Message From the Grave:

A Text-in-Context Case Study of Bikur Cholim Sephardic Cemetery

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ABSTRACT

This study utilizes Cara A. Finnegan's approach to text-in-context analysis of visual communication and rhetoric and applies the framework to a Sephardic Jewish site. The purpose of this study is to better understand the ways by which visual communication is employed to maintain, affirm, and communicate identity and cultural norms and values through a text-in-context case study of the Sephardic Bikur Cholim Cemetery. The text is analyzed in terms of sacred and profane space, hierarchy creation, as a voice for the historically voiceless, as a storage device for memories, and communication device for transmitting cultural values and norms to future generations. Analysis revealed four significant findings: 1) The cemetery relies on an American, left-to-right orientation, which indicates a conflict or a blending between two competing identities; 2) Mircea Eliade's concept of sacred and profane spaces was applied and confirmed in the cemetery; 3) Traditional Jewish roles are communicated and affirmed through imagery on the headstones, and 4) Living visitors are able to participate in their heritage by leaving stones on grave markers.

The study argues that messages, both intentional and unintentional, are created visually with a future audience in mind. Specifically, the existence of Bikur Cholim Cemetery communicates to the larger Seattle community that Sephardic history and the Sephardic people are worthy of commemoration and that the historically powerless group has gained the power necessary to enact their desire to memorialize. It also furthers Eliade's work concerning sacred and profane spaces by the application of his framework to an actual space.

Second, the findings indicate how identity is communicated across generations in a time when traditional methods and social structures meant for that type of communication are disintegrating.

Third, identity changes are occurring within a historic and traditional culture; this is demonstrated by the cemetery's American orientation, the "Men of Valor" panel on the memorial wall, etc. What is not yet clear is whether one identity (American or Sephardic) is primary, or if an entirely new identity is being formed that integrates traits from both. If that is the case, it is something new and significant. It may also partially confirm Carole Blair's assertion that modern memorials will necessarily incorporate multiple voices.

Fourth and finally, the findings of this study indicate that there is a type of memorializing communication that occurs within a group that shares a common religious and ethnic background; this type of communication dictates what is and is not appropriate for the cemetery messages.

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Chapter 1

Whispers from the Graveyard:

An Introduction to the Study of Bikur Cholim Cemetery

Every day, countless messages are sent via e-mail, the postal service, telephone, instant messages, and on the radio. Advertisements on television promote products, campaigns or even religions; in face-to-face contact, people are constantly being influenced and changed by those with whom they interact. In the din of direct messages, sometimes the influence of context can go unnoticed. Environments can also contribute to the flow of communication. Rarely spoken about except in times of tragedy, national celebration, personal bereavement, or other family events, public and private memorials are especially significant in the process of cultural message-sending. For example, memorials serve an important role in environments and communication because they are created with the consciousness of a lasting and purposeful visual message. At times, those messages are infused with underlying layers of meaning that are less consciously created, yet those messages also are important to understand. Unique among all memorial types is the cemetery; in a cemetery, the lives of ordinary and extraordinary people are remembered by people who realize that whatever monument or marker they erect will probably be the final legacy left to honor those people. What, then, do people say when they intend to communicate not only to those in the present but also to future generations? How do they communicate those messages through the cemetery?

Bikur Cholim is a Sephardic Jewish cemetery located in Seattle, Washington. Established in the 1930s by immigrants from the Mediterranean, it was created as a burial site for Orthodox

Jews of Sephardic descent.[1] The cemetery, located just off Aurora Avenue in Seattle,[2] is where my maternal grandfather was buried in 2004. His sudden death gave me a crash course in the burial rituals of the Jewish religion and Sephardic traditions. I learned that no matter the views one held during life about religion – whether one was a Reformed, Conservative, or an Orthodox Jew – in this cemetery, all were buried as Orthodox, in traditional Orthodox garb and two days after death. The grieving family and close friends arrive at the cemetery, ritually washing their hands before they enter, and sit segregated by gender through a small service in the memorial chapel. Pallbearers carry the casket to the gaping wound in the ground, and then one by one each mourner takes a turn shoveling dirt over the casket until it is completely buried. One year later, after a 12-month prescribed schedule of mourning rituals and prayers, a special ceremony marks the unveiling of the headstone. I explain the burial rituals not because I wish to study them, but to be clear about why I chose to analyze the cemetery in this thesis.

There are many ways to understand the Bikur Cholim Cemetery, but in this study I will analyze it through the lens of visual rhetoric. The cemetery is full of visual imagery and cues, an obvious example being the symbols engraved on grave markers. Common headstone elements are Stars of David, menorahs, flames (usually in a lamp), the Tree of Life, and depictions of the Torah. A few headstones also are engraved with Masonic and military symbols. Some of the headstones contain images that are entirely unique and reflect the person being memorialized; such images include poker cards, baseball images, a paintbrush and palette, etc. One unique headstone has an engraved menorah, but one can only see the image from an angle. It is as if a menorah were cut deeply into the black stone, and then smoothed away; from the front, it

[1] The exact date for the founding of the cemetery is difficult to ascertain, as different records indicate different years.
[2] The cemetery is technically located in Shoreline as of 1995, which is the year that the city was incorporated; however, most residents still consider the area to be a part of Seattle.

appears that someone made a mistake or that something was removed from the stone, but from the side the indentations of the individual arms of the menorah are seen, and the symbol's shape appears. Another gravestone element is the protected photograph – a picture of the deceased is affixed to the stone, and a metal covering protects it from the weather.

Another example of interesting visual communication in the cemetery is the gender specificity of certain symbols displayed on the gravestones. For example, the Star of David appears on both men and women's headstones. Menorahs, on the other hand, are far more likely to be found on women's headstones than men's. Additionally, if a married couple is buried together with a double or joint headstone, if the Star of David and the menorah symbols are used, the Star of David almost always appears on the husband's side of the marker, and the menorah almost always appears on the woman's side of the marker.

As the reader can see, the Bikur Cholim Cemetery is rich in symbolism. The images and symbols used function beyond decorative purposes, and are used to convey information about the people commemorated, those who commemorate, and the cultural context of the cemetery. There are layers of meaning imbedded into the construction of the site, in everything from the overall layout of the cemetery down to the most minute details of individual memorials. This thesis analyzes from a rhetorical perspective the messages in the Sephardic Bikur Cholim Cemetery seen as the "text," communicated against and through the "context" of the environment, the layout and design of the space, and the symbols and hierarchies created and implemented throughout the cemetery.

There are several questions answered in this thesis. The first two questions answered are related to space: (1) In what way or ways is Bikur Cholim Cemetery using space to communicate, and (2) How is the cemetery intended to affect the experience of the visitor?

Secondly, Bikur Cholim Cemetery is Sephardic, which raises the question: In what ways is the Sephardic identity maintained, confirmed or recreated in the space? It seems as though the inscription along the memorial wall at the entrance of the cemetery, which informs visitors about the history of the Sephardim and their place in Seattle's history, is meant to be significant, but are there other ways in which Sephardic heritage is communicated in the space?

Finally, this thesis asks: What are the effects of the current context of the cemetery, and how may they influence the rhetoric of Bikur Cholim? Founded in the 1930s, the neighborhood surrounding the cemetery has changed, as has the cultural environment; although attempts are made to filter out the sights and sounds of the Drift-On-Inn Casino and Aurora Avenue, they still play a part in the total experience of Bikur Cholim, but to what extent do they change the cemetery's message(s)? In what ways does the cultural context affect or influence the cemetery's function(s) and message(s)?

Literature Review

In researching this area – visual rhetoric, especially that of cemeteries and in Jewish symbolism – one is drenched in a cascading waterfall of information. The abundance of knowledge and learning has enriched this project, but it is unnecessary to exhaustively detail every source for the purposes of this project. Instead, I have chosen to present the sources most relevant to the purposes of this thesis.

One element of the cemetery as message medium that cannot be overlooked is its nature as a sacred area, set aside for holy uses. Mircea Eliade discusses the importance of the separation between sacred and profane regions in his book, The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion:

> There is, then, a sacred space, and hence a strong, significant space; there are other spaces that are not sacred and so are without structure or consistency, amorphous […] For religious man, this spatial nonhomogeneity finds expression in the experience of an opposition between space that is sacred – the only *real* and *real-ly* existing space – and all other space, the formless expanse surrounding it. It must be said at once that the religious experience of nonhomogeneity of space is a primordial experience, homologizable to a founding of the world. It is not a matter of theoretical speculation, but of a primary religious experience that precedes all reflection on the world. For it is the break effected in space that allows the world to be constituted, because it reveals the fixed point, the central axis for all future orientation. When the sacred manifests itself in any hierophany, there is not only a break in the homogeneity of space; there is also revelation of an absolute reality, opposed to the nonreality of the vast surrounding expanse. (20-21)

According to Eliade, a space must be first understood as either sacred or profane, because those two categories are what define the rest of the world. Sacred places are set aside and set apart for holy purposes; they are the central areas around which the world and lives revolve. An argument can easily be made for the sacred nature of a cemetery, for it is a place in which one or more "absolute realities" – such as mortality and eternity – are revealed.

Eliade also maintains that the creation and separation of sacred and profane spaces must be understood:

> The threshold that separates the two spaces also indicates the distance between two modes of being, the profane and the religious. The threshold is the limit, the boundary, the frontier that distinguishes and opposes two worlds – and at the same time the paradoxical place where those worlds communicate, where passage from the profane to the sacred world becomes possible. (25)

In order to analyze the Bikur Cholim Cemetery, then, one must begin by analyzing the context of the cemetery – the surrounding profane space – and the entrance into the cemetery itself as a passageway into a sacred place. Eliade states the entrance of any sacred space is a bridge that allows communication between mortal and holy (25).

Additionally, Eliade asserts that choosing a dwelling is connected with one's understanding of and relationship to sacred and profane spaces:

> This is why settling somewhere – building a village or merely a house – represents a serious decision, for the very existence of man is involved; he must, in short, create his own world and assume the responsibility of maintaining and renewing it. Habitations are not lightly changed, for it is not easy to abandon one's world. The house is not an object, a "machine to live in"; *it is the universe that man constructs for himself by imitating the paradigmatic creation of the gods; the cosmogony*. Every construction and every inauguration of a new dwelling are in some measure equivalent to a *new beginning*, a *new life*. (56-57, emphasis original to the text)

From Eliade's statement, we can draw a parallel between earthly dwellings and deathly dwellings. Just as a house is a symbol of or is itself a new beginning and a newly created universe, so is a cemetery. Building a cemetery is serious, for Eliade demonstrates that the issues of life and death and universe creation involved in making a home are paralleled in a cemetery, for it is meant to be a permanent residence, too. Those who dwell in the cemetery, according to Eliade, have made a new beginning and do not easily change their present habitation or world;[3] the cemetery communicates that message to the living visitors. The space of the cemetery is also one that symbolizes the transportation or journey from a former residence and life to a hoped-for and believed-in new beginning and new life.

The Bikur Cholim Cemetery must also be understood as a place of memory construction and maintenance. Greg Dickinson, Brian L. Ott, and Eric Aoki guide readers through the Plains Indian Museum experience in their article, "Spaces of Remembering and Forgetting: The Reverent Eye/I at the Plains Indian Museum," where the museum content is almost a secondary message to the design and layout of the building itself. The authors explain and analyze the creation of such memorial spaces:

> As official and institutionalized cultural expressions, public museums, memorials, and other historical sites play a crucial role in the construction and maintenance of national mythologies, histories, and identities […] The experience of museums and memorials does not begin at their entrances. (29)

[3] It is possible, though not common, for graves to be relocated to new sites even though they are designed to be permanent resting places for the dead.

According to Dickinson, Ott, and Aoki, the entire context of the museum or memorial – the surrounding area, the parking lot – convey or influence messages about the experience. Yet the question remains; what roles do the monument or memorial itself play in expressing meaning?

According to Sonja K. Foss' work, "Ambiguity as Persuasion: The Vietnam Memorial," the memorial is a work of art, and as such it produces a response in the viewer and takes on meaning that is not immediately obvious (329). Meaning is in the viewer and the interaction that occurs between him or her and the memorial itself:

> To say that an art object has meaning does not mean that it signifies some fixed referent. Rather, meaning results only from a viewer's creation of an interpretation of the visual object. Different meanings are attributed to a work of art, then, by different viewers as a result of the different endowments and experiences brought to the work. (330)

Applying Foss' concept of memorial art to a memorial such as a cemetery, it seems possible to conclude that there is a symbolic interaction occurring between the living, grieving people who raise the headstones and visit and those who have died.

In "Reading the Cemetery, Lieu de Memoire Par Excellance," Elizabethada Wright describes the cemetery as a tool and method for storing memories. According to her, the images engraved upon the markers also act as memory devices. The information contained in a cemetery has a voice and a message, though it has often been "silenced" (32). As she describes her journey through a large cemetery at Mount Auburn, Wright notes that even in a place of burial and remembrance, hierarchies are created by those who are alive and choose what ought and what ought not to be commemorated (33). At the same time, cemeteries have historically allowed for

more equality among constituents than other public forums. In cemeteries, she writes, it is acceptable to erect monuments to men and women alike. It is not only the powerful who can have a large marker – the same opportunity exists for more ordinary mortals. It is in this way, then, that the cemetery neutralizes some of the effects of gender and economic status and gives a public and historic voice to those who would not normally have access (34).

In another work, "Rhetorical Spaces in Memorial Places: The Cemetery as a Rhetorical Memory Place/Space," Wright affirms that cemeteries are storehouses for memories, and consequently, she agrees with Eliade that they are sacred and produce meaning (54). Yet these locations are not only for the purposes of mourning and remembrance, but they are also for "rediscovery" of the values that those memories represent:

> These cemeteries were and are beautiful gardens. They were structured for people to walk through, look at and internalize. One important goal of these cemeteries was for visitors to go and contemplate life and death, to see the beauty of order, and emulate this order… the gravemarker thus warns the living to watch their behavior. (59)

According to Wright, the living ought to be changed by the experience and message of the cemetery, as well as the encounter with entire lives that existed and were extinguished, yet continue to speak.

A cemetery can certainly instruct and affirm values, but it can also function by affirming identity. In Death, Ritual and Belief, Douglas Davies writes, "Death rites are as much concerned with issues of identity and social continuity as with the very practical fact that human bodies decay and become offensive to the sight and smell of the living" (6). The rituals that accompany

death, as well as the ways in which death is presented in a cemetery, communicate not only the identity of the deceased, but also the identity of those who survive. Davies claims that "death has been widely seen to challenge human identity;" it is therefore vital for human and cultural identity to be reaffirmed in the face of death (7). In a nation such as the United States, which has in the past been referred to as a "melting pot," identity might easily be lost, especially if the dead are forgotten:

> Links with forebears bear many meanings, whether directly existential in doubting death's finality or in rehearsing an identity gained through inheritance, succession and ethnic identity. For many groups their cultural identity is closely aligned with public funeral rites and patterns of memorialization. This was especially true in the USA, whose nineteenth- and twentieth-century immigrants founded distinctive communities whose identities were marked through cemetery construction […] [P]arts of cemeteries have reflected a definite ethnic identity as immigrant families from particular nations have been buried together and furnished memorials reflecting their national origin […]. (Davies 110)

A cemetery has no choice but to convey messages of value and identity; it is the nature of the space.

The cemetery itself has a message to convey that is not merely specific to those who are mourning or even those who knew the individuals who passed away, but to all of humankind. Indeed, in "Rhetorical Spaces," Wright envisages not only a single voice speaking to those who walk through it, but says that "there are thousands upon thousands of voices clamoring to be

heard, a cacophony of remembrances are calling out" (60). How is it that these silent voices continue to speak?

"In silence, obstructions are removed," says Peter Ehrenhaus, author of "Silence and Symbolic Expression" (42). In this work, the author attempts to explain how silence works as a message channel, emphasizing that in order to decode the messages sent in the silence, we must understand the medium, insisting, "Symbolic expressions speak when we know how to use them" (44). Silence is particularly relevant in the discussion of memorials and cemetery messages, as neither tend to be arenas for jubilation or joy, but are more typically the sites of solemn quiet and tears. Ehrenhaus asserts that silence in these places communicates by causing self-reflection:

> Encounters of silence provide the opportunity of "taking hold" and gaining genuine insight. Silence issues a call of conscience [...] Its call is indefinite, towards nothing in particular, but its direction is unequivocally towards self-awareness [...] Conscience is a call that arises in encountering silence. It summons us to question the genuineness of our lives [...] Moreover, silence can give rise to anxiety, and this, in turn, can pull us back from inauthenticity. We generally view anxiety as undesirable, but it benefits us precisely because it tugs us back from our immersion in the world. (46)

If we understand a cemetery as a sacred place, Ehrenhaus' description of the experience of silent places fits well with the role and purpose of a cemetery, allowing mourners and visitors to experience the central and absolute realities of the universe. The cemetery experience described by Wright, in which the gravemarkers warn readers to watch their behaviors and to examine their

lives, is also supported by Ehrenhaus' understanding of the voice of silence. In both cases, the audience experiences quiet and self-reflection that spurs him or her to make adjustments to life activities or attitudes.

It is likely that there are more messages, however, than those intended to produce self-reflection. Does simplicity in gravemarker design indicate message or lack of message? In "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as Prototype," Carole Blair, Marsha S. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci, Jr. state that understanding the creator's intentions for message creation may be difficult to discern because the identity of the creator or author is often unclear (270). Additionally, there may be multiple creators with differing visions or messages who collaborated for the project; a gravemarker may serve many purposes for the living and mourning. According to the authors, "Decisions about whom or what to memorialize appear to require recourse to some principle of who or what is *worthy* of public commemoration. They seem to demand a reliance, in fact, upon a meta-narrative […]" (271). In her essay describing the process of the Vietnam Memorial project, Carole Blair asserts that memorials created in a postmodern era are multivocal, and suggests that postmodern memorials could lead to a new type of memorializing rhetoric that involves all of those voices ("Public Memorializing in Postmodernity," 346). Blair's insight may be helpful in understanding some memorials, and certainly helps increase understanding about the Vietnam Memorial. A memorial with many different voices with different agendas, however, is not what the Seattle Sephardic community is looking to express in Bikur Cholim; they strive to create a site with one voice that primarily communicates a Sephardic Jewish identity. Postmodernism, then, is an element that the Sephardim attempt to prevent from influencing the creation and interpretation by visitors of their

space; it seems postmodernism would be resisted not only by this group, but also by any group that wished to protect and maintain a separate identity.

It is a nearly universal trait to look for an overarching theme or meaning to life, but meta-narratives are of particular importance to the Jewish people. Tracing their history through centuries of nation-less wandering and persecution, they see their ethnic and religious survival as evidence that God has divinely protected them and given them an eternal purpose. Since the Jews see themselves in context of the meta-narrative, it seems natural that they value memory and memorializing in their religion and culture. According to Faith Jones and Gretta Siegel in "Yizkor Books as Holocaust Grey Literature," memorial times, called "yizkor services" are held regularly to mourn loved ones, the two destroyed temples, and those who died in the Holocaust. The name "yizkor" is employed because it is Hebrew for "you will remember;" during such services the names of the dead are recited aloud so that they will never be erased from the memories of the living (52). Additionally, Jones and Siegel note that yizkor services are typically conducted by philanthropic or benevolent societies made up mostly of Holocaust survivors from specific regions of Europe who have found one another. The Bikur Cholim Cemetery, significantly, was founded by one such society – the Seattle Sephardic Brotherhood. In creating a memorial space for the dead, the Brotherhood also consciously created a legacy for future generations. As Jones and Siefel write, "One of the purposes of the Holocaust was to destroy memory, yet one of the strongest foundational tenets of Judaism is the belief in text as a force for perpetuating memory" (53). Therefore, the Bikur Cholim Cemetery could be seen as conveying two messages: the first that proclaims that the Jewish people emerged victorious from the horrors of the Holocaust extermination camps – despite the fact that it was originally constructed before World War II, and many of the people buried in the cemetery were never even in the camps –

and the second message declares that the Jewish history and the individuals who belong to it will never be forgotten. The cemetery then communicates both to the Jewish community and the Gentile community a general message of historic survival and triumph. The very life of the cemetery, seen as much in the landscaped lawns and carefully tended shrubs and flowers as in the new brown graves, indicates the longevity of the Sephardic community and its continuance and preservation into the future.

Some Holocaust memorials in the United States have been charged with "Americanizing" a European phenomenon. In "Remembering and Forgetting the 'Final Solution': A Rhetorical Pilgrimage through the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum," Marouf Hasian, Jr. examines the ways in which the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum treats the subject of the Holocaust and how it presents information to an American public. Hasian agrees that curators of the museum chose to appeal to Americans by formatting presentations in such a way as to "Americanize" the material, yet understands that, dependant on goals, there may be occasions where that type of approach is acceptable (67, 88). A cemetery is a unique memorial, particularly when concerned with memorializing Holocaust victims or survivors, because each individual gravemarker's design is determined by a different person or persons for differing reasons. While the marker may be designed for an American audience even when its purpose is to memorialize a person not born in the United States, that is consistent with the context of the memorial – a Jewish cemetery in the U.S. Additionally, the cemetery as a whole does not need to change its approach in order to communicate to a specific audience; people worldwide are familiar with the functions and messages of cemeteries.

Regina Miriam Marchi, writing in "El Dia de los Muertos – American Style: Communicating with the Living," says, "To remember the dead, after all, is to remember how

and why they died" (6). Her article is interesting and relevant due to its focus on cemetery messages in Latin cultures during El Dia de los Muertos, or the Day of the Dead. Like American and Jewish cemeteries, Marchi establishes that Latin cemeteries speak to the living: "Day of the Dead […] becomes a self-reflexive expression of Latino identity that is performative and designed to communicate messages to a living audience rather than to the dead" (9, 10). Cemetery message-sending, then, is not necessarily culture-specific, though the types of messages sent may very well be. Communities use the rhetorical space of the cemetery to communicate a legacy to future generations.

The Bikur Cholim Cemetery must be understood in terms of the preceding research; to neglect any of those areas would be to have an incomplete, and therefore inaccurate, picture of the purposes and messages of the space. Bikur Cholim operates as a sacred space that facilitates the construction and maintenance of both [Jewish] identity and memory. Additionally, the interaction that occurs in the cemetery between the previous generations and the living is one that transfers the inherited legacy of value and culture. This thesis builds upon the research that has been presented here, but has also been influenced by the work of others who are noted in following chapters as well as in the Works Consulted section.

Methodology

This thesis will analyze the Bikur Cholim Cemetery as a rhetorical text. As such, the cemetery will be analyzed in terms of its layout, attempting to understand the area as an intersection of sacred and profane spaces and as a place of memory construction and maintenance. The cemetery also operates as an avenue of value and cultural affirmation, and will be examined in the context of the Jewish understanding of their historical meta-narrative.

Cemeteries seem clearly to qualify as rhetorical space and as a communication channel. Adding Jewish culture and history to the symbolic interaction occurring between viewers and the cemetery space creates an expanded avenue of research that can and ought to be studied. The Bikur Cholim Cemetery is particularly suited for study, as it combines Jewish symbolism and the language of cemetery rhetoric into one message medium. The context of its presence in Seattle's red-light district is also an important element of the study, as the present-day rhetoric and messages of Aurora Avenue may subvert both the originally intended and unconsciously imbedded rhetoric and messages of Bikur Cholim Cemetery; even more vital to the study is the cemetery's context within a Seattle Jewish community that does not necessarily embrace unique regional characteristics, but strives to keep ties strong through recognizing and/or creating common ground among Jews of all backgrounds and religious dedication.

In order to conduct such a study, I intend to rely on the model set forth by Cara A. Finnegan, in "Doing Rhetorical History of the Visual: The Photograph and the Archive," a chapter in Defining Visual Rhetorics, edited by Charles A. Hill and Marguerite Helmers. In her work, Finnegan references Zarefsky's distinctions in the overlap between rhetoric and history, and highlights his third and fourth distinctions as the most pertinent to her study:

> In the *historical study of rhetorical events* (sense #3), discourse is studied as a 'force in history,' as a part of the history of culture, or as a microcosm for history itself (30). Using such an approach, a critic might study the history of terms relevant to particular instances of rhetorical discourse, attempt to uncover the history of the production of a text, or look for patterns in discourse that 'suggest a rhetorical trajectory' (29). […] The fourth sense of rhetorical history takes something of the opposite approach[: …] the *rhetorical study of historical events*

> (30). Here, one uses the critical tools cultivated by one's rhetorical sensibility to understand history itself, conceiving of people, events, and situations as *rhetorical problems* for which responses must continually be formulated, reformulated, and negotiated (30). […] Thus, rather than using history to understand the [text] (sense #3) one would use the [text] to understand history. [… D]oing rhetorical history of the visual must entail *both* the third and fourth senses of rhetorical history; neither is sufficient alone. (199-200)

Finnegan's approach seems ideally suited for a study of Bikur Cholim, as the cemetery site itself cannot be separated from its nature as an expression of Sephardic Jewish culture and history. The path laid out by Finnegan allows for an integration of relevant history and visual text. Because her article partially focuses on photographs taken and published during the Great Depression, part of the path involves analyzing the material in terms of production, reproduction and circulation (211). The examination here of a cemetery text only loosely follows that specific outline; one could see the origination of the Sephardic people as the step of production, the creation of a Sephardic community in Seattle as reproduction, and the use of the cemetery as circulation. To follow Finnegan so closely, however, would not prove as useful or as enlightening to the purposes and functions of the cemetery as to adopt her attitude toward and method of studying texts in context; she asserts that

> [a] definition of visual rhetoric(s) alone cannot be useful unless it simultaneously suggests a way of seeing that combines an understanding of the unique qualities of visual discourse with a rhetorical sensibility that can account for how visual discourse comes to mean something in the public sphere. (211)

In this thesis, I attempt to follow Finnegan's above guidelines, both in the material chosen for study and the interpretation applied to the text(s).

Proposed Chapters

It seems clear that in order to understand the cemetery fully, four additional chapters are necessary.

The second chapter will further elaborate the foundation by presenting a short history of the Sephardic Jews, particularly those who came to the United States and the Pacific Northwest. Beyond a basic retelling, the historical account must consider at least the two following questions: Are there any themes or traditions within their history that seem significant in the founding of a cemetery? Are there any themes or traditions that may have developed upon arrival in the United States or in Seattle that are related to cemetery-building?

The third chapter will narrow the focus from the broad history of the Sephardic Jews to the particular context of the Seattle Jewish community, and the place of the Sephardim within that community through the examination of websites linking together different components of the Jewish community.

The fourth chapter will build upon the narratives of the first and second, and examine – in light of its Sephardic nature – the cemetery as a rhetorical text. There are many questions to be answered in this chapter, but the religious and cultural aspects of the site will be of primary concern. For example, does Bikur Cholim's Sephardic history influence the types of messages conveyed and the ways in which they are conveyed? Does the cemetery serve to both memorialize individuals and to establish a separate Sephardic identity? These questions are

important to answer; the answers shed light on the preservation of a community and an identity that has resisted assimilation into a homogenizing outside culture.

Finally, there will be a concluding chapter that synthesizes the discoveries gained through this study. Additionally, it will provide direction for future inquiries and research.

Chapter 2

Out of Egypt (and Everywhere Else):

A Rhetorical Analysis of the History of the Sephardim and the Wandering Jew Motif

The journey began long ago as the first steps were taken out of Egypt and toward a land filled with milk and honey – the Promised Land. What should have been an uneventful exit quickly morphed into a life-and-death escape dash, as the ancient Hebrews fled the pursuing Egyptian army. Once the immediate danger was past, the travelers continued toward their destination, but due to disobedience and unfaithfulness they wandered in the desert for forty years before finally arriving in the land for which they longed.

The story of the Exodus and the subsequent forty years in the desert is one of the formational stories of the Jewish people; it is one of the key events that formed their historic identity, and it has continued to influence through the centuries the understanding of who the Jews are and where they belong. Interestingly, the flight from Egypt is profound in its impact, but is far from the only time this scenario has been played out in their history; it is merely the first in a line of many exits the Jews have made. What differentiates the Exodus from all other exits, however, is that the departure from Egypt was voluntary; few have been the times in history that the Jews left a place out of choice and not out of necessity. Yet through this story and a history full of exits and dispersions through the world, a motif has been developed depicting the "wandering Jew" – a nation-less, root-less, and perhaps friend-less tribe meandering aimlessly across the globe. The picture of a wandering Jew is understood not only outside the Jewish culture but also within it, and in some ways that motif has been integrated as part of the Jewish cultural identity. It is important to understand the history of the Jews in light of the motif;

it has influenced the way outsiders have viewed them, as well as how Jews see themselves individually and as a community. Additionally, the idea of separateness and wandering has been preserved in tradition and continues into the present to impact the practices in the daily lives of Jews; those practices and traditions cannot be understood fully without first understanding the history that created and was created by the wandering Jew motif.

One group that has fully integrated the wandering Jew motif is the Sephardim. Whether that acceptance of the motif was an embrace or an imposition is questionable, but it is without question that the Sephardim experienced a traumatic event that contributes to that identity. This chapter will examine two areas concerning the wandering Jew motif; the first part will seek to see the history of the Sephardim in light of their travels and their expulsion from Spain and how that has contributed to their cultural identity, and the second part of the paper will examine how the wandering Jew motif has been understood by non-Jews and has consequently influenced opinions about Jews. A final portion of the chapter will attempt to explain the implications of a wandering Jew motif that has been applied to an American sub-culture from within and from without.

History of the Sephardim

In early 1492, the Spanish monarchy declared that all Jews would either convert to Christianity or be expelled from the nation, and they had mere months to do it. Some of the Spanish Jews fled to neighboring Portugal, but under pressure from the Spanish crown, Portugal, too, expelled the Jews in 1497. Most of the refugees ended up in the Ottoman Empire under Muslim rule. Although of a different faith than the majority of the citizens and the government, Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, authors of Sephardi Jewry: A History of the Judeo-Spanish

Community, 14th-20th Centuries, explain that the influx of Spanish Jews was welcome in the Empire:

> The Jews had already proven their usefulness to the sultans' demographic and economic policies, and the state had much to gain from welcoming the post-1492 immigrants, who could add to the wealth of the country without posing a political problem. Consequently, they were not merely authorized to come; they were actively encouraged. (6-7)

The Spanish Jews did not necessarily bring a lot of money into the country, but they brought their trade skills and abilities, the value of which the Ottoman Empire's rulers recognized. Though the Jews benefited the nation, Arlene Malinowski, author of Judeo-Spanish Language Maintenance Efforts in the United States, states they were still separate from the rest of the population:

> The multiethnic, multicultural Ottoman Empire readily accepted, even encouraged, the autonomy of […] minorities. As one such minority, the Spanish-speaking Jews lived in their own separate neighborhoods, established and staffed their own schools, and, by and large unmolested, observed and enforced their own precepts and ordinances. (1)

While to some degree the separation may have been due to comfort levels of the Jewish population, the main reason for separation was the policies and mandates handed down by the government. Benbassa and Rodrigue explain that their status was higher than other minorities

because the Jews followed a religion of revelation, but they were still considered second-class citizens in the Ottoman Empire:

> The Muslim tradition (*sunna*) made express provision for the presence of non-Muslims in the land of Islam, so long as they could claim kinship with the Book, that is, the Bible. It forbade their conversion by force, and prescribed the details of their status in a series of stipulations developed in the first centuries that followed the rise of Islam. A hierarchy existed among non-Muslims which determined their status. Pagans had the choice of death or conversion; Jews and Christians, followers of a revealed religion, and Sabaeans and Zoroastrians had a third possibility: submission. This was governed by a pact (*dhimma*) whereby their new masters guaranteed the public and private rights of these categories of non-Muslims, the people of the Book (*ahl-al kitab*), living in territories conquered by Muslims. Those subject to the pact came to be called *dhimmis* (*zimmi* in Turkish).
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> The *dhimma* conferred a legal status on the *dhimmis*, who were to be protected and tolerated, even if it transformed them into second-class subjects in Muslim society […] What must not be lost sight of is that, however numerous these restrictions affecting Jews in Ottoman lands, they were insignificant compared with what Jews had recently experienced in Spain or elsewhere in medieval Europe. (2-4)

In the Ottoman Empire, the Jews were not considered to be full citizens, with all the corresponding rights and privileges, just as they had been lesser personages when living in the

Christian nations of Spain and Portugal. This arrangement certainly benefited the Muslim majority, because it allowed them to enjoy the products of the skills and knowledge possessed by the Jews, while still maintaining their own superiority and the supremacy of the Muslim religion and identity. The arrangement, in some ways, also indirectly benefited the Jews, because it reminded them constantly of their own separate identity and history of being a nation set apart; their heritage not only as Jews but now also as the Sephardim was preserved by their status in the Ottoman Empire. Even though they experienced greater freedom under Muslim rule, the Spanish Jews could not forget, even had they wished to, that they did not belong; they were foreigners and aliens without a land to which they could return. The fact of their expulsion from a place they had lived for generations combined with their position as sub-citizens under Muslim rule created a sense of impermanence; this also worked to emphasize the picture of the wandering Jew. Benbassa and Rodrigue assert that essentially, the Sephardim were created in and defined by this time in their history:

> In this cultural universe, the Expulsion from Spain remained for many the original trauma that became constitutive of the very experience of the life in the Levant. For rabbinical sages, whether personally or in collective memory, the loss the Expulsion entailed remained vivid and real. Many families had been torn asunder, some members converting, others remaining behind against their will, and still others dying en route to new destinations or in the new lands of refuge. While the Ottoman Levant provided a safe haven, disease and pestilence continued to take their toll, and for many a scholar, the loss of children and spouses remained vivid and colored their world view. Both exile and personal misfortune had to be interpreted, and the Jewish tradition had well established answers to catastrophe.

> And interestingly, while these Sephardim now found themselves in the land of Islam, they remained preoccupied with Christendom, and with the suffering that it had inflicted on them. Christianity remained the principal tyrant, the main foe. (55)[4]

The Spanish expulsion was so traumatic and definitive for the Sephardim that they would not, or could not, integrate themselves into the larger Jewish community in the Ottoman Empire. Their experiences were too different, coloring thoughts and actions and the traditions they knew and to which they wanted to cling. Giving up that part of their history would have signified their experiences and losses no longer mattered or influenced their present. According to Moshe Idel, author of the essay, "Religion, Thought and Attitudes: the Impact of the Expulsion of the Jews," found in Spain and the Jews: The Sephardi Experience, 1492 and After, for many of the Jews, the memories of their past lives had to be integrated into the new lives they were building in order to preserve meaning in the suffering and losses:

> The Sephardi communities always remembered the expulsion as crucial both materially and spiritually. The sudden, drastic uprooting of a whole people could not but have a devastating effect, socially, politically and economically. Important centres of learning disintegrated; great spiritual leaders died; and in the new conditions and new environments into which the Jews were thrown, these aspects of their lives – the focus of cultural identity – had to be painfully reconstructed.

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[4] The term "Levant" refers to the regions along the Mediterranean; at the time of the Expulsion, most of the area was known as the Ottoman Empire. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, the term was "applied to the coastlands of Asia Minor and Syria, sometimes extending from Greece to Egypt. It was also used for Anatolia and as a synonym for the Middle or Near East. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the term High Levant referred to the Far East" ("Levant").

> The experience certainly left an indelible imprint on those who were expelled and on their descendants, expressed more directly in their *belles-lettres*, poems and short biographical or autobiographical writings than in more major speculative works. The Jewish intellectuals, after all, could see things in a larger historical perspective and more easily made themselves at home in their new environment than ordinary people, and were therefore less inclined to indulge in nostalgia, to idealize the past or complain about their fate. These factors are common to any mass migrations of learned people. Two of those characterized this one in particular were the atrocities involved in the expulsion and the fact that significant segments of the Jewish population chose to convert and not to leave the Iberian Peninsula. Both must have added to the trauma of those who did leave. (123)

Through this experience, the Sephardic community not only reconstructed their lives and identities in a new place, but they also had to recover from the loss of loved ones who did not see their Jewish identity as a powerful enough motivator to leave for a new land – they preferred losing their identities to losing their home. Those who had left Spain and Portugal in order to preserve their history, culture, and identity must have clung more tightly to those things, for they had given up everything else. It seems natural that the Sephardim refused to believe the Jews who were already living in the Ottoman Empire could comprehend their situation. The Sephardic newcomers refused to integrate themselves even into the existing Jewish community; voluntarily, they chose to preserve their status as Sephardic and wandering Jews:

> Certainly, the arrival of Sephardim in places where other kinds of Jews were already living was bound to cause problems. The newcomers did not easily

> assimilate with the older residents. On the contrary, Spanish Jews tended to establish their own synagogues and to maintain their own customs. (Idel 125)

Even when building lives and semblances of permanence in their new cities, the Sephardim refused to integrate themselves and become part of the fabric of the larger community. The practice of remaining separate did not change throughout their history in the Ottoman Empire, and continued even after leaving the region for other parts of the world. Shlomo Deshen, author of The Emergence of the Israeli Sephardi Ultra-Orthodox Movement, explains that even in present-day Israel, the long-desired Promised Land, the Sephardim have a difficult time choosing what, if anything, about their Sephardic traditions they should and can give up:

> Israeli Jews of Mediterranean background have variants of Jewish culture, details of which differ from the cultures of Jews of north European background. The differences are often conceptualized by the dichotomy "modern and traditional," and this is indeed a useful starting point to uncover the nature of Sephardi religiosity. Thus, an important feature of the orbit of Sephardi Jewry is the comparatively late development of modern ideologies. In nineteenth-century northern Europe, various religio-ideological positions within Jewry gained political and institutional crystallization. Sometimes communities cleaved and split apart permanently to accommodate various ideological platforms. Numerous political parties, clubs, synagogues, and publications arose out of the efforts of protagonists of various ideological positions. This kind of ideological hyperactivity had no counterpart in Islamic countries and their Jewish communities. Even in the largest communities, such as Baghdad, Tunis, and

> Salonica, where incipient class-formation occurred, there was no social agitation comparable to that in contemporary Jewish communities in northern Europe.
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> Traditional life among Jews of Islamic lands until the late nineteenth century was as stable as was Ashkenazi Jewish life up to the eighteenth century. And many Mediterranean Jewish communities remained relatively unshaken as late as the time of mass emigration in the mid-twentieth century. (2)

The Sephardic life has remained stable, the traditions have remained constant, and the identity has remained strong. It is significant to note that even in Israel – the homeland, the Promised Land – the Sephardim cannot seem to discard their traditions that define them as a wandering people, though they no longer have any need to wander and seek a land to call their own.

The Wandering Jew

While the Jews have historically been homeless wanderers, having their own country for a relatively few number of centuries, the influence of the idea of the wandering Jew is more due to a well-known story from the Middle Ages. The wandering Jew motif is derived from a legend; while there are many variations, the general story remains constant and has influenced perceptions of the Jewish people throughout the centuries. According to S.G. Andrews in his article, “The Wandering Jew and The Travels and Adventures of James Massey,” the legend details the story of a man (the wandering Jew) who has been alive since the time of Christ. The story continues that, as Christ was condemned by Pontius Pilate to die, He told the Jew that he would roam the earth until the time when He returned to it. As a result of his long life, the

wandering Jew has traveled widely and lived through a long stretch of the world's history, and tells his tale to those who will listen.

Different retellings of the story serve different purposes; for example, Andrews says that in the case of The Travels and Adventures of James Massey (the book he examines in his article), that particular version communicates beliefs about theology, a history of the world, as well as reason to discriminate against the Jews. Andrews asserts that the nameless Jewish man is condemned to centuries of wandering because he has rejected Christ; the wandering Jew is then punished for his ignorance and/or defiance, and becomes a representative for all Jews, who stubbornly refuse to submit to the Christian religion. Therefore, their wanderings and persecution are part of the punishment originally inflicted by Christ Himself; contributing to the misfortune of the Jewish race is then justifiable.

David Daube expands upon the wandering Jew legend by introducing one of the names of the Jew in his article, "Ahasver." He is quick to point out that the name, at first glance, makes little sense for a Jew, for it is a shortened version of the name of the king through whom Haman attempted to destroy the Jewish people. Daube explains that because of the king's actions – getting rid of his first wife because his friends told him to, letting a conniving and sneaky man enact laws in his name without his knowledge, and then allowing his wife to save a nation without any involvement on his part – his name has become synonymous with "fool" or "foolish." While a Jewish couple would never in actuality name their child after such a king, the wandering Jew is named after him for he is foolish. Daube does not explain why he is considered a fool; perhaps it is because of his rejection of Christ, and the character of the legendary man has

been imposed by a culture dominated by Christian prejudices.[5] The foolishness and wandering associated with Ahasver (and by extension, all Jews) may have served a purpose for the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492:

> Here we are told that some fifty years before, a bishop met him in a church at Hamburg, penitent, ill-clothed and distracted at the thought of having to move on again in a few weeks. One cannot help feeling that this particular tale is related to the attempts, made at that period by Jews expelled from Spain and Portugal, to be allowed to settle in Hamburg – if only temporarily; and to the fact that a number had lived there for some time, outwardly professing to be Christians but at heart keeping to their old religion. (Daube 244)

Coming across as foolish, and therefore no threat to the city, would have benefited the Jews looking for some type of sanctuary; portraying themselves as wanderers would have also have had the potential to secure them temporary respite, communicating to Hamburg citizens that the nature of the Jews was to wander and keep moving – their stay would be brief, and therefore tolerable.

The legend of the wandering Jew was well-known in the Middle Ages and beyond, and consequently influenced the opinions and writings of the time. Charles B. Mabon, in his article "The Jew in English Poetry and Drama," demonstrates the long history of portraying Jews as villain, conniver, and the less malevolent representation of "other." Through the greater portion of the history of English poetry and drama, the Jewish character is portrayed in caricature or as

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[5] If the outside culture has imposed such an identity, it cannot go unsaid that the identity has been adopted within the Jewish culture, too; Jews have not only referred to the wandering Jew as "Ahasver," but also to this day apply the term to any person or persons deemed foolish.

less than human. Mabon also explains that misconceptions led the more well-intentioned writers of English literature to ascribe certain traits or beliefs to those they did not understand in an effort to portray them in a more human way. The progression from Jew as conniving villain toward an allowance that a Jew might be human and possibly even good has been a slow one; it is noteworthy and relevant that the process took centuries. Although Mabon only surveys English literature in his research, the slow evolution he details is a more universal phenomenon and parallels the evolution that occurred in other cultures with different languages.

Indeed, Shakespeare's work, although originally created in the English language, has been revered the world over and translated into countless languages, influencing the perceptions of many generations and cultures. One of Shakespeare's most famous characters is a Jewish man with whom audiences cannot empathize. Efraim Sicher, in his article, "The Jewing of Shylock: Wesker's 'The Merchant,'" focuses on that Jewish character, and contrasts Shakespeare's historic portrayal with a modern retelling that involves a more three-dimensional Shylock. Shakespeare's Shylock is the Jew who demands a pound of flesh from poor Antonio, who cannot pay a debt; Sicher then contrasts that caricature with a modern Shylock, who is an idealist who is brought to cruel reality by having to choose between his good friend, the Gentile Antonio, and the survival and best interests of his people, the Jews. In both versions of the story, however, Shylock is "other" and Jew before he is anything else, and it is that identity that compels him to choose his people and culture over his personal humanity; Shylock must always choose to demand the pound of flesh because he is a Jew. The story, in either telling, shows that Shylock is not of Venice by the very fact that he is Jewish; he cannot help but be a wanderer. The legend thus influences not only Shakespeare, but also influences current writers – even ones who attempt to escape the prejudice that is imbedded into the legend and into Shakespeare's Shylock.

Despite the centuries of progress and achievement and enlightenment between it and the Middle Ages, the legend of the wandering Jew affected Victorian culture. Michael Ragussis asserts in his article, "The Birth of a Nation in Victorian Culture: The Spanish Inquisition, the Converted Daughter, and the 'Secret Race,'" that British authors often wrote popular stories about the Spanish Inquisition, but few of them were sympathetic toward the Jewish people even while making the Spanish and the Inquisitors the villains of the stories. Ragussis explains the seeming paradox by citing John Stockdale's History of the Inquisitions, saying that the goal was to incite anger toward the Catholics without arousing sympathy for the Jews:

> After all, Stockdale's goal was to defeat "what is insidiously termed Catholic Emancipation," and insofar as Catholic emancipation might have opened the door to removing similar civil and political disabilities from which the Jews themselves suffered, he managed to write a history that was anti-Catholic without being pro-Jewish – that is, a history that inflamed Protestant Britain against Catholic fanaticism while refusing to stir British sympathies for the Jewish martyrs of the Inquisition. Such a history of the Inquisition was intended to keep the English national character secure from Catholic *and* Jewish influence. (481, emphasis original)

Instead of being objects of sympathy, Jewish people and characters were merely devices by which the authors represented tension between nations, religions, and even perceived gender differences. In the stories and histories produced during the Victorian age, Jews were not even allowed the privilege of receiving sympathy from what is an acknowledged historic outrage. Instead, they were seen as mere pawns in the battle of rhetoric between Catholic and Protestant,

Spain and Britain; the Jew was either not human or not human enough to be the recipient of human sympathy – again, he was not Christian and therefore "other;" the implication is that the Jew was in some way deserving of the scorn and persecution received.

Implications for the American Sephardim

To the present day, the Jews continue to be perceived and perceive themselves as wanderers. Immigration is an obvious way in which the motif of wandering Jew can be enforced. As modes of transportation increased and improved, people have moved about with much more ease, but the Jews have moved most and farthest, especially following the Holocaust (a clear demonstration of hatred and scorn born of prejudice, not entirely unlike that which sparked the expulsion from Spain). Many of those displaced Holocaust survivors made their way to the United States. Ten years after the end of World War II, Hugh H. Smythe and Jerry J. Pine recorded some of the trends of Jewish people in the US in their article, "The Jew in America Since World War II." Smythe and Pine noted that in the early part of the century before WWII, Jewish Americans assimilated quickly, but following the war assimilation was nearly halted. The progression slowed dramatically, and Smythe and Pine attribute that to the horrors of the Holocaust that had been experienced and were being revealed, and the reaction within the Jewish community to those horrors, saying their response may have been to hold more tightly to their religious and ethnic heritage and rituals. Although the immigrant Jews looked more like Americans than many other minorities coming to the United States, they showed fewer signs of assimilation after arrival, indicating that their separateness, at least in the US, may have been at least partially self-imposed. Smythe and Pine note that although they wanted to be perceived as Americans, they also wanted to retain their cultural identity:

> This tended to slow down his assimilation and has kept it from becoming as complete as many Jews have wished. An indices here is his intermarriage pattern which is below that for most other ethnic groups. As late as 1950, Jewish intermarriage here was 4.5 percent while in Europe it rarely fell below ten percent. (66)

Smythe and Pine indicate that while Jews wanted to be American, the Holocaust may have served to remind them that while they can belong to more than one culture, their Jewish identity is primary; they are other. Being reminded of the nature of their Jewish identity, Jewish Americans began to act differently, as evidenced by their decreased rates of intermarriage – becoming less than it was even in Europe. However, intermarriage as defined by Smythe and Pine means marriage between a Jew and a Gentile. For centuries, intermarriage was for the Sephardim any union between a Sephardic Jew and anyone else – including a Jew who was not of Sephardic ancestry. Smythe and Pine's statement that Jewish intermarriage rates decreased seems to imply that the Jewish community in the US chose to hold more tightly to their culture and traditions, but while that may in some sense be true, their research gives no indication whether or not Sephardic identity was also being preserved by marriage within culture. Other efforts were under way, however, to preserve the separation and identity of the Sephardim within the US; according to Arlene Malinowski, author of Judeo-Spanish Language-Maintenance Efforts in the United States, beginning in the late 1800s and early 1900s, Sephardic communities within large American cities had been growing, and Sephardic immigrants had been directed to settle in those areas:

> From the earliest days of immigration, attempts were made to persuade or encourage the newcomers to travel to and establish themselves in cities other than New York. In 1907 the Industrial Removal Office, a Jewish organization that was part of the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society, relocated Sephardic immigrants in such cities as Seattle, Gary, Cincinnati, Toledo, Columbus, and Cleveland. […]There were, nonetheless, in 1914 sizeable congregations in Seattle, San Francisco, Atlanta, Rochester, New York, and Portland, Oregon; and smaller communities in Chicago, Los Angeles, Indianapolis, and Montgomery, Alabama. (2)

These communities that developed grew even more rapidly following the Holocaust; Sephardic survivors who made their ways to the United States often looked for a community that could help rebuild their lives with familiar patterns and traditions. Seattle was one of the places many of these Sephardic Jews chose to settle.

Summary

I think it has been clearly established that the wandering Jew motif has been reinforced both by the history of the Sephardim and by the maintenance *of* their culture as Sephardic Jews. I think it is equally clear that the wandering Jew motif has also been applied through the centuries from outside the culture and has served to influence opinions and “knowledge” about the Jewish people and justify their persecution. American Sephardim must now struggle to find ways to integrate their historic otherness with the efforts toward assimilation that is so strongly encouraged in the United States.

Chapter 3

Seattle's Jewish Community: A Larger Context

Seattle is a city rich in Jewish community life, evidenced in large and small ways. The grocery stores have large selections of kosher foods, the noted music venues invite Jewish punk bands to play, and the local Jewish Community Centers attract large audiences to their public events. While the city's Jewish community is not as large as the ones found in New York City's various boroughs, it does provide its constituents opportunities to connect with one another and with their heritage. Even those who may not be especially observant value the interconnectedness of the Seattle Jewish network; Becca Campbell, a local resident of Jewish heritage, writes a blog about the Jewish experience in Seattle and her appreciation for it:

> Well, thank God I AM, at all. Jewish is a bonus but I think that's because I've studied Judaism, grown up with it, and have begun to enjoy some fundamental aspects that were hidden from view (from me) for a long time.
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> I LOVE connecting with people. I just realized this recently. I realized it differently, anyway. I love connecting to people, and then seeing them connect to people too. I love gatherings, community meetings (meetings, in general, actually), reunions, synagogue services, and even the occasional memorial service (not because of the subject, but I love to see communities get together and support each other). […]
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> As I am understanding the depth of my love of community, I am beginning to see why I really love being Jewish, but also, why it was so hard to sit with for a while. What I loved were the similarities and commonalities, and what I hated was the

> "chosen people" theme, the elitism, the snobbery. […]
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> Now that I am older, creating my own family, and re-discovering my deep passions in life, I am happy to say that Judaism provides a lot. Did I love community because of my Judaism, or did I love Judaism because of my natural draw towards community? It doesn't matter. ("Half-Torah," par. 1-4)

Campbell's concept of community, and specifically Jewish community, is dependent on many structures that have been set in place both by synagogues and by religious organizations. Like any other, the Seattle Jewish community offers its members services and events. This community is significant because it does not offer these things just for the enjoyment of its members, but as a form of self-preservation. The events and services are vital for the very survival of the Jewish community; what is still to be determined is what *type* of survival will occur. This chapter will outline the ways by which the Seattle Jewish community is attempting to survive, but will also take note of some of the important aspects of identity that are being ignored, and thereby perhaps even lost, by the majority of the Jewish organizations. The last portion of this chapter will identify a group that stands apart from the Seattle Jewish cultural norm, and what they are doing to preserve their own identity.

The American Jew is becoming an endangered species. According to the 2000-2001 National Jewish Population Survey, conducted by United Jewish Communities, the American Jewish population is on the decline. The last survey that was conducted, ten years previously, reported 5.5 million Jews in the US, while the most recent survey found only 5.2 million; additionally, the median age of the American Jew rose from 37 years old to 41 years old ("U.S. Jewish Population Declining," par. 2). The rise in median age means that there are fewer children

being born into Jewish families to keep the average age constant. The October 9, 2002 *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* article reporting the survey results explained the situation:

> Researchers found Jews are having fewer children than needed to keep the population stable. Half of Jewish women age 30-34 have no children, compared to 27 percent of all American women. Nearly half of American Jews are age 45 or older. […]
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> Its 1990 finding that 52 percent of American Jews marry outside the faith has transformed Jewish community work in this country, redirecting tens of millions of dollars and other resources to programs that build Jewish identity, including religious day schools and trips to Israel. (par. 5-7)

The survey's findings indicate that those of Jewish descent do not seem to have high identification with the culture; whatever identification they do have is not strong enough to influence them to make decisions consistent with cultural maintenance, such as marrying within the community.

In the ways that matter, American Jews are leaving their community. Efforts to prevent further assimilation into the Gentile community and to educate ethnic Jews about their heritage are important and necessary to the survival of this group. Seattle's Jewish community evidences this effort toward regaining affiliation between the community and its lost members. According to 1997's Community Outreach Task Force Report, prepared by Natalie Merkur Rose and Amy Wasster-Simpson of Jewish Family Services and the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, respectively, the Seattle community is coming to grips with its new purpose:

> The 1990 National Jewish Population Survey was a wake-up call to the entire North American Jewish community about the high rates of unaffiliation and intermarriage. A local population survey, completed at the same time, found that approximately two thirds of the Jewish households, in the greater Seattle area, close to 19,400 people, were not members of a Jewish congregation and 60 percent were not members of any other Jewish organization. This lack of affiliation among a large majority of Jews is a major concern. ("Community Outreach," par. 8)

The 1990 survey information motivated the Seattle community leaders to do their own research about Seattle Jews. What was found in the local study in 1997 was not encouraging to the community leaders:

> The NJPS indicated that 28 percent of the 2.64 million married born Jews in the United States are married to non-Jews. In Seattle, 40.3 percent of those who were born Jewish and are married are in an interfaith marriage. Furthermore, the 1990 NJPS also reported that, of born Jews who married between 1985 and 1990, 52 percent married non-Jews. This correlates to the Seattle survey which showed that the largest number of those intermarried were between the ages of 18 and 24. Since younger Jews are more likely to intermarry than are older Jews, the rate of interfaith marriages can be expected to increase in the future. Second marriages are more likely to be intermarriages. Intermarriage rates increase in the regions of the West and South. In 1990, there were 740,000 intermarried couples and 664,000 children living in intermarried households. Only 25 percent of these

> children were being raised in the Jewish religion, 30 percent were being raised in the secular/no religion environment, and 45 percent were being raised in both Jewish and another religion (CJF Report of the Task Force on the Intermarried and Jewish Affiliation, 1994.) ("Community Outreach," par. 67)

The 1997 Outreach Task Force Report communicated to the leaders of the community, both in the synagogues and the outside organizations, that in order to preserve the Jewish nature and identity of their community, they needed to address the concerns and meet the needs of the younger generation of Jews and those on the fringes of the community. Even if they did not grow up in the Jewish religion and tradition, they could be encouraged to learn about their heritage and become engaged with it. The community's perspective was changed.

Historically, an ideal Jewish community was self-contained; in this world, a Jew would never have to leave the community in order to find services or products that were needed. This attitude was fostered in part by the persecution endured through the centuries and the ghettos within which the Jews lived. The perspective is also understandable even with the freedoms experienced in the United States when one considers the dietary restrictions and laws for religious observance that a good Jew would obey, but that outsiders would probably not understand. In today's world, especially given the increasingly secular Jewish population, the self-contained world is not possible. There are, however, many organizations existing in Seattle that reflect that ideal and help to maintain a semblance of it. The organizations reflect both the reality of the population as well as what that community values and emphasizes. Additionally, the organizations show the historic cultural desire of Jews to protect and preserve their traditions and cultural values.

In Seattle, there are Jewish organizations that provide services for many different parts of life and different members of the community. For example, the Jewish Prisoner Services International organization works to protect the rights of prisoners and prisoners' families, as well as providing rabbis who serve the observant from any of the branches of Judaism while they are in jail ("All About Us," par. 1). Another organization is the Seattle Association for Jews with Disabilities; this group cares for those with developmental disabilities, mental illness, and brain injuries, in addition to running a group home called Shalom House ("Seattle Association for Jews with Disabilities," par. 1-2). The Puget Sound Jewish Coalition on Homelessness educates members of the Jewish community about the problem of homelessness and encourages involvement and volunteering ("Puget Sound Jewish Coalition on Homelessness," par. 1). The Women's Endowment Foundation meets the needs of Jewish girls and women in the Puget Sound and in Israel, mainly through education and training ("Women's Endowment Foundation," par. 1-3). Toward Tradition is a group that attempts to solve social problems by pairing up with Christian organizations that have certain core values that match the tenets of traditional Judaism ("Toward Tradition," par. 1). A valuable component of the Seattle community is Jewish Transcript Publications; it publishes a subscription-only paper filled with local Jewish news, as well as maintaining a website with news, an online directory of area organizations, and an online magazine for Seattle Jews in their 20s and 30s.[6]

As one can see, there is a wide variety of organizations in the area involved in serving many different needs, but there are also concentrations of need that attract the services of more than one group. One such concentration is that of the aging Jewish population. As was noted

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[6] I am deeply indebted to the Jewish Transcript News' website for helping me to locate information about many of the organizations mentioned in this chapter; anyone who is interested in Washington State or Seattle-area Jewish organizations would greatly benefit from their online resources.

previously, the average age of the American Jew is 41, and many are much older. Part of traditional Jewish culture is appreciation and respect for elders and the elderly, and the organizations that exist to serve this segment of the community are based upon the idea of honoring those whose youth and strength provided for the younger generations. Some of these groups have changed focus through the years as their target audience aged; one example is the Jewish Club of Washington. It was originally begun in the 1940s to help Jews escaping the violence and genocide perpetrated by the Nazis, and over time, it became more of a social group, linking survivors together ("Jewish Club," par. 1-2). The Jewish Club of Washington is also associated with the Kline Galland Center and Affiliates, which is another organization dedicated to helping the elderly. Unlike the Jewish Club of Washington, the Kline Galland Center and Affiliates was begun with the intention to serve the aged. Operating as a fulfillment of the command to "honor thy father and mother," it organizes events, provides nursing care through the Caroline Kline Galland Home as well as The Summit At First Hill, offers caregivers and spouses time off through The Polack Adult Day Center, etc. ("Welcome to Kline Galland"). Jewish Family Services is an organization that does not only serve the elderly, but among other things it provides in-home caregivers and companions for the older members of the community ("Aging and Adult Programs"). The older generations of Seattle Jews are valued not only as loved ones who provided for the younger people, but also as the bearers of Jewish history, tradition and culture.

If one is to look at the number of organizations addressing a need, it can be assumed that the highest concentration of need in the Seattle Jewish community is education. Given the results of the 1997 Community Outreach Task Force Report conducted by Jewish Family Services and the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle and the 2000-2001 National Jewish Population Survey

done by the United Jewish Communities, education from a Jewish perspective or about a Jewish heritage is of the utmost importance for the health and longevity of the Seattle Jewish community. While all of the organizations attempt to educate in one way or another, each one focuses on educating either a different segment of the population or for a different purpose. The Young Leaders Division is a leadership training program aimed at up-and-coming leaders in their 20s and 30s; its goal is to not only prepare Jewish young people for business leadership but also for community leadership by giving them the opportunity to do so through involvement in events and groups such as the Seattle Jewish Film Festival, Latkepalooza, MenschWorks, etc. ("Young Leadership Division"). *The Jewish Transcript News* also falls into this education category, thanks not only to its publication of the single Seattle-area Jewish newspaper, but also to the 2007 launch of Jew-ish.com, an online magazine targeting Seattle Jews between the ages of 20 and 40. What is interesting about the Jew-ish.com website is its perspective about the experience of being Jewish:

> We're Jewish, sure, and our Judaism might be a big part of our identities. Then again, it might take up only a smidgen of our lives. Or maybe it's even on hold. No matter where it fits, and as much as being Jewish is a part of our being, if we are to find Jewish experience in our hectic everyday lives, we are likely to access it through unconventional channels. So when we thought about what being Jewish means to us – that maybe as a generation we're really more Jew-*ish* – this site is what we came up with. ("Making a Community," par. 1-2)

This perspective is in line with the recommendations outlined by the 1997 Community Outreach Task Force Report; in an effort to encourage ethnic Jews to retain or reclaim their identity, Jew-ish.com makes few if any demands of its audience. The site encourages young Seattle Jews to get

involved in the community in "whichever way you are most comfortable. No pressure from you parents, no requests for donations, no obligatory maztoh ball soup with schmaltz" ("Making a Community," par. 3). The Jew-ish.com method for attracting an audience seems to be similar to that of other area organizations; low demands with promises of high return in terms of community and relationship and connection. It illustrates the attitude adopted in the last few years by other Jewish services. Very few of the educational opportunities offered in Seattle, unless they are paid services, ask for commitment from the learner. This is particularly evident in most of the programs offered to college students. The Chabad-Lubavitch Education Center provides Torah education to adults who may have missed it while growing up or to those who wish to expand their current knowledge and understanding; they also have a chapter at the University of Washington through the UW Jewish Students' Organization ("Chabad").[7] Participants can be involved on sports teams, go on trips, and attend Shabbat dinners, but they are not required to do other things, like attend Shabbat services or observe holy days, in order to participate in the Chabad events. Another Jewish organization at the University of Washington is Hillel; this group organizes events and programs for students between the ages of 18 and 32 ("Hillel"). A third program for college students is The Jewish Student Experience, which works to increase and enhance the experience of Jewish identity during the college years ("Jewish Student," par. 1). The male Jewish students who wish to join a fraternity are also in luck, because Alpha Epsilon Pi is the Jewish fraternity at the University of Washington ("Alpha Epsilon"). The very nature of a fraternity requires that it make demands of its inhabitants and members, but

[7] It is not my intention to diminish or downplay the efforts of area organizations, especially not those of Chabad Lubavitch. This organization's website advertises through a short video on the main page an educational course that encourages area Jews to learn to live their faith instead of just dying for it; the point I wish to make is that involvement with these organizations does not always mean commitment to them.

those demands are not so very different than those of a nonreligious fraternity. All of these groups require very little from the people who they attempt to attract to their events or by their services, and the Jewish identity that they affirm or help maintain is on whatever terms the individual sets.

For those not in college (adult or child), the Seattle Kollel offers low- to no-cost education services ("Seattle Kollel," par. 3-4). The Study Buddy Volunteer Tutoring Program pairs adult volunteers and underperforming students ("Study Buddy," par. 1-2). For community members who wish to learn about the life, history, and culture of Washington Jews, there is the Washington State Jewish Historical Society; this group is also responsible for the Jewish Studies archives at the University of Washington ("Jewish Historical," par. 1-2). Again, these organizations offer education and information about the Jewish heritage, but they do not ask users to commit themselves to long-term involvement with the organizations.

All of these groups are committed to educating the population about some part of being Jewish, and while the programs they offer are important in the task of helping Jews to retain or reclaim their identity, most of them do not address the issue of regional Jewish identity. Regional identity used to be an integral part of an overall Jewish identity, and remnants of that perspective can still be found. The Jewish Family Service Aging & Adult Programs, for example, does not identify itself as a program for specific nationalities. It does, however, offer its services in both English and Russian, indicating that there are more community members from Eastern Europe than from any other region utilizing their services. Chabad-Lubavitch also targets and attracts those of Ashkenazic background through its own Russian history and its current outreach efforts in the Seattle Russian community. Other organizations, in stark contrast, seem to take for granted a homogenous Jewish population; this is evidenced by such minute things like references to

latkes and the assumption that all Jews speak Yiddish. Both latkes and Yiddish were originally regional indicators that a family traced an Ashkenazic lineage. Such assumptions do not exist concerning aspects of the Sephardic culture, but there are two [affiliated] organizations in Seattle that promote continued education about and identification with the Sephardic heritage.

The first Seattle group formed to help maintain Sephardic culture and identity is the Seattle Sephardic Sisterhood; mostly a social group, it sponsors a yearly Aid to Israel Tea, during which they award a college scholarship to the daughter of a Sisterhood member, as well as the annual Kline Galland Home Luncheon ("Sephardic Sisterhood," par. 1). In conjunction with two other groups, the Sisterhood also sponsors a Hanukkah luncheon that benefits the food bank maintained by the Jewish Family Service ("Sephardic Sisterhood," par. 2).

The second Seattle group involved in identity and cultural maintenance is the Seattle Sephardic Brotherhood, from which the Sisterhood sprang. In Seattle's past, one of the greatest influences in the Sephardic Jewish community was the Brotherhood. Gordon DeLeon, himself a member of the Seattle Sephardic community and author of the article, "How the Brotherhood Started," details the beginning of the benevolent society; he says it formed out of the remnants of previous attempts to forge the community together. The Brotherhood successfully offered medical services from a Sephardic medical doctor, ran youth activities and organizations, and created and maintained a cemetery: Bikur Cholim (par. 13-14). Establishing the cemetery was one of the first things accomplished by the Seattle Sephardic Brotherhood following its inception; although incorporating land from an already existing Jewish cemetery, Machzikay Hadath Cemetery, the Bikur Cholim Seattle Sephardic Cemetery was officially established in 1933.

One may ask why it is important what the Seattle Sephardic Brotherhood did during its early years. The reason the Brotherhood's first actions are important is that they indicate the purpose the organization was created to serve – to not only keep the Sephardic community alive, but to keep it distinctive and free from homogeneity even within the larger Jewish community. By offering medical care, youth activities, and maintaining a cemetery specifically for Sephardic Jews, they made it more feasible for the community in Seattle to keep to themselves. Although many of the services originally offered are no longer available to area Sephardic Jews, the impulse that led the Brotherhood to offer them is still alive. Unlike some of the other organizations in Seattle, the Sephardic Brotherhood does not try to recruit Jews of all stripes; they are concerned only with addressing the needs of fellow Sephardim and helping them retain their regional identity as a part of their larger Jewish identity. It does not recognize that being Sephardic or Jewish might only be a "smidgen" of identity – it is rather the format for individual identities. In line with that perspective, the Brotherhood makes demands of its constituents. The most obvious demand it makes is paying fees for initiation into the organization and for continuing membership.[8] A less obvious demand is participation in the Brotherhood; while it is possible to merely pay the fees and not actually become involved, the high price of membership tends to weed out casual observers. The primary purpose of the Brotherhood is the maintenance and upkeep of the Bikur Cholim Cemetery, but the living members contribute not only to the well-being of the cemetery but also to that of the larger Sephardic community; participation within the Brotherhood means one is committed to

[8] According to the fee schedule on the Brotherhood's website, there is no initiation fee until the age of 35; at 35, the fees begin at $60 ("Fee Schedule," par. 4). Yearly dues are $55 for members under the age of 80, but associate members or widows have a discounted rate of $45 a year; lifetime memberships range in price from $45 to $750 ("Fee Schedule," par. 7-9). These fees do not include the price of a plot in the Seattle Sephardic Brotherhood cemetery, Bikur Cholim.

> [a]lleviate the distress and suffering of the impoverished[, a]ssist local charitable organizations within the Sephardic community[, s]ponsor youth organizations and facilitate youth activities as well as a scholarship program[, c]oordinate and encourage the humanitarian, cultural, social and educational activities throughout the Jewish community. (“Membership,” par. 4)

The requirements for membership in the Brotherhood indicate not only that these activities are necessary for the continuation of the organization, but also that they are consistent with, and perhaps necessary to, Sephardic identity. Combining this information with an understanding of the primary mission of the Brotherhood to provide perpetual cemetery care for the Seattle Sephardic dead, it seems likely that the Bikur Cholim Cemetery performs a necessary function for Seattle Sephardic identity, too.

The Bikur Cholim Cemetery is set within a physical context of a grungy area filled with casinos and prostitutes, but its spiritual and cultural context is that of a complex Jewish community. Throughout history, the Sephardim have had to carve out space for themselves in new environments, and even within Jewish settings; this practice is continued in Seattle, because although the cultural climate is inviting to a variety of religions and lifestyles, the Sephardim insist on being a distinct group. They, too, have carved out physical space for themselves in less-desirable places like Aurora Avenue, and they have also carved out space for themselves within the Seattle Jewish community that tends to overlook distinguishing Sephardic traits in favor of homogenized American Jewishness.

Even a group as intent on preserving tradition and identity as the Sephardim must make choices about what to preserve and how to preserve it. Just as any move requires families to pack up some belongings and choose to discard others, moves into new environments or new eras

require self-reflection about what is important to keep and what is no longer valuable; the Sephardim, as a wandering group, have had to make such moves and decisions many times throughout their history. It is important to understand the ways by which the Seattle Sephardic community has chosen to preserve their history and identity; one place where the evidence of their decisions about culture retention exists is the Bikur Cholim Cemetery.

Chapter 4

Freedom of Speech:

An Analysis of the Visual Rhetoric of the Sephardic Bikur Cholim Cemetery

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press…"

--*The First Amendment*

Americans often make mention of the "freedom of speech," referencing the Bill of Rights. It is considered to be one of the greatest privileges Americans enjoy, but by reading the words "freedom of speech" in context, one notices that free speech is sandwiched by the right to practice religion the way one wishes and the right to print what one wishes to say. These three freedoms are intertwined, because together, they constitute the ability of American citizens to publicly address others and communicate their thoughts and beliefs. Free speech, in particular, has been interpreted in the past two hundred years to encompass a wide variety of communication methods, many of them non-vocal. Even the rights of high school students to wear certain clothing have been protected under the right to free speech; it seems that visual communication now falls under the umbrella of free speech's definition and protection.

Immigrants are often the most appreciative of these three freedoms, because they have experienced life without such liberties. They truly understand the blessing it is to worship without fear, to speak without recrimination, to write or publish without retaliation. The Sephardim are one such immigrant group; in the United States, they have taken advantage of many of the privileges native citizens take for granted. In one of their cemeteries, Bikur Cholim, the Sephardim utilize their rights to free exercise of religion, freedom of speech, and, in a sense,

the freedom of the press. The cemetery acts as a text that communicates both within the Sephardic community and to the larger outside community.

A visit to Bikur Cholim, then, is not merely a trip to a cemetery; it is an act of memorializing. One remembers not only the loved one or ones they specifically visit, but also the entire community laid to rest in that space; the visitor remembers not only the death of a relative or friend, but the meaning of all the lives that have been lived and are now woven into one rich history and commemorated in a garden of grass and stone. For the visitor to Bikur Cholim, the buried dead is only one element of what is being memorialized – he or she is also memorializing a historic Sephardic Jewish community that has finally found a voice. Stanley French says in "The Cemetery as Cultural Institution: The Establishment of Mount Auburn and the 'Rural Cemetery' Movement," that, beginning with the historic Mount Auburn Cemetery, these spaces began to be perceived as more than just dumping grounds for corpses; society has started to understand that they serve also as cultural institutions (38). Seattle Sephardic Jews may not regularly attend synagogue services, but their culture is preserved in the cemetery, and it waits patiently for the heirs to visit their legacy.

The reader may be asking why it is important to study the cemetery as a Sephardic cemetery – after all, previous studies have made it clear that there is plenty to research within a cemetery without the added layer of Sephardic identity. The significance of the Sephardic heritage portrayed in the cemetery is clear by the very existence of the site; in a "melting pot" nation, the Sephardim do not want to melt together with other groups and lose their heritage. Even within the larger Jewish community, the Sephardim want to maintain their unique history and are better at preserving it than other groups have been. Rather than integrate even into existing Jewish communities, throughout history the Sephardim have consistently chosen to

preserve their own heritage, and the Bikur Cholim Cemetery is one of the methods by which they are preserving that heritage.

While preserving an overall Sephardic identity is an important goal, what else is the Seattle Sephardic community communicating through the cemetery? If the cemetery is an opportunity to exercise their freedom of expression, have they utilized it for other messages? The answer is both yes and no; throughout the rest of this chapter, I will argue that while there are additional messages or themes inherent in the cemetery as text, and that they are parts or aspects of the overall communicated Sephardic identity or, ironically, may actually reveal a minor, but significant level of cultural accommodation.

The location of the cemetery is important to the ways in which its messages are currently being influenced; Bikur Cholim is just off of Aurora Avenue, a busy street covered in a grungy film and lined with shabby buildings and dubious businesses. Known as the Seattle area's red-light district, strip clubs, Hooters, and casinos are all within close proximity of the cemetery, and billboards can be seen from the grounds. Chained link surrounding the boundaries of the cemetery is visible through the gaps between the trees that line the perimeter in an attempt to filter the outside intrusions.

The actual entrance to the cemetery is on 167th Street, a narrow tree-lined road in a residential neighborhood. Two large granite pillars on either side of the drive mark the driveway and entrance into the parking lot. Entering the cemetery, the parking lot lies directly ahead, and beyond that the memorial chapel. To the left is a secluded, old part of the cemetery that my mother long ago informed me was a separate cemetery for Askenazic Jews, who can not be buried with the Sephardim in the main burial areas. Separating the parking lot and the Askenazic cemetery is a winding granite wall, engraved with prayers in both English and Hebrew, the

history of the Sephardim in Seattle, and the names of benefactors and war heroes. The first engraved panel is entitled "Cemetery Prayer;" two inscriptions are underneath the title, Hebrew to the right and English to the left:

> Blessed are You, Lord, our G-d, King of the universe, Who formed you in judgment, sustained you in judgment, brought death to you in judgment and knows the number of all of you in judgment and Who, in the future, will raise you and restore you to life in judgment.
>
> Blessed are You, Lord, Who restores life to the dead.

Beneath the English inscription is a verse from Isaiah:

> "Your dead shall live; my dead bodies shall rise up. Awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust. For Your dew is as the dew of light, and from the earth may You bring life to the spirits of the dead." (Isaiah 26, 19)[9]

Moving to the right, one sees names engraved to memorialize loved ones, notably the founder and builder of the cemetery, Marco Franco, and his wife, Rose, and mother, Bolissa. The visitor next reads a brief history of the Seattle Sephardim, entitled "Spain to Seattle":

> The first Sephardim reached Seattle 410 years after the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492. They were Solomon Calvo and Jacob Policar from Turkey. In 1904 came Nessim Alhadeff from Rhodes and soon after many more arrived from Turkey, Rhodes and the Balkans. Sephardic synagogues Ezra Bessaroth, Ahavath

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[1] All Scripture citations are presented as they are inscribed.

> Ahim and Sephardic Bikur Holim [sic] were founded in the early 1900's. The Seattle Sephardic Brotherhood, organized in 1935, and followed by the establishment of this Cemetery for the entire Sephardic community by Marco Franco and other Sephardic leaders, remains active and vibrant in this year 2001, 66 years later. The Ezra Bessaroth and Sephardic Bikur Holim synagogues have expanded their memberships to include arrivals from around the world and, with the Seattle Sephardic Brotherhood, continue to keep alive our Sephardic traditions and identity.

Following the history of Seattle's Sephardic community and the history of the cemetery is a list of Seattle Sephardic Inspirational Men of the Year, beginning in 1960. The neighboring panel to the right is titled, "Men of Valor," and explains that "[t]hese men who gave their lives serving our country so we can live in freedom, hold a special place in the hearts of our community and all Americans." A Hebrew inscription lies below that; underneath the Hebrew is [presumably] an English translation: "On your high places shall be the slain. How have the heroes fallen? II Samuel 1.19." Eight names follow. Several panels to the right list those who have donated to the upkeep of the cemetery; after that, a panel informs visitors that the landscaping and seating was done in memory of Rachel and Albert Benaroya and Dona and Yuda Benoun by their children, Becky and Jack Benaroya. Directly to the right, the next panel quotes a passage from Genesis in both English and Hebrew:

> GOD formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils a breath of life. Man thus became a living creature. GOD planted a garden in Eden

> to the east. There He placed the man He had formed. GOD made grow out of the ground every tree that is pleasant to look at… (Genesis 2; 7,8 & part of 9)

Several panels after the Genesis panel, names of parents are remembered, sometimes with a brief statement or description about the person(s). The final panels on the granite wall repeat the cemetery prayer that began the wall; it is here that one enters the actual cemetery.

Facing the far end of the grounds and with the granite wall to one's left, the memorial chapel rises up on the right, and in front of it is a small structure that resembles an altar. In fact, it is a hand-washing station. Before entering and before leaving the cemetery, visitors are supposed to wash their hands; though there are no signs commanding one to do so, it is understood within the Jewish community and therefore is deemed to require no directional sign. Its location at the very entrance of the cemetery – one cannot go into the main grounds or the memorial chapel without passing it – seems to imply the importance of hand-washing to gain entrance into the religious and memorializing experience at Bikur Cholim. The stone structure is approximately waist-high, and offers visitors a stainless-steel basin and flowing water with which to ceremonially wash their hands. Though the structure serves a practical purpose, it also functions as a memorial itself. An engraving in the stone, facing the hand-washer, alerts cemetery visitors to the basin's dual purposes:

> Samuel Israel Memorial Fountain
>
> And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might. And thou shalt teach these words diligently unto thy children.
>
> Deuteronomy 6, 5-7

Samuel Israel, born on the Isle of Rhodes, provided to future generations the opportunity to learn God's words through the Samis Foundation.

Samuel Israel 1899 – 1994

Walking past the hand-washing structure and the chapel, one crosses a small paved pavilion[10] into a sea of headstones spreads out, broken occasionally by granite benches or an extra stretch of turf.

Walking into the main area of the cemetery, one is confronted with a flat expanse of green lawn punctuated by straight, orderly rows of stone gravemarkers, occasionally broken by the presence of a stone bench provided for the contemplative.[11] The markers are not separated by gender, though as previously noted, they are segregated according to sub-ethnic and regional identity.

Looking at the rows of stone, one notices that many of the headstones have a last name engraved on the back side; this dual inscription enables visitors to easily locate the grave of a loved one, but also serves to reinforce the community and tribal nature of Sephardic Jews by the repetition of certain surnames. Walking through the cemetery facing the normally obverse side of the headstones, one sees many names repeated over and over. As is customary, stones, rocks, and pebbles rest on nearly all the markers, leaving visible signs that the deceased have been visited and remembered.

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[10] The pavilion is for the kohanim, who are descendants of Moses' brother Aaron. According to J. David Bleich in his article, "Kohanim and Flights Leaving Israel," the kohanim are prohibited from touching a corpse or anything that is "present within the same tent" (65, 68). Additionally, the kohanim are also prohibited from participating in most mourning rituals, including funerals; the pavilion, apparently because it is paved and connects to the parking lot, is not considered part of the cemetery itself, so they may "stand and hear" the services ("Re-dedication").

[11] One reason for the notable orderliness and wide aisles of grass is that the cemetery, or at least the newer section, was designed with wheelchair accessibility in mind ("Re-dedication").

The cemetery space conveys the idea of Jew as wanderer; this message is clear, both to the Jewish and Gentile visitor. Upon entrance into the cemetery, one is immediately faced with two tall, stone pillars, naming the space: on the left, declaring it to be "Machzikay Hadath Cemetery of Bikur Cholim-Machzikay Hadath Congregation," and on the right, below a Hebrew inscription, "Seattle Sephardic Brotherhood Cemetery." These pillars do more than mark out territory – they signal the beginning of a sacred and Sephardic space.

Traveling further into the cemetery, one passes through a parking lot and is then confronted with a stone wall to the left; the first panel is headed by, "Seattle Sephardic Cemetery." The term "Sephardic," within the larger Jewish community, alerts visitors to the history of the people buried and memorialized in the space, reminding them that they have wandered historically even more than other Jews. A few panels down the stone wall, the still-unaware visitor can read a brief history of the Seattle Sephardic community, beginning with their expulsion from Spain in 1492 (as quoted previously). Now all visitors are on the same page and share a basic understanding about Sephardic history, and are prepared to experience the main areas of the Sephardic cemetery. An unintentional indication of impermanence is the temporary laminated paper guides posted on the wall to indicate where loved ones are interred; while it probably is designed for utilitarian purposes such as the ability and low cost of updating it often and easily, the fact is that it is made of paper and plastic in an area dominated by stone and earth, and it can be easily torn off and taken, unlike the granite emblems of permanence. To the right of the wall is a small stone sink for ceremonial hand-washing; engraved on the side is a verse from Deuteronomy and a short dedication of the fountain to the memory of Samuel Israel. Part of the inscription notes that Israel was born on the Isle of Rhodes; this serves to affirm his Sephardic identity, but also affirms his status as a wanderer. Israel's nation of origin, combined with the

recency of his life, reminds Jewish (and especially Sephardic) visitors that they are not chronologically far removed from his travels; they, too, are by extension wanderers.

Another way in which wandering and homelessness is indicated is by the placement of the cemetery itself. A tiny space wedged between small homes and Seattle's busy, four-lane Aurora Avenue, it serves as a barrier for the homeowners from the roar of road traffic, the occasionally-rowdy patrons of the casinos lining the street, and the street-walkers who appear after sundown. The irony of the situation should not go unnoticed; the cemetery is located just off a street named after the Greco-Roman goddess of the dawn, and on that street one encounters pagan and ungodly enticements in many forms. In the midst of such a sinful setting is a place that does not seem to belong, a place of holiness and tradition. Behind the Drift-On-Inn Casino is the Bikur Cholim Cemetery, the perimeter lined with chained-link fence and bordering trees, indicating its separation from the outside influence and temptations. While many cemeteries are carefully protected by the enfolding arms of churchyard fences and landscaping or the quiet Neighborhood Watch, the Seattle Sephardic community's cemetery stubbornly sits in the red-light district, refusing to yield the space they have carved out for themselves in a hostile environment. The existence of such a cemetery without the protective shadow of a synagogue indicates both a separateness typical of Jewish identity and behavior, but also of a strong sense of identification with other Sephardic Jews; in death and for eternity, the Seattle Sephardic community members refuse to be separated by synagogue affiliations and choose instead to be united in their Sephardic identity.

The cemetery is also a method by which the Seattle Sephardic community members struggle with the tension between dual identities; they are both American and Sephardic Jews. Perhaps the struggle is less difficult for first-generation Americans, for they have experienced

citizenship or residency in other nations, and they see Sephardic identity as unchanging; for those who have lived in the United States for their entire lives, it may be more difficult to so neatly compartmentalize their lives. The cemetery reflects the tension experienced by these American Sephardim, for it is an American cemetery even while it is strongly Sephardic.

A new American heritage is quickly evident in Bikur Cholim; on the stone wall visitors encounter upon entry, there is a panel dedicated to fallen [Sephardic] war heroes:

> Men of Valor
>
> These men who gave their lives serving our country so we can live in freedom,
>
> hold a special place in the hearts of our community and all Americans.
>
> [omitted Hebrew inscription]
>
> On your high places shall be the slain. How have the heroes fallen?
>
> II Samuel 1.19
>
> Larry Albohaire . Moshe Habibi . Albert J. Israel . Jack E. Israel
>
> Isaac I. Levy . David Y. Mezistrano . Ezra Rousso . Isaac Varon (all punctuation original)

The inscription makes it clear that the United States is “their” country and that the Seattle Sephardic community, as represented by the author of the inscription, fully identifies itself as American, though perhaps as a sub-culture within the larger American culture.

Another way by which American identity is communicated is by the use of English for most inscriptions. While Sephardic and Jewish identity is maintained by the use of Hebrew in inscriptions, particularly in Scriptural inscriptions, Hebrew is more of an exception than the rule. Tension between the two identities and languages is evident in panels on the stone wall that have

Scripture verses; while the verse will always appear both in English and in Hebrew, if one is above the other, the Hebrew version appears first; however, if the verses appear side-by-side, the English version is to the left and the Hebrew to the right. Although the orientation could be seen as important for both languages – English is read left-to-right, and Hebrew is read right-to-left – the overall orientation of all written text in the cemetery is left-to-right, giving primacy to the English translation of the Scripture verses.

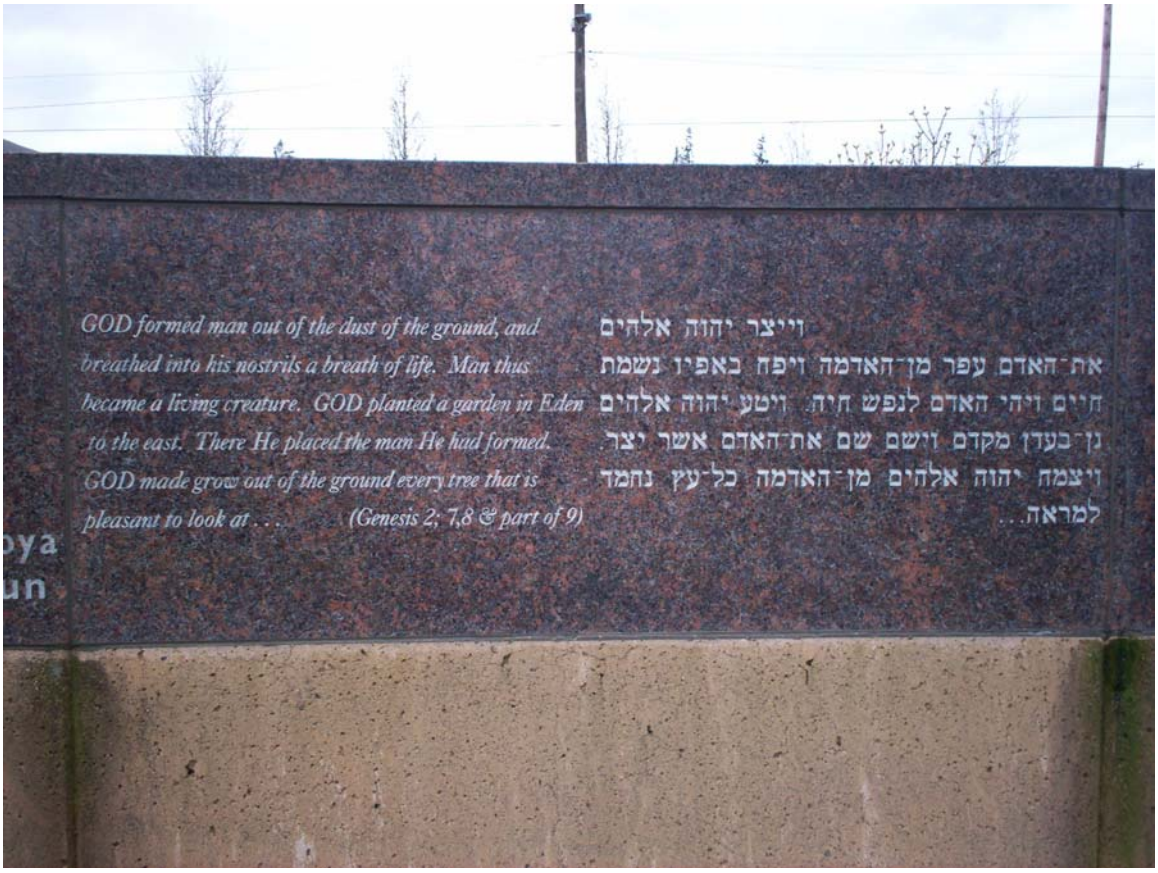

Figure 1 - an example of English and Hebrew Scripture inscriptions

Arguably, the entire cemetery is a left-to-right affair, if one is to assume an orientation of facing the stone wall and facing the content-side of the headstones as “correct.” Incidentally, that orientation would also involve the visitor facing the direction of Aurora Avenue. If the described

orientation can be assumed, the lone entrance to the cemetery is at the far left side; the visitor then moves right and into the parking lot, past the stone wall and to the hand-washing station, past the chapel, and then into the main burial area. Thus, the cemetery evidences an American orientation and identity through the layout of the space; while this could be interpreted just as tension between the dual identities of American and Sephardic Jewishness and an undermining of the intentioned Sephardic nature of the cemetery, it could also show the emergence of a new identity subset – the American Sephardic Jew, or even the Pacific Northwestern Sephardic Jew.

It is important to pause here, and note that although there is a strong American identity and influence communicated in the cemetery, there is also a strong – though perhaps subtler – Sephardic and Jewish theme as well. Symbolism and hierarchy that may be lost or unimportant to the uninitiated Gentile visitor speaks with the weight of history and religious authority in the Bikur Cholim Cemetery.[12]

One distinctly Jewish message that is conveyed in the cemetery through headstone symbols is gender roles. Some of the symbols are fairly generic, as in all cemeteries, but others are gender-specific. For example, the Star of David appears on both men and women's headstones. Menorahs, on the other hand, are far more likely to be found on women's headstones

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[12] One way many of the symbols could be understood or studied is by using the semiotic theory set forth by American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. In his framework, a "sign is either an *icon*, an *index*, or a *symbol*. An *icon* is a sign which would possess the character which renders it significant, even though its object had no existence; such as a lead-pencil streak as representing a geometrical line. An *index* is a sign which would, at once, lose the character which makes it a sign if its object were removed, but would not lose that character if there were no interpretant. Such, for instance, is a piece of mould with a bullet-hold in it as sign of a shot; for without the shot there would have been no hole; but there is a hole there, whether anybody has the sense to attribute it to a shot or not. A *symbol* is a sign which would lose the character which renders it a sign if there were no interpretant. Such is any utterance of speech which signifies what it does only by virtue of its being understood to have that signification" ("Sign," 239-40). Peirce's work has the potential to be a helpful aid in studying Bikur Cholim Cemetery, but the first task is to *identify* what the signs are, and in this case that is best done by utilizing a text-in-context approach.

than men's. Additionally, if a married couple is buried together with a double or joint headstone, if the Star of David and the menorah symbols are used, the Star of David almost always appears on the husband's side of the marker, and the menorah almost always appears on the woman's side of the marker. In fact, the trend is so consistent that I took a photograph of the single double headstone in Bikur Cholim Cemetery that reverses the symbols; it is significant enough to be recorded because it is the only marker where the husband's marker displays a menorah and the wife's marker displays a Star of David.

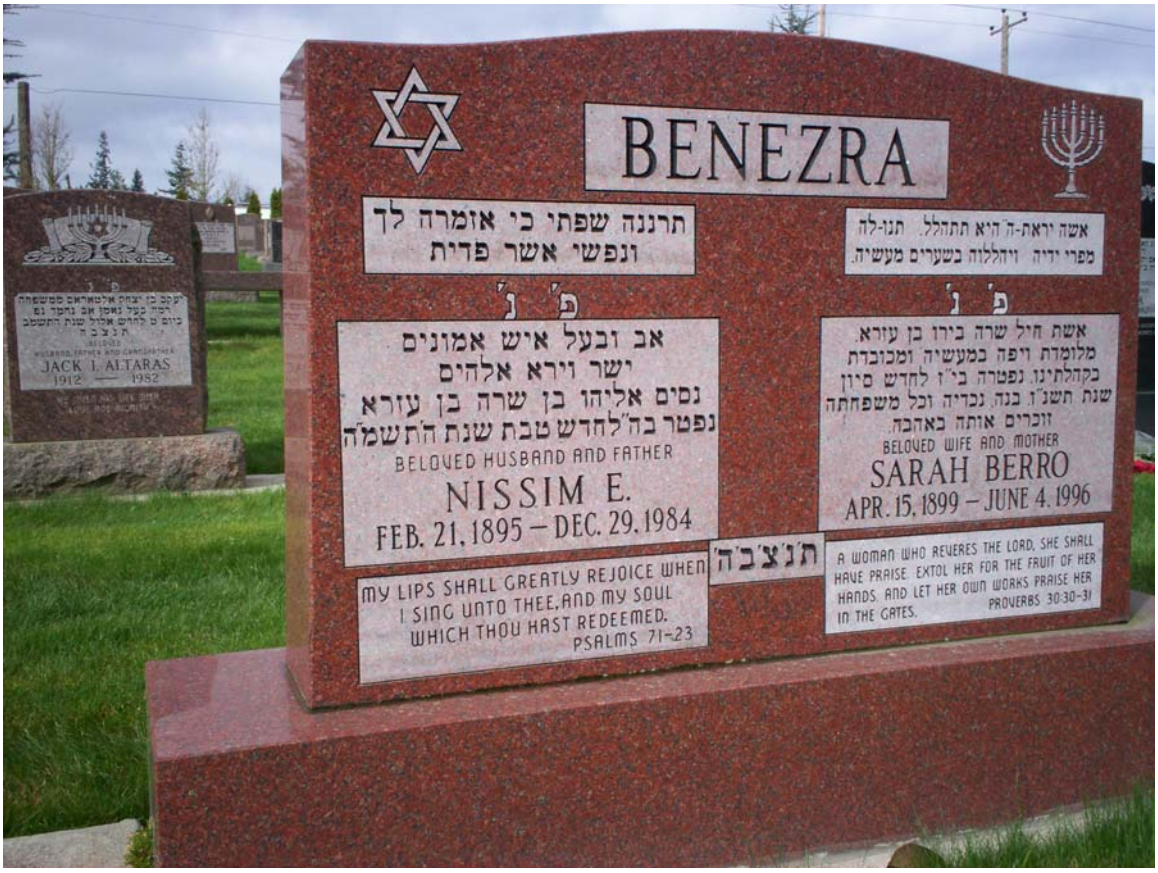

Figure 2 - a typical double headstone featuring gender-specific symbols, photograph taken March 15, 2007

The gender specificity of the menorah symbol makes sense, since it is traditionally the woman's role to light the menorah and Shabbat candles; what is not currently explained is why

the Star of David or the Torah is chosen to represent a man on his gravestone instead of using the Tree of Life or another religious symbol. David Goberman, author of Carved Memories: Heritage in Stone from the Russian Jewish Pale, asserts that the symbolism of the menorah goes beyond merely representing a traditional action or role, but actually says something significant about the person being memorialized:

> The most important theme is the menorah, or candelabra, which is usually depicted as having seven branches, though some have up to nine, and some fewer than seven. On the stones, the menorah is a symbol of female virtue, expressed in a complicated design that depicts the ritual of Sabbath candle lighting. On a young girl's grave one might see a single – sometimes broken – candlestick. The hands of a woman often accompany the menorah, the fingers locked in prayer. (17)

According to Goberman, the woman memorialized with an image of the menorah is one who is virtuous and dutiful, one who understood her responsibilities and roles as a Jew.

The menorah is not the only rich symbol that occurs on Jewish grave markers; some headstones depict two hands, each with two fingers extended in blessing. This image indicates possible priestly lineage, but certainly the virtue of the Jewish man memorialized by the stone (Goberman 18). The Torah is often shown, as well, usually decorated with intricate detail and sometimes with a crown, indicating the memorialized person was a scholar or lover of Scripture. In Bikur Cholim, there are several Torah images, but one in particular illustrates well this concept of Torah imagery (shown in Figure 2). Jack Isaac Almo's headstone shows a white engraved Torah on black stone; above the image is the title, "Crown of our Hearts." Arched

around the Torah are words in both English and Hebrew, serving both to convey information and to contribute beauty to the image of the Torah. The words framing the Torah on the left-hand side are English and declare, “They rose from ashes of the Holocaust and built beautiful homes full of goodness.” Presumably, the Hebrew words say something similar. The placement of the words in relation to the Torah also indicates that Jewish identity and religion were central to the building *of* those homes full of goodness. The inscription below Almo’s name seems to confirm the implication of the Torah image on his headstone; it reads, “Who Is Honored? He Who Honors Others. [Hebrew omitted]” The statement comes from the Ethics of the Fathers, indicating that Almo was not only familiar with the Torah itself, but also with the Talmud and other supporting documents and commentaries about conducting Jewish life.

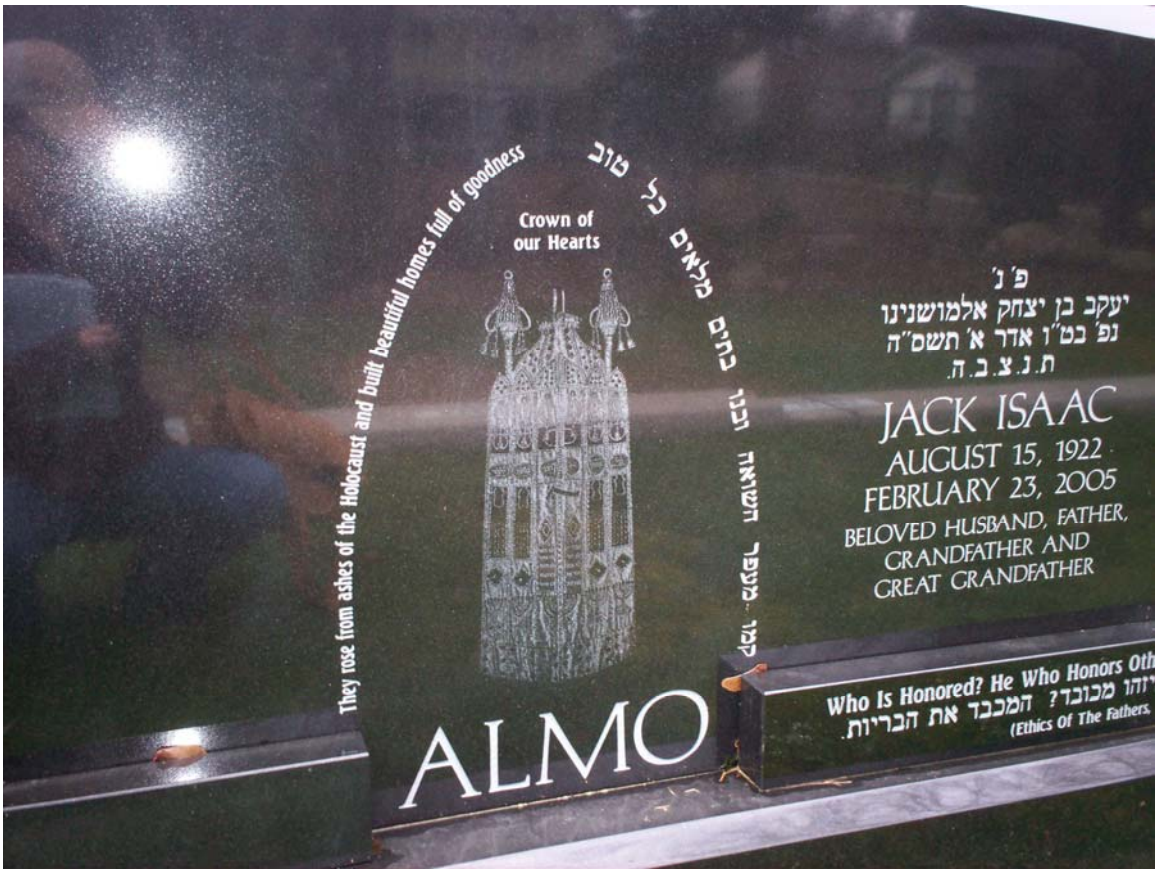

Figure 3 - Jack Isaac Almo's headstone, photograph taken March 15, 2007

In Bikur Cholim, the priestly hands symbol only occurs, and the Torah usually occurs, on the headstones memorializing men. When the Torah does occur on women's headstones, it is when the woman memorialized has a joint headstone with her husband; this is a possible indication that it is only through a man, specifically a husband, that a woman has access to Scripture and learning.[13] Both the priestly hands and the Torah images reinforce traditional male roles in the Jewish culture and religious activities, as they were the ones to be priests and to read and study the Torah in the synagogues. Conversely, "feminine" symbols such as the menorah occasionally appear on a male headstone that is not a joint headstone; however, when the headstone is a double marker, the feminine nature of the menorah seems to indicate that it is one of the roles of the wife to keep alive religious tradition and ritual, while the man may have his masculine role of priest or Torah scholar. Other symbols, as noted earlier, do not seem to be gender-specific. For example, the Star of David and the Tree of Life appear on both male and female headstones; while this could indicate that these symbols have reached a clichéd status, it could alternately indicate a perceived equality of human and cultural value existing between men and women in the Sephardic Jewish community.

While all of the previously mentioned symbols affirm Jewish identity and convey rich meaning and a sense of history, their placement on the headstones serves the same purpose. On the vast majority of these headstones, one notices that the religious images are typically the largest single element on the headstone, and they almost always are at the top of the headstone – the name of the deceased is only listed after the image affirming his or her Jewish identity and

[13] Women have not historically been given access to Torah study; it is only within the last few decades that female Torah students have become common.

cultural membership. The hierarchy indicates that while the headstone does act as a memorial to the individual, it also functions as a monument to Judaism. In fact, some of the older headstones do not include any English, instead recording the memorialized individual's name and information in Hebrew or a native language; in a sense, this, too, emphasizes to the visitor that the most important thing one must know about the deceased is that he or she was Jewish.

Although Jewish identity is important in all the monuments and markers in Bikur Cholim, the individuals laid to rest there are certainly not unimportant or ignored. One way the deceased are memorialized is through the use of portraits and photographs on the headstones themselves. According to Douglas J. Davies, author of Death, Ritual and Belief, the use of photographs on headstones originated with Italian immigrants, who were able to do so beginning in 1851 when a special type of daguerreotype was created that would be appropriate for monuments and outdoor memorials (109). In Bikur Cholim, photographs appear on a large number of the tombstones.[14] The images are typically placed next to or above the name of the deceased. Just as the placement of the religious symbols conveyed meaning, so could the placement of the photographs, but the meaning is more uncertain. Because the person is both name and face, the placement of image before word may only indicate an understanding of how memory works, and not indicate a hierarchy of information. What is not in doubt, however, is the function of the photographs: memory and identity affirmation. Relational identity is also affirmed in some of these images. One headstone, marking the grave of Albert R. Calderon, displays an engraved portrait of the man who is through the image identified as a member of a marriage relationship; his [living] wife is not depicted in the portrait, but an obvious spot has been left for her portrait, leaving his

[14] Portrait images appear on some of the oldest headstones in Bikur Cholim, despite the cost that may have been prohibitive to some. Judging by the frequency with which the portraits appeared through the years, the images either became more affordable or more important to memorializing in the Seattle Sephardic community.

image – and by extension, the man himself – un-whole. Calderon's portrait also pictures him wearing a fez, identifying him as a member of the Masons. Because Jews have historically been discriminated against and excluded by this organization, it is uncertain why he would not only become a member but also that his membership would be commemorated on his gravestone. One possible answer to the question is that his Masonic membership was a way to express the American ideals of equality and pluralism by gaining access to that which was denied his forefathers in Europe, but without in-depth research about this individual it is impossible to know with any certainty why Calderon is depicted wearing a fez.[15]

The forms of identification discussed earlier identified the deceased with their religious and ethnic backgrounds, but the forms addressed were all static memorials. Another way in which both the deceased and the living engage in identification is through the practice of the living leaving items at the headstones. On and next to the grave markers, one sees stones and rocks – left as acts of mitzvot.[16] Davies explains that while other items are sometimes left, leaving stones is the preferred method of memorializing:

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[15] Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann discusses Masonic discrimination against the Jews of Germany, as well as their persistent attempts to gain access to the organization in his article, "Brothers or Strangers? Jews and Freemasons in Nineteenth-century Germany;" interested readers may find this article helpful.

[16] "Mitzvot" is the plural of the term "mitzvah," which refers to obedience to Torah commands. Encyclopaedia Britannica explains that the definition of the word has been expanded; while it originally only meant the 613 commands in the Torah, "[m]any more (some virtually equated with divine law) have been added throughout the ages on the authority of outstanding rabbinical leaders, such as reciting the Hallel (specific psalms) at prescribed times, reading the Book of Esther on Purim, washing the hands before meals, and lighting candles on certain festivals. Though nonobservance of a mitzvah constitutes a transgression (*'avera*), it is understood that not all mitzvahs are of equal importance; circumcision, for instance, is a direct response to a divine command, while the wearing of a skullcap (yarmulke) in public is not. In a broader context, Jews consider all good deeds as the fulfillment of mitzvahs, for such actions express God's will" ("Mitzvah").

"Small stones are placed on the grave after burial and on subsequent visits. To some orthodox Jews such stones are much preferable to flowers, since stones are symbols of permanence while flowers are obviously ephemeral" (121). Flowers are sometimes brought to the graves, but usually in addition to the stone-leaving. Long-lasting, the stones share similarities both with the headstones themselves as well as with the monuments created by their ancestors in the Jordan River and at other sites. The stones are a reminder that the deceased have not been forgotten, and that their names have not been erased. This is specifically a Jewish tradition – therefore, adherence to it affirms the Jewish identity of both the deceased and the living visitor(s). Some of the stones are not mere pebbles gathered on the way in, but are smooth and carved with words in English and Hebrew. Sometimes, items are left that memorialize the deceased without referring to Jewish heritage. Some of the items left at Bikur Cholim include golf balls and special-order Starbucks coffee drinks. This phenomenon is interesting, as it indicates that the members of the Sephardim may slowly be accommodating their traditions to their current setting and outside culture. Even still, as some of the less-traditional mitvot items deteriorate over time, they illustrate by comparison the lasting nature of stone and, in a sense, the Jewish culture that provides such traditions.

The Bikur Cholim Cemetery seems to clearly be a way by which American Sephardic Jews in Seattle can freely communicate messages and ideas that are important for their history, culture, and faith. In addition to communicating a cultural identity to outsiders, the cemetery also serves to affirm and maintain a Sephardic identity within the community through visual cues that aid in religious and cultural rituals. The cemetery also serves as a method for dealing with tensions between dual or emerging identities, between the use of certain images or symbols and the Sephardic nature of the cemetery, and between all the voices that attempt to speak through

the site. As immigrants, but especially as Jews with a history of discrimination and expulsion, the Sephardic Jewish community members have taken advantage of the freedoms they enjoy in the United States and have created a site rich with meaning and full of culture and identity maintenance efforts. The Bikur Cholim Cemetery is a unique text, significantly different even from other Jewish or Sephardic cemeteries, and provides insight into the Seattle Sephardic culture and community.

Chapter 5

A Temporary End:

Conclusions, Implications, and Ideas for Future Journeys

Throughout the centuries following their expulsion from Spain, the Sephardim have wandered the face of the earth in search of a haven of safety and respite. Wherever they landed, they were forced to carve space for themselves out of an often-hostile environment; when Sephardic Jews were fortunate enough to find a place where there was already an established Jewish community, they discovered that members of the existing community did not understand their experiences, traditions and heritage. These were things the Sephardim chose not to lose even when it meant separating and further marking themselves for persecution.

In Seattle, the Sephardim enjoy the larger Jewish community while maintaining their own identity through organizations such as the Sephardic Brotherhood and Sephardic Sisterhood. One of the best and most obvious ways by which this group maintains their heritage, however, is through the Bikur Cholim Cemetery. Physically situated in an environment that does not invite religious rituals or reflection, the cemetery maintains strict boundaries around the site and around its use. The cultural environment for the cemetery is a Jewish community that minimizes differences – sometimes important differences – in order to retain and reclaim membership within its ethnic [and sometimes, religious] community. The context of the Seattle Jewish community is one that loosens traditionally rigid identity boundaries because of things like intermarriage between Sephardic Jews and other Jews, intermarriage between Jews and Gentiles, and other expressions of apathy toward a traditional Jewish heritage; Bikur Cholim Cemetery is

one method the Sephardim employ to maintain certain characteristics of their community and identity.

The purpose of this study was to better understand the ways by which visual communication is employed to maintain, affirm, and communicate identity and cultural norms and values through a text-in-context case study of the Sephardic Bikur Cholim Cemetery. The discoveries of this research have the potential for broad influence, because they may shed light on how other communities and cultures have in the past and will in the future preserve themselves through memorials, visual symbols, public spaces, etc. Nations' borders and names change regularly, regions lose distinctive characteristics with the introduction of new technologies and new people, and the huge advances in transportation and toward a more unified world currency system make it easy for people to move around and blend their cultures. In such a world, the Sephardim have much to teach about the communication of culture, tradition and identity, for they have grappled with these issues or similar ones for the entirety of their existence. As a more global community emerges and nations' borders become less meaningful, those intent on protecting aspects of their culture should look to a successful group that has not had a homeland for centuries.

With this purpose in mind, the first chapter of the study built a foundation of knowledge and information gleaned from the works of others concerning the rhetoric of space, the rhetoric of memorialization (both in a larger sense and specifically in cemeteries), and Jewish history and symbolism, showing that this was a relevant topic for research. Mircea Eliade established in his book, The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion, the importance of analyzing the use of space and the meaning that use implies. Additionally, Eliade maintains that space usage has religious implications, which is especially relevant to a study of a religious site such as Bikur

Cholim Cemetery. Sonja Foss's work concerning the Vietnam memorial emphasized the importance of understanding memorials not only by what was intended by the creator, but also that context and experience of the memorial and viewer contribute to meaning (330). Through the work of Elizabethada Wright, we saw established the nature of cemeteries as memory-keeping devices, their ability to record a hierarchy of information about individuals and cultures, and their use in a "rediscovery" of values ("Reading the Cemetery," 33, "Rhetorical Spaces," 59). She also noted that cemeteries are places where those who historically have been silenced from the public forum find a voice ("Reading the Cemetery," 34).

In Death, Ritual and Belief, Douglas Davies does not identify many specifically Jewish mourning or memorialization rituals, but he does assert that "death has been widely seen to challenge human identity," and that cultural identities must be reaffirmed in those situations (7). He goes on to say that many cultures have close ties between identity and memorialization, making memorialization an important function of cultural identity maintenance (110). Meaningful memorial rituals, however, must conform to the symbols and customs of the group for which they are created; Faith Jones and Gretta Siegel explain in their article, "Yizkor Books as Holocaust Grey Literature," that remembering in specific ways, such as speaking the names of the dead, are important to the Jewish culture (52).

Additionally, the first chapter reviewed the methodological path, framed by Cara A. Finnegan in a chapter included in 2004's Defining Visual Rhetorics, that this study was to follow. Finnegan suggests a text-in-context approach employing Zarefsky's third and fourth distinctions concerning the study of rhetoric and history which, given Bikur Cholim's Sephardic nature, is an especially useful method for study. While other methods of study may have been

useful in shedding light on this site, Finnegan's approach allowed for a greater study of the historic culture employing the space as a communication text.

The second chapter explained the origins of the Sephardic people, and why their origin necessitates their separateness not only from the Gentile world but also from the Jewish world. The chapter also served in establishing the influence and importance of the Wandering Jew legend and motif throughout history, and explained how that motif continues to affect the Jewish community, particularly that of the contemporary Sephardim. Signs of the motif are easily discoverable within the Jewish culture, which indicates that it is reinforced both by the outside world and from within the Jewish world. Because the motif, and its emphasis on wandering and homelessness, is prominent in the larger Jewish culture, it makes sense that it would especially affect the portion of the population that originated out of expulsion and has ever since wandered the earth.

The third chapter explored the Seattle Jewish community's outreach efforts in terms of assuring Jewish identification and professed allegiance. In my systematic perusal of Jewish websites relevant to the Seattle community, I discovered that outreach efforts minimized differences and maximized commonalities; this approach not only overlooks important aspects of heritage, but also threatens the very existence of regional identities. While some of the regional identity traits have been more protected than others (like the use of Yiddish and the making of latkes), the chapter suggests that this set of choices is not out of concern for regional identities but is more a symptom of homogenization in the Seattle Jewish community. On the other hand, the Seattle Sephardic Brotherhood was identified as one of two groups that opposes a strategy calling for (or implying a) lack of strict adherence to religious and traditional norms; instead, it is one group in Seattle that calls its constituents to active participation in the community and in

their regional heritage. The loosely Jewish cultural environment in which the cemetery is set highlights the rhetoric of separateness used in Bikur Cholim Cemetery and, if anything, strengthens its message.

The fourth chapter examined the Sephardic Bikur Cholim Cemetery as a site of identity affirmation and maintenance, and attempted to understand what parts of identity were considered sufficiently important to memorialize; additional analysis revealed what values were perhaps unintentionally encoded into the visual rhetoric of the space.

The chapter uncovered a reliance upon American orientation within the cemetery, even while emphasizing a Jewish and a Sephardic identity. The space was used to indicate a conflict between or possibly a blending of separate identities, but it also seemed to confirm Mircea Eliade's concept of sacred and profane spaces, as evidenced by the "zones" one passes through while journeying through the space within the cemetery confines.

I discovered that Sephardic Jewish identity was a more important element than individual identity, though that too was an important characteristic of the individual memorials, as seen by the use of portraits and photographs on the gravemarkers.

Additionally, Jewish symbols on the head stones seemed to correlate with traditional Jewish gender roles, and communicated to the living visitors about the virtue of the dead and how well they had adhered to those traditional roles in the culture. An unexpected finding was the use of Masonic symbols on gravestones in the cemetery. Historically, the Jews have not been welcome in Masonic societies, so the fact that Sephardic Jews not only participated in them but then chose to include their membership in such a group on a headstone memorial is significant; what such images indicate is unclear as it depends so greatly on the individual memorialized and the deceased person's family. Lastly, I identified a way by which both the living and the dead

Sephardic community members participate in their heritage in the cemetery; by leaving stones at the headstones in a uniquely Jewish tradition, both the living and the dead are symbolically identifying themselves with their culture and history.

Implications

Although this study focused on the use of visual rhetoric in a Sephardic cemetery in Seattle, Washington, it has value for the communication field and for future communication researchers. First, it demonstrates how messages – both intentional and unintentional – are created visually with a future audience in mind. Bikur Cholim Cemetery therefore communicates on many levels; one way by which it communicates is through the physical context and the cultural context. Concerning the physical context, Bikur Cholim seems to confirm Mike Parker Pearson's claim in The Archaeology of Death and Burial that "the fixing of the dead in the land is a social and political act" and is "one of the most visible activities through which human societies map out and express their relationships to ancestors, land and the living" (141). Just as the Jewish people and the Sephardim in particular have always had to accept what bits were grudgingly given them or carve something out for themselves, the Seattle Sephardic community has done the same on Aurora Avenue. In the midst of seedy businesses and shabby buildings is their space of remembrance. While the location of the cemetery in such an area might initially seem to detract from the holiness of the site, it in fact affirms both the holy, separate nature of the space as well as its Sephardic nature; it is consistent with their history for the Sephardim to find a place in the less-desired areas. The very existence of Bikur Cholim Cemetery sends a visual message; according to Elizabethada Wright, hierarchies are created by the living to choose what is worthy and what is not worthy of being remembered ("Reading the Cemetery," 33).

Therefore, the fact that Bikur Cholim stands at all communicates to the larger Seattle community that Sephardic history and the Sephardic people are worthy of commemoration, as well as expressing that this historically powerless group has the power to choose to do so and then enact their own wishes. Mircea Eliade's concept of sacred and profane spaces seems to apply here, especially in relation to the idea of communicating a piece of Sephardic Jewish history through sacred space wedged into an obviously profane environment. Visitors to the cemetery encounter a visual message presented just by the use of space about the place of the Sephardim in society, the acceptability and accessibility of this group, and a small microcosm of their history. This study furthers Eliade's work, because while his is a thorough framework, it has now been applied to an actual physical environment that easily lends itself to the terms of that framework.

A second implication of this study is that it shows some ways by which identity is communicated across generations, in a time when traditional methods and social structures for that type of communication are disintegrating. As Faith Jones and Gretta Siegel write in their article, "Yizkor Books as Holocaust Grey Literaure," "One of the purposes of the Holocaust was to destroy memory, yet one of the strongest foundational tenets of Judaism is the belief in text as a force for perpetuating memory" (53). The Jewish and the Sephardic people believe that memory is one of the greatest aids they have in retaining identity and culture; because of this belief, they engage in rituals and repetition of information in many if not all their religious services and memorials. Jones and Siegel describe yizkor services as times when the names of the dead are recited aloud so they will not be forgotten (52). A cemetery acts in a similar way by recording for posterity the names of the deceased, but Bikur Cholim goes further than a typical cemetery by recording not just individual names but also elements of the Sephardic culture. That is why one sees a brief history of the Sephardim, a declaration that the [American] Sephardic

heroes will not be forgotten, the names of the donors and supporters of the cemetery and the Sephardic Brotherhood, etc.; these visual elements function just as the recitation of names in a yizkor service and brand things of importance into the minds of the living.

A third implication is that there are identity changes occurring within a historic and traditional culture; this is an important aspect to consider any time a culture's communication is analyzed. For example, the discovery that the cemetery functions in an American orientation, from left to right and predominately in the English language, demonstrates that there is a possible shift occurring in the traditional identity and culture. Further elements that support this possibility are the inclusion of a panel on the memorial wall calling to remembrance the "Men of Valor" who "gave their lives serving our country so we can live in freedom" and who now "hold a special place in the hearts of our community and all Americans." This indicates that even while attempting to preserve the Sephardic identity, the members of this group see themselves also as Americans. It is not clear which identity may take primacy if one does, but it is at least equally possible that a new type of identity is forming that integrates both Sephardic Jewish and American traits. Moshe Idel asserts in his work, "Religion, Thought and Attitudes: the Impact of the Expulsion of the Jews," that the Sephardim have throughout history refused integration into their new communities, even within existing Jewish communities (125). In The Emergence of the Israeli Sephardi Ultra-Orthodox Movement, Shlomo Deshen claims that upon reaching the Promised Land of modern Israel, the Sephardim do not seem to know what characteristics and traditions of their wandering identity they ought to keep and which should be discarded (2). If in fact the Seattle Sephardim are creating a new type of identity and not merely succumbing to assimilation, then what is happening is significant and new. Despite the fact that one of Bikur Cholim's main purposes is to maintain a traditional cultural identity, the possible conflict in

messages in the cemetery seems to at least partially confirm Carole Blair's assertion that modern memorials will necessarily incorporate multiple voices ("Public Memorializing," 346).

A fourth implication is an indication of a type of memorializing communication that occurs within a group that shares a common religious and ethnic background. For instance, this study established that in Bikur Cholim Cemetery, Jewish symbols appear at the top of the gravemarkers and other information is included below, indicating that the primary and important content of the stone is Jewish identity. The cemetery also indicates that there are appropriate and inappropriate types of communication; for example, some of the images are used to be gender specific in order to communicate to the viewer certain traits about the person being memorialized. In Carved Memories: Heritage in Stone from the Russian Jewish Pale, David Goberman asserts that gender specific symbols are meant to convey information about the virtue of the dead; it seems reasonable to conclude that breaking those unwritten rules for symbol usage would be frowned upon (17). Another unwritten rule for communication within this environment and context is that of using Jewish or neutral images on the gravemarkers. While some of the images engraved are not Stars of David or menorahs, they are likely baseballs or paint palettes, indicating the interests of the person commemorated and are religiously neutral. Some of the images walk the line of appropriateness, such as Masonic symbols, but one absolutely does not see any engraved crosses, scripture verses from the New Testament, etc. Use of images from another religion would violate the very nature and purposes of the site and are unacceptable at Bikur Cholim Cemetery.

A fifth implication of this study concerns its use of Cara A. Finnegan's framework for text-in-context analysis. While this project did not employ every step that she laid out in her chapter in Defining Visual Rhetoric, Finnegan's philosophy was adopted in order to incorporate

the greater context of Jewish and Sephardic history and identity into this work. The framework used allowed for the important influence of Sephardic history, culture, and imagery to be identified and interpreted; although Sonja Foss's understanding of the function of memorials and the creation by individuals of memorial meanings is important and often useful, it did not seem to be relevant in Bikur Cholim Cemetery. The intent of the creators of and contributors to the cemetery must be considered in analysis, because communicating their intent is the entire purpose and main function of the site. Even in cemeteries that are not intended to aid in identity or cultural maintenance, individual memorials are still created for the express purpose of conveying specific information about the deceased and tend to be successful in achieving that goal. Therefore, it seems possible that while useful in other situations, Foss' approach may not be suitable in all cases for the study of cemetery rhetoric.

Limitations

While this study is both useful and valuable, it has certain limitations. Because it focuses on a single, very significant site, it did not feature comparison between Sephardic cemeteries, Jewish cemeteries, or even cemeteries in general.

Another limitation of the study is based on the mutability of life and life's artifacts. The study focused on a snapshot at a single point in time on the visible life of the cemetery; because people continually die and are buried, the cemetery changes constantly. This project was conducted over a one-year period, and although it can offer insight into studies of future versions of the cemetery itself or into other cemeteries, some of the findings in this thesis may decrease in

importance as time progresses,[17] though they will continue to function as an important historical [and rhetorical] record.

A third limitation is that of size; this study does not include interpretations from others, such as the "voices" of other scholars, rabbis, members of the Seattle Sephardic Brotherhood, family members of those buried in the cemetery, [non-Sephardic] members of the larger Seattle Jewish community, etc. Those interpretations would be insightful, but would require a methodologically different type of study from this.

Researchers from other disciplines who may be able to shed additional light on this site and topic are those in the fields of anthropology, religion and psychology; while my study out of necessity incorporated elements of all of these fields in small ways, researchers trained specifically in these areas would greatly aid in an understanding of the Bikur Cholim Cemetery and what is occurring there.

Future Research

There are many avenues that could be followed in future research dealing with this site or others like it. One valuable avenue that was partially traveled in this thesis could be followed further by examining the cemetery in terms of Eliade's concept of sacred and profane spaces, as well as the symbolic universe that he mentions. While space was divided in this work, and attempts were made to show the intentional definition of those areas inward from the property boundaries (such as the kohanim pavilion), Eliade's work would be important in examining the

[17] Importance is here defined as the ability to shed light on the Bikur Cholim Cemetery's functions and purposes, as well as on other studies conducted about cemeteries or Jewish memorials.

physical context of the cemetery given its close proximity to Aurora Avenue, the Drift-on-Inn Casino, and other unsavory places.

Another avenue of research could be uncovering the depth of participation of younger Seattle Jews in the Sephardic Brotherhood and in the maintenance of the cemetery. It would be interesting to learn the average ages of the Sephardic Brotherhood members, and what efforts they are taking to ensure a future generation in their organization and community, as well as what they are doing to combat assimilation, both into a more homogenous Jewish community as well as into the larger Gentile culture. This information could be possibly be unearthed through a textual analysis of Brotherhood documents and/or meetings, as well as by interviewing members about the assimilation situation.

A third avenue of research could build upon the work of this study, which, among other things, identified signs used in the Bikur Cholim Cemetery; using Charles Sanders Peirce's framework, it would be possible to classify and study them in-depth and perhaps provide greater insight into the imbedded meaning(s). Peirce himself said that his triad – icon, index, and symbol – are "all indispensable in all reasoning" ("One, Two, Three," 181). Peirce's philosophy might very well provide a bridge between Foss' and Finnegan's concepts of visual rhetoric as it allows both for individual interpretation by the viewer and the intentional meaning imbedded by the creator.

A fourth avenue of research is not directly related to Bikur Cholim Cemetery itself but is more concerned with some of the artifacts used to study it. It would be valuable to better understand the internet's effect on the Seattle Jewish community, and how area Jews use the internet to connect with other community members as well as with their own heritage. Information for this study was culled in part from the website for Bikur Cholim, but much of the

contextual information was found using the *Jewish Transcript News* website. This site contains information that can also be found in the Jewish newspaper, but also offers "The Guide to Jewish Washington," a directory of Jewish organizations with a presence in Washington State. Additionally, the *Jewish Transcript News* maintains the Jew-ish.com website, which targets Seattle Jews in their 20s and 30s. The information these sites offered was valuable for this study, but how do they function themselves? What is chosen for inclusion and what is not? The Jew-ish.com website is particularly interesting, as it provides an online representation of a young Jewish community that may not actually maintain the behaviors or lifestyle that has historically defined the Jewish experience and identity. These sites could be analyzed very effectively using the tools of qualitative research; surveys or interviews could uncover how Seattle Jews are using these websites and for what purposes.

While the suggestions above in no way constitute the only ways by which greater understanding could be gained about Bikur Cholim, visual rhetoric, communication of identity and culture, or any of the other aspects of this study, they could prove to be important in the future. They also illustrate how much is still to be discovered in the areas of communication mentioned above; it is my belief and hope that this work has contributed a small, unique piece of knowledge to the mosaic being constructed by scholars in the communication field.

Last Thoughts

Bikur Cholim Cemetery is an important site for religious and cultural reasons, as well as for the purposes of expanding knowledge in the field of visual rhetoric. It communicates and transmits history, tradition, culture and identity; soon, however, Bikur Cholim's identity will change as it nears the end of its own life. The cemetery is being filled up at a faster rate than ever

before, and it is unlikely to slow as the Baby Boomer generation ages. Unless additional land is obtained, Bikur Cholim Cemetery will probably be full within the next ten to fifteen years. What is contained in the cemetery will continue to function, but the Sephardic Brotherhood will be charged with the responsibility of finding new ways to make it relevant or encourage its use by the Seattle Sephardic community.

APPENDIX A: A visual tour of Bikur Cholim Cemetery, beginning from the corner of Aurora Avenue and 167th Street

PRIVATE
PROPERTY
No Trespassing
After Dusk

1230
N. 167th St.

SEATTLE SEPHARDIC CEMETERY
ESTABLISHED 1933 ✦ RENOVATED 2002
ונאמן אתה להחיות מתים
FAITHFUL ARE YOU TO GIVE LIFE TO THE DEAD

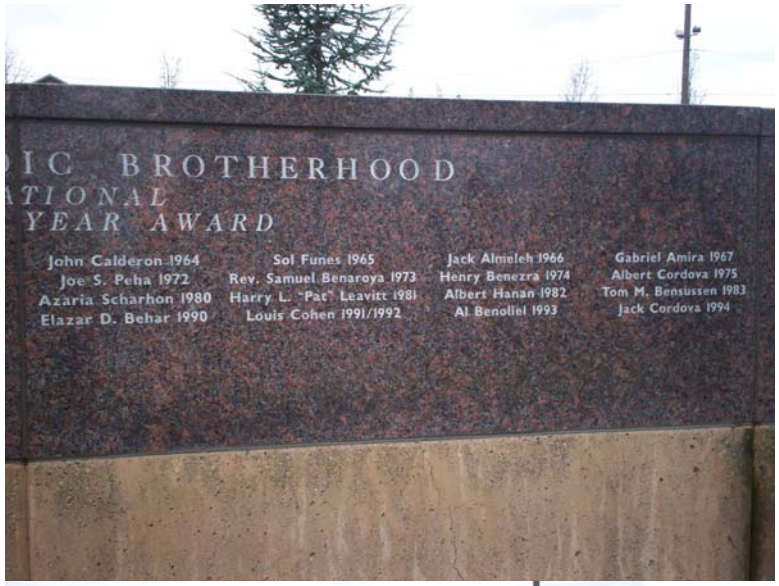
CEMETERY PRAYER
Blessed are You, Lord, our G-d, King of the universe,
Who formed you in judgment, sustained you in judgment,
brought death to you in judgment and knows the number
of all of you in judgment and Who, in the future,
will raise you and restore you to life in judgment.
Blessed are You, Lord, Who restores life to the dead.
"Your dead shall live; my dead bodies shall rise up.
Awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust.
For Your dew is as the dew of light, and from the earth may You
bring life to the spirits of the dead." (Isaiah 26, 19)

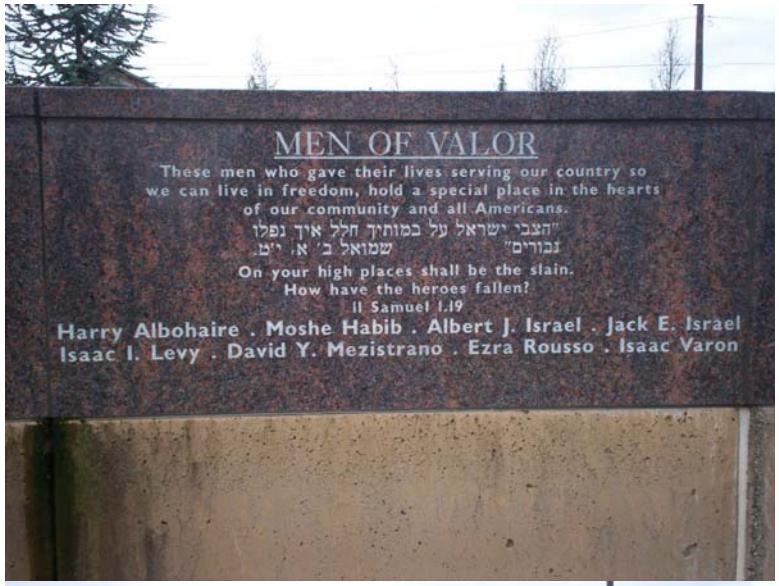
EMETERY PRAYER
ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם אשר יצר אתכם בדין
וכלכל אתכם בדין והמית אתכם בדין ויודע מספר כלכם בדין
והוא עתיד להחיותכם ולהקימכם בדין
ברוך אתה יהוה מחיה המתים
יחיו מתיך נבלתי יקומון הקיצו ורננו שכני עפר
כי טל אורות טלך וארץ רפאים תפיל

We Honor Our Beloved
Parents and Grandparents
MARCO and ROSE
BOLISSA FRANCO
John Franco and Family
Dr. Robert Franco and Family
Albert M. Franco and Family
Dorothy Franco Muscatel and Family
Toddy Franco Horowitz and Family
MARCO FRANCO
Founder and Builder
Seattle Sephardic Brotherhood Cemetery

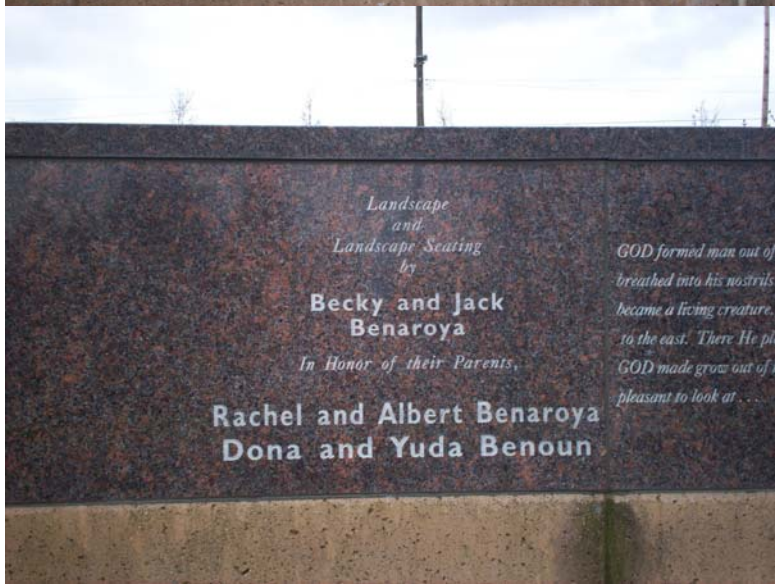
SPAIN TO SEATTLE
The first Sephardim reached Seattle 410 years after the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492. They were Solomon Calzo and Jacob Policar from Turkey. In 1904 came Nessim Alhadeff from Rhodes and soon after many more arrived from Turkey, Rhodes and the Balkans. Sephardic synagogues Ezra Bessaroth, Ahavath Ahim and Sephardic Bikur Holim were founded in the early 1900's. The Seattle Sephardic Brotherhood, organized in 1935, and followed by the establishment of this Cemetery for the entire Sephardic community by Marco Franco and other Sephardic leaders, remains active and vibrant in this year 2001, 66 years later. The Ezra Bessaroth and Sephardic Bikur Holim synagogues have expanded their memberships to include arrivals from around the world and, with the Seattle Sephardic Brotherhood, continue to keep alive our Sephardic traditions and identity.

SEATTLE SEPHARDI
INSPIRAT
MAN OF THE Y
Marco Franco 1960
Albert Altaras 1968
Jack Adatto 1976
Isaac Maimon 1984
Victor Barkey 1995
Sam Baruch 1961
John Israel 1969
Richard Galanti 1977
Allyn J. Adato 1985/1986
Morris Scharhon 1998
Albert M. Franco 1962
Lazar Scharhon 1970
Robert Benveniste 1978
Harry Fein 1987
Joseph S. Alhadeff 2002
Jack Caston 1963
Gordon De Leon 1971
Joseph Haleva 1979
Morris Piha 1989


IC BROTHERHOOD
ATIONAL
YEAR AWARD
John Calderon 1964
Joe S. Peha 1972
Azaria Scharhon 1980
Elazar D. Behar 1990
Sol Funes 1965
Rev. Samuel Benaroya 1973
Harry L. "Pat" Leavitt 1981
Louis Cohen 1991/1992
Jack Almeleh 1966
Henry Benezra 1974
Albert Hanan 1982
Al Benoliel 1993
Gabriel Amira 1967
Albert Cordova 1975
Tom M. Bensussen 1983
Jack Cordova 1994


MEN OF VALOR
These men who gave their lives serving our country so
we can live in freedom, hold a special place in the hearts
of our community and all Americans.
"הצבי ישראל על במותיך חלל איך נפלו
גבורים" שמואל ב' א, י"ט.
On your high places shall be the slain.
How have the heroes fallen?
II Samuel 1.19
Harry Albohaire . Moshe Habib . Albert J. Israel . Jack E. Israel
Isaac I. Levy . David Y. Mezistrano . Ezra Rousso . Isaac Varon

CONTRIBUTORS
צדקה מארכת ימיו ושנותיו של אדם ככתוב צדקה תציל ממות (משלי י"א, ד.) תדא"ו א.
Charity Lengthens A Persons Days And Years As It Is Written In Proverb II, 4.
Charity Will Save From Death. T.D.E. Zotá. I


Landscape
and
Landscape Seating
by
Becky and Jack
Benaroya
In Honor of their Parents,
Rachel and Albert Benaroya
Dona and Yuda Benoun
GOD formed man out of
breathed into his nostrils
became a living creature.
to the east. There He p
GOD made grow out of
pleasant to look at . . .

GOD formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils a breath of life. Man thus became a living creature. GOD planted a garden in Eden to the east. There He placed the man He had formed. GOD made grow out of the ground every tree that is pleasant to look at . . . (Genesis 2; 7,8 & part of 9)
וייצר יהוה אלהים
את־האדם עפר מן־האדמה ויפח באפיו נשמת
חיים ויהי האדם לנפש חיה. ויטע־יהוה אלהים
גן־בעדן מקדם וישם שם את־האדם אשר יצר
ויצמח יהוה אלהים מן־האדמה כל־עץ נחמד
למראה..

In Loving Memory
RABBI ABRAHAM
AND
VICTORIA MAIMON
May Their Memory be for a Blessing
BY THEIR GRANDCHILDREN AND GREAT GRANDCHILDREN
In Loving Memory of Our Parents
Rev. Morris L. Scharhon
משה בצלאל שארכון
&
Esther Cohen Scharhon
אסתר שארכון
Inspirational Pioneers, Educators & Leaders of The Seattle Sephardic Community
DEDICATED BY THEIR CHILDREN & GRANDCHILDREN
In Loving Memory of Our Parents
JOSEPH HAIM BENOLIEL
RACHEL (MAIMON) BENOLIEL
May Their Memory be a Blessing
In Loving Memory of Our Beloved Parents
Albert N. & Margaret Moscatel
Sam and Rachel Caston
In Memory of Our Beloved Father
Joseph Mezistrano
And In Honor of Our Dear Mother
Eda Mezistrano
From Their Children
In Honor of
Joseph S. De Leon
Rose Condiotty De Leon
Marcia & Sara Wolin
Ivy De Leon
Jack J. & Paula De Leon

Loving Memory
f Our Parents
Morris L. Scharhon
משה בצלאל שארכ
&
er Cohen Scharhon
אסתר שארכון
rational Pioneers, Educators
& Leaders of
Seattle Sephardic Community
EDICATED BY THEIR
REN & GRANDCHILDREN
t N. & Margaret Moscatel
m and Rachel Caston
In Honor of
Joseph S. De Leon
ose Condiotty De Leon

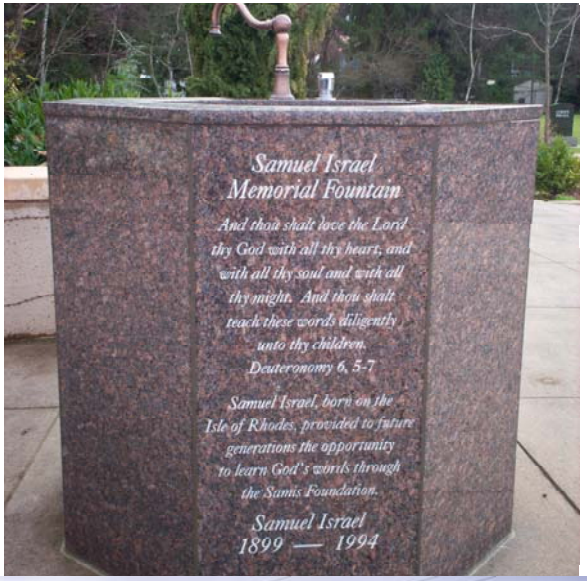
JACK J. "YARSH" ALHADEFF
From
Rose Alhadeff-Newhouse
and Family
In Loving Memory of Our Parents
Sam H. Baruch &
Donna Baruch
BY THEIR CHILDREN
SELMA AMIRA
ISAAC & RACHEL BARUCH
In Loving Memory of Our Parents
Morris N. Angel &
Matilda Angel Alhadeff
SAM & JEAN ANGEL
HARRY & TRUDY ANGEL
In Loving Memory of Our Parents and Grandparents
Sam and Mary Capeloto
In Loving Honor Of Our Parents
Sally and David "Dixie" Alhadeff
and
Raye and Ralph Policar
In Loving Memory of Our Beloved Parents
David I. & Marie Israel
and our sister
Sarah Alhadeff
Gabriel Amira
April 25, 1924 - January 4, 1981
In Loving Remembrance
Sylvia Amira and Family
Loving Memory
Victor and Sara Condiotty
In Loving Memory of
Morris (Mike) Kligerman
The Kligerman Family
In Loving Memory
Of Our Parents
Morris and Behora Alhadeff

In Loving Memory of Our Dear Parents
Albert and Bona Hasson
FROM THEIR CHILDREN
ROBERT EDDIE
DAVID VICTOR
MARILYN
In Loving Memory
Isaac Handaly
Jeanette Handaly Calderon
Samuel Handaly
John Asher Israel
THE HANDALY FAMILIES
In Loving Memory of Our Parents
Morris D. & Zelda Tacher
& Our Brothers
David M. & Jack B. Tacher
SOL M. & MARY A. TACHER
In Loving Memory of Our Parents
Samuel H. & Vida Piha
& Our Sister
Lynne Marie Coe
MORRIS & MARLENE PIHA
Benjamin Habib
Jacques & Fanny Kalisker
Meyer Horowitz
Leon & Perla Benezra
Zelma Caston Piha
Betty Alhadeff
Samuel J. Alhadeff
Tillie Cohen
Leon "Cookie" Cohen
Joseph & Doreen Alhadeff
IN HONOR OF OUR PARENTS
LOUIS & RACHEL COHEN
In Loving Memory of Our Beloved Wife & Mother
Revella C. Bensussen
David & Esther Levy
Jack & Cadoon Halfon

In Loving Memory of Our Parents
Samuel H. & Vida Piha
& Our Sister
Lynne Marie Coe
MORRIS & MARLENE PIHA
In Memory of
DOREE & CHARLIE ALHADEFF
DAVID H. & ALEGRA L. ALHADEFF
Buena Lea and Rev. David J. Behar
& Perla Benezra
Zelma Caston Piha
Albert Leon Oziel
Marvin Morris Oziel
Victoria & Harry Alhadeff
Victoria & Morris Galante
Julia Behar
1925 - 1938
David & Esther Levy
Jack & Cadoon Halfon
Jack & Estraya Amon
Samuel & Henrietta Hasson
Eleanor Behar

CEMETERY PRAYER
Dedicated In Memory Of
SAM BENSION & LUCY MAIMON
By Their Children
VICTORIA & SIDNEY SCHAIN
ALBERT & JEAN MAIMON
ESTHER & EUGENE NORMAND
Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the universe,
Who formed you in judgment, sustained you in judgment,
brought death to you in judgment and knows the number
of all of you in judgment and Who in the future,
will raise you and restore you to life in judgment.
Blessed are You, Lord, Who restores life to the dead.
"Your dead shall live; my dead bodies shall rise up.
Awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust;
for Your dew is as the dew of light, and from the earth may You
bring life to the spirits of the dead." (Isaiah 26, 19)

CEMETERY PRAYER

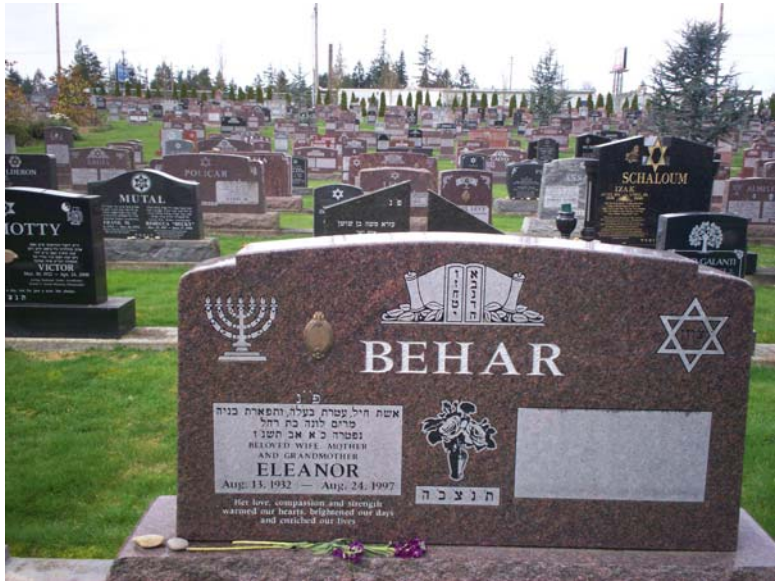

Samuel Israel
Memorial Fountain
And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might. And thou shalt teach these words diligently unto thy children.
Deuteronomy 6, 5-7
Samuel Israel, born on the Isle of Rhodes, provided to future generations the opportunity to learn God's words through the Samis Foundation.
Samuel Israel
1899 — 1994

COHEN
COHEN
CASTON
COHEN

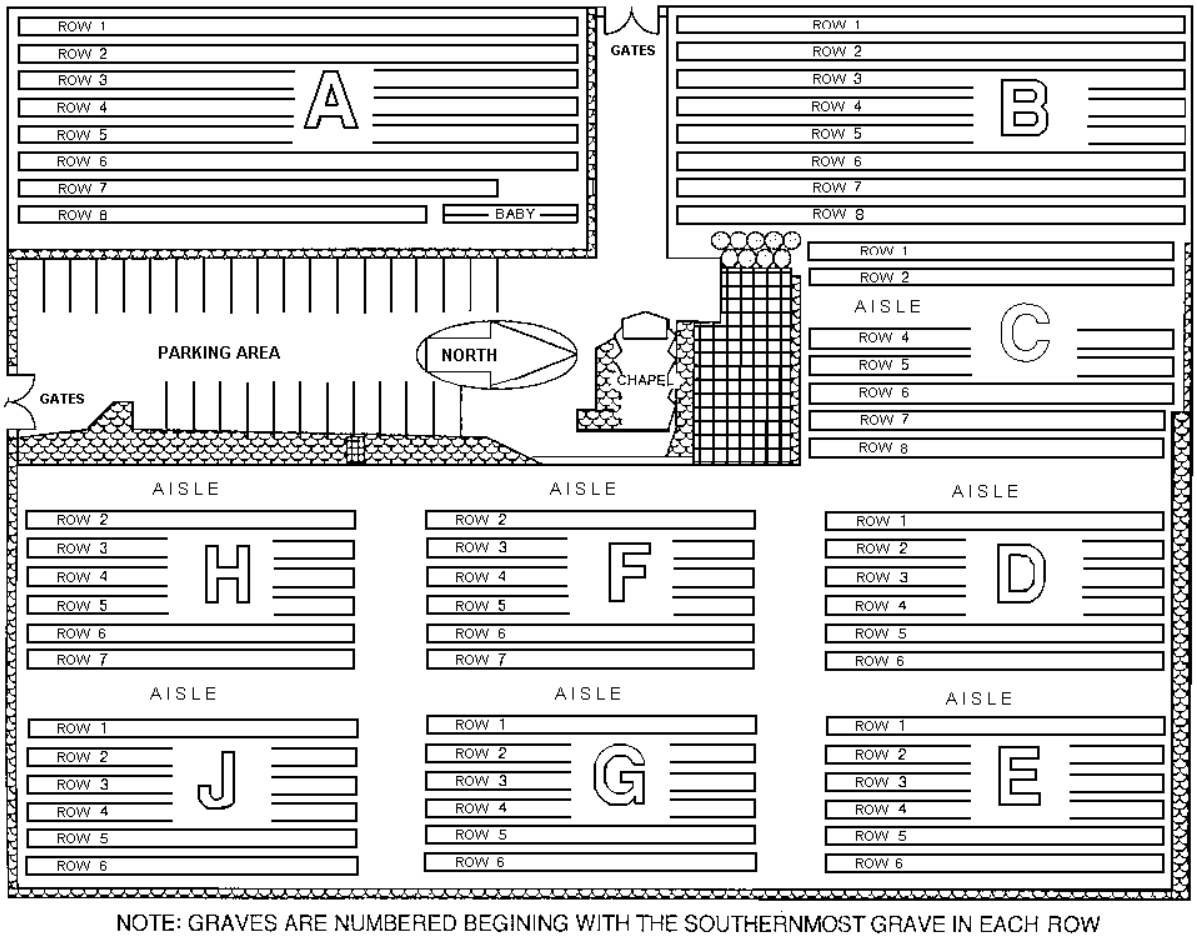
CASTON
COHEN
COHEN

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם
אשר יצר אתכם כדין והחיה אתכם
בדין וזן אתכם בדין וידדע מספר
כלכם כדין והוא עתיד להמיתכם
ולהקיצכם כדין ברוך אתה יי
מחיה המתים
Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe. By Thine established law Thou has formed us; by the law Thou has endowed us with life, and by that law Thou sustainest us. By Thy law Thou determinest the number of all Thy children, and by that law Thou wilt raise us up to new life hereafter. Blessed art Thou who revivest the dead.
Dedicated In Memory Of
SAM BENSION & LUCY MAIMON
By Their Children
VICTORIA & SIDNEY SCHAIN
ALBERT & JEAN MAIMON
ESTHER & EUGENE NORMAND

CALDERON
ISRAEL
SICHEL
IZIDOR JACK S.
AZOUS
FEB. 15,
1923
JULY 23,
2004
BELOVED HUSBAND, FATHER,
GRANDFATHER AND FRIEND


MUTAL
VICTOR
SCHALOUM
BEHAR
BELOVED WIFE, MOTHER
AND GRANDMOTHER
ELEANOR
Aug. 13, 1932 — Aug. 24, 1997
Her love, compassion and strength
warmed our hearts, brightened our days
and enriched our lives
ת נ צ ב ה

APPENDIX B: Layout of the Bikur Cholim Cemetery



Aurora Avenue west of the cemetery, and 167th Street lines to the cemetery to the south; to the north and east are residential areas (“Sephardic Brotherhood Cemetery”).

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