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*The Jewish Cemetery in the Mellah of Fez, Morocco.
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Salient Aspects Of Moroccan Judaism – Analysis

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Being the scapegoat of tribal lore cast out with the heavy

By Dr. Mohamed Chtatou

Ancient Jews of Morocco

Traces of a Jewish presence on the Mediterranean coast of Africa go back to ancient times. It preceded the Arab conquest and the Islamization of Africa by at least nine centuries. Indeed, the first traces of a Jewish presence can be found in Carthage (now a suburb of Tunis), a city founded by the Phoenicians in the seventh century BC. Four centuries later, this flourishing port city became a rival to Rome in terms of trade, wealth and population. Not far from Carthage, the Jews of Djerba arrived in the 6th century BC, fleeing Judea after the destruction of the First Temple by Nebuchadnezzar. It was in 586 B.C. in Djerba, where a few thousand Jews found refuge, that the construction of the oldest synagogue on the African continent (the Ghriba) began. (1)

The multidimensional relationship between Morocco and Palestine is deeply rooted in history. There is evidence of trade between Moroccan Jews and the Romans as early as the fourth century B.C. These early communities were joined by the Jews of the first diaspora at the time of the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem in 581 B.C. Cities such as Salé (Chella) and Larache (ancient Lixus) became important trading centers for the Jews of Morocco, who traded in gold and salt. However, the earliest epigraphic evidence dates back only to the 2nd

weight of sins
remains a popular
political motif.
Supposedly



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century B.C., consisting mainly of funerary inscriptions (2) in Hebrew and Greek found in the ruins of Roman Volubilis. (3)

On the particular point of the presence of Jews in Volubilis, Sofia Andreeva, Artem Fedorchuk, and Michael Nosonovsky write: (4)

“Semitic population was present in Volubilis throughout its history. The Phoenicians appeared here since at least the third century BCE. Jews had contacts with Mauretania on several occasions. Midrash Exodus Rabba 18:6 (35b) contains a reference to Mauretania including a folk-etymology of the word ברבור barbur (appearing in 1 Kings 5:3) as “a fowl coming from Barbary” (Hirschberg 1974, p. 27). After the death of King Juba II’s wife, Cleopatra Selene II (40 BCE–before 6 CE), who was a daughter of Mark Antony, Juba II married Glaphyra (35 BCE–7 CE), a widow of Herod the Great’s son Alexander. Alexander had been executed by his father’s order for a conspiracy against him. Glaphyra was a Cappadocian princess; however, being a daughter-in-law of the Judean king, she had adopted Judaism, at least, to some extent. Her marriage to the king of Numidia and Mauretania did not last for a long time. She divorced Juba II and married another son of Herod the Great, a half-brother of her first husband, Herod Archelaus, the Ethnarch of Judea, Samaria, and Idumea. Despite Glaphyra’s brief tenure as a Queen of Mauretania, the story of her second marriage caused interest towards the African country among the Jews (Hirschberg, ibid.)”

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At the beginning of the Christian era, the Romans invaded the region, with the Berber tribes, mostly Jewish, putting up much resistance, and gave Morocco (and part of present-day western Algeria) the name of Mauritania Tingitana (from Tingis, the ancient name of Tangier, which was its capital). Archaeological traces attest to a significant Jewish presence in these new Roman provinces.

For Haim Zafrani: (5)

“Historically, the Jews are the first non-Berber people who came to the Maghreb and continued to live there until our days”

A certain amount of interbreeding occurred with the exchanges with the Berber communities, which led to a “Judaization of the Berbers” and conversely a “Berberization of the Jews”. (6) During this period, Berber Judaism flourished to the point that the overwhelming majority of Moroccans chose a lifestyle based on Judaism. (7) From the year 429, the Vandals of King Geiseric began to invade Mauritania, and around 430, drove the Romans out of Africa Romana. The Vandals found strong allies in the Jews, who enjoyed freedom of worship for a century. In 533, the general Belisarius, sent to Africa by the Byzantine emperor Justinian to drive out the Vandals, invaded the region and imposed the laws of the Byzantine Empire (330/395–1453). The Jews then experienced a very dark period, with bullying and forced conversions, restricted worship, and persecution. (8)

Nevertheless, this did not prevent the migration to this region of Jews from the Iberian Peninsula fleeing the repression exercised by the Visigoth kings of Spain (who had become Catholics) from the beginning of the 7th century (with King Sisebut). According to Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), on the eve of the Muslim conquest of the Maghreb, several Berber tribes practiced Judaism. He reports that: (9)

“Part of the Berbers professed Judaism (...) Among the Jewish Berbers were the Djeraoua, a tribe that lived in the Auras and to which belonged the Kahena, a woman who was killed by the Arabs at the time of the first conquests. The other Jewish tribes were the Nefouça, Berbers of Ifrikiya, the Fendelaoua, the Mediouna, the Behlouloua, the Ghâatha and the Fazaz, Berbers of the Maghreb-el-aqsa.”

In the seventh century, the Arabs attempted several expeditions to the extreme Maghreb without success. But it was at the beginning of the 8th century that the governor of Ifriqiya (corresponding to present-day Tunisia and eastern Algeria), Moussa Ibn Noursayr (640-716), definitively occupied Tangier, pushed as far as Sijilmasa (present-day Rissani) and imposed Islam among the Berber tribes. But the Kharidjite movement, strongly egalitarian and rejecting Sunni orthodoxy, spread among these tribes and fuelled numerous insurrections against the Arab emirs of Kairouan, representatives of the caliphate. During this turbulent period, Jews lived in the capitals of the Kharidjite kingdoms, notably Tlemcen and Sijilmasa. (10)

Moroccan Judaism

The Moroccan Jewish community is one of the oldest communities in North Africa, dating back to Roman times. Over the centuries, Jews have occupied an important place in Moroccan society, playing a significant economic, cultural, and political role. The Moroccan Jewish community was composed of different branches: Jews from antiquity known as *Lihud I-beldiyin* or *Toshavim* Sephardic Jews or *Megorashim*, Mizrahim Jews, and Berber Jews. (11)

Moroccan Judaism is rich in religious traditions and practices. Moroccan Jews have developed their own style of prayer, their own cuisine, and their own customs. Some of the best-known practices include the celebration of the festival of Mimouna, (12) which marks the end of the Passover holiday, and the annual pilgrimage to the tomb of Rabbi Amram ben Diwane (1743-1782) in Ouezzane. (13)

Over the years, many Moroccan Jews have emigrated to Israel, France, the United States, and other countries, but a Jewish community continues to exist in Morocco today, although it is much smaller than before. The Moroccan government has established programs to preserve Moroccan Jewish heritage, including the restoration of synagogues and Jewish cemeteries. (14)

Here are some of the salient aspects of Moroccan Judaism:

History: Jews have lived in Morocco for over 2,500 years. They have experienced periods of prosperity, but have also been persecuted at various times in history. In the 20th century, the majority of Moroccan Jews emigrated first to France and then to Israel.

Culture: Moroccan Jewish culture is rich and varied. It includes elements of Berber and Arab culture as well as more universal Jewish traditions. The music, cuisine, and costumes are all elements that reflect this diversity.

Religious customs: Moroccan Jews observe the same religious customs as Jews around the world, but with regional variations. For example, the Pessa'h (Passover) ritual is celebrated differently in different parts of the country.

Synagogues: Morocco still has many ancient and historic synagogues, notably in Marrakech, Casablanca, Fez, and Essaouira. These synagogues are witnesses to the long Jewish history of the country.

Relations with Muslims: Despite occasional tensions, relations between Jews and Muslims have often been positive in Morocco. Jews have often held important positions in Moroccan society (royal merchants (*tujjâr as-sultân*), (15) traders, artisans, doctors, etc.) as well as in the government (ministers, diplomats, advisers, etc.) and have contributed to the country's development. (16)

Immigration: Since the 1950s, most Moroccan Jews have emigrated to France, Israel, and other

countries. Nevertheless, some Jews have remained in Morocco and continue to live their religious and cultural life in the country. (17)

On this particular point Sarah Melloul writes in *Orient XXI*: (18)

["Various geographical, religious and linguistic influences (Sephardic, Toshavim, Berber) have shaped and nourished the specificity of Moroccan Jewish culture, with its religious practices and its architectural, linguistic, musical, festive, artisanal or culinary culture. After 1947, the successive departures of entire families seriously reduced the Jewish presence in Morocco. Representing approximately 250,000 people under the French protectorate in 19121, the Jewish community today numbers 2,500 people, who reside mainly in Casablanca. Several waves of departures, sometimes brutal as in June 1967, have led to the abandonment for a time of certain mellahs (Jewish neighborhoods in Morocco), cemeteries or synagogues, etc."]

Moroccan Jewish Culture

Moroccan Jewish culture is a rich and diverse culture that has evolved over the centuries.

(19) Jews have lived in Morocco since ancient times and have contributed their own tradition and history to Moroccan culture. (20) Here are some important elements of Moroccan Jewish culture:

Cuisine: Moroccan Jewish cuisine is a fusion of traditional Jewish and Moroccan cuisine. Dishes are often spicy and include ingredients such as spices, dried fruits, olives, and vegetables. The most popular dishes are couscous, tagine, *mechoui*, and meatballs.

Steeped in its Moroccan origins and strongly attached to the values of Judaism, Moroccan Jewish cuisine is a model of fusion between two communities. For centuries, Jews have been present in Morocco and religious gatherings, whether Muslim or Jewish, were often the occasion for an exchange of food where each community was proud to share its gastronomic know-how with the other. (21)

It is important to address the cultural and religious symbols in order to study the similarities in Moroccan Jewish-Muslim culinary art through the coexistence of Jews and Muslims in Morocco for centuries.

Music: Moroccan Jewish music is a combination of Arabic, Andalusian, and Sephardic music. It is often played at religious festivals and weddings. (22)

Language: Moroccan Jews spoke a form of Judeo-Arabic called "haketia". This language is still spoken by some Moroccan Jews today, although it is disappearing. (23)

Religion: The majority of Moroccan Jews practice traditional Judaism. Synagogues are important places of worship for the Moroccan Jewish community.

Holidays: Moroccan Jews celebrate the same holidays as Jews around the world, such as Pesach, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur. However, they also have their own holidays, such as the holiday of Maimouna, which celebrates the end of Pesach. (24)

Moroccan Jewish culture is marked by what Joseph Chetrit calls the “hybrid community habitus”: (25)

“Even if it was restricted to the economic domain and to certain socio-cultural fields only, the permanent interaction between the Jewish communities and their Arab-Muslim and Berber-Muslim environment produced inescapable interferences that shaped, as elsewhere in the Arab-Muslim world, a common socio-cultural habitus in all fields where the principles of the Muslim faith and its precepts were not predominant or visible. This concerns both material cultural objects, indispensable for daily life, including food permitted by Halakha [rabbinic law] or clothing permitted by dhimma, and certain symbolic cultural fields, such as music, folk-tales, oral poetry, proverbs, and even magical beliefs and practices normally prohibited by Torah and Halakha. Another area of common creed and practice between Jews and Muslims, sometimes involving the same hagiographic figures, is their shared veneration of saints.”

In November 2018, the city of Debdou (in Taourirt province) paid tribute to the Jewish-Moroccan cultural heritage. This event allowed to show its richness as a town erected as an example of the coexistence of the Jewish population with the

Muslims. The Moroccan Jews living in this town were expelled from Spain about 700 years ago, and found a home in this locality. It is known for its commercial exchanges, but also as a place of pilgrimage that contains within its walls two Jewish cemeteries. (26)

The city of Fez has also an important Jewish heritage. In April 2019, King Mohammed VI launched the construction of a museum of Jewish culture as part of “the complementary program to enhance the medina.” This new museum of Jewish culture will join the two others dedicated to Judaism in the city of Casablanca (Museum of Moroccan Judaism and El Mellah). These museums are unique as there are no others in the Arab world. There are also four synagogues in the city of Fez, two of which are particularly important: “Aben Danan” and “Slat El Fassiyine”. (27) The latter was restored after it was abandoned after the 1967 exodus. Between 2011 and 2013, it was inaugurated by Abdelilah Benkirane, Islamist head of the government. The restoration of these places of worship is also strategic given that 60,000 Jews return each year to visit the synagogues of Fez.

Moroccan Jews are nostalgic about leaving

Moroccan Jews are often nostalgic about leaving because their history as a community is very old and deeply rooted in Moroccan history and culture.

Jews have lived in Morocco since ancient times and have experienced periods of peaceful coexistence with other religious communities in the country. (28)

However, during the twentieth century, many Moroccan Jews were forced to leave the country due to political instability, inter-religious conflicts, and economic pressures. This emigration resulted in the loss of a vibrant and prosperous community that had contributed significantly to the culture and economy of Morocco. In leaving their homeland, many Moroccan Jews have lost not only their home, but also their language, culture, and heritage. As a result, they may feel uprooted and nostalgic about their past life in Morocco. Finally, the Moroccan Jewish community also left behind historic monuments, cemeteries, and places of worship that are often considered important symbols of their heritage. As a result, their departure also meant the loss of these precious cultural and historical relics.

The departure of Jews to Israel was carried out discreetly, at the instigation of the Zionist movement, with the planning and logistical organization of the Mossad and the tacit consent of the state acquired under international pressure. This exodus was carried out by boats heading to Europe, and then to their final destination. Other departures were organized privately to France, Spain, the USA, and Canada. No less than 250,000 Moroccans of the Jewish faith left Morocco, 120,000 of them during this decade, in great pain and suffering. It was a tragedy for those who left as well as for their country of origin. Everyone knew that

this was not a temporary migration, as was the case with labor migration, but an irreversible exodus, a departure without return, a Farewell forever... The heartbreak was absolute. (29)

Community life in the Moroccan bi-confessional space

Moroccan Jews were not intruders or new immigrants. The most recent settlers in Morocco arrived with the Moors from Spain driven out by the Inquisition at the beginning of the 16th century. Otherwise, all the others have been Moroccans for centuries and were there even before the arrival of Islam. Many of them have converted. And, they have all actively participated in the epic of the Kingdom of Morocco since its creation by Moulay Idris I (743-791) to the present day, and this at different levels, scientific, economic, and political. They have taken a significant part in the influence of the great plural community of the territories historically linked to the Moroccan sultans, from Andalusia to Mali in the South and from Marrakech to Tunisia in the East.

Very active in international trade, Moroccan Jews were also well-rooted in the Amazigh/Berber tribes and well-established in the cities. They ensured substantial commercial intermediation between the city and rural areas for the sale and enhancement of agricultural production. The less well-off among

them provided handicrafts, others ran a variety of businesses ranging from groceries to goldsmiths. (30) In the new town, they occupied high positions in the liberal profession: doctors, notaries, or holders of credit houses.

In the city as in the countryside, Moroccan Jews lived in perfect harmony with other fellow citizens in a bi-confessional environment that has been shaped in a generally serene and peaceful way over more than a millennium. And like any minority in human society, it happened that the weakest among them suffered the excesses of a wicked minority and, on the other hand, benefited from the protective benefits of the majority. Collective and widespread abuses against Jews because of their faith are almost non-existent. In normal social relations, their total integration into Moroccan culture made them a stable component of it. (31)

Community life in this bi-confessional space had its charm and richness. It maintained in an implicit and spontaneous way a touch of humanism in Moroccan society through the natural acceptance of diversity, the expression of feelings of affection towards the other, in spite of his difference, and the leniency towards the human being as such. These values took on their full expression in celebrations through the exchange of cakes, meals, and recipes, through visits between neighbors, business partners, or casual acquaintances, and through acts of support or compassion towards one another within the framework of a friendship in "otherness". These transcendent human values flourished in

diversity, and took on their perfect expression in the serenity of mutual recognition.

All this beauty of living together was lost with the departure of the Jews. The divorce was to be sealed with the six-day war in 1967. The expulsion of Palestinians driven out from their land and the confessional exclusivity established by Zionism in occupied Palestine will alter, in Morocco, in an amalgam among ordinary mortals between Zionism and Judaism, a perception of the Jew built around ancestral values of cohabitation and conviviality.

Fortunately, among Moroccan Jews, there were those who bet on Morocco by standing up to Zionism. They are the living testimony of a common past. They are not very visible in the daily life of Morocco today, especially in the medina, but they are still around.

Those who have settled in other countries remain, nevertheless, attached to their Moroccanness *tamaghrabit* and their centuries-old living side by side with Muslims on Moroccan soil, as evidenced by the following quote from Mr. Robert Assaraf: (32)

“Morocco and its Jewish communities are a real textbook case. No other Jewish community has, in fact, maintained such a strong and fruitful relationship with its land of origin, a relationship that is all the more intense because there is nothing conflicting about it. This peaceful and serene conception of the past, based on the memory of the centuries-old mutual coexistence between Muslims and Jews, is also valid for the present and for the

future. Far from being any nostalgia, the Moroccan identity is a certain conception of the world”.

That said, the exodus of Jews will have an indelible impact on Moroccan society. It was no longer the same at the end of the sixties compared to the beginning of the decade in question.

Moroccan Muslims regret the departure of Jews

After Morocco's independence in 1956, many Jews left Morocco due to a variety of factors, including political instability, economic hardship, and the founding of the State of Israel. However, in recent years, there has been a growing recognition in Morocco of the value of the country's Jewish heritage, and many Moroccans have expressed regret over the departure of Jews from the country. This has been particularly evident in the efforts of King Mohammed VI to restore and preserve Jewish sites and cemeteries in Morocco, and in the growing interest in Jewish culture and history among young Moroccans. (33)

However, it is true that the history of Islam and Judaism is complex and the relationship between the two communities has varied over time and in different places. There have been periods of peaceful coexistence and collaboration, but also periods of conflict and discrimination. For example, during the period of *convivencia* in Spain in the

Middle Ages, Jews and Muslims coexisted peacefully and even collaborated in culture, science, and art. (34) With the arrival of the Spanish Inquisition, Jews and Muslims were persecuted and forced to convert to Christianity or leave. Likewise, in other parts of the world, Jews have been expelled or forced to leave due to anti-Semitism or political strife.

It is therefore possible that some Muslims regret the departure of Jews from certain regions or periods of history, because of their contribution to society or the loss of cultural diversity. However, that would depend on each individual and their understanding of history and religion. (35)

On this particular point, Rabii El Gamrani writes: (36)

“The silent exodus of the Jews from Morocco conceals a rift too painful both at an individual and communitarian level for Jews and Muslims alike. In the mellah (Jewish ghettos) of Fes, Marrakesh, Essaouira, Meknes, or Rabat, the Star of David still remains visible, engraved on the doors of homes or on the shutters of shops once occupied by Moroccan Jews.

These feelings of loss and mourning are well expressed in the literature and music of Moroccan Jews. The novelist and militant Edmon Amran El Maleh was one of the best authors to have narrated the vicissitudes of Jews in Morocco (Mille ans, un jour; Fenec 1990). The same can be said about authors such as Marcel Benabbou, Joseph Shtrit, Sami Berdugo or Nicole Elgriss; while singers Pinhas

Cohen, Sami El Maghribi or Raimonda El Bidaouia remain better known as performers of Moroccan Jewish music and raconteurs of the destiny of a community obliged to live in exile."

A centuries-old cohabitation, the same languages, and dialects, convergences including at the level of religiosity, allegiance to the same Sovereign, economic complementarity, and similar reactions to attempted foreign invasions, as well as to natural disasters, including epidemics and cycles of drought. These calamities somehow transcend religious divides, Jews and Muslims alike invoked divine mercy and clemency from Heaven. In such circumstances, the inhabitants of the *mellahs* organized, like the Muslims the *istisqa'* prayers (rogatory prayers), fasts, supplications around the tombs of revered rabbis, and rogatory processions so that the drought ends.

The changes that occurred during the 19th century and at the time of the protectorate were the cumulative and corrosive factors that played in the direction of the beginning of a process of disarticulation of the traditional structures of the country. The multifaceted impact of Morocco's increased integration into the world market, that of the Algeciras Conference (37) (in particular the clause establishing the so-called "open door" regime), as well as the upheavals generated by the colonial regime with, among other things, the dispossession and proletarianization of the *fellahs* (farmers). The latter, the majority of the population, were once the main customers of Jewish peddlers,

craftsmen, seamstresses, and souk attendants. (38)
Among the factors of change were also, at various levels, the major foreign Jewish associations, notably the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*. (39)

During the time of the protectorate, one of the major facts is that the Jews of the country remained subjects of the Sultan. It was this status that enabled Sultan Sidi Mohammed ben Youssef (King Mohammed V) to come to their defense during the Second World War and to oppose the application of Vichy racial laws in Morocco, despite pressure from the French Head of State, Marshal Pétain, and his General Commissioner for Jewish Affairs, Xavier Vallat. (40)

Muslim-Jewish Conviviality in Morocco

Morocco is known for its tradition of conviviality and peaceful coexistence between the Muslim and Jewish communities. Jewish communities have lived in Morocco for centuries and have played an important role in the history and culture of the country. Relations between the two communities have been largely peaceful and cordial, with close cultural and economic interaction. (41)

Moroccan Jews have long been considered an integral part of Moroccan society, with their own neighborhoods and institutions. Relations between the communities were often based on ties of

neighborliness, friendship, and commerce. Jews were often involved in craft and trade industries, and their skills and expertise were valued by Muslims. (42)

Morocco is known as a country where the Jewish and Muslim communities have coexisted peacefully for centuries. This coexistence is often referred to as the “golden age of Jewish-Muslim coexistence”. Jews have lived in Morocco since ancient times and were welcomed by Muslims upon the arrival of Islam in the 7th century. Over the centuries, Jews have actively participated in the economic, social and cultural life of Morocco, and have developed close ties with Muslims.

Morocco has also been a refuge for Jews persecuted in other parts of the world, notably during the Spanish Inquisition in the 15th century and during World War II. Sultan Mohammed V refused to turn Moroccan Jews over to the French authorities during the wartime occupation of France, thus protecting many Jews from deportation to Nazi concentration camps. (43)

It is very difficult to talk about coexistence and relations between Jews and Muslims in Morocco without mentioning its moments of tension and its moments of peace. The complexity of these relations is not simply linked to the creation of the Zionist state in the land of Palestine. Although the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948 and 1967 precipitated the departure of tens of thousands of Moroccan Jews to Europe, the Americas, or Israel, a unique bond of

attachment still exists between this Jewish diaspora and its native Morocco.

Debdou is a particular example of the complexity of Jewish-Muslim relations. The last Jews in Debdou left the city in the late 1980s. However, dozens of Jews, including the Marcianos and Cohens, come every year to visit their hometown and pay their respects in their cemeteries, and synagogues, or to see their homes in the *mellah*. (44)

It is said that Debdou is a Jewish city without Jews. It is true that six centuries of Jewish presence in Debdou have marked this city forever. The collective memory is rich in stories and anecdotes that tell of this exemplary cohabitation. The youngest of the city did not know the Jews in Debdou but got used to seeing them as tourists strolling through the streets of the *mellah*. For the older generation, the Jews were their neighbors, friends with whom they did business. Some regret their departure from the city, while others hope for a return that would revive Debdou.

Today, although the Jewish community in Morocco is much smaller than it once was, Jewish-Muslim conviviality is still present. Moroccan Jews are an integral part of Moroccan society, with their own cultural and religious heritage, and work alongside Muslims in many areas. The two communities often come together to celebrate cultural and religious events, such as the World Sacred Music Festival of Fez, (45) which features artists from different religions and cultures, and Le Festival Andalouses atlantiques of Essaouira.

"There are no Jews in my country, only subjects," is the famous phrase that the late King Mohammed V (grandfather of Mohammed VI) uttered in 1940 in denial of the Nazi mandates of Vichy France. (46) After the fall of France to Nazi occupation in 1940, the pro-Nazi Vichy government enacted laws similar to Nazi Germany's laws regarding Jews and their dispatch to extermination camps in Germany and Poland. At the time, the Moroccan Jewish community numbered more than 250,000 Jews, about 10 percent of the total Moroccan population, and was the largest Jewish community in an Arab country.

During the colonial period, Moroccan Jews often served as intermediaries between the colonial authorities and the Muslim population. After Morocco's independence in 1956, most Jews emigrated to Israel, but those who remained continued to play an important role in the economic and cultural life of the country.

Today, the Jewish community in Morocco is relatively small, but it is still well integrated into Moroccan society. Moroccan Jews have their own synagogues, schools, and cultural institutions, and they continue to participate in the economic and cultural life of the country.

Morocco is considered a model of peaceful coexistence between the Muslim and Jewish communities, and Moroccan authorities have always been committed to promoting this coexistence. King Mohammed VI has launched several initiatives to preserve Moroccan Jewish

cultural heritage and promote interfaith dialogue. In 2011, he established a **Truth and Reconciliation Commission**, which examined human rights violations committed during the “Years of Lead” (Arabic: سنوات الرصاص *Sanawāt ar-Raṣāṣ*, French: *années de plomb*), including violations against Moroccan Jews. (47)

The Muslim-Jewish coexistence in Morocco is a well-established historical and cultural reality that has endured despite hardships and socio-political developments. The peaceful coexistence between the communities is supported by the Moroccan authorities and remains a source of inspiration for other countries seeking to promote tolerance and interfaith dialogue.

Jewish Life in Morocco

The Jewish community in Morocco is one of the oldest Jewish communities in North Africa, with a history dating back more than 2,000 years. Before the arrival of Islam in Morocco, Jews were a large and influential community in the country, with well-established communities in major cities such as Marrakech, Fez, Tetouan, and Casablanca.

Moroccan Judaism is inseparable from the history of Morocco and is honored politically and culturally in the country. For all Moroccans, Moroccan Judaism is a test to time in that it is one of the oldest Jewish traditions marked by an unequalled continuity in the host country because it goes back, according to

certain legends, to the time of the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple in the fourth century BC.

It is difficult to imagine today, in view of the small Jewish minority still established in Morocco, what Moroccan Judaism was like in its heyday. Of the approximately one hundred and twenty thousand Jews in Morocco in 1956, almost all emigrated as soon as the country gained its independence, driven by the political conflicts that opposed the Arab world to the State of Israel after the latter's creation. (48)

This rupture in a two-thousand-year-old history should not erase what were a model of common life and shared traditions. Jews were part of Moroccan life in the rural world as well as in the cities, where they played an important role in the economic fabric. (49)

Over the centuries, Jews have experienced periods of prosperity and persecution in Morocco. During the medieval period, Jews were often persecuted by some Muslim rulers, but they were also protected by sultans who promoted peaceful coexistence between the religious communities. (50)

In the 20th century, Jewish life in Morocco was profoundly transformed by French colonization, which introduced new laws and ways of life to the country. (51) Moroccan Jews experienced heavy emigration to Israel after the creation of the state in 1948, but many remained in Morocco and

continued to live their lives in well-established Jewish communities. (52)

Today, the Moroccan Jewish community is much smaller than it once was, but it is still active and vibrant. Moroccan Jews have preserved their culture and heritage, and they continue to play an important role in the economic and cultural life of the country. The King of Morocco, Mohammed VI, has also taken steps to promote religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence between the Muslim and Jewish communities in Morocco. (53)

The Jews of Morocco were well-established in Morocco culturally and intellectually that they had their own press and newspapers from 1830 to 1965. In this regard Pierre Cohen writes: (54)

“The Moroccan Jewish press has long remained ignored. Having fallen into the “dustbin of history,” it deserved to be resurrected and studied as a full-fledged component of the cultural heritage of Maghrebi Judaism. After a brief overview of the information and communication system in pre-colonial Morocco, we trace a broad geographical and linguistic panorama of this press from its Tangier origins (1870) until its disappearance in 1963, through a series of monographs that constitute the core of this work. We present them according to the classic chronological order which “sticks” better to the historical reality. In addition to tracing the history of each newspaper and reflecting several aspects of Moroccan Jewish society, these monographs also show the role that the Jewish press played in its mission of information, liaison,

education and formation of Moroccan Jewish opinion. We also underline the original character of this press, mainly a press of opinion and debate, where the notion of solidarity constitutes the central element. Going beyond the framework of strictly Moroccan Judaism, we highlight the natural link of this press with the universal Jewish press, suggesting the existence of a “transnationality” in the exchange of information, in the themes and in the journalistic strategies. Finally, we show the limits and grey areas of this press as well as the difficulties of investigation that we have encountered. The aspects of this thesis are intended to be a contribution to a global study of the Jewish press in North Africa from the end of the 19th century to decolonization.”

The spirit of tolerance which is at the origin of the doctrine of *dhimmi* (55) depended in Morocco on the economic, climatic, and political situation of the country. Moreover, Jewish-Muslim relations in the Moroccan context are not managed exclusively by the doctrine of *dhimma*, but also by another socio-anthropological mechanism such as patronage. (56) Thus, to say that Moroccan Jewish communities have lived their history on the same legal and social model is wrong.

Given the kinship between Judaism and Islam, the question of spiritual proximity and intellectual rapprochement remains persistent. Among Jews and Muslims in Morocco, access to holiness often follows the same routes. It is first of all a quest for piety, devotion, and charity, but also the social role

that the saint occupies in his own community and beyond its borders. (57)

The field of the sacred literature of dialectal expression constitutes a privileged place of cultural symbolism and religious syncretism which is often translated, through the same myths, and the same vision of the world but also through the same incantatory formulas, the same invocations, the same appeals to the saints and to the local santons. (58)

The beliefs of Moroccan Jews and Kabbalism

The beliefs of Moroccan Jews are influenced by Judaism, which is the main religion of this community. Moroccan Jews are known for their traditional religious practice and strict observance of Jewish laws and customs.

The core beliefs of Moroccan Jews are based on the principles of Judaism, such as belief in one God and recognition of the authority of the Torah and rabbinical teachings. Moroccan Jews also believe in prophecy, divine reward and punishment, the resurrection of the dead, and the coming of the Messiah.

Moroccan Jews have their own religious calendar and follow Jewish traditions of prayer, fasting, and religious holidays. The most important holidays for

Moroccan Jews include Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year), Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), Sukkot (Festival of Booths), Hanukkah (Festival of Lights), and Passover (Mimouna).

In addition to religious beliefs, Moroccan Jews also have a rich and diverse culture that includes unique culinary, musical, and linguistic traditions.

Moroccan Kabbalah is a branch of Kabbalah (Hebrew: קַבְּלָה *Qabbālā*, literally “reception, tradition”), which is an esoteric tradition of Judaism. This tradition emerged in North Africa, particularly in Morocco, where it was influenced by the teachings of the famous Spanish Jewish mystic Moses ben Maimon, also known as Maimonides. (59)

Moroccan Kabbalism has developed a unique approach to Kabbalah, focusing on meditation, prayer, music, and dance to achieve union with the divine. It also emphasizes the relationship between the individual and the community and values personal and collective spiritual experience.

Adam Ross wrote in *Ash*: (60)

“Morocco was home to some of the greatest kabbalists of the Jewish world including Rabbi Chaim ibn Attar, also known as the Or ha-Hayyim (The light of Life) after his kabalistic commentary on the Torah. Rabbi Abraham ben Mordecai Azulai (c. 1570–1643) was another such giant who wrote a commentary on the Zohar.

Among the pilgrimage sites for Jewish travelers in Morocco, the most popular is the tomb of Rabbi Yehuda Ibn Attar in Fez (1655–1733), who served as the chief rabbi of Fez. A saintly and pious man, he was known as a miracle worker and was revered by the local Jews and Muslims alike, who refused to accept a salary from the community.

It is told that Rabbi ibn Attar was put into prison and left there until the Jewish community paid a heavy ransom to free him, but the amount was too great. The rabbi remained in prison until the governor decided to throw him into the lions' den. Rather than being mauled, the guards witnessed him sitting quietly on the ground and pursuing his studies with the lions respectfully crouching around him. As soon as he was informed, the governor liberated the rabbi and accorded him great respect."

Among the best-known figures in Moroccan Kabbalism are Rabbi Isaac Benzaquen (1873-1959), Rabbi David Bouzaglo (1903-1975), and Rabbi Shalom Messas (1909-2003). Their teachings have influenced the Moroccan Jewish community and have been passed down from generation to generation. Today, although the Moroccan Jewish community has become smaller, Moroccan Kabbalism continues to influence the practice of Kabbalah throughout the world.

Kabbalism, also known as Jewish mysticism, is an esoteric tradition in Judaism that explores the nature of God and the universe. Although Kabbalah has roots in the ancient Jewish tradition, it became

more formalized and systematized from the Middle Ages onward in Europe. (61)

In Morocco, there has been a strong tradition of kabbalah among Jewish communities. Moroccan kabbalists developed their own system of kabbalah that was influenced by local Sephardic and Berber Jewish traditions. They were also influenced by the teachings of the famous Kabbalist Isaac Luria (1534-1572), who lived in sixteenth-century Safed, Palestine.

Moroccan kabbalists developed mystical practices such as meditation, prayer, and the study of kabbalistic texts. They also used tools such as gematria (the study of the numerical values of Hebrew letters) to interpret sacred texts and find hidden meanings. (62)

Moroccan kabbalism influenced Moroccan Jewish culture as a whole, including music, dance, and art. It also had an impact on Moroccan Muslim culture, as Kabbalists often worked with Sufis and other Muslim mystics to share ideas and practices.

Today, the kabbalistic tradition is still alive among Moroccan Jews, although the Jewish community in Morocco has shrunk considerably in recent decades. Moroccan kabbalists continue to practice and teach kabbalah, passing on their legacy to the next generation. (63)

Kabbalism, or the Kabbalah, is an esoteric and mystical tradition in Judaism that focuses on understanding the divine teachings revealed in the Torah. In Morocco, Kabbalism has been practiced by

a minority of Jews, particularly those in the city of Safi in the southwest of the country.

Moroccan Jews practicing Kabbalism followed the teachings of several famous rabbis, such as Rabbi Abraham Ben Baruch and Rabbi Massoud Ibn Danan, who both lived in Safi in the 16th century. These rabbis taught a form of Kabbalah known as "Safed Kabbalah," which was developed in the city of Safed, Israel, in the 16th century.

The practice of Kabbalah among Moroccan Jews was influenced by local culture and traditions, as well as by the mystical and spiritual practices of Morocco's Muslim Sufi communities. This led to the emergence of a unique form of Kabbalism that incorporated elements of Moroccan culture.

Although the practice of Kabbalism was limited to a minority of Jews in Morocco, it had a significant influence on the spiritual and cultural life of the Moroccan Jewish community. Today, although most Moroccan Jews have emigrated to other countries, Kabbalism remains an important part of their cultural and spiritual heritage. (64)

On the influence on Moroccan Kabbalism on the European Christian lands, Moshe Idel writes: (65)

"... once again Jewish culture served as a bridge between the Arab/Moslem world of thought and that of Christian Europe. The magical reading of some aspects of Kabbalah, which stemmed from the encounter between Arabic forms of magic and Jewish mysticism, was characteristic of Moroccan Kabbalah in many of its phases. This then made its

way to Florence where, in the writings of R. Yohanan Alemanno, they reached their apotheosis in Christian Kabbalah as formulated in the writings of Pico della Mirandola, who reflects this astro-magical Kabbalistic synthesis.¹⁴ However, as important as the impact of this synthesis was for some developments in Spain and Italy, and perhaps for Vital, it was much less important for the further development of Kabbalah in North Africa where, as we shall see below, the theosophical-theurgical trend arriving from Spain prevailed. The main trends in 13th century Spanish Kabbalah were not concerned with psychological and astrological explanations of prophecy or the Bible, as they preferred a much more theosophical-theurgical approach. This remained the dominant type of interest until the expulsion from Spain, and then became influential on Kabbalah in Morocco. Ironically, the astro-magical Kabbalistic synthesis based upon Arabic sources was more successful in Christian Europe, whereas the theosophical-theurgical Kabbalah articulated in Christian Europe was more influential upon Jewish centers located in Moslem countries. Those shifts are two fascinating and intertwined cases of cultural exchange.”

Revamping Jewish institutions

After 1918 and 1945, the year 2022 is a milestone for the Moroccan Jewish community. At the Council of Ministers meeting of July 13, 2022, three new bodies were created: **The National Council of the**

Moroccan Jewish Community, The Commission of Moroccan Jews Abroad, and The Foundation of Moroccan Jewry. King Mohammed VI and Crown Prince Moulay Hassan were present when Interior Minister Abdelouafi Laftit announced the project.

Since 1945, the authorities of the Jewish community in the kingdom had never been reformed. It is now a done deal. The main thrust of this overhaul is a centralized institutional system, public subsidies, and the support of Moroccan Jews abroad.

For the 3,000 souls of the Moroccan-Jewish community, this is a real revolution. In early November 2022, a *Dahir* (decree) on the organization of this community was published in the *Bulletin Officiel*.

Basically, it is a question of setting up a centralized system, "*an architecture in line with the expectations of the community, which was widely consulted*", agrees Serge Berdugo, Secretary General of the Council of Jewish Communities in Morocco. (66)

The King has thus decided to strengthen the legal framework for the institutions organizing the Moroccan Jewish community, a framework developed through broad consultations with personalities and representatives of the community, whether they are present in Morocco or living abroad.

These new institutions "*respond to the wishes of Moroccan Jews, here and abroad, to regain their place in the nation's concert in order to contribute*

to the building of a united and peaceful, dynamic and prosperous Morocco, within its legitimate ancestral borders", (67) as stated in the communiqué sanctioning the Council of Ministers of July 13, 2022.

The bodies concerned are **The National Council of the Moroccan Jewish Community**, which will be responsible for managing the day-to-day issues and affairs of the community's members, **The Commission of Moroccan Jews Abroad**, whose role is to consolidate the ties of Moroccan Jews living abroad with their country of origin, to strengthen their cultural and religious influence and to defend the supreme interests of the Kingdom. Finally, **The Foundation of Moroccan Judaism** will have as its mission to promote and watch over the intangible Jewish-Moroccan heritage, its traditions, and specificities.

The Jewish community in Morocco and representatives of the Jewish community abroad have warmly welcomed the relevance of the reorganization of the institutions of the Moroccan Jewish community as a whole. **The Council of Jewish Communities in Morocco** has stated that this new legal framework provides the diaspora with a framework that will allow them to further strengthen ties with the Kingdom and to become fervently involved in the defense of national causes.

This renewal of the Jewish framework is intended to highlight the richness and diversity of the national identity, which by definition is nourished and enriched by multiple tributaries and components.

For some years now, there has been a growing interest in the Jewish community. Moroccan society seems to want to reconnect with this component of its identity, whose presence in Morocco dates back to the fifth century BC, after the destruction of the First Temple and the exile to Babylon (587 BC).

In addition to the interest of Morocco, one finds this impulse in several cultural undertakings. For example, the radio program Nass El Mellah, (68) launched in 2018, gives voice to Moroccan Jews and revolves around their relationship with Morocco and the traditions of the Moroccan Jewish community. Numerous renovation projects are also taking place: in 2019, 167 Jewish cemeteries are being renovated, including some that are located in Cape Verde and Gibraltar, as a large Moroccan Jewish community emigrated there in the 19th century. The Mellah (Jewish quarters in the medinas) in Rabat is being refurbished and embellished.

King Mohammed VI has launched a project for a museum of Jewish culture in Fez in 2019. A dozen synagogues are being restored and new ones built in Tangier, Marrakech, Fez, and El Jadida. Finally, a call in civil society to teach Hebrew alongside Amazigh demonstrates that the 3,000 Moroccans of Jewish faith remain attached to Hebrew culture.

Moroccan Jewish identity: *dâkirah*

The preservation of the Judeo-Moroccan heritage, through the multiple actions of rehabilitation and upgrading of a series of places of worship, sanctuaries, neighborhoods, and cemeteries, eloquently illustrates, if need be, the particular interest that the Kingdom, under the leadership of King Mohammed VI, *amîr al-mu'minîn* (Commander of the Faithful), continues to grant to the promotion of national identity, both plural and united.

Over the centuries, Morocco has always served as a true "haven" of peace, (69) tranquillity, tolerance, acceptance of others, and respect for difference, offering, thus, a model to follow in terms of dialogue and coexistence of civilizations, religions, and cultures.

And it is no coincidence to see the Kingdom form a planetary "exception" in terms of living together, by making the Hebrew affluent an essential component and an integral part of Moroccan national identity. (70) A Morocco that remains "proud" of its daughters and sons, both Muslims and Jews, those who continue to demonstrate, where they are, their unfailing attachment to the motherland and to highlight, with jubilation their Moroccan origins. (71)

In Morocco, this land of Islam is open to both the Mediterranean and the Atlantic and serves as a crossroads and a link between Europe and Africa as well as between America and the Middle East, the coexistence of religions is a tangible and daily reality, which is part of the collective conscience and

constitutes one of the fundamentals of an open and tolerant Moroccan society.

So many interactions and interferences, over the centuries, have forged and enriched the Moroccan identity so rich, diversified, plural, and “unique”, which constitutes all the singularity of Morocco yesterday, today, and tomorrow, which aims to be a real “compass” that a world currently in the grip of denial and fracture, needs more than ever. A Morocco, that is rich in its history and its unfailing commitment to the values and principles of peace, humanism, and mutual respect. (72)

This interest in preserving and promoting the Hebrew component of the national identity was reflected, from the outset, in the launch by King Mohammed VI, Amir Al Mouminin, of a large-scale program relating to the rehabilitation of these places of worship, like the Synagogue “Slat El Fassiine of Fez” classified as World Heritage by UNESCO.

A salutary Royal initiative that Morocco now wants to be the only Arab country in the world to proceed with the establishment of synagogues (Slat El Kahal or Slat Attia in Essaouira), sanctuaries, and Jewish cemeteries. And that is not all because, in this approach, no “community” or “elitist” type approach has been observed, considering that these spaces remain those of all Moroccans without exception.

In the same vein, in April 2019, the King presided over the ceremony to launch the construction of a Museum of Jewish Culture as part of the

complementary program to enhance the Medina of Fez. A museum space that comes in addition to the Jewish Museum of the Arab-Muslim World in Casablanca, which houses collections of objects testifying to two thousand years of Jewish life in Morocco.

The importance given to the preservation of the Judeo-Moroccan memory will continue in the heart of the medina of Essaouira, with the historic visit of the Sovereign, on January 15, 2020, to “Bayt Dakira”, in the presence of an audience of Jewish personalities from Morocco and abroad, such as Mr. André Azoulay.

If each Jewish community has its own venerated patron saint, there are certain Jewish saints buried in Morocco who continue to attract, each year, several hundred followers from all over the world for *Hailula* celebrations, such as Rabbi David U-Moshe near Agouim in the Western High Atlas, Rabbi Amram Ben Diwan near the city of Ouezzane, Moulai Irhi and Rabbi Daniel Hashomer Ashkenazi and Rabbi Halevi Dra near Demnate

The very strong singularity of Morocco is expressed both through these dynamics of rehabilitation of its heritage and its memory, but also through the immense historical depth between Islam and Judaism. Quite simply, the great spiritual and cultural richness of the Moroccan identity in all its diversity and plurality. Therefore, the Moroccan Jewish culture is a historical reality.

The Jewish presence is attested since at least the 3rd century, in particular in Volubilis, an ancient city then Roman abandoned by the latter in 285. The Jews were the first non-Berber people to settle in the Maghreb. It is on this same soil that the Jews found a meaning to their destiny which is ours today and it is in Morocco in 1950 where more than 250,000 Jewish souls out of 10 million lived in harmony with their Muslim compatriots. (73)

The major concern to preserve the Jewish-Moroccan heritage in its tangible and intangible aspects, and to highlight this capillarity always so close between Islam and Judaism, was translated through the salutary initiative of the Essaouira-Mogador Association to endow the city of Alizés and, therefore, Morocco, of a festival called “Andalousies Atlantiques”, an event of high quality, so singular and unique in its kind throughout the world, which puts side by side, Jews, and Muslims to sing, play music together and revive these secular traditions that have always marked the Souiris.

More than a festival with a musical and festive dimension, the “Atlantic Andalusia” whose international influence is no longer to be demonstrated, is also an Agora of debate and exchange via the Forum “School of Essaouira”, on all issues related to living together that characterizes the Kingdom.

One of the most important organizations active in the field of *dhakira*, the memory of Judeo-Muslim conviviality in Morocco (74) is, undoubtedly, the High Atlas Foundation -HAF-, a non-profit

organization founded in 2000. HAF is based in Marrakesh and presided by the eminent and active Yossef Ben-Meir. (75) Besides, HAF promotes organic agriculture, women's empowerment, youth development, education, and health. Since 2011, HAF has been a consultant to the United Nations Economic and Social Council. HAF, also, focuses on local initiatives that community beneficiaries identify and manage; sustainable agriculture: fruit tree and wild medicinal plant nurseries; irrigation efficiency; organic certification; technical skills building; carbon sequestration; school infrastructure; environmental stewardship health; clean drinking water, and waste management; women, and youth empowerment; human rights, and cooperative development; capacity building, and environmental management.

Conclusion

Morocco's history is one of cultural and ethnic intermingling between various communities (Muslim, Jewish, Berber, Arab, and Christian). The cohabitation and permanent interaction between Jews and Muslims has given rise to cultural interference in various areas of daily life such as food, clothing, music, folk tales, proverbs, anecdotes, beliefs and magical practices, and the common veneration of saints. In fact, many Jewish Moroccan authors have produced works inspired by their millennial existence in this country, driven by the imperative need to situate themselves, to delve into memory, to examine tensions born of complex

kinships, they never cease to emphasize a rootedness of which they take pleasure in reviewing the details, sometimes in highly ambivalent ways, without wanting to lose anything. (76)

The examination of Jewish family aspects shows many points of convergence with those of the Muslims. The narratives constructed by some Moroccan Jewish women writers, though very different in form and content, converge in the role of the father as a symbol of economic and moral power and in the weight of tradition and the criticism of a patriarchal society in which women suffer from male authority and discrimination. Writing, for these women, allows them to bear witness to changing social realities and also raises the question of their emancipation, which requires adherence to the culture of the colonizer. (77)

Today, Judaism is back in the limelight in Morocco, especially since the recognition of the "Hebraic affluent" in the constitution of 2011. The Jewish monuments, synagogues, and cemeteries are being revamped and culture has been celebrated all over the country, and Jewish history inscribed in the school textbooks and relations normalized with Israel in 2020. (78)

In this regard, Rabii El Gamrani writes: (79)

"Jews currently living in Morocco are citizens with equal rights and duties compared to their Muslim compatriots. Freedom of worship and the possibility of resorting to Rabbinic courts to solve their controversies is a fully acknowledged right. In fact,

Morocco remains the only Arab-Muslim country in which Jewish religious functions are still celebrated in synagogues (Yoshayaho Pinto is Morocco's Grand Rabbi), while the judicial system includes rabbinic courts that are still employed today.

A few years ago, the Moroccan authorities, under the aegis of the King himself, inaugurated large sites for the restoration of all places of interest for Jewish culture. These initiatives also concern education with the introduction of the history of the Jews in Morocco in books used in state schools, while the Museum of Moroccan Judaism opened in Casablanca in 1997."

It is undoubtedly in Morocco that the good life shared by the two Jewish and Arab communities has worked best. Particularly in Essaouira-Mogador, the white city, bathed in the light of the Atlantic. This small city, revived and developed by the Alaouite Sultan Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah, had up to thirty-seven synagogues for 20,000 inhabitants, 16,000 of whom were Jews.

To maintain this memory, André Azoulay, advisor to King Mohammed VI, of Jewish faith and whose family has been in Essaouira for four generations, has worked to revive the Jewish memory, including the transformation of a synagogue in the middle of the medina in Beyt Dakira, the House of Memory that King Mohammed VI supervised and inaugurated in person in 2020. Like his father, Hassan II, and his grandfather, Mohammed V, the King has a protective status for the community. In recent years, he has allowed the renovation of some

20 synagogues and more than 14,000 graves in forgotten Jewish cemeteries. (80)

Jews have always held prominent positions with the Moroccan sultans. Even if this status is interpreted differently according to the period and the ruler, as Jews suffered violent attacks, notably in the Middle Ages under the Almohad dynasty in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Jewish intellectuals and scholars, leaders of their communities, nonetheless occupied key positions at the sultan's court as *Tujjâr as-sultân*, businessmen, diplomats, and politicians.

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23. Haketia
(**Hebrew**: חַקִּיתִּיָּה; **Arabic**: حاكيتيا; **Spanish**: *Haquetí a*), the Jewish vernacular, takes its name from an Arabic term, ḥaka حكي, which means "to say" or "to tell." Haketia is the name of the Judeo-Spanish dialect (Djudeo Español) spoken by the megorachim, the Sephardic Jews who settled in Morocco following the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. The haketia is nowadays neglected. The Hakitian language, which dates from the deportation from Spain and developed in various other regions, mainly

Morocco, is a Jewish language based on ancient Spanish with a mixture of Hebrew and Arabic words that is an integral part of the culture of the Jews of Spanish Morocco, although unlike the Ladino communities of the East (which do not incorporate Arabic), there are very few written texts in Hakitian. The focus of hakitia is on the northern coast of Morocco, in Tetouan, with a strong presence in the cities of Tangier, Larache, Arcila, Alcazarquivir, Chefchaouen, west of Meknes, Rabat, and in the autonomous Spanish North African cities of Ceuta and Melilla. Cf. Benoliel, José. *Dialecto judeo-hispano-marroquí o hakitía*. Madrid: OCLC, 1977.

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Islam, the “People of the Book”, Christians and Jews, enjoyed a status of “protected”, or *dhimmi*. They were obliged to pay a capitation tax, the *jizya*, and were subject to a certain number of social restrictions, but they enjoyed religious freedom and were guaranteed their person and property, which were declared inviolable. They had their own chiefs and courts and conducted their family, personal and religious life according to their own laws. The origins of the *dhimma* remain uncertain.

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