About the Contributors

AVIVA BEN-UR is Associate Professor in the Department of Judaic and Near Eastern Studies at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, where she teaches a wide range of courses, including Jewish history and the history of slavery. She is author of Sephardic Jews in America: A Disporic History (New York: New York Univ., 2009) and co-author, with Rachel Frankel, of Remnant Stones: The Jewish Cemeteries of Suriname (New York: HUC, 2009); and Epitaphs and Remnant Stones: The Jewish Cemeteries and Synagogues of Suriname: Essays (New York: HUC, 2012). Her current book project is titled Jewish Autonomy in a Slave Society: Suriname, 1651–1863.

LISA ANSELL is Associate Director of the Casden Institute for the Study of the Jewish Role in American Life at the University of Southern California. She received her BA in French and Near East Studies from UCLA and her MA in Middle East Studies from Harvard University. She was the Chair of the World Language Department of New Community Jewish High School for five years before coming to USC in August, 2007. She currently teaches Hebrew language courses at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

RABBI DANIEL BOUSKILA is the Director of the Sephardic Educational Center (SEC), an international educational and cultural organization dedicated to strengthening Jewish identity for youth and young adults, and to building a new generation of spiritual and community leaders. Through various innovative programs at the SEC’s historic campus headquartered in the Old City of Jerusalem, and in different communities in the diaspora, Rabbi Bouskila is developing the SEC into a Sephardic think tank that explores the unique halakhic and philosophic worldview of Classic Sephardic Judaism. He spends significant time in Israel throughout the year, developing, leading and teaching in SEC programs. He earned his BA in History from the University of California, Los Angeles and Rabbinic Ordination from Yeshiva University in New York. He also studied at Yeshivat Kerem B’Yavneh in Israel for two years, served in the IDF’s Givati Infantry Brigade for one year, and studied at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem for one year. He was a pulpit rabbi and high school Judaic Studies instructor for seventeen years, continues to teach rabbinic courses in the US and Israel, and contributes articles regularly to many different publications. Rabbi Bouskila lives in Los Angeles with his lovely wife Peni, and together they are the proud and loving parents of their beautiful kids, Shira (eighteen) and Ilan (fifteen).
MOLLY FITZMORRIS is a second-year PhD student in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Washington. She studies sociolinguistics, with a focus on Seattle Ladino. She completed her MA in Hispanic Studies at the University of Washington and her BA in Latin American Studies at New York University. Molly has spent time in Buenos Aires studying the Ladino spoken there, and has worked closely with the Ladino-speaking community in Seattle, both for her research, and to organize Seattle’s first two International Ladino Day celebrations.

BRYAN KIRSCHEN is an Assistant Professor of Hispanic Linguistics at Binghamton University. He received his doctorate from the University of California, Los Angeles, where he taught a variety of courses in Spanish and offered weekly language workshops in Judeo-Spanish. During his time at UCLA, Kirschen co-founded and directed ucLADINO, a student organization aimed at promoting the use and knowledge of Judeo-Spanish. He also served as the Jack H. Skirball Fellow in Modern Jewish Culture, teaching courses at the Skirball Cultural Center on Sephardic language and culture. He was also the Maurice Amado Senior Fellow, organizing international annual symposia on Judeo-Spanish language, culture and history. Kirschen’s current research focuses on language contact between Judeo-Spanish and Spanish-speaking communities in the United States. He is the editor of Judeo-Spanish and the Making of a Community (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2015), as well as the co-director of Saved by Language, a documentary exploring how the use of Judeo-Spanish helped a young Bosnian child survive the Holocaust.

DEVIN E. NAAR is the Marsha and Jay Glazer Chair in Jewish Studies, Chair of the Sephardic Studies Program, and Assistant Professor of History at the University of Washington. Naar received his BA in History (summa cum laude) from Washington University in St. Louis and his PhD in History from Stanford University. He teaches courses in Jewish history and culture, the Holocaust, the Ottoman Empire and Greece, and Sephardic Studies. His forthcoming book, Jewish Salonica: Between the Ottoman Empire and the Greek Nation-State, will appear in 2016.

GINA NAHAI is a best-selling author, columnist, and professor of Creative Writing at USC. Her novels have been translated into eighteen languages, and have been finalists for the Orange Award, the IMPAC Award, the Harold J. Ribalow Award, and the Jewish Book Council’s Fiction Award. She is the winner of the Los Angeles Arts Council Award, the Persian Heritage Foundation’s Award, The Simon Rockower Award, and the Phi Kappa Phi Award. Her writings have appeared in numerous national and international publications, as well as in a number of literary and academic journals and anthologies. She writes a monthly column for the Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles, and is a three-time finalist for an LA Press Club Award. Nahai holds a BA and a Masters degree in International Relations from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a
Master of Professional Writing from the University of Southern California. Her latest novel, *The Luminous Heart of Jonah S.*, was a finalist for the Jewish Book Council’s fiction award in 2014.

**SHULAMIT NAZARIAN**, former architect turned gallery owner, began independently exhibiting and supporting artist projects in 2006. Shulamit officially founded Shulamit Gallery in 2012. Ms. Nazarian’s passion for art anchored in diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds was the basis for her inspiration, following the ideal of artistic practice as holding the keys to our heritage and shaping the landscape and climate of the world we live in. Ms. Nazarian is a strong believer in the notion of complex identity politics—spreading individualism while contributing to a collective consciousness. In addition to her role as Gallery Director, Shulamit Nazarian is an active philanthropist both in the local Los Angeles art community as well as internationally. She is a trustee of the Farhang Foundation, a group promoting Iranian arts and culture in Los Angeles, a member of LACMA’s Art of the Middle East Council (AMEC) and member of Tate’s Middle Eastern Acquisition Committee.


**SABA SOOMEKH** is the Associate Director of Research for the University of California, Los Angeles’ Alan D. Leve Center for Jewish Studies. Professor Soomekh’s research concentrates on Iranian Jewish ethnography, gender/sexuality studies, and Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewry. Professor Soomekh is the author of the book *From the Shahs to Los Angeles: Three Generations of Iranian Jewish Women between Religion and Culture* (New York: State Univ. of New York, 2012). Her book was awarded the Gold Medal in the 2013 Independent Publisher Book Award in the Religion category. Dr. Soomekh was the Exhibition Coordinator of the exhibition at the Fowler Museum at UCLA entitled: *Light and Shadows: The Story of Iranian Jews.*
DAVID SUISSA is president of Tribe Media/Jewish Journal in Los Angeles, where he has been writing a weekly column on Jewish issues since 2006. In 2014, he was awarded first prize for editorial writing by the American Jewish Press Association, and in 2009, he won the “Best Columnist” award by the Los Angeles Press Club. He has also been named one of the top fifty Jewish leaders of North America by the Forward newspaper. Prior to Tribe Media, David was founder and CEO of Suissa/Miller, a marketing company that was named Agency of the Year by USA Today. He sold the company in 2005 to devote himself full-time to the Jewish world. David was born in Casablanca, Morocco, and moved with his family to Montreal, Canada in the mid-1960s. He graduated from McGill University in 1978 with a degree in Economics and Marketing, and began his career with Procter and Gamble in Toronto, where he became their youngest brand manager. He lives in a very Jewish neighborhood of Los Angeles that often brings back memories of his Jewish neighborhood in Casablanca.

JOYCE ZONANA is the author of a memoir, Dream Homes: From Cairo to Katrina, an Exile’s Journey (New York: Feminist, 2008). She is a professor of English at Borough of Manhattan Community College where she has taught since 2006. A regular contributor of book reviews and essays to Sephardic Heritage Update and Nola Diaspora, she has published numerous articles in such journals as Signs, Meridians, Journal of Narrative Technique, and The Hudson Review. She is currently at work on a translation of Henri Bosco’s Malicroix.