Holy One, through which only the righteous may pass.[39] In this sense as well, the *mihrab* shape turns the tombstone into an object that symbolically connects not only the deceased and those mourning him or her but, in a more general way, the present world and the hereafter.[40]

Another tombstone, that of Simḥa, wife of Teshuva Roman (d. 1644) [Photograph No. 5], is horizontal, without a vertical element, and is also adorned with the outline of a *mihrab* with two candle niches at its head, mimicking a Muslim prayer rug. The tombstone of Sultana, wife of Shelomo Hamon [Photograph No. 8], who died in 1648, already has an innovation. In addition to the high-quality marble from which it is fashioned, and the poem engraved in it, the *mihrab* surrounding the poem is divided into three pairs of inner frames with rosettes carved between the pairs, as well as in the spaces between the inner frames and the overall outline of the *mihrab*. This is already an adornment whose intent is not to convey meaning but to display wealth, and it brings this type of stone into the realm of the illuminated Ottoman manuscript [Photograph No. 9].

Let us assume, for the purposes of this discussion, that the designs on the tombstones, or at least on the more sophisticated ones, were not created by the stonemasons themselves but by people who specialized in this, devising standard patterns that the engravers followed. Whether it was they or the stone cutters who planned the ornamentation on the stones, how had they come to be familiar with illuminated Ottoman manuscripts? The answer apparently lies

38 Ps 118:20.
39 Rozen, *Hasky Cemetery*, pt. I, pp. 55–61.
40 Rozen, p. 82.

in the Ottoman lifestyle. These designs were generally in manuscripts of the Quran, of prayers, or of poetry, the margins illuminated by master artists whose imagination knew no bounds. Such volumes were sold at the book market (*sahaflar*) next to the grand bazaar of Istanbul. Calligraphers would purchase these illuminated works and write the text on the empty space in the center of the page. The Jews of Istanbul were doubtless familiar with the book market, and apparently also visited its stalls, as attested to by a kabbalistic prayer-book from 1734 that was copied into an illuminated book ready for writing [Photograph No. 16]. These patterns were copied from generation to generation for hundreds of years [Photograph Nos 17–18]. It would appear that this was the practice of the Jewish stonemasons as well. An empty ornamental frame was prepared in advance, and upon the client's request, the epitaph was engraved in the stone. The inspiration, both practical and decorative, apparently came from the book market.

Another example of Roman family tombstones is the prism-shaped stone, generally heptagonal, mimicking the form of an Ottoman coffin. This gravestone was usually placed on a stone base, and, from the start of the eighteenth century, on a large, ornamented stone slab. The tombstones of Teshuva ben Mevorakh Roman [Photograph No. 10], Reina bat Yiṣḥaq Roman [Photograph No. 12], Kalomira wife of Aharon Roman [Photograph No. 13], Kadın bat Aharon Roman [Photograph No. 14], and Kalomira bat Aharon Roman [Photograph No. 15] are all of this type. In only one of them [Photograph No. 14] has the bottom slab been preserved. In all cases, the investment in the stones was significant, in terms of detail as well as cost. They were always made of Marmara marble of the finest quality, with stylized frames on each facet of the prism; the decorative ornamentation divided each side into two, so that there were twelve frames in total on each prism. The tombstones of men were generally adorned with rosettes, while those of women were embellished with a belt, symbolizing the engagement belt that the woman received from her betrothed or her groom. On the tombstone of Kadın daughter of Aharon Roman, who was not yet betrothed, we see no such belt.[41] On the sides of the tombstones, there were generally plants representing the Garden of Eden and the hereafter – primarily tulips and lotuses, which were typical symbols of Ottoman art.[42] None of these elements appears by chance or without prior thought, and what characterizes all of these tombstones, in terms of their artistry, is the integration of the Jews who buried their dead at Hasköy into the surrounding cultural space.

41 Rozen, pp. 65–81.

42 R. Ya'aqov ben Ḥayyim Alfandari, *Responsa Muṣal me-Esh* (Jerusalem: Mishor, 1997), sec. 2.

7 What can we learn by merging the information derived from the tombstones with that drawn from other types of sources?

Who were the Roman family? We were unable to find information about all of them outside the cemetery, but some indeed left their imprint on the sands of time. One fact stands out from an examination of the Roman family trees (see above) and the sources on which they were based: even if we are speaking of two different families named Roman without blood ties between them, what we have before us is a group of individuals who were extremely well educated, poets, judges, scholars, linguists, and grammarians. In the first Roman family tree, the only individual identifiable in historical sources is the unfortunate Aharon Roman, who was a *dayyan* (religious-court judge) in Istanbul; in late Tammuz 1686, while serving as head of the *bet din* (religious court), he heard testimony concerning the death of a Jew who had drowned in the Bosphorus.[43]

The second Roman family tree raises additional questions. The name Baquda, or alternatively, Paquda, is an Arab one. The first association of the name is with the tenth-century neoplatonic Jewish philosopher, Baḥya ibn Paquda, author of *Ḥovot Ha-Levavot* (Saragossa, 1050–*c*. 1120). It is not clear whether Ya'aqov Roman's plan to publish this work (see below) was connected with the fact that his grandfather, Paquda Roman, was descended from Baḥya ibn Paquda (or wished us to think so), or whether he simply considered it important to publish the book. In any event, the name Paquda indicates that Ya'aqov Roman, along with the other poets who were apparently part of this branch of the family, and perhaps Yiṣḥaq ben Bakuda Roman as well, was not part of the first generation of emigrants from Rome. They might have been scions of a family that immigrated from Rome to the Iberian peninsula generations before the expulsion from Spain, and then moved to Istanbul due to that expulsion. A more conceivable possibility is that they were the offspring of marriages between Roman immigrants who settled in Istanbul and a Sefardi family that may or may not have descended from Baḥya ibn Paquda. The family's Sefardi roots are clear not only from the name Paquda-Baquda (names of Jewish males tended to be preserved for generations, and were not affected by changing fashions, at least until the nineteenth century)[44] but also from

43 See below.

44 The name Baquda was still preserved in the family as of 1707. In that year, Yom Ṭov ben Baquda Roman added an introduction to Eliyahu Ha-Kohen's anti-Sabbatean treatise 'Holy War' (see 'Inyenei Shabbetai Ṣevi [Hebrew], ed. by A. Freimann, Berlin: Meqize Nirdamim, 1913, p. 2).

the association with Sefardi poetry and the Judeo-Arabic philosophy of Spain as reflected in the epitaphs discussed above, as well as from the Sefardi influence evident in the literary milieu of the individuals on the second family tree.

Almost all the male descendants on that family tree were known as scholars and poets. Avraham Roman, the son of Yiṣḥaq Roman is mentioned as the author of several poems, a letter to the renowned Rabbi Yom Tov Ibn Ya'ish, and an introduction entitled '*Milḥemet Ḥova*' ('Mandatory War') to a polemic work against the Patriarch Kiril, *Sela' Ha-Maḥloqot* ('Bones of Contention'). His brother Ḥizqiyya Roman eulogized him, mentioning his mourning brothers.[45] Ḥizqiyya Roman is cited as the person who completed the copying of *Sefer Otiot Ha-Noaḥ* in 1600,[46] and he was still alive in 1655 when he wrote an approbation for *Hod Malkhut* by Avraham Ha-Yakhini, printed in Istanbul that year. Ḥizqiyya Roman is described in that book as 'the eminent scholar, master of all books and sciences, wonderful and great'.[47]

Ya'aqov Roman was a collector of books, a bibliographer, a linguist, a grammarian, and a well-known poet. The manuscript of an Arabic–Hebrew dictionary that he completed in Istanbul on 27 Tishrei 5390 (11 October 1629) is housed in the National Library of France, in Paris,[48] as is the manuscript of an Arabic–Turkish dictionary that he composed.[49] Ya'aqov Roman also authored a book entitled *Moznei Mishqal* on Hebrew rhyming schemes. The book was written prior to 1634, the year in which it is mentioned several times in the author's correspondence with Johannes Buxtorf the Younger (13 August 1599–16 August 1664).[50] Buxtorf and his father, Johannes Buxtorf (25 December 1564–13 September 1629) were professors of theology at the University of Basel, and among the earliest Christian Hebraists in Europe. Buxtorf the Younger translated Maimonides' *More Nevukhim* (Basel, 1629) and the *Kuzari* (Basel, 1660) into Latin, and corresponded with numerous Jewish scholars in Western Europe and the Ottoman Empire.[51] A friend of Ya'aqov Roman's by the name

45 D. S. Sasson, ed., 'Poems and Songs by Ancient Poets', in *Ohel Dawid: Descriptive Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts in the Sasson Library* (Oxford and London: Oxford University Press and Humphrey Milford, 1932), vol. 2, sec. 590, p. 461; and ibid., '*Milḥemet Ḥova*', sec. 793, p. 426.

46 See n. 62, below.

47 P. 2b.

48 *Manuscrits orientaux: Catalogues des manuscrits hébreux et samaritains de la Bibliothèque Impériale* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1866), no. 1277, p. 230.

49 *Manuscrits*, no. 1278, p. 230.

50 M. Kayserling, 'Richelieu, Buxtorf père et fils, et Jacob Roman', *REJ*, 8 (1884), pp. 89, 94.

51 On the correspondence between Buxtorf and Roman, see M. Kayserling, 'Les correspondants juifs de Jean Buxtorf', *REJ*, 8 (1884), pp. 261–76; 'Moznei Ha-Mishqal', in *Medieval Literature* (Hebrew), ed. by Neḥemya Allony (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1945), p. 88. On Buxtorf (father and son), see Ora Limor, *Jews and Christians in Western Europe: Encounter between*

of Arye Yehuda Leon Sa'aya,[52] who ultimately converted to Christianity, also wrote under the Arab name Nasser a-din Tabib (i.e., physician), and was the court physician of Prince Rakoczy I of Transylvania (1639). Sa'aya was closely acquainted in Istanbul with one Anton Lager, a scholar from Piemonte who was then acting as minister of the Dutch Embassy. Lager subsequently served as a professor of Eastern languages at the University of Geneva, and it was he who put Sa'aya in contact with Buxtorf.[53] Sa'aya later brought together Roman and Buxtorf. From Sa'aya's letter of recommendation to Buxtorf the Younger concerning Ya'aqov Roman, we learn that Sa'aya was of the opinion that 'thanks to his family, riches, dignity, and contacts, this man surpasses all his coreligionists'.[54] It emerges from the correspondence between Ya'aqov Roman and Buxtorf the Younger that Roman asked Buxtorf to send him two copies of the biblical concordance that the senior Buxtorf had composed, and an accurate copy of the Latin translation of *More Nevukhim*.[55] Roman wished to set up a printing press in Istanbul. Among his plans was to publish a trilingual edition of Maimonides' *More Nevukhim*, in Hebrew, Latin, and Arabic in Hebrew transliteration. The reason why the Arabic would appear in Hebrew letters, as he explained, was the Sultanic prohibition against printing Arabic letters. In addition, Roman planned to publish Baḥya ibn Paquda's *Ḥovot Ha-Levavot* and *Sefer Ha-Kuzari* by R. Yehuda Halevi, both in the Latin translation of his friend Sa'aya.[56]

Of particular interest is Roman's plan to publish *Ḥovot Ha-Levavot*, the work written in Arabic in Spain in the eleventh century, translated into Hebrew by Yehuda ibn Tibbon from 1161 to 1180, and published in 1489 in Naples. The book was poorly received due to its numerous neoplatonic concepts, largely in the beginning of the work. It was published in Istanbul in 1550 together with the work *Sefer Tiqqun Middot Ha-Nefesh* by R. Shelomo ibn Gabirol.[57] The idea of also publishing it in Latin is evidence of Roman's desire to reach an

Cultures in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Open University, 1997), pp. 114, 130; A. L. Katchen, *Christian Hebraists and Dutch Rabbis: Seventeenth-Century Apologetics and the Study of Maimonides' Mishne Torah* (Cambridge, MA/London: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 27–28.

52 Avraham Rosanes referred to him as Asseo, but I have not found sources that support this position (A. Rosanes, *Qorot Ha-Yehudim be-Turqyia we-Arṣot Ha-Qedem*, pt. III (Sofia, 1938), p. 259.

53 M. Kayserling, 'Richelieu, Buxtorf père et fils, et Jacob Roman', *REJ*, 8 (1884), pp. 84–86.

54 Kayserling, p. 85.

55 Kayserling, p. 91.

56 Kayserling, p. 93.

57 Baḥya ibn Paquda, *Ḥovot Ha-Levavot* (printed together with Ibn Gabirol's *Sefer Tiqqun Middot Ha-Nefesh* [Istanbul, 1550]); Kayserling, 'Richelieu', p. 88.

audience that read neither Arabic nor Hebrew. Sadly, his plan to establish the printing press and to publish the other two books did not come to fruition, but his multilingual and multicultural aspirations offer evidence of his well-rounded nature – a point also demonstrated by the many manuscripts dealing with Greek philosophy that were in his possession and by several unpublished letters that he left behind as well as the translation from Arabic to Hebrew of several of the works of Yona ibn Janaḥ, the tenth-century grammarian and linguist from Cordoba.[58] Roman collected numerous manuscripts, some of which were purchased by Buxtorf for Jean Tilleman Stella de Téry et Morimont, commercial representative of Cardinal Richelieu, and are now housed in France's National Library. Others found their way to the Bodleian Library.[59] On several of the works, it is written explicitly that they are the property of Ya'aqov Roman.[60] From the legacy of Roman's life's work in the libraries of Europe, it is evident that he was, by any measure, a wealthy man, very distinguished and highly erudite He knew Hebrew, Greek, Spanish, Arabic, Turkish, Latin, and Italian, and was an expert in the literatures of the world. He was fluent in manuscripts of poetry and philosophy in Arabic and Latin, and compared the Arabic *maqama* genre of rhymed prose to the splendid language of Cicero in Latin, and, in its style and imagination, to Boccaccio's *The Decameron*. His connection to Italy was also apparent in his letters to Buxtorf the Younger, and in the fact that he wrote the name of Anton Lager as pronounced in Italian (Antonio Leggero), perhaps because this was the foreign language he was most comfortable with.[61]

An anonymous linguist and anthologist who borrowed a great deal from Roman's *Moznei Mishqal* made reference in his work *Qeṣev u-Moznei Ha-Mishqal* not only to Ya'aqov Roman's book but to other poets of the time: Yiṣḥaq Roman, Avraham Roman, and Ḥizqiyya Roman, whom he placed in the exalted

58 *Manuscrits*, no. 126, p. 224.

59 Kayserling, 'Richelieu', p. 95, nn. 4–5.

60 D. Schwartz, '*Berurim ra'ayoni'im be-farashat ha-pulmusim 'al ha-filosofia ba-me'a ha-shelosh-'esre'*, *Qoveṣ 'al Yad*, 14 (1998), p. 344: manuscript of the work *Sefer Yore De'a* by Qalonymos, which was copied during the fifteenth century, possibly before the Ottoman conquest, and was sold in 1481 by Yosef Bekhor Avshalom Bona-Vita to a man by the name of Mordekhai. At the start of the manuscript is the name of its owner, 'Yiṣḥaq Roman ben Baquda z"l, Tammuz 5390', i.e., the summer of 1630. Bodleian ms 267 (Opp. 212). See also the Arabic commentary on Song of Songs by Moshe b. Ḥiyya Kohen, completed on 9 Elul 5195 (1435), colophon in Arabic, apparently written in Granada, property of Ya'aqov b. Yiṣḥaq Roman, 1597 (*Catalogue of the Bodleian Library, Supplement of Addenda and Corrigenda to Vol. I* [A. Neubauer's Catalogue], compiled under the direction of M. Beit-Arié, ed. by R. A. May (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), ms no. 356*, p. 54.

61 Kayserling, 'Richelieu', p. 89.

company of Shelomo ibn Gabirol, Yehuda Halevi, and Moshe ibn Ezra.[62] In *Qeṣev u-Moznei Ha-Mishqal*, there is also a poem by a contemporary of Ya'aqov Roman, R. Yehoshu'a Rafael ben Yisrael Benveniste.[63] Roman's ties with Benveniste are apparent from the latter's remark that he cannot make use of the grammar book entitled *Tevat Noaḥ* because it was lent to R. Ya'aqov Roman, and he himself is ill and cannot go to fetch it from Roman.[64] The work referred to is apparently the *Sefer Otiot Ha-Noaḥ* of R. Yehuda Ḥayuj, the tenth-century Sefardi grammarian and linguist whose book was translated into Arabic by R. Moshe ibn Jiqatilla of Cordoba. This manuscript was copied by Ḥizqiyya ben Yiṣḥaq ibn Paquda Roman in 1600, and was apparently among the manuscripts purchased by Buxtorf the Younger for resale to the agent of Richelieu.[65] I was unable to find Ya'aqov Roman's tombstone in Istanbul, and Buxtorf lost contact with him in 1641.[66] A poem written by Yiṣḥaq ben Ya'aqov Roman is included in the same manuscript of 'Poems and Songs by Ancient Poets' described by David Sasson.[67]

By examining the family tree of the Benveniste family [Tree No. 2, below], we can understand, at least in part, the world of Ya'aqov Roman, and that of

62 Allony, '*Moznei Mishqal*', p. 96.

63 Ibid.

64 Allony., p. 95; Yehoshu'a Rafael ben Yisrael Benveniste, *Responsa Sha'ar Yehoshu'a* (Husiatyn: n. p., 1904), sec. 11, p. 36a.

65 *Manuscrit*, no. 1215, pp. 224–25.

66 An elderly man of eighty from Istanbul by the name of Ya'aqov Romano – a linguist renowned for his brilliance, who knew all six orders of the Mishna by heart – is mentioned in the work of David Conforti (*Qore Ha-Dorot* [Venice, 1746], p. 49a) as living in Jerusalem. The question is whether he is the Ya'aqov Roman of the present work. A person with the same name is referred to in *Ḥorvot Yerushalem* (Venice, 1627; Minna Rozen edition, Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1981), pp. 35, 103, 106, 140, but again it is unclear whether this is in fact 'our' Ya'aqov Roman, and whether he is the same person mentioned by Conforti. Given the fact that Conforti was born in 1617 or 1618, and came to Jerusalem in 1644, scholars are of the opinion that the Ya'aqov Roman mentioned in Conforti's work and the one cited in *Ḥorvot Yerushalem* are one and the same. While it is possible that the former is 'our' Ya'aqov Roman, one would be hard-pressed to explain how the latter, who is mentioned in *Ḥorvot Yerushalem* in 1625, corresponded with Buxtorf from Istanbul in 1634 and intended to set up a publishing house there. In *Qore Ha-Dorot* (p. 51b), Conforti also refers to 'Ḥayyim Romano, my relative' among the Torah scholars of *Yeshivat Yerushalayim* at the time. Also cited in *Ḥorvot Yerushalem*, in addition to Ya'aqov Roman, are Moshe Romano (Rozen ed., pp. 14, 53, 98, 100), Shelomo Romano (Rozen, pp. 56, 110), and Shemuel Romano (Rozen, pp. 98, 100). Yiṣḥaq Romano is signatory to an agreement not to sow discord and not to besmirch the community leaders, signed in Jerusalem in 1623. See also: Minna Rozen, *The Jewish Community in Jerusalem in the Seventeenth Century* (Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Publishing House and Tel Aviv University, 1985), p. 292.

67 See Sasson, *Ohel Dawid*, vol. 2, sec. 590, p. 464.

Yiṣḥaq Roman as well. Yehoshu'a Rafael Benveniste, who was not only a rabbi but also a physician, was the grandson of the physician of Sultan Mehmet III (1595–1603), Dr. Moshe Benveniste. The later was described by his grandson as 'the righteous prince, the flawless sage, the renowned scholar, who devoted his whole life to helping Jews everywhere, facing ministers and judges of the highest rank'.[68] The grandmother of Yehoshu'a Rafael was the daughter of another Jewish luminary from Italy, R. Yehoshu'a Ṣonṣin, a renowned rabbi in Istanbul and a member of the family of printers. Yehoshu'a Rafael Benveniste was also the nephew of another physician of the Sultan, Dr. Nissim Benveniste, who was married to the daughter of the *rav ha-manhig* (generally, if somewhat inaccurately translated as Chief Rabbi) of the Romaniotes, R. Eliyahu ibn Ḥayyim, and the cousin of the *av beit din* (head of the religious court) of Istanbul, R. Moshe Benveniste.[69]

Yiṣḥaq Roman, the father of the young Reina Roman, who died at an early age, was a poet and scholar in Istanbul.[70] In Tammuz 5425 (the summer of 1665), he turned to R. Moshe Benveniste in a dispute over the rights of a female orphan to a house she bought from a leaseholder of the Muslim religious trust (*vakıf*). Moshe Benveniste, grandson of the sultan's physician, was born in 1608. His father, Nissim, died in 1621, when Moshe was a young boy of twelve. It was his mother who endeavoured to see to it that he continued his studies, and he testified of himself that he never engaged in 'vainglorious pursuits' but devoted himself entirely to Torah. He studied at the La Señora *Yeshiva*, established in Istanbul by Doña Gracia Mendes, later teaching there from 1622 to 1660, the year that the *Yeshiva* went up in flames along with the entire Eminönü quarter of Istanbul. He served as a *dayyan* from the age of approximately 24, and as *av beit din* of Istanbul until his death, *c.* 1677.[71]

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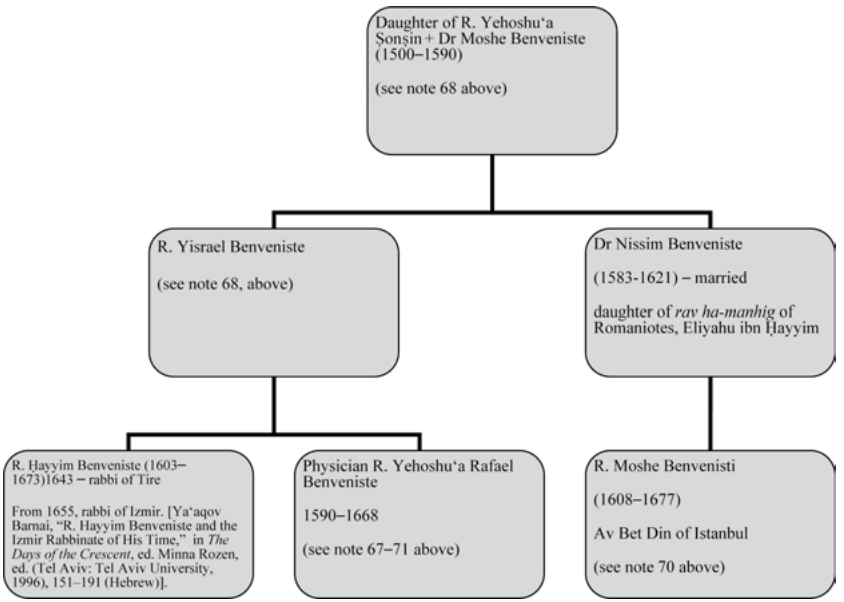
68 See introduction to vol. I of *Penei Moshe*, Moshe Benveniste's responsa, printed in Istanbul in 1669.

69 On the Benveniste family, its pedigree and ties, see M. Benayahu, *Rofe He-Ḥatzer: Rabbi Moshe Benveniste we-ha-shir 'al haglayato la-I Rodos* ['The court physician Rabbi Moshe Benveniste: An elegy on his exile to Rhodes'), *Sefunot* 14 (1970–1973), pp. 125–35. The British merchant John Sanderson bequeathed to his cousin, Samuel Sanderson, several oil paintings of his Istanbuli friends, which he apparently commissioned from an artist in the Grand Bazaar of Istanbul during his stay in the capital of the Ottoman Empire. One of these was of the 'Jewish Physician Dr Benveniste'. John Sanderson, *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant 1584–1602*, ed. by W. Foster (London: Hakluyt Society, 1931), p. 35, n. 2. See also Minna Rozen, The Social Role of Book Printing among Istanbul Jews in the Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries, in Rozen, *Journey Through Civilizations*, forthcoming.

70 Allony, '*Moznei Mishqal*', p. 96.

71 See R. Moshe Benveniste, *Responsa Penei Moshe*, I (Istanbul, 1669), Introduction.



Family Tree 2: Benveniste family of Istanbul.

With the aid of several additional details, we are able to place the Roman family in its rightful position in the Istanbuli Jewish society of the seventeenth century. Aside from the connection to the Benveniste families, another notable connection is through the marriage of Sultana bat Teshuva Roman to Shemuel Hamon. For generations, the Hamons served as physicians to the sultans.[72] The first member of the family to settle in Istanbul was R. Yosef Hamon, who

72 On Rabbi Yosef Hamon and the Hamon family, see U. Heyd, 'Moses Hamon, Chief Jewish Physician to Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent', *Oriens*, 16 (1963), pp. 152–70; A. Galante, *Médecins juifs au service de la Turquie* (Istanbul, 1938), 1st ed., in *Histoire des Juifs de Turquie* (Istanbul: Isis, n.d.), vol. 9, pp. 85, 89; A. Dannon, 'Mosheh Hamon and his family', in *Yosef Da'at* (Edirne, 1888), pp. 118–20, 130–34, 146–47, 162–67, 178–83, 194–95; M. Benayahu, 'The House of Abravanel in Salonika' (Hebrew), *Sefunot*, 12 (1971–78), 42–52; Benayahu, 'The sermons of R. Yosef b. Meir Garson as a source for the history of the expulsion from Spain and the Sephardi diaspora', *Michael*, 7 (1981), pp. 124–31; A. Levy, *The Sefardim in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, NJ: The Darwin Press, 1992), p. 31; H. Gross, 'La famille juive des Hamons', REJ, 56 (1908), 1–26; 57 (1909), pp. 55–78; A. Rozanes, *History of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, vol. I (Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1930), p. 93; vol. 2 (Sofia, 1937–1938), pp. 85–86; vol. 3 (Sofia, 1938), pp. 244–68, 275; M. A. Epstein, *Ottoman Jewish Communities and their Role in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Freiburg: Klaus Schwartz Verlag, 1980), pp. 86–88, 184–85; L. Bornstein-Makovetsky, 'The Jewish Community in Istanbul in the mid-seventeenth century: Its Sephardi and Romaniot personalities and sages', *Michael*, 9 (1985), pp. 27–54.

immediately upon his arrival in the city (1492/3) entered into the service of Sultan Bayezid II. When Hamon died in Damascus during Selim I's military campaign in the Near East, a sermon was delivered in his memory describing the honour and kindness bestowed upon him by the Sultans he had served, and their great benevolence to the Jews of the Ottoman Empire in general and to those of Istanbul in particular.[73] His son Moshe continued to serve Süleyman the Magnificent, and was rewarded with permission to build a stone house in Hasköy,[74] and a four-storey stone house in the Jewish Quarter near the palace that was leased to the *bailo* of the Republic of Venice.[75] Such permits were generally issued only to viziers and to members of the royal family. The Hamon family constituted a separate fiscal unit (*cemaat*) from all the Jewish communities in Istanbul, and maintained a synagogue of its own in the Hasköy neighbourhood.[76]

There is virtually no direct information on Shelomo Hamon at our disposal, but meticulous detective work based on the scant details in our possession has produced an interesting portrait of the connections between the Hamon, Benveniste and Roman families. Included in the responsa of R. Ḥayyim Benveniste (*Ba'ei Ḥayyai*), brother of Moshe and Yehoshu`a Refael Benveniste, is a decision rendered in 1651 by

> the impeccable wise man, the venerable gentleman, his honour our Teacher, Rabbi Av Hamon, ... the words flowing from the mouth of this flawless wise man, who possesses both a great breadth of knowledge and superior analytical reasoning; the rabbinic

73 Benayahu, 'Sermons', pp. 124–31.

74 Hans Dernschwam, *Tagebuch einer Reise nach Konstantinopel und Kleinasien (1554–1555)*, ed. by F. Babinger (Münich & Leipzig: Dünker & Humblot, 1923), p. 113.

75 Regarding the building adjacent to the Sultan's palace, see: Minna Rozen and Benjamin Arbel, 'Great Fire in the Metropolis: The Case of the Istanbul Conflagration of 1569 and its Description by Marcantonio Barbara', in *Mamluk and Ottoman Societies: Studies in Honour of Michael Winter*, ed. by David Wasserstein and Ami Ayalon (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 134–63.

76 The Hamon cemaat is mentioned in the tax registers from 1603 (Table 1, ref. in Minna Rozen, *A History of The Jewish Community of Istanbul – The Formative Years (1453–1566)*, (2nd ed. Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2010), p. 51; 1608–09 (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık Arşivleri, Maliyeden Müdevver [MM] 14932); and 1623 (ibid., MM 286). The tax exemption allegedly received by the Hamons is rather doubtful; see Rozanes, Ottoman Empire, vol. II, pp. 286–88; Bernard Lewis, 'The Privilege Granted by Mehmed II to His Physician', *BSOAS*, 14 (1952), pp. 550–63; Lewis, 'On a Historical Document in the Responsa of Rabbi Shemuel de Medina' (in Hebrew), *Melila*, 5 (1955), pp. 69–76. See also U. Heyd, 'The Jewish Communities of Istanbul in the Seventeenth Century', *Oriens*, VI (1953), p. 303. Heyd's contention that the Hamon family was exempted from taxes is based on the fact that in the 1603 register, no tax scale was assigned to the family; the family was, however, ranked in all of the other registers.

> decisor, … whose mouth speaks great [words of Torah], as they were given at Mount Sinai; his reasons are good and his justifications are sound and the law is rendered in accordance with his rulings; wherever we may live, we live according to his utterances and we take pleasure in the radiance of his Torah, his Torah teachings are whole, wrapped in a robe of light, the young Av Hamon, the son of our esteemed teacher, Joseph Hamon …[77]

The fact that the responsum is found in the work of Ḥayyim Benveniste leads us back to the social milieu of the Roman family. Av Hamon, son of Yosef Hamon [the second] and grandson of the physician Moshe Hamon, was a *dayyan* in the community of Aragon who is mentioned in various sources. The Romans moved within the same social circle as the Benveniste and Hamon families, and, as we shall see below, the Vileisid family as well. Yet neither social nor marital ties were able to prevent disputes over property, assets, and influence. At the request of Aharon Hamon, R. Moshe Benveniste sat in judgement in a dispute between him and the wealthy ibn Vileisid brothers, who had earned their riches in the silk trade. One of them sought to be appointed the *sarafbaşı* of Egypt, in response to which Aharon Hamon intruded on their business dealings. Hamon also tried to recruit Yehoshu'a Rafael Benveniste, when he (Hamon) attempted to take control of the Neve Shalom community of Istanbul in 1641.[78]

The connection between the Roman family and the Hamon and Vileisid families also emerges in a different context – the placement of the Roman family's tombstones. A close examination of the concentrations of their gravesites, especially throughout the seventeenth century, and a comparison with those of other families, indicates that members of the ibn Vileisid family were buried specifically in their vicinity. In section 6-5, where most of the burials of the Roman family were conducted in the seventeenth century, we find most of the gravesites of the ibn Vileisid family for this period (nine out of seventeen), with the remainder in close proximity. In addition, four out of six burial sites of the Hamon family are found in these sections. It is possible that there were other ties between the Roman and ibn Vileisid families of which we are not aware, bearing in mind that in the first half of the seventeenth century, members of the Romano family and Avraham Vileisid, all of them from Istanbul, were prominent members and leaders of the Jewish community of Jerusalem.[79] The graves of the Benveniste family are not found at this location, and may have been destroyed during the laying of the ring road around Istanbul.

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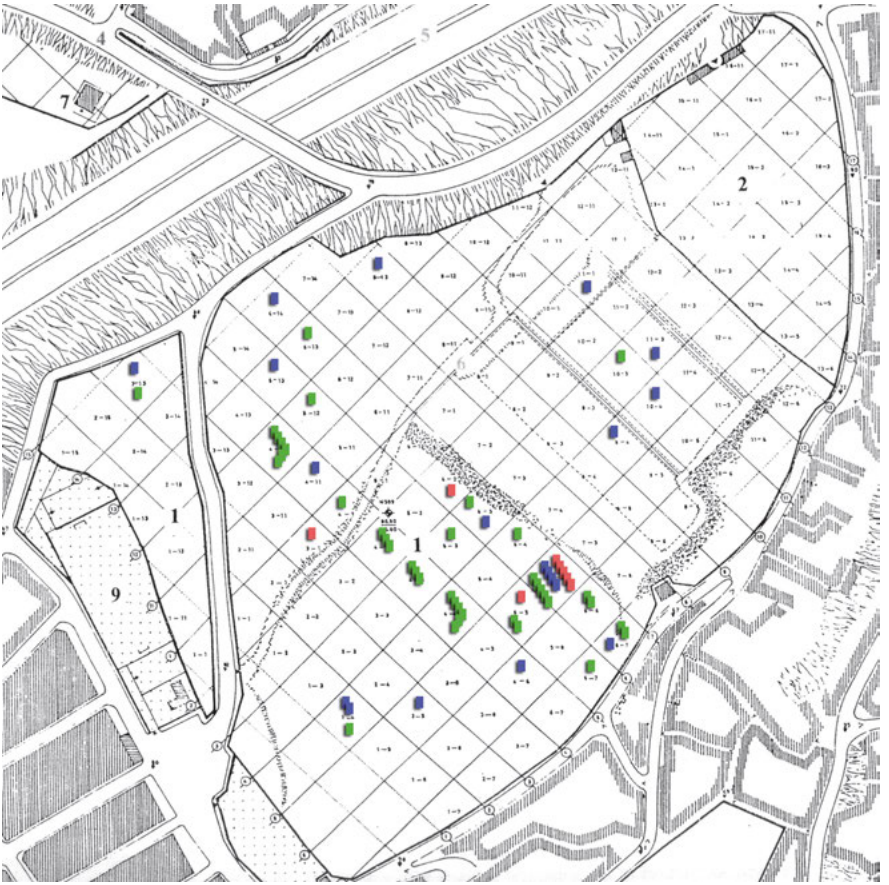
77 R. Ḥayyim Benveniste, *Responsa Ba'ei Ḥayyai* (Salonika, 1791; facsimile, Jerusalem 1970), *Ḥoshen Mishpaṭ* pt. I, sec. 212.

78 Bornstein-Makovetsky, 'Jewish Community in Istanbul', pp. 27–54, esp. pp. 36–38.

79 Avraham ibn Vileisid was a leader of the Jewish community in Jerusalem from at least 1600 to 1618, Rozen, *Jewish Community in Jerusalem*, pp. 120–22, 125, 285; Moshe Hamon, was counted among Jerusalem's notables (1586), Rozen, p. 287; Shemuel Hamon of Jerusalem



Legend: Red = Roman, Green = Vileisid, Blue = Hamon
Notice the concentration of the three families in lot 6–5, which apparently was the burial plot for distinguished families during the seventeenth century.

Map 3: Distribution of the Roman/Romano, Vileisid, and Hamon families in Hasköy Cemetery, 1583–1700.

was entitled to collect taxes from properties in the Diaspora (prior to 1635), ibid., p. 288; Shelomo Romano was among the city's notables (1620), Rozen, p. 291, (1625) *Ḥorvot Yerushalem* (Rozen ed.), p. 98, n. 134, and p. 110; Yiṣḥaq Romano was among the notables of Jerusalem (1623), *Jewish Community in Jerusalem*, p. 292; Ya'aqov Romano was among the city's notables (1631), Rozen., p. 293, (1625) *Ḥorvot Yerushalem* (Rozen ed.), pp. 103, 106; Moshe Romano was one of the city's notables (1623), Rozen., p. 292, (1625) *Ḥorvot Yerushalem* (Rozen ed.), pp. 98–99; Shemuel Romano was also among the city's notables (1623), *Jewish Community in Jerusalem*, p. 292, n. 8.

8 In conclusion

Through the use of painstaking detective work involving manuscripts, books, and tombstones, we have managed to cast a spotlight on one family. Based on their name, the Romans/Romanos ostensibly had their roots in the city of Rome. But, as the inquiry presented in these pages has shown, from the time their forefathers left their place of origin the family spun a network of marriage, social, and business ties with Sefardi families of similar standing – the cream of Istanbuli Jewish society. The placement of their tombstones in the Jewish cemetery at Hasköy is a reflection of their social status. They are buried among distinguished figures, community leaders, rabbis, and men of wealth. The tombstones of the family members demonstrate refinement and restraint, with a similar level of material and emotional investment in the graves of men and women, young girls and boys, and the elderly. Those who mourned them spared no expense in transporting from afar fine stones that have stood the test of time, and devoted effort and imagination to composing the epitaphs of their loved ones. But what is more, those who bore the Roman name were apparently men of letters, with broad intellectual interests. The libraries of several of them contained books and manuscripts brought over from Spain. At least one of them, Ya'aqov Roman, was a polymath whose knowledge of world literature extended from the culture of the Islamic Golden Age to that of the Italian Renaissance. Indirectly, he became a central figure in the promulgation of the study of the Hebrew language in Christian Europe during the early modern era.

The cemetery alone cannot provide all the wealth of information needed to complete this picture. To do that, it is necessary to assemble all of the details piece by piece; researching Jewish cemeteries is only one part of this puzzle.

9 Appendix 1: Data on the Romano family in Bulgaria

'Central Consistory's (Sofia) 1920–1926 Report – Introduction to the Jewish Community of Kiustendil', *Bulgarian State Archives* (hereafter: BSA), Jewish Community, fond 1568, opis 1, file 8944, p. 2, SN 12, p. 1–3 (2–4), no. 520 in the computerized archives of Bulgarian Jewry, Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center, Tel Aviv University (hereafter: CA). Three members of the Romano family are mentioned in the above report, BSA, Jewish Community,

fond 1568, opis 1, file 8944–end, p. 2, SN 13, pp. 1–14 (42–55). In 'Review of Jewish Education' (CA, no. 536), there is a reference to an Albert Romano, born in Plovdiv in 1886. He studied law in Geneva and Sofia, served for twenty years as president of the Zionist Organization in Bulgaria beginning in 1921, and died in Tel Aviv in 1965. He was one of the major activists in the Sofia community on the subject of Jewish education. On 23 June 1932, he is cited as one of the individuals elected to the Consistory (BSA, circular letter no. 1258, dd 23/06/1932, Vidin, fond 9k, opis 1, file 80, p. 36, SN 24; CA no. 6769). See also concerning him: Калев Марчел, 'Албърт А. Романо (1886–1965)', в. Ардити Бинямин, *Видни Евреи в Бьлгария*, *Галерия на забравените,* Том I, (Хулон, 1970), сс. 111–121 (M. Kalev, 'Albert A. Romano [1886–1956]', in *Notable Jews of Bulgaria* [in Bulgarian], ed. by Benjamin Arditi, vol. I [Holon-Tel Giborim, 1970], pp. 111–121). Albert Çelebi Romano, born in Plovdiv 15 September 1886, completed medical studies in Vienna in 1912, died in Tel Aviv, Ибен Анави, *Иэвравени от Эабрвата Пловдевски Медици Евреи 1878–1941* (Шалом, 2009), p. 61 (Ivan Eliezer Anabi-Kalev, 'Albert Çelebi Romano', in *Jewish Physicians from Plovdiv Who Were Not Forgotten, 1878–1941, Memoirs and Documents* [in Bulgarian] [Sofia: Shalom Publishers, 2009], p. 61). Sha'ul Bekhor Romano, born in Plovdiv in 1892, completed pharmaceutical studies in 1949 in Sofia (ibid., p. 106). Romano M. Nissim, born in Plovdiv on 15 October 1878, completed his pharmaceutical studies in Prague in 1906 (ibid., p. 105). In an undated registry of foreign subjects residing in Vidin, three Romanos are mentioned, BSA, Vidin, fond 9k, opis 1, file 27, p. 34, SN 20 (CA, no. 2700). In an undated index of all the correspondence between the Consistory in Sofia and the community of Rouse, the name Romano appears once among all 105 names mentioned there (BSA, fond 163k, opis 1, file 39, p. 61, SN 12; CA, no. 8818). In the 1924–1925 registry of all the needy families in Rouse who received firewood from the community, there is a reference to a Rachelle Romano (ibid., file 33, p. 61, SN 6; CA, no. 8628). In a pamphlet about the Zionist movement in Plovdiv dated 2 February 1928, Preciado Romano is mentioned as one of six names (ibid., file 35, p. 61, SN 8; CA, no. 8708). Yakir (Preciado) Avraham Romano was born in Plovdiv in 1866. A lawyer by profession, he was a leader of the Zionist movement, promoted Jewish education, and was a prominent member of the Jewish community of Plovdiv (A. Romano et al., *Bulgaria*, vol. 10, *Encyclopedia of the Jewish Diaspora* [Hebrew] [Jerusalem: Ḥevrat Enṣiqlopediya shel Galuyot, 1967], see index). His signature also appears as vice-president on the charter of Society for the Settlement of Ereṣ Yisrael, 27 December 1893 in Plovdiv (Jerusalem, Archives of Ben Zvi Institute, 1708 L), where he served as chairman of the city's Zionist Federation beginning in 1898. Died in pre-State Palestine in 1933. See also: Ардити Бинямин, 'Пресиадо (якир)

Аврам Романо (1865–1933)' в Ардити Бинямин, *Видни Евреи в България, Галерия на забравените*, Том I, (Хулон, 1970), сс. 122–27 (Benjamin Arditi, 'Preciado [Yakir] Avraham Romano [1865–1933]', in *Notable Jews of Bulgaria*, pp. 122–27). Dr. Marco Romano was also a leader of the Zionist movement in Plovdiv, a lawyer, and a journalist. He immigrated to pre-State Palestine in 1937, and was among the founders of Kefar Ḥittim (*Bulgaria*, *Encyclopedia of the Jewish Diaspora*, index). A lengthy list of other Romano family members from the nineteenth and twentieth century is also available (ibid.)

10 Appendix 2: Data on the Romano family in other centres

In the city of Arta in the Epirus region, Teshuva and Ya'aqov Romano are mentioned in a legal discourse dating from 1561 (*Responsa of Maharashdam* [R. Shemuel de Medina] [Lvov, 1862], EH sec. 50). There is a reference to a Shabbetai Romano in Manastir (Bitola), Macedonia (in the present-day New Republic of Macedonia) in the mid-sixteenth century (R. Yiṣḥaq Adrabi, *Responsa Divrei Rivot* [Salonika, 1582], sec. 310). Avraham Romano is mentioned in Skopje in 1672 (Eliyahu Kobo, *Shenei Ha-Me'orot Ha-Gedolim* [Hebrew], pt. 1 [*Penei Yehoshu'a*] [Istanbul, 1739], sec. 23). A list of Jewish families on Neofit Bozveli Street in Bitola, prepared by the '*mukhtar*', Vasil Gyorgiev, apparently just before they were sent to their deaths by order of the Bulgarian Commissariat for Jewish Affairs, contained sixteen names, two of which were members of the Romano family (BSA, Bitola, Macedonia, Jewish Community – List of Jewish Families, fond 664, opis 1, file 7, p. 63, SN 7, no. 18; CA, doc. no. 3125). Included in the list of families demanded by the Commissariat from the Jewish community of Shtip is that of Joya and Shemuel Romano (ibid., Shtip, fond 667, opis 1, file 22, SN 9, p. 65, CA. doc. no. 5205). No date was noted, but the list dates from after 7 November 1942. In Sarajevo, a family of rabbis by the name of Romano is mentioned in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (R. Avraham Mercado Romano, *Sefer Avraham Avraham* [Jerusalem, 1927]). In Salonika, a Meir Romano is mentioned in the mid-seventeenth century (R. Ḥayyim Shabbetai, *Responsa Torat Ḥayyim* [Jerusalem, 2004], pt. IV, sec. 34). In a book of Salonika tombstones, which records 1,858 tombstones from 1492 to 1929, five members of the Romano family are found, the earliest from 1557 (Y. S. Emanuel, *Salonika Tombstones* [Hebrew] [Jerusalem, Ben Zvi Institute, 1968], sections 300, 306, 722, 469, 1590). In the records of the Salonika community, located in the archives of the former KGB

in Moscow, are 127 references to individuals with the name Romano out of 50,000 documents that have been analyzed and computerized in the TAU DP (see n. 1 above), all of them from the years 1924–1940.