

## *South of Sepharad* Resources Page

Below readers will find an extensive list of the resources I consulted in writing this novel. As no primary accounts exist from the Jews expelled from Spain—it would've been too dangerous to keep such records—the novel's research is a compilation of these many secondary sources. I consulted both English and Spanish language sources to gather the most complete understanding of this event as I could. Based on these many sources of research, the novel provides my best conclusion for what happened to the expelled Jews. Any historical inaccuracies or anachronisms are my own.

### **BOOK I**

#### **Chapter One**

Jewish funeral rituals differ depending on time period, geographical location, and branch of Judaism, and there is no single standard for the service, thus it is difficult to be certain how a funeral would unfold in 1488 Granada. Sarah's funeral is pulled from personal experience attending Jewish funerals and corroborated by the site [My Jewish Learning](#).

The white burial shrouds Sarah is buried in refer to a tachrichim, simple shrouds used to bury Jewish bodies. Being buried in a simple white shroud without a coffin was standard practice during this time period and is still practiced in some areas of the Jewish world today. I learned about this from the site [My Jewish Learning](#).

Clothes worn by the characters throughout the novel are taken from sources such as *Granada: A Pomegranate in the Hand of God* by Stephen Nightingale, the paper "Jewish Attire in Medieval Iberia: Between Christian Jurisdiction and Jewish Inner-Communal Regulations" by Eunat Mirones Lozano and the site [My Jewish Learning](#).

Vidal's approach to medicine and philosophy of care are taken from the works of Ibn Sina (also known as Avicenna), a Persian philosopher and physician who died in 1037, but whose teachings were still popular during the time and location of the novel. As Ibn Sina's works are lengthy and difficult to read, I consulted the book *Medieval Medicine: The Art of Healing, from Head to Toe* by Luke E. Demaitre to better understand Ibn Sina's concepts and ensure that a doctor from 1492 Granada would follow his teachings.

The impending battle at Baza being discussed alludes to "The Siege of Baza" that took place in 1489, which was one of the final cities standing between the Catholic Monarchs and the city of Granada. I learned about the campaign from the site [Visit Andalucia](#).

The concept of Jews, Catholics, and Muslims living together cohabitating in medieval Spain is explored in *The Ornament of the World* by María Rosa Menocal and *Pomegranate in the Hand of God* by Stephen Nightingale.

## Chapter Two

The chapter opens on January 2, 1492, when the Emir Muhammad XII officially surrender the city of Granada to the Catholic Monarchs, which I learned from my time in Granada and is also corroborated on the site [Visit Andalucia](#).

Descriptions of soldiers' armor comes from *The Project Gutenberg EBook of Spanish Arms and Armour*, by Albert F. Calvert.

Ferdinand and Isabella's siege of Granada lasted eight months, with the strategy of starving the people of Granada into submission within the city walls. This is taken from *Granada: Pomegranate in the Hand of God* by Steven Nightingale.

The Articles of Capitulation (also known as the Treaty of Granada), was signed on November 25, 1491, between Isabella, Ferdinand, and Muhammed XII. Among other promises, the articles were meant to ensure that no one would lose their house and all would be allowed to continue to practice their own religion. The Alhambra Decree ultimately superseded this agreement (see Chapter Three).

Descriptions of the interiors of houses during this time period were taken from *Granada: Pomegranate in the Hand of God* by Steven Nightingale.

The idea of the ha-Rofehs pilgrimaging to Sarah's grave on the anniversary of her death dates back to a custom of Spanish Jews in medieval Spain and is taken from a web page from the University of Washington's [Sephardic Studies Program](#).

Descriptions of Vidal's instrument case are taken from descriptions of a similar doctor instrument case in *Against the Inquisition* by Marcos Aguinis. Suitcases were typically made of leather. They included scalpels, valves, knives, saws, tongs, scissors, and lancets. These instruments were cleaned, sharpened, boiled, and polished.

Eliezer's practice of using a sponge dusted with opium to relieve the suffering of a patient is a process called *spongia somnifera*. I learned of this practice from *Granada: Pomegranate in the Hand of God* by Steven Nightingale.

Sumac is also mentioned in Nightingale's work and was a medicinal herb used to treat many ailments. For more on the herbs Vidal uses, see the notes in Chapter Eleven.

The many descriptions of fruits and fruit trees found in Granada throughout the novel are taken from *Granada: Pomegranate in the Hand of God* by Steven Nightingale.

The many locations and dates of massacres against Jews mentioned throughout the novel are taken from Teofilo F. Ruiz's *Spain's Centuries of Crisis 1300-1474*.

According to *Divided Families in Converso Spain* by David Gitlitz, intermarriage between faiths was a relatively common practice in Iberia before the Inquisition.

## Chapter Three

According to [Rutgers University Libraries](#), money changer's benches were a common way to exchange money before banks. They were prominent throughout Europe and could often be found at town fairs or market squares, according to the [National Bank of Belgium Museum](#).

Although the ha-Rofehs often bathe themselves using a bucket in their courtyard, I learned from my time in Granada that bathhouses were a common feature during the time period. This detail was omitted for pacing.

The halftorah portion Asher is learning is Numbers 13-14.

According to *History of a Tragedy: The Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* by Joseph Pérez, olive oil was associated by Catholics with the smell of being Jewish.

The meat stew Bonadonna makes was a popular Sabbath dish in pre-Inquisition Spain known as [adafina](#), though it usually takes longer to prepare than the novel suggests. Meals eaten in the novel were informed by the site [Historia y Arabismo](#).

In *Spain's Centuries of Crisis 1300-1474* by Teofilo F. Ruiz, the concept of cooking with oil instead of lard was a telling sign that one was a converso who may still be secretly practicing as a Jew. While the ha-Rofeh's are not conversos, this knowledge would have been enough to make them cautious about their practices in the presence of the new Christian army.

Bloodletting was one of the most common forms of treatment in the middle ages, according to *Medieval Medicine: The Art of Healing, from Head to Toe* by Luke E. Demaitre.

“La Prima Vez” is a traditional Sephardic song that originates in Spain before 1492. The song is written in Ladino, a language originally spoken by Jews in Spain. I discovered the song through the CD “Songs of the Sephardim: Traditional Music of the Spanish Jews” by La Rondinella and Tina Chancey, though the song has been performed by many artists.

“The Law of Moses” was how Catholics referred to Jewish teachings. Jews referred to their teachings as “The Law of God”. Taken from *Against the Inquisition* by Marcos Aguinis

Though the Alhambra Decree was signed on March 31, 1492, the Catholic Monarchs were slow to distribute it in order to give people less time to make arrangements to leave, according to Yitzhak Baer's *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*. This is why the ha-Rofehs learn about the decree in April.

The words of the decree that Eliezer reads are taken from the Alhambra Decree, a real and infamous decree that commanded all Jews leave Spain or convert to Catholicism under penalty of death by July 31, 1492. Apart from using an English translation of a Spanish document, I have left the words unaltered.

Jews were banned from France in 1394 according to *History of a Tragedy* by Joseph Pérez.

The idea of large numbers of Jews arriving in Iberia after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE comes from *History of a Tragedy* by Joseph Pérez.

## Chapter Four

The descriptions of Granada houses being made of white plaster and stone is taken from *Granada: A Pomegranate in the Hand of God* by Steven Nightingale.

As the look of Granada has changed from 1492 to present day, the recreated appearance of Granada in 1492 is inspired by several sources. [The David Rumsey Map Collection](#) provided illustrations of what Granada looked like around this time. I also referenced travelers' accounts from Jacobo Munzer, who visited Granada in 1492, and Andrea Navagiero, who visited Granada in 1526. I found these accounts in Nightingale's work, though they were originally pulled from the works of James Dickie.

As all synagogues of Granada have been destroyed or converted to churches, descriptions of the synagogue that the ha-Rofehs attend is based on images of the Synagogue of El Tránsito in Toledo, built in 1357.

I learned in my own travels to Granada that the Nasrid Great Mosque once stood where the Granada Cathedral stands today. I consulted images of the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba to get a sense of how elements of the Nasrid Great Mosque may have looked.

The story of the wealthy Portuguese man in Ferdinand and Isabella's court is a well-known story about Don Isaac Abarbanel and can be corroborated by the site [Jewish Heritage Alliance](#). As Abarbanel's life has little to do with the novel's story, most details about his life go unmentioned in the novel.

The Council of Fifteen is inspired by the concept of a council of elders that were an integral part of Jewish internal organization during this time period, as discussed in Yitzhak Baer's *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*.

## Chapter Five

The concept of the afterlife in Judaism is complex and has differed over time. For the sake of simplicity, the ha-Rofehs all believe in the concept of the afterlife as put forth by Moses Maimonides (a Spanish Jewish philosopher) in *The Mishneh Torah*. I have read conflicting accounts as to whether Maimonides was praised during this time period or dismissed. In the world of the novel, the ha-Rofeh's follow his teachings when it comes to the afterlife.

With only weeks to sell their house and possessions before they were exiled, Jews were often given abysmally unfair prices for their possessions, according to *History of a Tragedy* by Joseph Pérez.

The idea of Shelomo marrying off Tsipora prematurely comes from a passage in *History of a Tragedy* by Joseph Pérez which says that men and women as young as twelve were married off before the expulsion, so that all women would go in the company of their husbands.

## Chapter Six

Bonadonna's story of seeking aid from the church to divorce her husband and convert is taken from *Divided Families in Converso Spain* by David Gitlitz.

The concept of using animal fat to fuel torches comes from the essay "[Lighting Through the Ages](#)" by Sue Matthews.

## Chapter Seven

To construct a Spanish Jewish wedding that takes place in 1492, I pulled from several sources. The prayers and rituals are common practices at a Jewish wedding and are corroborated in *The Jewish Wedding Now* by Anita Diamant. Anyone who's been part of a Jewish wedding may notice no mention of a chuppah in this scene, which is because the chuppah as it exists today did not become part of a Jewish wedding until 16<sup>th</sup> century Poland. The scene was further fact-checked by a Sephardic colleague who works with me in the medical community.

Constructing the reception for a Jewish wedding in 1492 Spain proved equally challenging. While dancing in a circle and lifting the bride and groom onto a chair is a fairly recent custom of a Jewish wedding, circle dances and the idea of lifting the bride or groom goes back centuries, as mentioned on the site [Enlace Judío](#). The novel has a net acting as a partition between men and women, but many types of objects and materials were used.

## Chapter Eight

"Avre Tu Puerta Cerrada" is a traditional Sephardic song that originates in Spain before 1492, written in Ladino. Like "La Prima Vez" (see Chapter Three) I discovered the song on the CD by La Rondinella and Tina Chancey.

## BOOK II

### Chapter Nine

While neighbors and families likely caravanned together to leave Spain, the concept of the Jews traveling in a single caravan is a work of invention. The idea was additionally inspired by the painting “Expulsión de los judíos de Sevilla” by Joaquín Turina.

The aurochs that Rabbi el Barchilon owns were native to Andalusia, though they would have been a less common site in 1492. The species went extinct 1627. Taken from the [National Library of Medicine](#).

The Alhambra Decree stated that Jews not take “gold or silver or coined money” once they left Spain.

### Chapter Ten

The use of rosemary and sage to revive people who fainted is not based on any medieval medical practices per se. The idea is simply that these are the only supplies Vidal still possesses.

While the book of poetry that Eliezer reads in not specified in the novel, the Spanish Jews have a rich history of beautiful poems. Many of these poems have been collected in *The Dream of the Poem: Hebrew Poetry from Muslim and Christian Spain, 950-1492*, translated by Peter Cole.

### Chapter Eleven

The list of medicinal herbs that Vidal requests are taken from “[The Calendar of Córdoba](#)” an agriculture manual written by Mozarabic bishop Rabi-Ben in 961 to Al-Hakam II, the second Umayyad Caliph of Córdoba, which I found in Nightingale’s book. Although written several centuries prior to 1492, the list provides a helpful inventory of medicinal herbs native to Andalusia. Additional herbs are taken from *Medieval Medicine: The Art of Healing, from Head to Toe* by Luke E. Demaitre.

The use of black salve to treat a patient is taken from *Against the Inquisition* by Marcos Aguinis.

### Chapter Thirteen

Bonadonna’s use of lye and water to wash her clothes comes from “Strangest Hygiene Practices from the Middle Ages” by Shannon Quinn. Lye was made from a mixture of white ash and urine.

## BOOK III

### Chapter Fifteen

According to Joseph Pérez in *History of a Tragedy*, the Catholic Monarchs were determined to do away with Jews and Jewish influence in Spain, so it is likely they would've wasted no time removing all Jewish symbols from La Judería and renaming the neighborhood to Realejo.

### Chapter Sixteen

The constable's dungeon is a fictional creation, though I borrowed certain elements of the design from BBC Reel's video "[The hidden world beneath the Alhambra fortress](#)".

Padre Leonardo's anti-Semitic remarks about the powers Catalina's family hold over her come from the Alhambra Decree, which accuses Jews of tricking Catholics into practicing their ways.

### Chapter Seventeen

The description of new fashions arriving in Granada are taken from the site [Fashion History Timeline](#).

The description of the inquisitors wearing black habits is taken from a passage in *Against the Inquisition* by Marcos Aguinis.

The thirty-day grace period was known as an Edict of Grace, which I learned of from the site [The Collector](#) as well as Yitzhak Baer's *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*.

The concept of Catalina giving the converso names to the Inquisitors comes from *Divided Families in Converso Spain* by David Gitlitz.

The descriptions of the house where the inquisitor is working is inspired by the Palace of the Convent of San Francisco, where the Inquisitors lived. However, the location is not named in the book and only serves as a proxy as it wasn't complete until 1507. I first learned about the location through the site [Barceló Experiences](#).

### Chapter Nineteen

Although Catalina would not know for certain whether her son was in danger during this time period, Aznaro would be seen by the Inquisition as having "the contamination of a Jew", according to *Against the Inquisition* by Marcos Aguinis. Because Aznaro is so young, he'd likely be raised by the church, rather than executed.

The many details of Catalina's tribunal are taken from *Against the Inquisition* by Marcos Aguinis, which recreates the real life tribunal and execution of Argentinian converso Francisco Maldonado de Silva at the hands of the Spanish Inquisition in great detail.

It was standard practice for the Inquisition to never reveal the names of the accusers who brought up charges of heresy against the condemned, according to *Against the Inquisition* by Marcos Aguinis.

The flag Catalina sees that bears Psalm 73 is the Seal for the Tribunal of Spain. According to *The Last Jew* by Noah Gordon, if one were to accept the cross, they'd get the olive branch. If one were to refuse the cross, they'd get the sword. As the symbol would be unfamiliar to Catalina, none of this is mentioned in the novel.

I learned of the torture methods used on Señor Calderón by visiting Palacio de los Olvidados in Granada, Spain, a museum devoted to the Spanish Inquisition.

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## **BOOK IV**

### **Chapter Twenty**

The idea of an enslaved Moorish population in Málaga is taken from Joseph Pérez's *History of a Tragedy*. Many locals were enslaved after Ferdinand and Isabella conquered the city to make an example of the city rulers for refusing conditions of surrender.

The idea of price gouging Jews to leave Spanish shores is also taken from Joseph Pérez's *History of a Tragedy*.

### **Chapter Twenty-One**

The idea of Vidal's accent sounding unique to the priest does not come from any specific research. Due to Granada's isolation during the war and being part of a Muslim kingdom, it's likely the Jews might have sounded different to other people of the Iberian Peninsula. Likewise, this is a nod to the very specific accent Granadinos have to this day, which sounds different than all other parts of Spain.

According to Joseph Pérez's *History of a Tragedy*, when Jews realized they would be unable to escape Spain before the start of the decree, they had no choice but to convert in droves.



## Chapter Twenty-Two

I have found no sources that could give me a reliable estimate of how much 10,000 reales in 1492 would be worth in modern day currency. The essay “[Columbus’s First Voyage: Profit or Loss From a Historical Perspective](#)” by David Satava has lead me to the conclusion that establishing a reliable conversion is nearly impossible. The price of 10,000 reales is simply meant to demonstrate that Vidal is asking for a significant, but not impossible, sum of money.

## Chapter Twenty-Three

The surgery Vidal performs on Marcos is loosely based on a surgery that takes place in *Against the Inquisition* by Marcos Aguinis. As Vidal is not a surgeon and does not own cauterizers, his approach to the surgery is intentionally incorrect.

The concept of making a patient inhale garlic powder to regain consciousness is taken from *Against the Inquisition* by Marcos Aguinis.

Many Jews did meet the fate of being murdered at sea, which the priest tells Vidal to warn him. This comes from *History of a Tragedy* by Joseph Pérez. The “Expulsion of the Jews from Spain” podcast from Torah Café explores this topic as well.

## Chapter Twenty-Four

Although the Alhambra Decree marked July 31<sup>st</sup> as the deadline to leave Spain or convert, the Jews were actually granted an extension to leave by August 9<sup>th</sup>, according to [Jewish Heritage Alliance](#), among other sources. The date correlates to the ninth day of the month of Av (Tisha B’Av) in the Hebrew calendar, and is a date associated with tragedy in Jewish history. A list of tragic events that occurred on Tisha B’Av before and after 1492 can be viewed on the website of [Ohr Somayach](#). The novel makes no mention of the extension as the ha-Rofehs escape Spain before they’d have knowledge of it.

I took a somewhat longwinded approach to estimate how long it would take a carrack to sail from Málaga to Tétouan. The average speed of a carrack was 80 miles per day according to an article published by the [University of Montreal](#). The distance between the two cities is 95 miles as the crow flies. Thus I can deduce the ship took slightly over 24 hours to arrive at Tétouan. “Two days” being the day they left as well as the following day.

The “madness” used to describe Señor Curiel’s illness was a catchall phrase for diseases we think of now such as senility or dementia, according to *Medieval Medicine: The Art of Healing, from Head to Toe* by Luke E. Demaitre

## BOOK V

### Chapter Twenty-Five

Joseph Pérez's *History of a Tragedy* touches on the idea that when Jews arrived in Fez they were met with bad treatment by Muslims and local Jews alike. The word "Megorashim" was used to identify Iberian Jews. I first learned of the word from the site [Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme](#).

The Ibn Zadok Synagogue is a work of invention. Its description is inspired by the Ibn Danan Synagogue in Fez, built in the 1600s and thought to be the only complete Moroccan synagogue still in existence. I first learned of the synagogue from the site [Atlas Obscura](#).

Columbus returned from his first voyage to the Americas on March 15, 1493, as corroborated by the site of [Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History](#). The novel suggests that news has reached the community in Fez a couple of weeks later.

### Chapter Twenty-Six

Gabriel's description of his family falling into financial and social ruin following Catalina's execution is taken from *Against the Inquisition* by Marcos Aguinis. It was common practice for the Holy Office to charge a family for all expenses related to the condemned, including imprisonment, torture, and execution.

Bonadonna's vague understanding of how many Jews managed to leave Spain is as unclear today as it was in 1493. Joseph Pérez's best estimate is that approximately 100,000 Jews left Spain to escape the Alhambra Decree. The Jewish Heritage Alliance's best guess is approximately 250,000. Nobody is certain of the true number.

Although shiva practices are taken from personal experiences, I also corroborated the customs of a Sephardic shiva from the site [My Jewish Learning](#).