

MODERNITY AND THE JEWISH QUESTION:
PERSPECTIVES ON JEWISH MODERNITY IN MOROCCO
BEFORE AND DURING PROTECTORATE

by

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A THESIS

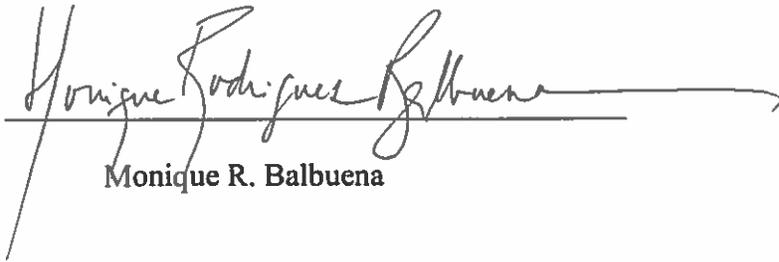
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As the European population in contact with Moroccan Jews began to grow, most noticeably from 1862 when the country's first Alliance Israélite Universelle school was founded, European culture and a conceptualization of what modernity entailed was projected onto the native Jewish population and emulated in real ways by that same population. Accordingly, this study contextualizes the encounter of Morocco's minority Jewish population with the diplomatic and economic machinery of European imperialism and looks at a set of accounts from Europeans having visited or lived in Morocco dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The debate over modernity that followed the establishment of literary cross-currents between Europeans living in Morocco and non-European Jews in Morocco forms the subject of this study. I look at the growth of channels of communication between Europeans and Morocco's Jewish population in Morocco's cities and finally the implications of cross-cultural communication in the Casablanca newspaper *L'Avenir Illustré* (1926-1940).

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Modernity before the Protectorate

Introduction

In 1958, two years after the formal declaration of Morocco's independence, Carlos de Nesry, a Jewish lawyer from Tangier published *Les Israélites Marocains A l'Heure du Choix*. De Nesry's ruminations on Morocco's "new generation" of Jewish youth, familiar with and emulative of foreign culture, turn into a set of remarks on the "choice" of Morocco's Jews—assimilate into a new Moroccan nation thereby embracing a longstanding heritage of Jewish-Muslim cohabitation, or reject the new model. France had relinquished its protectorate in Morocco, and Casablanca's adolescent Jews, hybrid in that they alternated in their conversations fluidly between French and Arabic, are in De Nesry's eyes "ostensibly existentialist" because of their precarious position between the departed France and the newly independent Morocco.¹ He explains that Jewish traditions in Morocco seem "stuck in for eternity", yet one finds particularly the youth at odds with this timeless existence of a community.² The colonial encounter of Morocco's Jews with France had meant all at once their "de-Marocanization", their "Europeanization", a "motionless emigration".³

One cannot consider the history of Morocco's coastal urban populations in the 19th and 20th centuries without considering Europe. More specifically, those Europeans

¹ Carlos De Nesry, *Les Israélites Marocains A l'Heure du Choix* (Tanger: Éditions Internationales, 1958), <http://library.lclark.edu/rabatgenizahproject/items/show/325>, 9-16.

² De Nesry, *L'Heure du Choix*, 19-20.

³ De Nesry, *L'Heure du Choix*, 38.

that visited and lived in the country's coastal cities at this period.⁴ As the 19th century progressed Europeans had both visited and settled in numbers⁵ in Morocco to conduct trade, establish diplomatic missions, provide education for the country's minority Jewish population and, to a lesser degree, to spread Christianity.⁶ Both Christian and Jewish, European visitors to Morocco began to reaffirm their worldview through their writing. Producing a set of classifications that asserted the difference and hierarchy of Morocco's native Jewish minority living amidst a Muslim majority, European visitors reproduced a discourse of difference and hierarchy—one that characterized much of Europe's relation with colonial subjects in the 19th and 20th centuries—and relied upon a rhetoric of modernity.⁷ The European discourse on modernity concerning Moroccan Judaism from the late 19th to the early 20th centuries relied upon vaguely ethnic distinctions in an attempt to “de-Marocanize” the country's long-established Jewish population.

Due to the conceptual nature of apprehending modernity as a discourse, the literary theory of academic Christopher L. Miller's “Theories of Africans: The Question of Literary Anthropology” is useful in understanding the intrusion of European literature into the colony. The challenge which Miller places before his reader is to

⁴ For the purposes of this study, one may take Essaouira, Tangier, and Casablanca as a focus, with Marrakesh, Fes, and Meknes being mentioned among others.

⁵ By the end of the 19th century, Tangier was the site of numerous European embassies and a “high concentration” of Europeans themselves, see Jessica Marglin, “Modernizing Moroccan Jews: The AIU Alumni Association in Tangier, 1893-1913”, in *Jewish Quarterly Review* (101.4, 574-603. Project MUSE. Web. <https://muse.jhu.edu/>). pp. 575-580. The Jewish population has been estimated to have been 12,000, one of the highest in any of Morocco's cities at the time, with Essaouira (Mogador) slightly behind the substantially larger Fes and Marrakesh in its Jewish population. See *Jewish Encyclopedia 1906*.

⁶ The French Jewish association, l' Alliance Israélite Universelle's first school in Morocco was constructed in Tetuan in 1862.

⁷ See Winks & Neuberger, *Europe and the Making of Modernity: 1815-1914*, pg. 260, for a discussion of the imperial construction of “difference” and “hierarchy” under European terms in the 19th century.

formulate “a model of knowledge which, while remaining conscious of the lessons of rhetorical theory, recognizes European theory as a *local phenomenon*.” That is, European understandings of North Africa were dictated by the projection of specific desires and hopes onto what Miller calls the “other.” For the purposes of this study, how can one understand Moroccan Judaism without jettisoning European accounts from the 19th and 20th centuries? How can European literature referring to Moroccan Jews afford an understanding of this religious minority’s role in colonial development? Miller, for his part, looks to the early 20th century German ethnologist Leo Frobenius’s conception of negritude. Frobenius, he explains, “rewards” Africans for conforming to a European image of civilization, thus acting as a mirror by which the European sees himself in the other. While Miller’s work focuses heavily on literature dealing with sub-Saharan Africa, the ethnological idealism of fin-de-siècle European literature extends to encompass Moroccan Judaism.⁸

This study will analyze European travel to and residence in Morocco as an agent of modernity and thus bears relevance to histories of colonialism in Morocco and may stand as a case study of France’s *mission civilisatrice*. In that Theologian Lauren B. Strauss attributes to studies of Jewish history in nineteenth-century Germany the seeds of modern Jewish life, “the first fruits of enlightenment” and the liberation of a community from “the darkening times of destruction”, Jewish modernity has been identified as a European invention. By analyzing Moroccan modernity as both a physical and psychological heritage of colonialism that implied agency and cross-

⁸ Christopher L. Miller, “Theories of Africans: The Question of Literary Anthropology”, in *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 13., No. 1, (The University of Chicago Press, 1986) pp. 123, 129.

cultural communication, this study can contribute to an intellectual history of Jewish modernity as a diverse, heterogeneous process.⁹

Moroccan Judaism and Europe prior to Protectorate

Colonial Emancipation

Writing in the 19th century on the presence of foreigners in Morocco, Ahmed Naciri touched upon the jarring character of Moroccan contact with Europeans. He explains:

We must note that the situation the present generation has come to find is entirely different from that of the previous generation. Everywhere the habits of the people have been turned upside down. The customs and practices of traders and craftspeople have been altered in all ways, including the way they do business, earn and handle money, price goods and manage other types of expenditure. The primary cause of this state of affairs is the meddling of Frenchmen and other foreigners with the population. Their habits smash violently into ours, and in the class their ways defeat and absorb ours.¹⁰

As a Muslim, Naciri seems to have been less than satisfied with the growth of Europeans along Morocco's coast in the 19th century. Morocco's urban Jews, however, experienced a different relationship with European visitors in that European contact implied emancipation. Yet, in their article entitled "Emancipation and its Discontents:

⁹ Lauren B. Strauss, "Modernity through the Eyes of Its Chroniclers: The Scholar as Interpreter and Shaper of Modern Jewish Life", in *Mediating Modernity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008), pp. 1, 3.

¹⁰ Naciri, A., *Istiqsa*, Vol. IX. Casablanca, 1956 as quoted in Kenbib, Mohamed, "Changing Aspects of State and Society in 19th Century Morocco" in *The Moroccan State in Historical Perspective 1850-1985*, Doumou Abdelali, Trans. Ayi Kwei Armah, pp. 11-27.

Jews at the Formative Period of Colonial Rule in Morocco”, historians Daniel Schroeter and Joseph Chetrit distinguish between what they call “colonial emancipation” and “European emancipation.” According to the two, colonial emancipation favored the detachment of Morocco’s Jews from society rather than their integration into a French national identity.

For Schroeter and Chetrit, the emancipation of North African Jews was characterized by the legal status afforded by being granted French citizenship (as was the case in Algeria in 1870 as a result of the Crémieux Decree). In this way, Moroccan emancipation was—as evidenced by De Nasry’s account—characterized by an adoption of foreign garb and rhetoric rather than gaining French citizenship en masse.¹¹

However, in order to substantiate the claim that the detachment of Jews in Morocco from a Muslim hegemony was defined by the intrusion of European customs even preceding 1912, it is necessary to look at the traditional role of Moroccan Jews in Morocco’s political framework. Accordingly, this section will look into defining Moroccan Judaism’s definitive “break” from tradition and determine to what degree and when European culture was embraced before moving into a discussion of modernity as a European discourse targeting Moroccan Jews.

Qualifying “tradition”

As a religious minority of *dhimmi* status according to Muslim law, Morocco’s Jews were in many ways an autonomous political minority as well. While religious practice defined Muslim-Jewish boundaries most definitively, the minority population’s

¹¹ Daniel J. Schroeter & Joseph Chetrit, “Emancipation and Its Discontents: Jews at the Formative Period of colonial Rule in Morocco”, in *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 170-206. (Indiana University Press, 2006) pg. 170.

legal decisions, for example, remained in the hands of local figureheads when not concerning the Muslim population. Education, in addition, was largely overseen by the community without apparent major interference from Muslims. Pre-protectorate Morocco's urban character was additionally ruled by specific ethnic and religious distinctions. Marrakesh, for instance, saw the imposition of hierarchies of space under Sa'di rule in the 16th century. Expressions of the sultan's authority during a period of increased religious tension due to an influx of foreigners necessitated the articulation of clear ethnic spaces.¹² Sa'di urbanism was articulated in clear terms: the Kasbah, where houses, prisons, churches and cemeteries facilitated the sultan's control over Christians, was distinct from the Jewish quarter, the *mellah*. The construction of these quarters defined the *medina*, the Muslim residential quarter, as a space in which Jews and Christians were restricted largely to trade and daily affairs with resident Muslims.¹³

Traditional leadership in Morocco provides one frame for understanding the political shift implicated by the advent of official French protectionism. The Moroccan sultan's authority was both uncertain and often ephemeral.¹⁴ Periodic disruption in leadership wrought havoc upon cities such as Meknes, Marrakesh, Fes, and Tangier as a new ruler sought to establish or re-establish rule over a region. Indeed, the linguistic and definitive regional boundaries between Morocco's native Berber populations attest to the complexity of the country's numerous localized political structures. Morocco's Jewish communities in the 19th century cannot be seen as an exception. Furthermore,

¹²Emily Gottreich, *The Mellah of Marrakesh: Jewish and muslim Space in Morocco's Red City*, (Indiana University Press, 2007) pp. 21-24.

¹³ Gottreich, *The Mellah of Marrakesh*, 24. See Haim Zafrani, *Deux mille ans de vie juive au Maroc*.

¹⁴ Jane S. Gerber "Histoire de la Communauté juive de Fès et de ses rapports judéo-musulmans de 1465 à 1700" in *Juifs de Fès* (Trans. Charles Dadoun), Pg. 113

inquiries into Berber authority and submission continued throughout French rule in Morocco.¹⁵

Despite what historian Jane Gerber calls the “opportunist” exploitation of Jews for diplomatic and economic purposes by Muslim rulers in Fes from 1450 to 1700 local politics were more often dictated by the sentiments of a Muslim populace towards Jewish “infidels.” Local leaders of the Muslim populace (Marabouts, the Cadi, and the Arabs), for example, often directed their resentment towards the Jews, particularly in times of famine or other strife. The vast majority of Jews in Fes during this period are reported to have lived with a sentiment of mixed anxiety and anguish in thought of the next imminent disaster to come from Muslim animosity.¹⁶ Morocco’s traditional Muslim leadership, thus, exercised both psychological as well as spatial control over local Jewish communities in a vaguely paternalistic sense.

Historian Mohammed Kenbib confronts the paternalism of Muslim leadership and the development of Jewish-Muslim relations in Morocco throughout the pages of *Juifs et Musulmans au Maroc: 1859-1948*. He admits to both “ethnic” prejudices and socioeconomic rivalries as well as cyclical drought and epidemics as impediments to trans-religious national unification, but argues for the existence of a sense of communal destiny wrought by hardship and tending towards economic collaboration amongst Muslims and Jews. Although local and national leaders hoped to maintain ethnic and religious difference through public space and political roles, cohabitation, economic cooperation and a host of other factors favored cross-community attachment to certain

¹⁵ See Katherine Hoffman, “Purity and Contamination: Language Ideologies in French Colonial Native Policy in Morocco” in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 50, No. 3, 724-752 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

¹⁶ Gerber, “Histoire de la Communauté juive de Fès”, 113.

traditions.¹⁷ Among the most influential of factors was the sultan himself, whose relatively steadfast commitment to guaranteeing the safety of a protected *dhimmi* community facilitated prolonged collaboration between Jewish elites and Muslim leadership. Ahmed Al-Mansour (1578-1608) entrusted Jews with affairs of the state and wealthy Jewish traders could even own Christian slaves following the battle of the Three Kings (4 August 1578). As early as the 16th century, Jews saw a state-sponsored extension of trade contacts beyond Morocco's borders and employment in the *makhzen*'s embassies abroad.¹⁸ In large part it was from disdain for European infringement and in the hope of systematizing a group of intermediaries that Morocco's sultans sponsored said elite traders.¹⁹

Essaouira (or Mogador) is a notable example of a port city defined by international trade and tied to the Sultan's traders. Furthermore, the prominence of Essaouira's elite Jewish traders in the first half of the 19th century fostered a preliminary instance of sustained European cultural importation along Morocco's coastal border. Daniel Schroeter, whose work *Merchants of Essaouira* deals extensively with the town's majority Jewish traders in the 19th century, explains that the sultan's merchants were able to make considerable profits under the direct patronage of the palace. Despite the distinctly European character of Essaouira's Jewish trade contacts, then, the sultan remained a primary figure of authority and allegiance. Legally "inferior members of the only religious minority in Morocco", Essaouira's elite did not share in local government outside of the Jewish community's political and legal structures. Generally, Moroccan

¹⁷ Mohammed Kenbib, *Juifs et Musulmans au Maroc 1859-1948: Contribution à l'histoire des relations inter-communautaires en terre d'islam*, (Casablanca: Imprimerie Najah El Jadida, 1994) pp. 30-31.

¹⁸ Kenbib, *Juifs et Musulmans*, pp. 33-35.

¹⁹ Kenbib, *Juifs et Musulmans*, 43.

Jews were considered to be of assured loyalty to the sultan because of their dependency on the palace.²⁰

The traditional bound of success for Moroccan Jews was religious status, which often physically assembled them as a community in the *mellah*. Trade, to a degree in the 19th century, could be a liberating factor in the sense that it implied an escape from financial burdens, sanctions and demands placed on the masses of Jews and Muslims alike. Although Jewish-Muslim relations during periods of difficulty were at times characterized by assistance, those Jews with ties to the sultan played off the protection of Gentiles and amicable relations with the Makhzen “(pour) se soustraire à la rigueur du joug qui se pèse sur la communauté” (“in order to avoid the severity of the yoke which weighed upon the community”).²¹ Success in trade, however, did not imply a detachment from religious traditions and a Moroccan identity such as Schroeter and Chetrit identify in formal French colonialism. Elite Jewish traders or diplomatic envoys did indeed continue to feel the precarity of their situation in remaining subject to the “good will” of the sovereign into the 19th century.

During his reign, Moulay Slimane (1792-1822) issued measures of demarcation aimed at the reducing the “exposure of believers” to those “pernicious” influences to which orthodox *Fouqahas* attributed deviations from faithfulness and weakness in the Muslim community. That is, both Slimane and local Muslim authorities promoted the construction of new Jewish quarters into the 19th century in an effort to reinforce a traditional religious hierarchy. Although neither the Qur’an nor the *hadith* prohibited

²⁰ Daniel Schroeter, *Merchants of Essaouira: Urban society and imperialism in southwestern Morocco, 1844-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pg. 21.

²¹ Kenbib, *Juifs et Musulmans*, pp. 44-45.

Jewish-Muslim cohabitation, the creation of new *mellah* was formally justified by complaints coming from Muslims. These complaints included the pollution of basins used for ablutions by used water from Jewish houses, deafening synagogue chants, sale of *mahiya* to “debauchers”, and the lodging of Christians.²²

It is apparent that the maintenance of Muslim-Jewish roles continued to characterize Moroccan politics throughout the early 19th century. Both city planning and a more subtly paternalistic sultan-*dhimmi* relationship was propagated most noticeably in Morocco’s royal cities and the port of Essaouira.²³ Jewish and Muslim religious movements in this period had a long term effect of placing Muslim communities increasingly under the referential authority of *Salafis* who sought to combat “charlatanism and obscurantism” within Muslim confraternities. For Jews, this apparently had little effect on the detachment of communities from *mellah* life other than the growth of a handful of *maskilim* devoted to the regeneration of the Jewish community, what Mohammed Kenbib calls “précurseurs du sionisme politique” (“precursors to political Zionism.”)²⁴ Whether directly resulting from European diplomatic and economic presence or not, the reign of Moulay Slimane appears to have been marked by appeals to traditionalism amongst the Muslim community. Despite the expansion of European trade contacts into Tangier and Essaouira, the continued distinction of Muslims from Jewish communities and the continued role of *dhimmi*

²² Kenbib, *Juifs et Musulmans*, pp. 51-53.

²³ Morocco’s royal cities being Fes, Meknes, and Marrakesh. Essaouira, founded in the 18th century under the sultan’s auspices, was largely an extension of the sultan’s authority to the Moroccan coast. See Schroeter, *Merchants of Essaouira*.

²⁴ Kenbib, *Juifs et Musulmans*, 52-53.

protector which the Moroccan sultan played speak to the restricted nature of European contact with Jewish communities in the early 19th century.

Moroccan historian Simon Levy touches upon the continuity of routine Jewish-Muslim interaction in the three centuries preceding official French administration in the country. Jewish communities, he notes, appear to have been well integrated into a division of labor and Levy identifies them as an “element of the system’s equilibrium.” Economically, in the three centuries preceding colonization, Morocco’s Jews were much more integrated into a state-driven or locally specialized economy than one under foreign or international control. In artisanship, Levy explains, certain professions were recognized as specific to Jews.²⁵ The routine interaction of Muslims and Jews during the 19th century took place in the *medina* of Morocco’s royal cities. Morocco’s urban Jewish communities of the 19th centuries appear to have been notably restricted to the interior, with significant Jewish migration to coastal cities occurring only after 1850 and on a larger scale only after 1900.²⁶ Because the state exercised an influential role in routine trading, Jewish traders are recognized as an important element of the economic functioning of the Makhzen. Indeed, the reformation of Jewish social mores—including dress—seems to have been a fringe movement isolated to Morocco’s coast.²⁷

One of the most telling European visits to Morocco during the late 18th and early 19th centuries is that of Samuel Romanelli, an Italian Jew. Having arrived in Morocco in 1787, Romanelli not only had knowledge of several European languages, but his Hebrew writing testifies to his awareness of a distinctively Jewish literary tradition. His

²⁵ Simon Levy, “La communauté Juive dans le contexte de l’histoire du Maroc du 17^e siècle à nos jours”, in *Juifs du Maroc : Identité et dialogue*, (Grenoble: Editions La Pensée Sauvage, 1980) pg. 109.

²⁶ Gottreich. *The Mellah of Marrakesh*, 54.

²⁷ Kenbib, *Juifs et Musulmans*, 61.

account, *Travail in an Arab Land* provides insight both into the political and ethnic order of pre-protectorate Morocco and the rhetoric by which Moroccan Jewry was painted the “Other”. Writing of his residence in Rabat, Romanelli explains that “the Arabs of Salé are harder on the Jews than are the people of Rabat. This is because the Jews in Salé have to walk barefoot all the time because they have no special quarter of their own as in Meknes.”²⁸ According to Romanelli, the lack of clearly defined Jewish space in Salé rendered the city’s Jewish denizens vulnerable to the abuse of an Arab population. “In the imperial cities of Meknes, Fes, and in the capital of Marrakesh,” Romanelli explains, “the Jews do not live in the city itself. Their quarter is at the outskirts. They can only enter the main part of the city barefoot.” The fact that, as he notes, “The Jewish quarter lies between the palace and the main part of town” demonstrates the power the sultan exerted over Jewish communities as part of what historian Emily Gottreich calls a “‘vertical’ relationship between Jews and rulers.”²⁹ The sultan’s role as enforcer of an ethnic-religious hierarchy is recognized by Romanelli, who writes the following of Moroccan Jews as a group:

There is no better than the best of them in their land of bondage; however, you cannot find worse than the worst of them when they go out of it, because when they find themselves free of their oppressors and can cast off their yoke, you can no longer tell them apart.³⁰

Romanelli draws an apparent distinction between the sultan’s Jew and the freed Moroccan Jew. Liberation, according to Romanelli, is incompatible with Moroccan Judaism because an innate otherness of Moroccan Jewry. Further, not only does he

²⁸ Sameul Romanelli, *Travail in an Arab Land* (Reprint, Revised, University of Alabama Press, 2004. Trans. Yedida Kalfon Stillman, Norman A. Stillman), pg. 103.

²⁹ Romanelli, *Travail*, pp. 91-92. Gottreich, *The Mellah of Marrakesh*, 16.

³⁰ Romanelli, *Travail*, 131.

depict Moroccan Jews submissive, “not very clever”, with muddled intellect but pure hears, but he attributes a deceitful and oppressive character to the Arab.³¹

Romanelli’s narrative is wrought with charged dichotomies that reveal an interpretation of the legal and social dynamics existent in pre-protectorate Morocco. For Romanelli, a distinguishing feature of North African Jewry is that their appearance differs from the European. He explains that “The Maghrebi Jews grow their beard, but shave their head like the Arabs. Most European Jews allow the hair of the head to grow, but shave their beard like the Christians.”³² Yet, Romanelli’s interpretation of Moroccan Jewry situates it in a social and legal space between foreigner and Arab, for in the imperial cities “All the Christians who come, stay with the Jews or by themselves in the houses outside the walls, as in the case of the monks there.”³³ He feels associated with difficulty with Moroccan Jews and typifies their religiosity as such:

They tend to view all new and mysterious things previously unknown to them as miracles. The sciences are too lofty for them. Their ignorance is bliss, for they say that many victims have been thrown into the pits of heresy and atheism by science. The light of knowledge does not shine upon them, nor has it even reached them until now to eradicate their moral failings and their immature vanities. A veil of obscurantist faith corrupts their hearts and blinds their eyes. They cling steadfastly to their ancestral customs even to the point of transgressing the laws of God, rather than violating their own laws.³⁴

Romanelli, in attempting to define the character of Moroccan Judaism, resorts to a broad religious dichotomy of European and Arab character. Moroccan Judaism, for Romanelli, is foreign because of its Arab surroundings, and to this he attributes

³¹ Romanelli, *Travail*, 131.

³² Romanelli, *Travail*, 67.

³³ Romanelli, *Travail*, 91.

³⁴ Romanelli, *Travail*, 28.

Moroccan ignorance. The Jewish communities are the oppressed subjects of the “fierce Arabs” and he criticizes the religious character of “All of the Arab’s laws.”³⁵

Romanelli links the faults of the Jew, accordingly, to those of the ruling “class”, the Arab. Although liberation is hardly a consideration for Romanelli, Moroccan Judaism’s degree of attachment to a Muslim environment remains a key concern.

A Break from Tradition

It appears to have been in the second half of the 19th century that Morocco’s Jews became the targets of pre-ethnographical, European-led Orientalization efforts rather than a fleeting interest of the European traveler. A literary analysis of Europe’s colonial precursors in Morocco will elucidate the character of fin-de-siècle modernity in Morocco, but it may suffice to look briefly into the characteristics of Moroccan Judaism’s veritable encounter with Europe.

It must be noted that those Jews initially Occidentalized through European accounts were a group restricted largely to the Atlantic coast, where a number of Jewish intermediaries became the “disproportionately represented” agents, servants, representatives and translators of foreign powers. From 1767, when a French-Moroccan commercial treaty was first signed, a system of protégés became increasingly associated with Western legations, consulates or businesses in Morocco. These firms were restricted in large part to Tangier.³⁶ The protégé system itself evolved from the granting of extraterritorial rights to these firms in Tangier, and had come to include the

³⁵ Romanelli, *Travail*, 35, 41.

³⁶ Tangier’s growth as an “international city” of legations and foreign consulates on Moroccan soil will not be discussed in this paper, but only noted as an exceptional case of European economic and diplomatic penetration in the 19th century.

authority of foreign firms to designate Moroccans either as officials or employees in businesses and legations. Moroccan protégés received the coveted privileges of exemption from Moroccan taxation, conscription and judicial control.³⁷ It is within this system that Moroccan Jews found themselves the disproportionate representatives due to their knowledge of foreign language, maintenance of a transnational network and what Gottreich identifies as “aspirations for improved civil status.”³⁸ Further, Jewish Moroccans were privileged by foreign delegations and favored by capitulations of the *makhzen* to the degree that Mohammed Kenbib calls them the “de facto auxiliaries of foreign penetration.”³⁹ Kenbib points to 1844 and the congress of Vienna as a major turning point in which European powers began to direct their hopes at Algerian Jews—in Morocco—who behaved as “sujets français”⁴⁰ and “Juifs de la première classe.”⁴¹ Through these groups Europeans sought to open the country to further trade.⁴²

The system of European diplomatic protections in Morocco appears to have been widespread after the 1880 Madrid Convention, but it was nonetheless restricted to wealthier Jews—a group which itself was a vast minority. Leland Bowie estimates that upper-class Jews numbered perhaps one percent of the Jewish community and were generally foreign protégés or even held foreign citizenship.⁴³ It appears this status was resented by lower class Jews and Muslims. Furthermore, Gottreich claims that being granted extraterritoriality by Europeans yet remaining physically in place began a

³⁷ Leland Bowie, “An Aspect of Muslim-Jewish Relations in Late Nineteenth-Century Morocco” in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, (vol. 7, no. 1, 1976, pp. 3-19), pg. 4.

³⁸ Gottreich, *The Mellah of Marrakesh*, 7.

³⁹ Kenbib, *Juifs et Musulmans*, 66, 71.

⁴⁰ French Subjects

⁴¹ First-class Jews

⁴² Kenbib, *Juifs et Musulmans*, 63.

⁴³ Bowie, “Muslim-Jewish Relations”, 4.

process of existential identity crisis amongst Moroccan Jews.⁴⁴ Yet what resentment existed apparently did not discourage hopefulness, for André Adam asserts that European trade and diplomatic protections were the primary reasons for Jewish migrations to Casablanca leading up to the protectorate, especially after 1880.⁴⁵

Perhaps most influential and most studied as an agent of Occidentalization among Moroccan Jews has been the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* (AIU). In the framework of this study, however, the growth of the AIU in Morocco is relevant as a method of tracking where and why Europeans inculcated Moroccan Jewry into a discourse of modernization. The AIU, which was established by European Jews in 1860, opened its first school in Tetuan in 1862, and its schools in Morocco came to number eighty-three during the 20th century. The organization's pre-colonial "civilizing" efforts in Morocco spurred the construction of the first Western-style schools aimed at educating Moroccan Jews. AIU teachers and directors additionally sought to reform Moroccan Jewish families' ideas of hygiene, dress, and religious practice. The organization's role in Morocco was largely encouraged by the Jews of Morocco's coastal communities, but received with ambiguity and even violence in the interior. The AIU would not establish a presence in Marrakesh, for example, until 1900, and did so with "great difficulty." Long-established patterns of Jewish-Muslim exchange, Emily Gottreich argues, were preserved much longer in Marrakesh than in

⁴⁴ Gottreich, *The Mellah of Marrakesh*. 9.

⁴⁵ André Adam, *Casablanca: Essai sur la transformation de la société marocaine au contact de l'Occident* (Paris: Centre National De La Recherche Scientifique, 1968), pp. 184-5.

Morocco's coastal towns, where European trade and habitation disrupted a "vertical" paternalistic relationship.⁴⁶

No doubt, the AIU's modernizing efforts were both recognized and embraced by members of the Jewish intelligentsia before the French protectorate was established. As early as 1893, Moroccan Jews educated by the Alliance Israélite Universelle were themselves concerned with the modernization of their communities. Tangier's AIU alumni, according to historian Jessica Marglin, "engaged in a process of collective self-definition as the modern manifestation of Moroccan Jewry" which, although using the Alliance as a foothold, "did not seek to mimic either the AIU or its French Jewish leaders." This group, Marglin explains, broadly did style themselves Europeanizing "and thus modernizing" elites, yet held aspirations specific to Morocco at the turn of the century. Marglin also notes that Jewish and non-Jewish "modernizers" alike shared the desire to emulate European bourgeois culture but local conditions and a desire to retain cultural authenticity produced distinct interpretations of modernity amongst Moroccan Jewry. In this way she introduces the idea of what she calls "multiple modernities" and a paradigm of non-monolithic modernity in relation to Moroccan Jewry; modernity is therein a psychological manifestation based upon "local interpretations and variations on the global process of modernization." Tangier's Alumni Association is termed "modern" in the sense that they imagined themselves to be breaking from the past and drawing from European notions of progress in the realization of a project.⁴⁷

The Alumni Association in Tangier was a non-political intellectual manifestation of hopes to redefine traditional Jewish leadership in Tangier, and in doing

⁴⁶ Gottreich, *The Mellah of Marrakesh*, 9-11.

⁴⁷ Marglin, *Modernizing Moroccan Jews*, 575-77

so appealed to progressive elements of Tangier’s Jewish population and to a broader, more international Jewish readership. The Association represents, in appeals to a “Moroccan Jewry”, a preliminary conceptualization of Moroccan Jews as a collective unit. Indeed, Marglin points to the attempted democratization of Tangier’s Jewish community as a primary example of politically-minded reform in Morocco’s Jewish communities. In 1890, she explains, a group of prominent Jews led by Haim Benchimol—“owner of a French-language newspaper, interpreter for the French legation, president of the local AIU committee, and one of Tangier’s richest Jews”—created a *Junta Representiva* in opposition to the traditional *Junta*, that is the Jewish community’s administrative council, and successfully took control of the community. Despite the progressive mindset of a community whose leaders championed modernity in their own interpretations, its success is framed by the privileged position of a “westernized” city. The Alumni Association’s members were “inextricably linked” to their position in Tangier’s Jewish community, one influenced by a high concentration of foreigners in the city and plentiful opportunities for cross-cultural interaction. It is the Jewish elite of Tangier, Marglin explains, that first adopted European dress and customs. The success of those elites, furthermore, was largely determined by work with foreign merchants and foreign legations. Not only did Tangier’s Jewish community see more opportunities for economic and diplomatic contact with Europe than most, but the Alumni Association’s founders were among the city’s elite. In Tangier above all, contact with Europe meant contact with modernity.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Marglin, *Modernizing Moroccan Jews*, pp. 575-580.

As early as 1915, only three years after the establishment of the French protectorate in Morocco, Morocco's French-educated elite was genuinely invested in European affairs. The editors of *La Liberté*, a Jewish newspaper published in Tangier and written in French, focused heavily upon Jewish communities outside of Morocco—largely those of Europe—and had adopted a European rhetoric of “international Judaism”, placing Moroccan Judaism into a tradition of Jewish emancipation sparked by the French Revolution.⁴⁹ The parallel publication of a Judeo-Arabic edition of *La Liberté* entitled *El Horria* attests to the ravine between Tangier's French-educated elite and a broader Jewish readership in Morocco in that *El Horria*'s editorials were not taken directly from *La Liberté* and provided extensive coverage of other Jewish communities in Morocco where *La Liberté* did not.⁵⁰ In Morocco at the turn of the century, modernity was not only a privilege restricted to Jewish elites, it was identifiably a European importation.

Notably, the *Alliance*'s foreign directors promoted the intellectual, religious and social “regeneration” of non-Western Jewish communities with what Gottreich calls an implicit goal of “easing these Jews' own assimilation into European society by erasing any signs of ‘backwardness’ among the ‘primitive’ Jews living in parts of the world with which the colonial powers were increasingly coming into contact, lest any association be made between the two groups of Jews.” She focuses on the AIU's targeted de-Orientalization of such communities and asserts it was an attempt to “de-Orientalize themselves as well.” Even where Moroccan receptiveness to modernity was

⁴⁹ *Au Lecteurs, La Liberté*, 6/18/1915.

⁵⁰ See <http://web.nli.org.il/sites/JPress/English/Pages/La-Liberte.aspx>

limited, the AIU and outward signs of European culture represented for the European a hope of Jewish modernization.⁵¹

The external signs of Europeanization in Morocco's interior Jewish communities during late 19th and early 20th centuries were restricted to a few wealthy citizens. Roger Le Tourneau explains that Jewish males in Fes in 1900 wore clothes "imposed by Muslim tradition": black caps, black cloaks and bare feet only covered by slippers. Women, he explains, differed from Muslims in their dress, which drew more from the Sephardic tradition of Spanish *megorashim*.⁵² Wealthier citizens could afford to adorn their homes with "modern" accoutrements.⁵³ André Chevrillon, visiting M. Boulbuol—a successful Jewish trader—in Fes during "la Pâcque", notes the following in his novel, published in 1906:

Dans la chambre d'honneur, au second étage, nous sommes à présent cérémonieusement assis sur des chaises et des fauteuils d'un rococo second empire : un mobilier dont j'ai vu l'analogue chez des Arméniens d'Asie Mineure, des Maronites de Syrie, des Coptes d'Egypte—tous Orientaux qui, de loin, subissent les prestiges de l'Occident et disent *non* à l'Islam. Des guéridons contournés, trop de glaces dans des cadres d'or américain, des buffets de bois jaune, tout cela venu de la côte à dos de chameau. Et puis, les signes de la religion : des chromographies allemandes, où luisent des David et des Salomon mitrés, des inscriptions hébraïques...

In the room of honor, on the second floor, we are at present ceremoniously seated on chairs and seats of second empire rococo: a set of furniture which I have seen in the houses of the Armenians of Asia Minor, the Copts of Egypt—all Orientals who, from afar, are adopting

⁵¹ Gottreich, *The Mellah of Marrakesh*, 9-10.

⁵² Among the French and English sources consulted for this study, little indication is made as to the differences between Morocco's Jews of Iberian origin and the long-established "native" communities in their receptiveness to European penetration and modernity. Suffice it to say that from sources consulted, Morocco's *expulsado* Jews seem to have been more likely to inhabit Morocco's coast in the 18th and 19th centuries. They are explained to have had more extensive transnational networks and a greater degree of multilingualism, with Spanish remaining relevant in Morocco's north into the 20th century, later sharing its prestigious international status with French and even Hebrew.

⁵³ Roger Le Tourneau, "La vie quotidienne des Juifs à Fès en 1900" in *Juifs de Fès*, 187.

the prestige of the Occident and saying no to Islam. Overelaborate guéridons, numerous mirrors framed in American gold and yellow wood dressers have all come from the coast on the back of a camel. As for the religious items: there are German chromographies where glow mitred David and Salomon adorned with square Hebrew inscriptions...⁵⁴

Chevillon's passage reveals two important features of Jewish life in Fes at the turn of the 20th century. First, Chevillon's admiration for Boulboul's home and his mention of camel transportation reveals the exceptional status of Boulbuoul. Le Tourneau explains that poorer citizens would be forced to decorate their homes in traditional Muslim style.⁵⁵ Boulboul's lifestyle shows an admiration among Morocco's interior elite at least for European products and their prestige, yet—and secondly—even Jews with connections to Europe by way of status “led a traditional existence” concerned with religious law and custom.⁵⁶ In Morocco in 1900, modernity may have been visible but it was a privilege of those favored by contact with Europe and Europeans.

Modernity: Europe's Ideal in Morocco

With a Jewish population of approximately 12,000 in 1900-1901 in relation to an estimated 109,712 across Morocco, Tangier was certainly not the only notable Jewish community in the kingdom and not the only city visited by Europeans. The populations of Fes, Mogador and Marrakesh, respectively, are estimated to have been 10,000, 8,676, and 15,700.⁵⁷ By 1927, Nahum Slouschz places the total at 144,600 and subdivides the population into ethnographically telling groups. The “groups of the Sahara” number 14,000 and are alone designated as “Arabic speaking.” The Jews of

⁵⁴ André Chevillon, *Un Crépuscule d'Islam*, (Paris: Hachette, 1906) pg. 213.

⁵⁵ Le Tourneau, “La vie quotidienne”, 187.

⁵⁶ Le Tourneau, “La vie quotidienne”, 190.

⁵⁷ See *Jewish Encyclopedia 1906*

Marrakesh, Mogador and nearby regions including the native Chleuh group of the great Atlas are called “The Arab and Chleuh group of the South”, numbering 48,650. The “Central Arab Berber group” numbers 10,500 and the French and Arabic speaking cities of “Central Morocco” includes Rabat/Salé, Casablanca, Fes and Meknes and numbers 35,500. Of the 30,950 Spanish speaking Jews in the country’s North, “A large number of the better class families speak French.”⁵⁸ If modernity’s aspirations were propagated by the few and access to European “modernity” held by even fewer, how were Morocco’s Jewish masses uninitiated to modernity imagined and described? Anthropologist Aomar Boum highlights that a pattern of European scientific voyages to Morocco in the 19th and 20th centuries which imagined the Jewish population in its entirety to be living in dilapidated and stagnant surroundings in large part undermines the degree to which Moroccan Jews had agency in relating to a Muslim majority.⁵⁹ Predating Nahum Slouschz’s colonial study are the accounts of foreign travelers to Morocco in the years preceding the protectorate.

Having established what Moroccan Judaism’s encounter with modernity looked like in both physical and psychological terms preceding France’s protectorate, this section will deal with the entry of European modernity as a discourse into Morocco through the accounts of foreign visitors. Proceeding with the assumption that Judaism’s association with modernity is an essentially European conceptualization, this section will look into how the contemporary English journalist Budgett Meakin and French

⁵⁸Nahum Slouschz, *Travels in North Africa* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1927), pg. 377-79.

⁵⁹ Aomar Boum, “Colonial Minorities: Jewish-Muslim relations in Southern Morocco re-evaluated”, In *Hespéris Tamuda*, (Vol. 48, edited by Abderrahim Ben Hadda, 25-40. Rabat: Editions et Impressions Bouregreg, 2013)

academic, orientalist and writer André Chevrillon dealt with Moroccan Judaism and an assumption that European-oriented development implied modernity.⁶⁰ For both, writing Moroccan Jewry into a narrative of modernity presented readers with a classification of the ambiguous “Other”, and their work represents a pre-colonial justification of European exceptionalism by relying upon modernity as a certainty of European contact.

A number of factors fueled the colonial passions of Europeans in Morocco. The sultanate, a “withdrawn” and largely unknown state, was for many, Jean-Louis Miège explains, imagined to be set in archaic ways while Europe was in “full development accelerating its progresses.”⁶¹ In addition to colonial competitions as manifested in the Madrid Conference of 1880 which reinforced European presence in Morocco and the protection of native Jews by European consulates, a mystique of European expansion and discovery were instrumental in aligning Europeans with a project of Moroccan development.

Budgett Meakin, writing in 1905, describes Morocco as a stagnant and untouched realm “save where a fringe of Europeans on the coast purvey the luxuries from other lands that Moorish tastes demand.” “Even here the foreign influence is purely superficial,” he admits, “failing to affect the lives of the people.” In that European civilization efforts are lacking in the country, Meakin laments that “native thought and feeling” are largely unknown to Europeans and indeed secondary to trade. He writes with enthusiasm and eagerness for the day the Moorish Empire “comes to be

⁶⁰ On the assumption of Jewish modernity as a European invention, I refer to that of David b. Ruderman, “Michael A. Meyer’s Periodization of Modern Jewish History: Revisiting a Seminal Essay” in *Mediating Modernity*, pg. 30, 2008.

⁶¹ Jean-Louis Miège, *Le Maroc* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966), pg. 38

pacifically penetrated and systematically explored.” Underlying Meakin’s account of Morocco is a hope of truly affecting and understanding its peoples.⁶²

Meakin does expound briefly upon the status of Morocco’s Jews and in doing so admits to several points of change resulting from foreign contact. Limited to a few ports such as Tangier and Mogador, the deconstruction of traditional boundaries is a chief concern. Meakin echoes the sense that a Jewish ravine exists, noting that the Jews of the interior capitals of Meknes, Fes and Marrakesh are “obliged to live in their own restricted quarters” and conform Muslims standards of physical appearance. The coastal minority is distinct in Meakin’s writing. By means of European-funded education, the coastal elite participated in what Meakin denotes a “tide of advancing westernization.” In Meakin’s eyes, those educated in European fashion have seen a transformation. They had become, unlike the Jews of the royal cities, “highly respectable citizens” and held the “chief prospects of the country’s welfare.” It is this community in which Meakin confides his hopes for Morocco’s development. Notably, it is their social distance from the Jewish communities of the interior that allows them to effectively Europeanize.⁶³

For Chevrillon, an imagined Oriental-Occidental dichotomy—and one of Oriental minorities detaching from Islam—indicates the nearly-ubiquitous duality within which turn-of-the-century Europeans categorized civilizations. Chevrillon’s own employment of these terms demonstrates his projection of a European duality onto Moroccan Judaism’s social and political status within Morocco. Chevrillon rejoices that

⁶² Budgett Meakin, *Life in Morocco and Glimpses Beyond* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1905), pp. 1, 18, 17.

⁶³ Meakin, *Life in Morocco*, pp. 16-17.

the oldest of the *Mellah*'s youth—learning European languages at the city's Alliance Israélite school—are “candidates for evolution. Unlike its Muslims, Morocco's Jews are imagined to be predisposed to “modernity”:

Nous sentons qu'entre nous et ces gens-ci des courants de sympathie humaine s'établiraient vite, et que nous pourrions 'entrer en société'. Si différente que leur vie soit de la nôtre, nulle consigne comparable à celle de l'Islam ne l'a fixée pour toujours : aussi docilement que leurs frères de Tanger ils subiraient les prestiges et les influences de l'Europe.

We felt that between us and these people currents of human sympathy would quickly establish themselves, and that we could 'enter into society'. Despite the differences of their life from ours, no order comparable to that of Islam has permanently fixed them: as submissively as their brothers from Tangier, they would soon feel the prestige and the influences of Europe.

By 1906, the year in which Chevrillon published his observations of Morocco, Jewish entry into “society” was a distinct hope placed in a Jewish youth.⁶⁴

Chevrillon's analysis of Jewish character is anthropological and relies upon extensive imagery. His journey to Fes's *Mellah* is one attempt to reconcile and subdivide the city's young “candidats à la civilisation” (“candidates for civilizing”) and Morocco's traditional leadership. As he heads towards the city's medina, space is a rough guide of character. The outskirts of Fes are marked by a “lugubrious filth”, copious because the city, “plus arriéré que la France à la fin des carolingiens” (“more backward than France at the end of the Carolingians”) sees the use of animals instead of cars and carts for transport. Passing into the city itself the southwest door, Bab-sidi-bou-nafa is “dark”, gloomy and of a “gothic” character; the passing of a camel is “fantastic and paradoxical” in the enclosed space of the medina where “dreamers, smokers and tea

⁶⁴ Chevrillon, *Crépuscule*, pg. 205

drinkers” gather. The men of the Muslim quarter are barefoot and covered with drab, worn draperies compared to the bourgeois Moors, “[who] walk in the fashion of Roman senators!” Nonetheless, the Muslim quarter is definitively antique. The *mellah* is “another world...another century” to itself in which life manifests itself and moves freely and warmly “like the evening, in a city of Southern Europe.” The *mellah* is much more ambiguous, for Chevrillon readily compares it and its compact windows to Naples or Sevilla. While the Muslim quarter constitutes another world which is so foreign as to be fully rooted in a resplendent past, the *Mellah* is familiar enough in Chevrillon’s rendering to be faintly European. His appeal to the *Mellah*’s vaguely European nature suggests that European visitors began themselves to envision a kind of transient internationalism to Moroccan Jews during the 19th century.⁶⁵

Budgett Meakin alludes to the underpinnings of modernity when he analyzes the European’s perspective of Moroccan development. At the outset of the 20th century, notes Meakin, Muslims had taken to unabashedly smoking and drinking with Europeans in Tangier. Sarcastically he claims, “Thus Morocco is becoming civilized!”⁶⁶ Meakin is critical of the external manifestations of Europeanism and their unquestioned assumption of modernity. Meakin criticizes the hollow praise of Morocco’s external adoption of modernity coming from Europeans, asserting that what continues to differentiate European sensibilities from Moorish sensibilities is one’s adaptability to the philosophical questions of modernity. For the author, France and England were the tentative Moroccan colonizers and his assumption of Morocco’s eventual colonization

⁶⁵ Chevrillon, *Crépuscule*, 202-204.

⁶⁶ Meakin, *Life in Morocco*, 41.

is steadfast. Accordingly, he appears to have been perennially bothered by the question of how civilized Morocco may be considered. He writes:

There are but two criteria by which the various forms of civilization so far developed by man may be fairly judged. The first is the suitability of any given form to the surroundings and exterior conditions of life of the nation adopting it, and the second is the moral or social effect on the community at large.

Under the first head the unbiased student of mankind will approve in the main of most systems adopted by peoples who have attained that artificiality which we call civilization. An exchange among Westerners of their time-honored habits for those of the East would not be less beneficial or more incongruous than a corresponding exchange on the part of Orientals. Those who are ignorant of life towards the sunrise commonly suppose that they can confer no greater benefit upon the natives of these climes than chairs, top-hats, and so on. Hardly could they be more mistaken... Under the second head, however, a very different issue is reached, and one which involves not only the social, but religious life, and consequently the creed on which this last is based. It is in this that Moorish civilization fails.⁶⁷

No doubt, Meakin's definition of Moroccan civilization relies upon a characterization of the "Moorish" character. Yet further, differentiating between the true candidates for civilization and the only half-civilized Oriental was posited as a necessary concern for the potential colonizer.

Chévrillon for his part appears to have been equally preoccupied by the degree to which Moroccan Jews possessed a social and religious heritage predisposed to civilization. In typifying the Moroccan Jewish character Chévrillon attempts to rationalize the detachment of Jewish communities from surrounding Muslim cities and from an Oriental character. The unveiled faces of Jewish women are "free", "trusting" and finally "almost Italian". The author openly demands whether this "type" is that which can be attributed to Israel. After searching for the presumed traits of an Israelite,

⁶⁷ Meakin, *Life in Morocco*, 68-69

Chévrillon confidently declares only five of thirty *mellah* Jews to have the typical aquiline nose. The characteristics of Fes's *mellah* population are speak to degrees of detachment for Chévrillon; the Jewish youth might well be Parisian youth, the young adults Italian students from the 15th century and the elderly resemble more closely the octogenarian Jews of Jerusalem or the "tacitly hostile" fanatics of Islam. Behind the exterior of a typical Jew from Fes is "un certain manque de fierté physique, mais toujours l'expression intelligente" ("a certain lack of physical pride, but always an intelligent and civilized expression.") On a religious note, Chévrillon places Moroccan Judaism, distanced as it is from Israel, in a grey area between Muslim and European heritage. Of European colonialism he asks:

Qui pourra donc mesurer les effets probables sur un group fermé depuis si longtemps, d'une religion qui pénètre dans le détail de sa société et de la vie privée pour le régler méticuleusement... du milieu physique si spécial qu'est le ghetto ?

Who can thus measure the probable effects [of Europe's ideals] on a group narrow-minded for so long, with a religion which penetrates and meticulously rules society and private life... [having lived for so long] in the unique physical milieu that is the ghetto?

Into the turn of the century at least, Chévrillon felt it necessary to distinguish the country's Jewish communities from "Muslim masters" by appealing to the supposed European nature of the Jew. Implicitly, the *prise de conscience* of Moroccan Jews stipulated, from a foreign perspective, a break both from external forms of traditional culture and from religious beliefs.⁶⁸

The "modern things from Europe" that adorn M. Boulboul's house—that which Chévrillon visits in Fes—do not only signify wealth, they speak to a society in

⁶⁸ Chévrillon, *Crépuscule*, 205-213.

transition for the author. Instead of things, the faces, costumes and attitudes of Boulboul's house display "a very special civilization", one divided along lines of gender, age, and profession. Chévrillon, for instance, distinguishes between the men and women of the house:

Les homes sont assis familièrement avec nous autour de la table ; mais que les femmes, vues de près, à loisir, apparaissent étrangères et lointaines, gardiennes hiératiques du type et des idées qu'elles incarnent....Si graves, laissant parler les hommes, et paraissant ne pas entendre, elles semblent, en leurs religieux atours, simplement *exposées*, comme les servantes de certains cultes orgiaques et féminins dans les anciens temples d'Asie Mineure et de Syrie.

The men are sitting in familiar fashion with us around the table; but the women, seen from up close, rooted in place, appear foreign and distant, hieratic guardians of the model and of the ideals which they personify....Quite serious, letting the men speak and not seeming to hear, they seem, in their religious finery, simply *displayed*, like the servants of certain orgiastic and feminine cults in the ancient temples of Asia Minor and Syria.

From the author's perspective, lines of familiar and foreign are drawn between male and female such that women appear to evoke the seriousness of religious tradition as it is imposed by a male master. The other manifestation of traditional male and religious hegemony in Fes's Jewish community is the Grand Rabbi, or "Cheikh el Yahoud." A man of about fifty emanating certitude and decision, he is the "maître du Mellah"⁶⁹ with powers firstly in service of the Law of Moses. The elders of *mellah*, the "true individuals of history" because they share the sentiments of Muslim merchants in Fes and Damascus alike, are "simple." They are pure like "Christianity in Europe of the Middle Ages, like Islam and Judaism in the Orient of long ago and today." Further, the *mellah*'s traditional leadership is an enemy of "foreigners, of innovation, of the liberal

⁶⁹ Master of the Mellah

ideas preached by the Jews of Europe and Algeria.” Where Fes’s Jewish community cannot be identified as monolithic Chévrillon divides it into the occidental and the oriental, or rather the familiar and the unfamiliar, along lines of gender, age and religious character. While the author’s observations speak to a reality in Moroccan Judaism’s disproportionate “evolution”, they speak most strongly to the group—young, wealthy Jewish males—that was identified by Europe as best suited for “civilization” on the eve of France’s Protectorate.⁷⁰

Conclusion

It must be noted that the 19th century witnessed a number of changes in Morocco’s national Jewish community. Yet, each of these changes was effected only to the extent that one could access, by means of habitation, wealth, trade, citizenship, age and gender, the material or intellectual alternatives provided largely through European trade and diplomacy. Tangier, for its importation of Europeans and Algerian Jews on a scale unseen elsewhere in Morocco during the 19th century, was a natural breeding ground for exposure to European trade, dress, language, diplomatic protections, and even education. It is no surprise that histories of Moroccan Judaism in the 19th century look to Tangier as a crucible of change and development. The history of Moroccan Judaism’s pre-protectorate “Renaissance” is foremost one of cities and social division, for the Europeanization of Morocco’s Jewish communities was never uniform. Certainly, transnational Jewish and even pre-Zionist movements saw foundations in Morocco as the 20th century approached, but no sense of widespread Occidental or even nationally Jewish identity can be said to have manifested itself in Morocco’s political

⁷⁰ Chévrillon, *Crépuscule*, 215-223.

body at this time. Throughout this period, regional divisions between Iberian *expulsado* communities and “Autochtones”⁷¹ remained more or less relevant to community organization. The mystique of the “Berber Jew” as a distinct native element of Moroccan Judaism appears to have remained popular throughout the protectorate period itself.

The 19th century saw an increased European presence, which in exploring the Maghreb attempted on various levels to adapt an oriental-occidental dichotomy to the occasionally ambiguous and definitively varied relationship of Moroccan Judaism with modernity. Although Tangier stood as an ideal of Jewish development for many Europeans having traveled throughout Morocco, the reality remained that many of Morocco’s Jewish communities defined themselves in relation to Islam and other Jewish communities across the nation rather than modernity prior to 1912. In exploring the Jewish character and the Moroccan suitability for “modernity”, Europeans spurred a dialogue of evolution and modernity that would define Moroccan Judaism throughout the period of the French protectorate (1912-1956).

⁷¹ “Natives”

Morocco's Colonial "Jewish Question"—1912-1947

Introduction

This section will take 1947 as framing date for Morocco's colonial "Jewish question". That is, from 1912 Morocco's Jewish communities increasingly came under the lens of French colonial administrators, European settlers—including European Jews and Algerian Jews—and Morocco's Jewish elite themselves, who sought to determine the capacity for Morocco's Jews to effectively assimilate into French society. The French Protectorate meant that national identities were definitively thrown into question, and the colonial Jewish "question" becomes most evident in debates over Jewish naturalization⁷². Accordingly, determining what constituted a well-assimilated Jew became subject to a discourse of modernity which made use of ethnic and anthropological tropes.

1947, however, signaled the creation of the state of Israel, and has come to signify a definitive break of Moroccan Jewry from two paternalistic relationships: that of the Muslim majority and Jewish minority, and that of the French colonizer and "indigenous" protégé. 1940 will be taken as a hard date for this section's consideration of contemporary, primary written materials in that it was the year in which Casablanca journal *L'Avenir Illustré* ceased circulation and it implies more recognizably the escalation of World War II. *L'Avenir Illustré*'s archives will be the subject of much of this section's literary analysis, and as such this study is most telling of a period from

⁷² That is, the granting of French citizenship en masse to all of, or at least a significant majority of Morocco's Jews.

approximately 1926-1940 in regards to the colonial association of Moroccan Judaism with modernity.

Given the complex web of politics and migrations that realigned Moroccan Jews en masse towards Israel, this section will not seek to detail the socioeconomic details of Morocco's Jewish diaspora. Indeed, Jewish migration from Morocco to Israel would comprise a study unto itself and can be distinguished from the French colonial project in Morocco and from the "multiple modernities"—wherein Zionism is included—that characterized Moroccan Judaism in the 1920s and 30s. This section will look more specifically at the interplay of European and Jewish discourses over modernity that took place in Morocco's growing urban centers of the early 20th century. Accordingly, this chapter will discuss the role of the colonial city as a stage for increased European-Jewish interaction during the protectorate era before delving into how *L'Avenir Illustré's* contributors imagined the role of Moroccan Judaism in the French colonial empire and on the international stage.

Associés ou Français?

As Carlos de Nesry's narrative demonstrates, the French Protectorate in Morocco may only be said to have detached Moroccan Jews from Morocco in the sense that colonialism implied a "motionless emigration." Unlike Algerian Jews, who in essence became French citizens with the passage of the Crémieux Decree in 1870, Morocco's Jewish population saw no such concessions.⁷³ In name, Morocco's Jewish

⁷³ Stillman, Norman A, "Frenchmen, Jews, or Arabs? The Jews of the Arab World between European Colonialism, Zionism, and Arab Nationalism", in *Judaism and Islam*, (pp. 123-138) pg. 128.

population—estimated at 250,000 in 1952⁷⁴--remained “indigenous”, or rather “Indigène” like the Jews of Tunisia.⁷⁵ Daniel Schroeter explains that after 1912, the notion of “Berber Jews” was instrumental to the racial, ethnic and religious divisions that underlay French colonial rule in Morocco. Berber Jews, accordingly, helped legitimate colonial rule and were believed to be “more amendable and assimilable to French rule [than Muslims], thus anticipating the implementation of the policy that the Berbers would be governed by their own ‘customary’ law rather than Islamic law.” Contradictorily, he notes, such notions of Jewish indigenesness legitimated the rejection of French citizenship for Moroccan Jews which was itself based in fears of repeating the Algerian “mistake.”⁷⁶ French colonial policy in Morocco, thus, decisively denied the extension of French citizenship to the country’s Jews. Hubert Lyautey, Morocco’s first Resident General, was the foremost proponent of “conquest and rule through association with traditional local elites.” With as little overt restructuring of the colony as possible, the “Lyautey Method” stressed, existing political and social structures would be retained to the end that French goals would be met with a minimum of force. Social dislocation, political dissidence, and *déracination*⁷⁷ were the primary fears of the colonial administration.⁷⁸ Accordingly, Moroccan Jews would be targeted as intermediary agents of civilization where force was disagreeable. Officially,

⁷⁴ Miège, *Maroc* 53-55.

⁷⁵ A. Lanly, *Le français d’Afrique du Nord: Étude linguistique*, (Paris : Presses universitaires de France, 1962) pg. 206.

⁷⁶ Daniel J. Schroeter, “The Shifting Boundaries of Moroccan Jewish Identities”, in *Jewish Social Studies* (15.1, 145-164. Project MUSE. Web. <https://muse.jhu.edu/>), pg. 147.

⁷⁷ Lit. “uprooting”, this French term may refer more accurately in this framework to the “motionless emigration” of intellectuals and middle-upper class Jews. The term implies here the separation or detachment of Moroccan Jewry from a purely Moroccan national identity.

⁷⁸ Spencer Segalla, “Georges Hardy and Educational Ethnology in French Morocco, 1920-26”, in *French Colonial History* (4, 171-190. Michigan State University Press, 2003), pg. 172.

Lyautey's reorganization of Morocco's Jewish communities was minor and only effected by means of local figureheads.⁷⁹

In real terms, it was not French politics that caused any true detachment of Moroccan Jews from their Muslim compatriots but rather the creation of the state of Israel. Of 12.5 million inhabitants in 1964, Morocco's Jewish population had dropped to 100,000.⁸⁰ By 1987, the number had reached 7,000, reduced so because of post-colonial migration to Israel and, in part, to France.⁸¹ Prior to 1947, explains historian André Adam, Casablanca had become a major point of migration for Moroccan Jews—75,000 Jews were living in Casablanca by 1960—but the creation of the state of Israel provided a real disruption in the national identity of Moroccan Jews. He asserts:

Yet the decisive blow was made on the night of November 29th, 1947 when the Assembly of the United Nations gave its approval of the creation of the State of Israel. The event was saluted with a mystical fervor by all the Jews of Morocco, to the base of the valleys of the Atlas, to the edges of the Saharan desert. It seemed that the ancient hope had taken form and that finally, after a millenary wait, the reunion in Jerusalem would cease to be a pious wish and become a reality. From that moment, "going up" to Casablanca was perhaps, in the penumbra of the simple conscience, only the first step in returning to the Promise Land.⁸²

1947 seems to have solidified Casablanca's place as a destination for Moroccan Jews, whether a in the form of a terminus or merely a waypoint. Nonetheless, Israel remained largely a hope for Moroccan Jews until the formal end of colonialism in 1956. Adam

⁷⁹ This is not to say that Lyautey and the French colonial administration did not enact reforms in view of "liberating" Morocco's Jewish communities, but the fact remains that France did not grant citizenship en masse to Morocco's Jews. Further, this study has the explicit goal of highlighting literary and journalistic appeals to modernity as an imagined reality. For these purposes, official decrees and statistics have been consulted purely as background material.

⁸⁰ Miège, *Maroc*, 52.

⁸¹ Roy Mittelman, *The Meknes Mellah and Casablancon Ville Nouvelle: A Comparative Study of Two Jewish Communities in Transformation* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, Ph.D., 1987), pg. 5.

⁸² Adam, *Casablanca*, pp. 199-200.

explains that “until independence, a rather small number of those who left [their hometowns] went all the way [to Israel]”. Many Jewish émigrés, in fact, found greater opportunities for employment and schooling as well as a flourishing Jewish community in Casablanca.⁸³

What characterized Casablanca after 1912 were its diversity and its substantial European population.

Year	Total Population	Total Moroccan Population	Moroccan Muslim Population	Moroccan Jewish Population	Foreign Population
1897	20,500	20,000	16,000	4,000	500
1907	25,000	24,000	19,000	5,000	1,000
1913	59,000	39,000	30,000	9,000	20,158
1917	75,000	47,000	-	-	28,000
1921	97,083	61,800	48,790	13,010	35,283
1926	106,608	71,624	52,134	19,490	34,984
1931	160,418	105,127	85,167	19,960	55,291
1936	257,430	184,668	146,062	38,606	72,762
1951-52	682,388	547,698	472,915	74,783	134,690
1960	965,277	850,806	778,780	72,026	114,471

Table 1: Population growth in Casablanca, including European, Muslim and Jewish communities. See André Adam, *Casablanca*, pg. 200.

⁸³ Adam, *Casablanca*, 200.

During the protectorate, Casablanca was characterized by rapid growth on a scale unparalleled by any other Moroccan city. The city's large European population after 1912—in relation to both other cities and the Muslim population—parallels such characteristics of its Jewish population. From as early as 1913—in which year Miège places the presence of the French military in Morocco at 70,000 men—Europeans had begun to take up permanent residence on a large scale in Morocco. Miège suggests that after reaching 80,000 in 1921 and 450,000 after World War II, the European population across the country was over 500,000 on the eve of decolonization. If France was generally an absentee on the subject of Jewish naturalization and Israel constituted a real alternative to assured Moroccan and potential French citizenship, the European population was profoundly connected to the standards of development by which Moroccan Jews measured themselves. Casablanca, for its role as a stage of European-Jewish interaction during the protectorate, is where one might expect debates of Jewish modernity taken on most vehemently. Throughout the colonial period, what historian David Cohen calls *Occidentalisation* took its greatest strides in a growing albeit restricted minority; the notable, “superior” class able to find residence outside of traditionally Jewish quarters.⁸⁴

Ethnic life in Morocco, one can assume, remained compartmentalized to the degree that distinctions continued to be made between the European *Ville Nouvelle*, the *mellah* and the Muslim *medina* as Europeans migrated to Morocco's cities. The growth of a strong European presence in Morocco's largest cities meant that “many Europeans

⁸⁴ David Cohen, “Le processus D’Occidentalisation de la Communauté Juive de Casablanca (1890-1940)”, in *les relations intercommunautaires juives en méditerranée occidentale: XIIIe-XXe siècles*, (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1982, pp.141-153) pg. 147.

lived without professional contacts with Moroccans.” In that learning French procured a particular advantage for non-European Moroccans in finding work and Europeans learned Arabic only in restricted cases, Morocco’s European settler population reinforced distinctions of modern and traditional culture that had begun to see use in the 19th century by foreign visitors and residents.⁸⁵ Moroccan Jews, nonetheless, began to occupy a space of ambiguity as separate both from Europeans and Muslims.

By the time of André Adam’s study of Casablanca in 1968, the Jewish community, “containing a proportion of illiterate individuals lower than the Muslims, doesn’t offer insurmountable obstacles to statistic conquests: [the Jewish population] can be counted very quickly by flyers, exactly like Europeans”⁸⁶. As for Muslims, he continues, the same is not true. French linguist Marcel Cohen, who published a study on the Arabic dialect of Jews in Algiers in 1912, notes the following:

Les juifs, assimilés civilement et politiquement aux éléments venus de France, s’assimilent aussi socialement et linguistiquement ; le costume indigène est devenu très rare et aura disparu avant une génération ; les institutions telles que le mariage à l’ancienne mode sont en égale régression ; enfin, le langage, indice excellent de l’assimilation d’une population, montre une transformation violente.

Jews, civilly and politically assimilated to French settlers, also assimilate socially and linguistically; indigenous dress has become very rare and will have disappeared within a generation; institutions such as marriage in the old style are equally in regression; finally, language, an excellent indication of the assimilation of a population, is showing a violent transformation.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Adam, *Casablanca*, 622.

⁸⁶ Adam, *Casablanca*, 145

⁸⁷ Marcel Cohen, *Le Parler Arabe des Juifs d’Alger*, (Paris: Librairie Ancienne H. Champion, 1912), pg. 10.

Colonial assimilation, in this case synonymous with Occidentalizing, stipulated the complete replacement of former customs for those of the European even if physical surroundings and religious identities did not change.

What did foster cross-cultural exchange between Europeans and Jews, however, was a loose class system based upon ethnicity and wealth. Wealth and education, foremost, were the determining factors of where one lived and could supersede religion as the primary factor in community organization. In Casablanca, from approximately 1900, the growth of European settlers and the construction of a European quarter began to rival the *mellah*, surrounded as it was by ramparts in the interior of the medina. Often of “Arab style” with a tiled inner court, Muslim homes within the medina were increasingly abandoned after World War I by wealthier families in favor of houses “identical in style to modern French accommodations of the period.” In suite, middle-class families of Casablanca’s *mellah* began to take up housing during the 1930s in the modest but modern lodgings of quarters formerly occupied by Italians and Spanish Christians. Unlike the French, English and Germans who constituted “la classe supérieure”⁸⁸ of Casablanca, Italians and Spaniards occupied the middle class among Europeans. As opposed to Moroccan Jews, who continued to live within separate communities when not privileged by wealth and education, the various European elements of Casablanca’s population were often quickly assimilated into the dominating French presence.⁸⁹

Seeing a constant influx of both Muslims and Jews predominantly from rural communities and the country’s south, Casablanca experienced a growth that retained

⁸⁸ Lit. “The superior class”, may be translated as “the upper class”.

⁸⁹ See Adam, *Casablanca*, Cohen *Le Processus d’Occidentalisation*, 143.

sizeable European, Muslim and non-European Jewish communities.⁹⁰ Spatial boundaries appear to have generally remained rigid between Muslims, Jews and Europeans. The primary intermediary between non-European Jews and non-Jewish Europeans was a Jewish European community, estimated in Casablanca to have been at its peak around 11,500, or 15% of Casablanca's Jews.⁹¹ It is this population that Chévrillon and others associated with the AIU's instructors and directors, and it was European Jews that, according to Adam, spearheaded many community organizations and Zionist efforts within the city. He asserts:

Plus évolués, plus instruits, moins pauvres aussi que les Maghrébins, ils ont contribué, non seulement de leur bourse mais de leur personne aux œuvres nombreuses et souvent admirables qui encadrent la communauté israélite de Casablanca. Ils ont été pour elle une porte ouverte sur le monde extérieur—et pas seulement sur la France—et se sont faits les agents très efficaces de son occidentalisation progressive.

More *evolved*, more *educated*, also *less poor* than Moroccans, they contributed, not only with their personal spending but with their *character* to the numerous and often admirable works that encompassed the Jewish community of Casablanca. They were for it an open door to the outside world—not only to France—and were effective agents of the community's progressive Occidentalizing.⁹² [My italics]

The role of European Jewry in development efforts in Morocco dates back to the 19th century, and has been touched upon by a handful of academics.⁹³ For the purposes of

⁹⁰ Adam, *Casablanca*, 184-5

⁹¹ Adam, *Casablanca*, 196-7

⁹² Adam, *Casablanca*, 197.

⁹³ See Michael M. Laskier *The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco: 1862-1962*, (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1983), Georges Weill, "L'Alliance Israélite Universelle et l'émancipation sociale et culturelle des communautés méditerranéennes", in *les relations intercommunautaires juives en méditerranée occidentale: XIIIe-XXe siècles* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1982, pp. 243-257) and Joan Gardner Roland, *The Alliance Israelite Universelle and French Policy in North Africa, 1860-1918* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc., 1970) for further reading.

this chapter, however, it should suffice to unpack some of the language used to contextualize foreign intervention in Moroccan Jewish affairs.

A definition of Moroccan Jewish *occidentalisation* can be found in the degree to which Jews actively integrated with Europeans. For historian Doris Bensimon-Donath, the Alliance Israélite Universelle's entry into Moroccan Jewish communities from the 19th century was the identifiable initiation of Moroccan Jewry to the standards—regarding education, language, dress, and community organization—of the Occident. The protectorate was a “promise of liberation” because it imposed a European academic and governmental heritage in official terms and implicated the relatively free migration of Spanish, Italian, French, English and German settlers to the colony. By defining the encounter of Moroccan Jews and “occidental civilization” as one of “liberation”, Donath is referring to the increasingly apparent integration of the former into the field of cultural and philosophical standards that the latter represented, whether by imposition or emulation.

Hardly, unless in reference to AIU leaders and the European Jews involved in Jewish community organizations, can it be said that Europeans living in Morocco sought active involvement with Jewish communities or customs of their own accord. That is to say, the boundaries of European-Jewish cultural space were largely only broken down to the degree that a Moroccan Jew could and had actively chosen to associate with European standards of dress, education, language, etc., and disassociated with those traditions with exemplified being Moroccan. Rather than define the character of the “emancipated” Jew from the “un-emancipated” as has been done in much of the postcolonial scholarship on Moroccan Judaism, this study focuses upon the ways and

particularly the discourse by which *la civilisation française* was both propagated and accessed.⁹⁴

Language and the agency of development

The acculturation of Jewish communities was affected in large part by schooling, a settler presence, and “given a certain level of evolution”, cinema, radio and the press. No doubt, Europeanizing required a certain amount of wealth and depended upon location as well as access to the “tools” of modernity.⁹⁵ A primary tool by which individuals sought acculturation was the French language. The links between the French language and Occidentalizing have been noted to the degree that linguist Joseph Chetrit, in a detailed study on Jewish languages in North Africa, confidently accepts changes in Jewish discourse and language choice in the 19th and 20th centuries as the result of processes of modernization. Linguistic changes—notably increased Judeo-Arabic and French bilingualism—were rooted in the expansionist aims of European powers and the resulting contact of Europeans with a merchant elite and diplomatic *protégés*. Chetrit notes that French became “fairly quickly a language of prestige, despite being reserved at the beginning [of the 19th century] to a minority and has formed rather rapidly a new Jewish diglossia.”⁹⁶ Generally, where—before 1912—AIU schools did not exist or in certain communities, Hebrew retained an importance in modernization movements which cannot be said to have diminished after 1912 and certainly not after 1947.

⁹⁴ Doris Bensimon-Donath, *Évolution du Judaïsme Marocain sous le Protectorat français: 1912-1956*. (Paris: Mouton & Co, 1963), pg. 120.

⁹⁵ Bensimon-Donath *Évolution*, pg. 120.

⁹⁶ Joseph Chetrit, *Diglossie, Hybridation et Diversité Intra-Linguistique: Études socio-pragmatiques sur les langues juives, le Judéo-Arabe et le Judéo-Berbère*, (Paris: Éditions Peeters, 2007), pp. 379-384.

It cannot be said that Arabic held nothing of a political interest, as evidenced by Azouz Cohen's "Appel à la Population Israélite" in 1933.⁹⁷ Within his appeal, Cohen entreats his coreligionaries to heed the utility of speaking and learning Arabic as an academic language. His notice reveals an anxiety, at least on the part of one Jew from Fes, over the mounting differences between modern, French-speaking Jews and a Moroccan Muslim population. Cohen posits reclamation of Moroccan nationalism through language, and without refusing Franco-Israeli schools he entreats Moroccan Jews to demand instruction in Arabic as a national community.

⁹⁷ Azouz Cohen, *Appel A la Population Israelite du Maroc* [c. 1933]. Lithograph on paper. Moroccan Jewish Museum, Casablanca.

Fig. 1: Azouz Cohen's "Appel A La Population Israélite du Maroc". Found in the Museum of Moroccan Judaism, Casablanca.

From as early as the mid-19th century French may have become the first language of Jewish elites throughout Morocco's cities, but linguistic diversity well into the 20th century testifies to the continued diversity of Morocco's Jewish communities in fact of a strong Occidentalizing force in the form of European settlers.⁹⁸

Making sense of the complex linguistic diversity of Moroccan Jews during this period is complicated by the fact that language was tied to location and varied from city to city, and between communities within a city itself. Generally, Morocco's Muslim population is broken into the categories of Berber and Arab, often self-defined identities of communities themselves with deep historic roots. The contemporary American ethnologist Nahum Slouschz—who was requisitioned by the French colonial government to study Morocco's Jews—analyzes Moroccan Jewry in a 1927 account by means of his own narrative and brings a set of anthropological categorizations to his description of Moroccan Jewry. The fact that Slouschz finds the need to define Moroccan communities under ethnic and linguistic terms testifies to the longstanding particularities of local Jewish identities.

Nonetheless, Judeo-Arabic might be identified as a traditional lingua franca of Moroccan Jews, for even Jewish communities located in Berber-dominated regions appear to have been bi- or even tri-lingual. Slouschz, for example, explains that his servant Yamin—from Tagmut in the Atlas's Berber speaking region, spoke Arabic,

⁹⁸ Chetrit, *Diglossie*, pp. 379-384.

Berber and a “most curious variety of Hebrew.”⁹⁹ Hebrew-Arabic diglossia dominated Moroccan Judaism’s linguistic situation into the turn of the century in spite of Iberian *expulsado* communities having reached as far as Demnat.¹⁰⁰ In Morocco’s capital cities and into the country’s interior, Judeo-Arabic connected widely dispersed communities; connected to Hebrew by means of ritual and religious scholarship and to Arabic through intercommunity communication.

The degree to which Jewish languages in Morocco borrowed from a plethora of sources—not dissimilar to Muslim communities—arguably facilitated a kind of dual identity through French-Arabic bilingualism. Of Algiers in 1912, Marcel Cohen explains:

Le type général de l’évolution est la substitution brusque et intégrale d’une langue à l’autre....Souvent entre individus également capables de parler les deux langues il se poursuit des conversations ou le passage se fait brusquement d’une langue à l’autre, pour revenir ensuite à la langue première ; assez fréquemment dans ce cas les émotions peuvent influencer sur le choix des parlers : la colère fait facilement réparaître l’arabe chez des individus qui s’expriment de sang-froid en bon français. Le mélange peut se faire de phrase à phrase, de partie de phrase à partie de phrase ; enfin des mots isolés d’une des deux langues peuvent se rencontrer éparpillés dans une phrase prononcée dans l’autre langue...

The general character of evolution is the brusque and integral substitution of one language for another....Often between individuals equally capable of speaking the two languages [French and Arabic] one might see conversations where a passage is made brusquely from one to the other, finally returning to the first language; rather frequently in this case emotions are invested in the choice of dialect: anger easily causes Arabic to reappear amongst individuals to express themselves in cold-blood in French. The mix can be made from sentence to sentence, from part of a sentence to part of a sentence; finally isolated words from each of the two languages are found scattered in a sentence spoken in the other language...

⁹⁹ Slouschz, *Travels*, 461

¹⁰⁰ Slouschz, *Travels*, 456

The disruption of Judeo-Arabic in North Africa by French usage thus crossed traditional spatial boundaries and was consciously facilitated by the speaker. Of course, one's engagement with the French language in colonial North Africa was defined, or internalized rather, by an existing hierarchy. Cohen notes, for instance, "a certain accent" in the "lower Jewish classes" of Algiers.¹⁰¹ Even in 1927, Nahum Slouschz's account makes no mention of French or even Spanish in use among the communities of the middle Atlas. By comparison, the 18,000 Jews of Marrakesh, who formerly toiled "unmercifully to eke out a bare existence" and remained tied to "The strongest superstitions and customs", have been, in Slouschz's words, ushered into a "new era" by French occupation. Linguistically, Slouschz's account hints to the fact that at the very least, the Alliance Israélite Universelle's alumni society in Marrakesh is foremost francophone and clad in European dress, much as the "best representatives" of Tangier's Jewish community "speak French and Spanish perfectly." Suffice to say, Morocco's "best"—French speaking—representatives are to the foreigner invariably "eager to be admitted to the benefits of modern civilization."¹⁰² Nahum Slouschz's *Travels in North Africa*, valuable as it is for its illumination of the linguistic variance of Morocco's Jews in 1927, clearly associates Western languages and customs with modernity as an active force—a foreign importation—favoring those eager for emancipation.

The active exportation of French by Europeans is by no means a falsity, for French-style schooling and the AIU were responsible for the rise of effective bilingualism amongst Morocco's Jews. The AIU and protectorate-era education

¹⁰¹ Cohen, *Le Parler Arabe*, pg. 12.

¹⁰² Slouschz. *Travels*, 443-4, 381, 444.

systems, for instance, remained subject to European standards of education. At the turn of the century, French and Hebrew were taught side by side in AIU schools, and by the advent of protectorate AIU schools had functioned in Fes for thirty years as a prestigious form of education. Around 1000-1500 of Fes's Jews spoke French in 1900, Simon Levy estimates, with certain individuals speaking it suitably enough to be correspondents for journals based in Tangier and Paris.¹⁰³

Despite the fact that many only reached primary school, Jewish schoolchildren discovered a “civilization very different from that in which he lived” by means of French education and French books. Not only was Western civilization a new model to imitate present through educators and books, it formulated the basis of a nationwide Moroccan Jewish education system. Each day was begun with a recitation of the phrase “Nos ancêtres, les Gaulois...” and the school imparted one with an internalization of the words “Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité.”¹⁰⁴ The active importation of French by foreigners appears to have challenged attachment to traditional community solidarity, for generational gaps revealed a process of unofficial and unequal bilingualism:

Still quite tied to the Mellah where the grandparents and part of the family live, [Fes's “Jews of the Ville Nouvelle”] are bilingual amongst family but speak only French in the streets, at school and recently at the Lycée Mixte¹⁰⁵. The first generation has a double culture. The second is much more francophone than arabophone. This generation even communicates with the several Muslims who go to the Lycée Mixte in French.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Simon Levy, “Particularités phonétiques et morphologiques des parlers juifs de Fès”, in *Juifs de Fes*, 204.

¹⁰⁴ Bensimon-Donath, *evolution*, 120-121.

¹⁰⁵ Literally, “Mixed High School”

¹⁰⁶ Levy, “Particularités phonétiques”, 244.

The movement of Jews into the *Ville Nouvelle*, Simon Levy explains, created a new category of Moroccan Jews distinguished by their place of habitation, which itself was intimately linked to language. In Meknes, the 1930s and 1940s saw the “voluntary transfer” of some Jewish families into new European quarters, whereby “French became the primary language of a growing portion of the Jewish community.” Only the presence of elderly family members, who had often never formally learned French and communicated in Judeo-Arabic, prevented French from becoming the sole language of “Frenchified” families.¹⁰⁷

Despite the presence of intellectual elites in Meknes from the 19th century, it cannot be said that language opposed Jewish tradition. The city’s intelligentsia, rather than expressing itself principally in French, was often self-taught in French and read new Hebraic literature from Europe at the turn of the century. Chetrit defines their association with the “combat” of modernization as one split between conservation and integration:

...They juggled an established harmony springing from the certain advantages of modernity and the no less certain prevalence of tradition.¹⁰⁸

French-Arabic bilingualism was widespread, but by no means universally embraced by Moroccan Jews as the route to modernity. Skepticism towards European modernity continued to qualify Jewish accounts throughout the protectorate, and Moroccan Jews remained in large part theoretically separate from Europeans because of the continued importance of transnational Jewish or even nationalistic Moroccan sentiments as

¹⁰⁷ Chetrit, *Diglossie*, 443.

¹⁰⁸ Chetrit, *Diglossie*, 443

expressed through ties to Arabic and Hebrew as alternatives to the monolithically French “tools” of modernity.¹⁰⁹

Jewish responses to modernity did not invariably imply real cross-community cooperation in the socio-linguistic realities of the protectorate. Bensimon-Donath asserts that despite all, “the [modernizing] fervor even of Jewish society in Morocco was not definitive.” Following Marshall Lyautey’s example, French administrators maintained a definite compartmentalization of the different ethnic groups in Morocco. The construction of specifically European quarters separate from traditional ones paralleled the maintenance of three educational systems: one European, one Jewish and one Muslim. Each group and, according to Donath, particularly the Jewish community, remained characterized by “internal cohesion.” Of Morocco’s Occidentalizing Jews, she notes that “social pressure remained a reality. The individual could neither abstract himself from his group nor definitively detach from it.”¹¹⁰ Like the *Ville Nouvelle*, radio and press, French was a tool by which one might Occidentalize, although French as a linguistic importation was asserted as a tool that necessitated willingness for emancipation. Thus, even widespread Jewish “Frenchification” did not imply being French.

Jewish association with French in Morocco demonstrates that like the other “tools” of modernity, language was a standard of occidental and evolved status which required an active role on the part of the native Moroccan. The European settler, already initiated into modernity by means of birth, was more often than not a passive, conceptual element with which modernizing Jews interacted both in real terms and in

¹⁰⁹ Bensimon-Donath, *évolution*, 122-127.

¹¹⁰ Bensimon-Donath, *évolution*, 128

psychological terms. Reversing the assumption that being Jewish or Muslim implied an innate adaptability, ignorance or association with modernity requires skepticism of *modérnité, évolution, and occidentalisation* as realities rather than the hopes of separate Moroccan and European communities.

L’Avenir Illustré

L’Avenir’s Foreign Correspondents: Instigating Reformation

While community structures reaffirmed a sense of ethnic hierarchy established well before the French Protectorate, Europeans did engage actively with Moroccan Jews in a discourse on development. The Casablanca newspaper, *L’Avenir Illustré*, founded in 1926 by Jonathan Thursz, himself originally a Polish Jew, provides an example of the rhetoric by which foreigners sought to inculcate Jewish communities into the various projects of modernity. The journal, a bi-monthly production for much of its tenure, is significant for the fact that it represents a crystallization of contact between Europeans and Moroccan Jews. Such contact manifest itself foremost in a set of appeals for Jewish modernity, but what defines *L’Avenir Illustré* as a tool of modernity is the diversity of hopes which its various contributors—European and non-European—attribute to development and in accordance with the journal’s namesake, to the future.

Parisian Charles-Henry Hirsch writes to the journal expressing his hope for the “fusion” of Jews in Morocco with the European and “indigenous” elements of the Cherifian Empire. Jews, for Hirsch, remain an in-between to be molded for the colonial mission. Writing to the journal, he expresses his hopes for the prosperity and happiness

of a diverse but united people under the banner of the French Republic.¹¹¹ Unity through an international French Republic is commonplace in European appeals within *L’Avenir Illustré*. French writer Jean Renaud envisions Thursz’s journal as a bridge, much like colonialism itself, by which Moroccan Jews will be able to enter “le temple de la Pensée Française qu’ils seront heureux de voir enfin telle qu’elle est—vierge des sectarismes ridicules, profondément et simplement accueillante” (“the temple of French Thought that they will be happy to finally see such as it is—virgin to ridiculous sectarianism, profoundly humane and simply welcoming.”)¹¹²

As with French soldier Paul Azan, who felt his heart fill with bitterness for the piteous state of Morocco’s Jews upon hearing the words “Vive la France” in a trip to Casablanca’s *Mellah* in 1911, a sense of national pride seems to have animated many of the modernizing narratives used to connect with Moroccan Jews.¹¹³ In open discourse—by means of a self-proclaimed Moroccan Jewish press—with Moroccan Jews, the heritage of Jewish emancipation in France of the 19th century is linked closely to “la Patrie Française.” A. Goulpen, a lawyer in Casablanca, implores his compatriots to enter “resolutely into this new tradition, complete with goodwill and justice.” Goulpen, presumably elite amongst Moroccan Jewry rather than European himself, places his hopes into France, which welcomes “like sons the Jews which want to love and serve her.” Through an enlargement and continuation of the colonial oeuvre, Goulpen asserts, the moral and social education of Jews might amend the fact that North African Jews are “moins socialement avancé qu’ailleurs” (“less socially advanced

¹¹¹ Charles-Henry Hirsh, *L’Avenir Illustré* (AI) 7/22/1926, pg. 5.

¹¹² Jean Renaud, AI, 1/11/27

¹¹³ Azan, Paul, *Souvenirs de Casablanca*, (Paris: Hachette, 1911), 118-119.

than elsewhere.”)¹¹⁴ Not only, then, did discourses of modernity cross lines of *colon-indigène*, but they are marked by an occidental-oriental relationship which identifies an ideal in France.

In 1915, at the height of the First World War the editors of Tangier journal *La Liberté* echo a devotion to French paternalism and recast French ideals within a broader struggle which implicates Moroccan Jewry. The editor writes:

Une humanité nouvelle va éclore du sein du drame sanglant qui bouleverse l'Univers. Le Judaïsme en espère un avenir meilleur. Son émancipation commencée par la Révolution Française sera complétée, nous voulons croire, par ceux qui luttent en ce moment pour le triomphe du Droit et de la Liberté. Nous sollicitons la collaboration de toutes les bonnes volontés et nous serons reconnaissants à tous ceux qui voudront être avec nous dans l'œuvre que nous entreprenons.

A new humanity will hatch from the bloody drama which is shaking the universe. Judaism places in it its hopes for a better future, and we believe that those fighting at this moment for Law and Liberty will aid the completion of the emancipation begun by the French Revolution. We solicit the collaboration of all willing and we will recognize all who are willing to stand with us in the project we are undertaking.

La Liberté's appeal to its readership touches on a variety of sentiments: that of a Jewish readership, an audience supportive of French “Law and Liberty”, and one which identifies development with emancipation.¹¹⁵

Leon Abensour, a laureate of history and geography from France, employs language directed more squarely at Moroccan Judaism in encouraging its assimilation into “la Rome nouvelle, la France.” Abensour, in an article within *L'Avenir Illustré*, notes that (Dans l'évolution future que...l'Afrique du Nord doit poursuivre, les

¹¹⁴ A. Goulpen, AI 7/22/1926, pg. 4.

¹¹⁵ “Au Lecteurs” *La Liberté*, 6/18/1915.

Israélites sont appelés à jouer un très grand rôle. Sans doute, ils ne sont qu'une minorité, mais une minorité intelligente, active et dont les services passés sont garants des services futurs" ("In the future evolution that...North Africa must undergo, the Jews are called to play a very large role. Without doubt, they are only a minority, but an intelligent minority, active and one for which past services are the guarantee of future services.") Abensour links the histories of pre-Islamic Jewish tribes and Jewish aristocracy in Fes under the Almoravid and Saadien dynasties with a tradition of Jewish exceptionalism in Morocco. Of Jewish Algerians, Tunisians and Moroccans, Abensour asks, "Have they not largely contributed—a living example for their Muslim compatriots—to the diffusion of occidental civilization?" What characterizes Abensour's demand is a subtle inclusion of Moroccan Jews into the colonial project at the expense of a Muslim majority. Despite continued political, economic and political divisions between French "colons" and Jewish communities, Abensour extends French rights and traditions in an imagined, ideological sense that places the native Jew in charge of real community re-organization.¹¹⁶

In spite of the disparity not only between European Christians and Moroccan Jews but also between Moroccans and Algerian Jews—naturalized French citizens—Abensour encourages intellectual and political action. Not only is it a prescribed duty of "the French genius" that Moroccan Jews serve the French idea, but it is necessary, writes the author, to earn naturalization by putting a "faculty of adaptation" to use.¹¹⁷ Contributor J. Bielinky, a journalist and Russian émigré naturalized as a French citizen in 1927 addresses Jewish assimilation from a different angle. At the last congress of the

¹¹⁶ Léon Abensour, AI, 8/10/1927

¹¹⁷ Léon Abensour, AI, 8/10/1927

French Rabbinate, he explains, the question of assimilating Eastern European Jews, “bearing a very different mentality and culture,” into France’s Jewish tradition has come up. Bielinky’s faith in this tradition, one which is “foreign to any national or political conception imposed on Jewish actions” and was solidified ideologically by the French Revolution, is firm. France, for the author, is a “freely accepted framework” for the development of French Judaism and precludes the necessity for a Jewish state. Bielinky explains that “there is thus a serious and urgent work to take up in order separate Jewish immigrants from their mentality forged in the Ghettos of Eastern Europe.” While Bielinky addresses French Jews on the topic of Eastern European assimilation, it places the citizens of France and its colonial holdings into an occidental-oriental division that demands assimilation of the latter into the former. The placement of this piece in *L’Avenir Illustré* suggests that Thursz intended to define assimilation outside of a colonial framework for Morocco’s Jewish community.¹¹⁸

Fernand Corcos, a French Jew and Zionist leader, expresses through his article “Salut au Judaïsme Marocain!” a hope of currying Zionist favor and does so using a language of modernity and evolution. He expresses his hopes for the journal’s success and asserts that Thursz “a commence l’oeuvre nécessaire d’évolution rapide, de progress materiel, d’intégration du Judaïsme marocain dans le grand courant de revolution mondiale qui est un des phénomènes les plus étranges de notre surprenante époque” (“has begun the necessary work of rapid evolution, of material progress, of the integration of Moroccan Judaism in the larger current of worldwide revolution that is one of the most foreign phenomena of our surprising age.”) For Corcos, Zionism is “the

¹¹⁸ J. Bielinky, “Deux Judaïsmes”, AI, 9/30/1926.

grand work which...offers its infinite promises!” Between French association and Jewish “renaissance”, Moroccan Jews are the “carriers of a double torch”:

I give you all of my wishes, young Jewish Moroccans. You are entering a career as the continuers and producers of all the thoughts of your ancestors.

Israel, then, is evoked alongside France as an ideal of Jewish reorganization, and like France, Israel is employed as a theoretical project through which Moroccan Jews may find renaissance.¹¹⁹

A submission by the “Commission Centrale de l’Est de France du Keren Kayemeth de Israël” asserts that “Sephardic Judaism is beginning to be revided and to retake within international Judaism the important place which it formerly occupied and which it has earned by right.”¹²⁰ Felix Allouche, director of the Tunisian journal, *Réveil Juif*, describes Jewish internationalism as a race towards progress. He explains, “thanks to you and your collaborators, Moroccan Judaism, which is in fact lively, will not delay in becoming aware of itself and will take an honorable place in the universal concert of Jewish communities.” In doing so, Allouche reveals the pressures of modernization placed upon Moroccan Jews living in colonial cities such as Casablanca, Rabat, and Tangier. When the communal “home” is built, explains Allouche, Moroccan Jews cannot remain at a distance.¹²¹

Notably, the role of Moroccan Jews in both French and pan-Jewish projects of evolution is one of necessity. Modernity, as referenced within the contributions of foreigners to *L’Avenir Illustré*, is an appeal to Moroccan Jews to reconsider their

¹¹⁹ Fernand Corcos, “Salut au Judaïsme Marocain !”, AI, 9/30/1926.

¹²⁰ Felix Allouche, AI, 7/22/1926

¹²¹ Felix Allouche, AI, 7/22/1926

national identity and to act in the name of a community. A. Elmaleh, corresponding from the Jerusalem journal “Doar Hayom”, forcefully inculcates Moroccan Judaism into international narratives of development:

Appelé à un avenir brillant au point de vue du sionisme et de la reconstruction Palestinienne, Judaïsme marocain était dépourvu d’un organe qui lui fut propre et rédige par des écrivains et journalistes connaisseurs de sa vie et capables de la refléter fidèlement, tout en indiquant à nos coreligionnaires de ce pays le chemin vers la renaissance des valeurs spirituelles de notre peuple.

Called to a brilliant future within regards to Zionism and Palestinian reconstruction, Moroccan Judaism was gifted an organ from among its own and written by knowledgeable authors and journalists capable of faithfully reflecting everything in indicating to our *coréligionnaires* of this country to path towards renaissance and the spiritual values of our people.¹²²

The role of the foreigner in regards to Moroccan Judaism is invariably that of the instigator of modernity, while the Moroccan Jew is called to act and adapt to modernity’s demands. Yet further, *L’Avenir Illustré*’s European and non-Moroccan Jewish correspondents as well as an elite of Moroccan Jewish correspondents took part in a conceptual project of uniting Moroccan Judaism—a process of creating a modern nation.

Moroccan Judaism: Critiquing and Reforming a Community from Within

L’Avenir Illustré’s place as a newspaper—albeit one not widely circulated—in Casablanca with a broad audience of “Moroccan Jews” in mind is indicative of the

¹²² A. Elmaleh, AI, 9/30/1926.

ideological struggle which Jonathan Thursz had in mind. Thursz, a Polish native educated in Belgium who founded the newspaper in 1926 and represented Moroccan Jews at the worldwide Zionist Congress of 1933, looked to journalism for the consolidation of Moroccan Jewry under a banner of evolution. Of Judeo-Arabic newspapers during Morocco's fin-de-siècle, Joseph Chetrit identifies a connection between journalism and the internationalization of Moroccan Jewry:

As for the thematic domains which would henceforth characterize journalistic writings, they were widely concerned with the opening of the community to the exterior and a new realization of the socio-political situation. This encompassed [the community's] daily problems, the changes imposed often by the exterior and their implication for the community, reinforced contact with the European Jewish world, participation in general socio-cultural movements, and Jewish solidarity in a period of increased anti-Semitism. In short, this included anything that contributed to the abolition of a longstanding community autarky dominated by two traditional Jewish oligarchies; the rabbinic elite and the merchant elite.¹²³

Chetrit equates the international flavor of Judeo-Arabic journalism with socio-cultural modernization and cross-community participation. While Thursz's journal, directed at a French-speaking urban elite and run by a European Jew, does not exist in the same vein as these Judeo-Arabic journals, it can be seen not only as an appeal to a nationally identified Jewish community in Morocco but as a definite collaboration on the part of a European Jew with a politically "indigenous" population.

Thursz and *L'Avenir Illustré* more broadly represent the "more evolved, more educated" European Jewish contribution to the struggles of Casablanca's Jewish community and its "progressive occidentalization."¹²⁴ David Cohen repeats this sentiment in writing that "many of the initiators, the pioneers in [Casablanca's]

¹²³ Chetrit, *Diglossie*, 397

¹²⁴ Adam. *Casablanca*. 197.

economic domain or in the development of Jewish community institutions and the place they took within Moroccan Judaism were Jews that came from outside of Morocco.”¹²⁵ Thursz’s journal has been written into a history of modernization which implicated a connection between European and Moroccan Jewry that transcended more firm Christian-Jewish-Muslim boundaries.¹²⁶ What is lacking from much of the scholarship surrounding Morocco’s Jewish modernization, however, is a closer textual analysis of the methods and arguments employed by *L’Avenir Illustré*’s editors. As a close reading of identifiably European contributions and “messages” to *L’Avenir Illustré* has revealed, modernity was an ideological tool employed in instigating support for transnational projects—both French colonists and Zionists seem to have clued into the political power of “modernity.” An analysis of the editorial board’s responses to these demands and the character of identifiably Moroccan submissions will afford a perspective of how modernity as a dialogue morphed along ethnic boundaries.

Certainly, *L’Avenir Illustré*’s orchestrators were in contact with Jewish organizations and journals across Europe and the Middle East, including Palestine. *L’Avenir Illustré*’s editors¹²⁷ devoted pages not only to European congresses and later, to the Second World War, but also to the affairs of Palestine, including local economics and migration as well as policy. Its ruminations on more local Moroccan political, economic and social affairs are, in large part, editorial summaries and restricted above all to the Jewish populations of the country’s most populous cities. The question of begging among Moroccan Jews, for example, incites a response from the editors. The

¹²⁵ Cohen. *Le Processus D’Occidentalisation*, 144

¹²⁶ See Laskier, Bensimon-Donath.

¹²⁷ The journal’s editors will be referred to as its editors or merely “Thursz”

journal follows, in one instance, a “Congress of minorities in Geneva.” It is of note that “before the opening of the Congress...a special conference on Jewish minorities which will last three days will be organized.”¹²⁸

Although the journal’s Zionist tendencies suggest a lack of association with the French colonial empire, interest in Europe can be clearly defined by the journal’s attention to pan-Jewish movements in Europe. Nonetheless, Casablanca’s Moroccan Jewish communities cannot be said themselves to have ignored international Jewish affairs. The “Chronique Locale” from July 22nd, 1926 commemorates the 22nd anniversary of Theodore Herzl, founder of Keren Kayemeth and the “Zionist Organization”, noting that “The Central Commission of K.K.L. of Casablanca has informed us that it is offering, on this occasion, a subscription in favor of the reforestation of Palestine, subscription which carries the name of Theodore Herzl.” The city’s Maghen David Society, it is also explained, had begun preparations for a campaign supporting the diffusion of the Hebrew language in Morocco.¹²⁹ Through local community organizations, it is more than likely that at least Casablanca’s Jewish population felt a sense—however faint—of connection to Zionist affairs in Europe, to the Hebrew language and to the territory of Palestine itself.

One can see a distinct hope for the collective destiny of Moroccan Jews in the editorial board’s pieces. For example, Thursz outlines his hope for Morocco’s Jewish communities to look critically at their past and judge themselves and their accomplishments for “the utility of these efforts and the fecundity of this task.” That task, implicitly, is one of self-critique and self-inspired *evolution*. In recognition of

¹²⁸ AI, 7/22/26

¹²⁹ AI, 7/22/26

evolution already undergone, Thursz looks to France and pays homage to the “infusion of [Moroccan] culture and French civilization...that benevolent influence.” Yet Thursz, in his dedication to Jewish renovation in Morocco, posits a unification of modernization projects:

Nous n’hésitons pas à rendre l’hommage le plus fervent à la sincérité et à l’élévation de cette interprétation de nos destinées. Mais, nous croyons, et nous l’avons prouvé dans nos écrits et dans toutes nos activités, que cet idéal ne saurait souffrir de la recherche d’une autre idéal qui doit en être le support, sinon le complément

We do not hesitate to pay our most fervent respects to the sincerity and elevation of this interpretation of our destinies. But we believe, and we have proved such in our writings and in all of our activities, that this ideal would not suffer in the search for another idea which might be its support, if not its complement.

That “complement” to French civilization is, quite simply, Judaism. Thursz hopes to unify a discourse of modernity based upon the French heritage and the Moroccan character of the protectorate’s Jewish community.¹³⁰

How Thursz employs a duty of confraternity in his articles is indicative of how he fuses Moroccan Judaism both to a French heritage and to a traditionally Moroccan heritage. He asserts, “Remain Jewish, that is the best gage that you will become excellent Frenchmen!” He links rhetoric of tradition with one of modernity by redefining Moroccan Judaism under French auspices:

Nous avons...une tradition, en quelque sorte personnelle, à garder puisqu’elle aboutit, par sa pente naturelle, à la tradition française dont nous avons tous les droits de nous réclamer...Nous proposons à nos frères du Maroc la renaissance de Sion comme un exemple et nous leur disons « Ce que nos frères de race ont fait, tout seuls, dans leur vieille patrie après tant d’années d’oppression, ne le pouvez-vous faire ici, portes sur les bras maternels de la grande France ? »

¹³⁰ *Notre Cinquième Année*, AI 1/9/30

We have...somewhat of a personal tradition to guard preciously because it will lead, due to its natural inclination, to the French tradition of which we have all the rights to claim for ourselves....We propose to our Moroccan brothers the renaissance of Zion as an example and we say to them, "What our Jewish brothers have done, by themselves, in their old fatherland after so many years of oppression, can we not do the same here, carried by the maternal arms of the great France?"

Without hostility to France, Thursz targets the Jewish population to recognize an offering of modernity veiled in the occidental-oriental discourses of French colonists. In proposing that Moroccan Judaism can undergo a renaissance of its own equivalent to Zionist movements internationally, however, Thursz is adjusting an established view of France as a civilization at odds with the orient, so that all of Morocco's Jews might recognize a duty both in being French subjects and in being Jewish.¹³¹

Throughout many of his editorial pieces, Thursz presents France alongside Judaism as a reformed ideal of renovation and renaissance. Despite a faith in Jewish evolution, Thursz expresses a degree of dissatisfaction with the realities of modernization. In an article entitled "Y-a-t-il une question juive au Maroc?", Thursz defends the cohesion of Morocco's Jewish communities and argues that the crisis of Jewish detachment from modern nationhood comes from a "lack of zealotry." Thursz explains that having both demanded that Jewish communities be released from Muslim jurisdiction and noted that conservatism of community leaders has maintained the community in a state of "regrettable inferiority", a Jewish "question" does exist in Morocco. Addressing what was presumably a restricted Jewish elite, Thursz explains the following:

¹³¹ *Notre Cinquième Année*, AI 1/9/30

You want the evolution of your people: then aid those who strive to attain it and facilitate it. You want naturalization en masse: prepare the masses for the role which you expect of them.¹³²

Thursz's writing responds to a set of assumptions founded by Europeans around the notion of France, but he appears to have been grounded in the concerns of a section of Moroccan Jews to the extent that he demands a real response from the community to the philosophy of the foreigner.

In an editorial piece entitled "La Nécessaire Évolution", Thursz proposes that Jewish families facilitate contact with French "progress" through enrollment strictly in French schools. He asks, "If we sincerely hope that our children, carried like us by an irresistible evolution, be prepare to live and act in the framework of French culture and institutions, why would we search elsewhere than in French institutions at the source of French culture?" Thursz employs both modernizing language when referring to France and moral language when defending the Jewish identities of Moroccan Jews. He notes:

We do not forget that our youth needs, alongside French culture, a specifically Jewish culture, without which it would risk finding itself isolated, without attachment to its own tradition, without a link to the moral and social traditions of the fatherland of their election.¹³³

In addressing Moroccan Jews, Thursz cautiously promotes French culture and Judaism as complementary ideals by which a community may collectively modernize. His adaptation of modernism into the political aims of a Moroccan Jewish community reveals the balance which he, as a European Jew, sought to impress upon his readership.

Thursz sees within a category of his coreligionaries in Morocco a group undistinguishable from French nationals, yet the rejection of mass naturalization in

¹³² *Notre Cinquième Année*, AI 1/9/30, pg. 2.

¹³³ *La nécessaire évolution*, AI, 2/28/30.

Morocco plagues any claim of real Jewish modernization. The solution for Thursz is thus to “multiply the number of these candidates worthy of acquiring naturalization.”¹³⁴

Thursz’s conclusion minimizes the problems of Moroccan modernizing to the question of nationality and does so by identifying potential candidates for modernity in similar fashion to Chévrillon. By 1935, however, Thursz appears to have turned to the real separations between Jewish communities and the French government’s ideals:

The amelioration of the social and moral level of the masses will be best achieved through the habitat. In effect, habitation and hygiene are the sole factors which can save the population from moral decline, which itself is a consequence of potent physical degradation.¹³⁵

Rather than engaging a theoretical mission for development that places the *indigene* at the charge of bettering his/her own position, Thursz in 1935 looks at the structures which propagate an inequality of development amongst Moroccan Jews. By alleviating means of spreading infection, he notes, the community’s budgetary restraints will be eased and “people will retake conscience of their dignity...will look to ameliorate their standard of living through work, without reverting to begging.” Whether this constitutes a shift in Thursz’s disposition towards the French colonial project cannot be said in the framework of this study, but it can be said that Thursz was dedicated to defining development beyond an occidental-oriental dichotomy and struggled with a reconciliation of the collective identities that defined Europeans and non-European Jews.

In addition to Thursz’s encouraging and middling tone are those accounts which question modernity outside of French auspices. Of the committee of Jewish studies, one

¹³⁴ *Notre Avenir est entre nos mains*, AI, 7/13/28

¹³⁵ *Ce que nous voulons*, AI, 9/1/1935.

contributor explains that its dedication to reassessing Jewish history in Morocco is essential for bringing the country's "forgotten" Jewish population out of obscurity. He recognizes the "beneficial work" of France, but asks, "Do we not have the right to affectionately pity ourselves because this mother has not held us to her breast with all the ardor as she has for others?" The Committee of Jewish studies, he contends, signals "the opening of a new path in front of us"—that is, a way to redefine oneself where France cannot. He continues:

In better understanding our past, we will better penetrate an understanding of our current lives: one will taste, out of curiosity, first as a historian, then one will be able to sympathize with our past and the most foreign elements of our race will collaborate with the most ardent from among us for a collective restoration.¹³⁶

Importantly, this passage demonstrates a reversal of European agency, inciting the foreigner to collaborate with the renovation of Moroccan Judaism. Filling the lacuna separating colonial ideology from collective action is an understanding of history and more implicitly the assertion of a unique identity.

Saloman Kagan, a lawyer in Casablanca, laments that an older generation remained fixed in a respectable and longstanding tradition while youth fled and "burned the steps" because of a new vision. With melancholy Kagan watches as "renunciation of the past" becomes associated with progress and modernism with the "material joys that large cities offer." He asks, in hoping that *L'Avenir Illustré* will act as a uniting force, "Why not try to create a bridge between the past and the future, a wise transition under the auspices of historic laws which should preside to a holy evolution?"¹³⁷ The anxiety of Perceval Buckwell, for example, comes from a youth which believed itself to have

¹³⁶ Le comité des études juives, AI, 1/11/27.

¹³⁷ AI, 7/22/26

broken from “its respectable traditions” and took pleasure in experiencing “the joys brought by French civilization.” Buckwell, a doctor in Casablanca, hopes for a “reasonable and conscious evolution”¹³⁸ Another author dreams of the day when Morocco’s Jewish youth, given “with a perfect grace to the delights of modern dances, so conducive to effusions”, would give up an “artificial personality” of a light “occidental varnish” in order to fulfill a duty of moral enrichment prescribed by Judaism.¹³⁹

What seems to have animated the fears both of European and non-European Jews in Casablanca alike is the verifiability of Jewish development. A duality of ideals appears to have been at hand with the lingering possibilities of mass expatriation to France and Israel each defined by different standards. What Thursz’s journal represents is an attempt to come to terms with a complex series of transnational, national and local identities by uniting them under the banner of modernity. In this way, modernity was not occidental or oriental so much as it was a project to which each community and each nation contributed.

While a discourse of colonial emancipation pervaded European Christian, Jewish and even Moroccan Jewish accounts during the protectorate, Casablanca’s Jewish elite of the 1920s and 1930s began to express their anxieties over the validity of traditional definitions of development through their concerns about a rapidly Europeanizing youth. The urban Jewish youth of Morocco represented in cases the incomplete unification of Jewish traditions and European evolution. And age appears to have been the crux of debates amongst Moroccan Jews. While the contents of a

¹³⁸ Perceval Buckwell, AI, 8/10/26

¹³⁹ *Divulgations autour d’un bal*, AI, 8/24/1926.

conference entitled “Ou va la jeunesse Juive marocaine?” given by a M. Sagues, director of an AIU school in Tangier, seem not to have been recorded, a group of responses following the conference yields a unique look into how youth operated as a medium for discussion over modernization in Tangier and Casablanca. A self-proclaimed “Jeune Israélite Marocain” writes to the journal and notes in response to Sagues that the youth is not yet 33 years old; it is the generation of the protectorate. He explains, “We are the future, liberty smiles upon us and we are following the right path.” This self-identified youth has faith in the promises of modernity as they have been defined by the protectorate and by Europeans. He distinguishes foremost that Sagues may be young old, “attached to the old ways” or may be evolved, leading a life, “the life of the entire world.” The young critic feels compelled to explain that although young Moroccans no longer go regularly to the synagogue, “a look at the moral effort of Casablanca, the real capital, will show that we are not inferior, that our youth works and thinks as well as that of Tangier.” The young Moroccan asserts that a young Jew from Casablanca may work in a bank or a store, and resembles Europeans, following their style. He relates to Europeans and is prized for his modesty, his intelligence, his self-determination and his “European mentality.” He may have parents to support as well as brothers and sisters as well as a fiancée or young wife, but he dedicates his time no less to social education and the less fortunate. He is faithful to his past and works for the “reconstruction of the Jewish Homeland.” In the face of uncertainties, Morocco’s Jewish youth, according to this critic, is evolved because it is involved in a multifaceted struggle for the renovation of the colony and the Jewish community.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ AI, 2/1/29

The young critique in fact provokes numerous responses of his own, “demonstrating that the Jewish opinion of Morocco is attached to this vital problem.” Sagues’s response is itself skeptical of an un-attenuated faith in Europe as civilization. Sagues expresses an anxiety concerning the dissolution of Moroccan Judaism under the regime of a monolithic civilization, asserting instead that “our traditions are not opposed to progress.” His hope, he explains, is “to signal a pitfall in the rapid, very rapid evolution...taking place amongst the Moroccan Jewish youth.” Even for Sagues, evolution is implicitly understood as an embrace of the European mentality. Drawing from a tradition of equating evolution with the non-oriental, both Sagues and the young Moroccan are engaging with a foreign definition of modernity and using debate as a tool for its assimilation into the identity of Moroccan Judaism.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ AI, 2/25/29

Conclusion

As historians have shown, Morocco of the 1920s and 1930s remained defined in terms of its European, Jewish and Muslim populations as separate, distinctly ethnic elements. Despite such divisions, however, Morocco's Jews were seen as capable of and did experience a degree of social mobility not seen prior to the protectorate. While education, urbanization, radio and journals have been identified as the "tools" of modernity in Morocco, the debates of modernity associated with journals such as *L'Avenir Illustré* remain vastly underestimated in relation to the Alliance Israélite Universelle and similar European Jewish institutions. *L'Avenir Illustré* uniquely demonstrates the interplay of European and Jewish ideals and the cerebral process by which both Zionist movements and French culture gained traction among Jews of Morocco's most heavily European-influenced cities. Understanding how Moroccans conceptualized modernity has implications for studying and defining France's "mission civilisatrice" in Morocco. Defining the French colonial character by means of its intellectual exportations brings new meaning to the "tools" of civilization as they implicated participation of both the *colon* and the *indigène*. Finally, Moroccan Jews' conceptual association with modernity within the pages of *L'Avenir Illustré* seems to have been spurred by the presence of a sizeable European community in Casablanca, by which a European and a Jewish character was asserted so as to challenge adherence to purely local identifications. The scale on which Moroccan Jews and Europeans shared space and language in Casablanca after 1912 provided hope for a growing mass of Gallicized Jews such that their rendering of modernity posited national and transnational communities in concern with one another.

Colonialism necessitated valuation, and many self-defined Europeans—including those that identified in Europe a form of emancipation—justified the colonial project by relying upon an occidental-oriental duality that paralleled that of the *colon* and the *indigene*. By defining what modernity meant in the context of an overseas colony, Europeans and Moroccans both took part in an ideological debate that redefined Moroccan Judaism outside of a majority-Muslim context. Nonetheless, many Moroccan and even European Jews remained skeptical of France as an assured emancipator, and for those that felt disillusioned by the gap between “evolved” Jews and their traditions, defining one’s relationship to modernity became a cause for crisis. The constant uncertainties of pan-Jewish modernization projects in Morocco, notably of Zionism, were doubled by the ambiguity of many Moroccan Jews’ identification with either France or Israel. The denial of foreign citizenship en masse outside of the Makhzen colored debate in Morocco’s largest cities until at least 1947 as defining one’s status within the Occidental-Oriental confines of modernity became stringently linked to nationhood. Moroccan Jews, targeted from the beginnings of the 19th century by foreign legations, European traders and Jewish associations alike for their exceptionality within an Occidental-Oriental duality, were forced to recast “development” and “tradition” in terms of Moroccan Judaism. Be it through Zionist movements, historical awareness, Europeanization, or otherwise, Casablanca’s pre-World War II Jewish elite reconciled a foreigner’s modernity with Moroccan Judaism through a diversity of tropes. “Modernizing” Moroccan Judaism, though often imagined in simple monolithic terms, was anything but simple.

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