Religious Jewish heritage tourism in Morocco

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Abstract
Heritage tourism is a very important a niche of marketing involved with discovering and experiencing historical sites, cultures, local traditions, arts related to specific destinations and sites characterized by a past or present cultural, religious diversity. This communication tried to make vision about the concepts of “tourism and cultural heritage” as a memory case of Jewish Heritage history in Morocco. The Moroccan Jewish Diaspora and their families came to rediscover their ‘homeland’ and participate in religious pilgrimages to the tombs of venerated Tsaddiks and Rabbins. Now our objective as PhD students is to focus on the origins and manifestations of the Jewish Heritage Tourism in Morocco including the physical elements composing the Jewish heritage product as a niche market.

Keywords: popular Judeo-Muslim holiness, hillula, cult of Jewish saints, religious tourism, cultural tourism

Introduction
“In the consciences of the nation, the term culture, in its comprehensive and human sense, has replaced the theological term of the Torah”. Haim Nahman Bialik 1925.26 This work, which deals with the study of the cult of saints, is for us a path to follow in order to trace the cultural continuity and the Moroccan identity of the literary works in question. This research is not new, some Jewish authors wrote before about this subject, they specially articulated around Jewish themes in general:their condition and the celebration of roots in a culture and heritage lost through colonisation, immigration and assimilation into the French language and culture. In a word, it is a literature of identity in order to realise the better structure our reflection, we have made sure that it is focused around the following problematic: what extent can the analysis of the rituals of the cult of Jewish saints? Jewish saints reveal the existence of a common imaginary culture shared with the Muslim majority and the predominance of a Jewish-Moroccan cultural entity, which is the result of the meeting of an ethnic and a plural cultural context. In order to answer this question, we will first look at on certain notions such as popular religiosity, popular culture, the Tsaddik, the Hilloula, etc….secondly, through an anthropological overview of the cult of Judeo-Muslim saints in Morocco, as well as the analysis of some literary works, we will attempt to clarify practices, rituals and beliefs and to illustrate the dynamics in which daily life and the constant influences of community traditions and see how they are combined to make the cult of the saints as a particular aspect of a hybrid cultural identity.

In general, defining culture is a difficulty process. Writing about it, researchers have narrowed or broadened its scope to suit their own points of view, and their discussion about culture is frequently characterized by obsession - ambiguity, and elusiveness, the more specific explanation is that Jewish culture is a dynamic phenomenon - with a variety of contents, forms, and styles - which has undergone many changes, and even upheavals, from its inception. Throughout jewfish history, there have been particular Jewish cultures that were shaped, by the influence of the host cultures in the varied geo-cultural environments in which Jews lived: In the specific contents of Jewish history in Morocco, the discussion of the culture of Jews and of Jewish cultures should deal with so many questions to which we tried to find the answers in our research specially: the Jewish culture as a minority culture existing within hegemonic non Jewish cultures, manifesting unique patterns and maintaining complex, stratified, and dynamic relations with the non-Jewish cultures (Muslims)

The Jewish population in Morocco was not only ancient and numerous but growing even further with the arrival from exile and precisely from the Christian kingdoms of medieval Iberia. This community was distributed across the whole region. The Jewish populations could be found in imperial metropolises such as Meknes, Fez and Marrakech; the dynamic port cities of the Atlantic coast, like Safi and Tangier; and in the most remote rural villages in the Atlas Mountains: “In the same mountain...

26 (On the Inauguration of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem), in Divrri Sijrut, 2nd Ed., Haim Nahman Biatik. (Tel Aviv, 1965), 127-135 (Hebrew)
great multitudes of Jews exercising handicrafts, do inhabit”\(^{27}\). The chroniclers of the time also mention the presence of a Karaite community in the High Atlas that are considered heretics by the other Jews. Despite the fact that many of these populations disappeared with the arrival of Islam, Luis del Már mol, who was following al-Wazzan’s description of the city of Teitdeuer in the western High Atlas, noted that: ‘Some African writers say that the builders of this city were Jews from the tribe of Judah, and that they built it when the Africans had the law of Moses, and Jewish culture and history that they remained in it, until the Mohammedan Arabs came to Africa, and they made them leave it’\(^{28}\). In the middle of the eleventh century, nomadic Saharan Berbers, the Almoravids, launched a religious and military crusade to impose a rigorous Maliki orthodoxy throughout the western Maghreb and Al-Andalus. With the Berber dynasties of the Almoravids and Almohads, and its later institutionalization by the Marinid kingdom of Fez, Malikism became the uncontested doctrine of the Muslim west. Although Muslim tolerance would explain the Jewish demographic importance in the precolonial western Maghreb observed by travellers and chroniclers from different times and places According to Lewis, the increase of Muslim intolerance towards the Christians dhimmis in North Africa was a pragmatic response to external military threats\(^{29}\).

The Jews of Morocco were the only non-Muslim religious minority in the pre-colonial period, religious minority in the country. They were also the first Jewish community in the Arab world, although some historians, chroniclers and journalists give a "negative" view of the Moroccan Jewish community, the Jewish community, insisting on the status of dhimmis, on the misery of the Mellahs, on a situation that they compare, explicitly or implicitly, to that of the situation of Jewish communities in the West, but rarely in relation to the history of Morocco, its socio-economic context and its evolution. Many others claim that more than 2000 years of Moroccan Jewish history has resulted in what is called “a Jewish-Muslim symbiosis”. The first segregated Jewish neighbourhood in the Muslim west was created in the imperial capital city of Fez in 1438, during the reign of the last sultan of the Marinid dynasty. Fez had received a major flow of Jews migrating from the Christian kingdoms of medieval Iberia, fleeing the persecutions and killings of 1391. That important influx modified the demographic composition of the city. The newcomers resisted assimilation into the local Jewish communities and kept their identity and Iberian customs. Some controversies arose between the locals and the newcomers over interpretations of the halakha, local customs, and ritual and liturgical practices\(^{30}\).

### Popular religion and Judeo-Muslim pilgrimages, a common identity aspect

“One of the issues at the heart of the definition of folk religion is the presence of a system of beliefs and practices that, far from being marginal and irrational, would in fact make up the core of the religion of a system of beliefs and practices that, far from being marginal and irrational, are in fact part of a coherent part of a coherent worldview”\(^{31}\).

“Popular religiosity” here, we mean a set of practices; rites, rituals and speeches, which without necessarily being marginal, are not often part of the so-called “orthodox” corpus. Our approach is not to see if such a practice falls within the domain of heresy, magic or “Superstition” but rather to seek what the practice represents in a specific situation and what it is meaning in a specific socio-cultural, intercommunity context. In the context of our research, popular culture is above all an oral culture; it is a manifestation of illiterate society, namely women, children and illiterate. It is the result of a set of oral traditions from a region, from a locality, a social class or an entire society. Beyond ethnic borders, the imaginary Moroccan universe is a world that has its own codes and its own Peculiarities. It is above all a "dualistic" world, which is divided between good and evil, Angels and demons, the right side beneficial space and the left evil side (domain of All superstitions and curses), between the word above and the word below of the Earth, between human beings and demonic beings. Man, in the imagination Moroccan, is not the only one who lives in this world in reality shared by other Beings, the angels and spirits (jnoun), demons (shaytān).

In this regard, we can only strongly confirm the words of André E. Elbaz, for whom the oral literature represents in Morocco a true symbolic language, which expressed the soul of people. Throughout the history of the Moroccan populations (all ethnicities and faiths confused), we see the birth of a vast collection of registers, codes and values which are mainly on popular cultural memory. So here, we are faced with a story that no register or manuscript has been able or able to canonize this ancient wisdom that represents the aspirations of communities, the beliefs popular, customs and mythical stories is conveyed exclusively through:

- The pilgrimage and the veneration of saints, popular religion
- Extra-religious practices: magic, consultation with clairvoyants, etc.
- Popular beliefs: evil eye and others (the casting of fate)
- Tales and legends
- The interpretation of dreams and their role in society
- Anecdotes
- Proverbs
- So-called “traditional” medicine

The universe of tales and legends is also another aspect of the common culture Judeo-Muslim, all communities combined (Arabs, Berbers, Jews and Afro Moroccan).
Moroccan Judaism and Islam place a high value on the veneration of saints, Tsaddikim, in Hebrew; awliyā’ (friends of God), in Arabic, also known in Morocco as marabouts in often play important political roles. They serve as mediators between warring parties, and after death their tombs are acknowledged as sanctuaries. For those seeking refuge. The Jewish saint’s tombs provide therapy to their visitors and can punish the transgressors, they performing miracles when they were still alive a lot of stories and myths about them exist.

As a rule, tales and legends can be subdivided into two categories: religious and not religious in this particular context, the local religious geography necessarily passes through the phenomenon of the veneration of common Judeo-Muslim saints. Very widespread in the 19th century Morocco century, this phenomenon was only possible thanks to this common imagination likely to legitimize worship and promote ritual. Despite an orthodox (Muslim and Jewish) rationality with a discriminatory tendency, the “popular culture” Stillman Norman has written a comparative study of Jewish tsaddikim and Muslim marabouts stressing the differences between them. One of the principle differences is that while many Moroccan marabouts are venerated while still living, most Jewish tsaddikim are usually venerated after their death. Pilgrimages to their gravesites are famous and important practices of saint veneration in both Moroccan Islam and Judaism. (Mousssem and Hiloulia) visitors come to ask favors, sacrifice animals at the site of the tomb and sharing of a communal meal near (kosher) many Jewish families and former residents of cities or villages have connections to particular tsaddikim and visit their tombs or sanctuaries annually in Morocco and Israel, too.

Mysticism and popular Judeo-Muslim holiness
Any attempt to identify the phenomenon of Jewish mystical effervescence in Morocco, as H. Zafrani indicates to us, requires a thorough knowledge of local socio-cultural context, but also of the historical and intellectual evolution of Muslim mystic. The importance of the spiritual quest for Jews and Muslims alike is rooted in the interpretation of “divine blessing” which means:

- The quest for the Baraka through the Ziyārah / Hilūlah where it is located: Sanctuary, person (saint), source, cave, object, etc.
- The proximity of the holy “wali Allah”, friend of god
- Brotherhood life in order to access the mysteries of the divinity

The worship of saints (mystics) insists that divine experience is not whole, but unfolds during different spiritual stages (Al-maqqāmat). Indeed, if the main characteristic of the cult of saints among Muslims results in a veneration of the saint that can take place during his lifetime and subsequently from his descendants, among the Jews it is the posthumous veneration that dominates. In Jewish Morocco marabout, and the associated rituals, are late developments, probably not much earlier than the mid-nineteenth century. Later they gained much saliency, and in latter-day Israel attained major dimensions. In precolonial Morocco, although the potential was there, the phenomenon was far less important. As Stephen Sharot argued earlier in his contribution, Jewish cultures are variously informed, sometimes molded, by the surrounding non-Jewish majority. However, beyond this general point, on which historians are generally agreed, there are open questions about the nature and details of this influence. Tsadikin do not die, they keep on living’, remarked to me an informant in Sefrou several years ago, when there was still a Jewish community left in that Moroccan town, just south of Fez” S. Deshen et al. (eds.), Jews among Muslims

Fig1: The RAV prays at the grave of the holy Rabbi Messod Abehassira, the father of Rabbi Israel Abehassira, nicknamed Baba Salé (the praying father) – Tafilalet city-

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33 Drouin, Jeanine, « Un cycle oral hagiographique dans le moyen-atlas marocain », Paris university V René-Descartes Sérés Sorbonne 2
34 Popular culture essentially refers to the culture of the illiterate and illiterate
35 Norman A. Stillman, “tsaddiq and Marabout in Morocco,” in The Sephardi and Oriental Jewish Heritage, ed. Issachar Ben-Ami (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, the Hebrew University, 1982), 489–500
36 Term used to describe food that complies with the strict dietary standards of traditional Jewish law.
For many Jews, keeping kosher is about more than just health or food safety. It is about reverence and adherence to religious tradition.
The veneration of holy men, both living and dead, is a well-known hallmark of popular religion among Jews and Muslims in Morocco and, indeed, throughout North Africa. Most observers of the Maghrebi cultural scene have noted the phenomenon for several hundred years - at least as far back as German Mouette in the seventeenth century's there is a considerable body of ethnographic and anthropological literature on North African Muslim hagiolatry. Much of this work is descriptive and is devoted to the folklore and cultic practices associated with saints' shrines or with Muslim brotherhoods (turuq, tariqtit, or tawitiif). There is much less scholarly literature on the Jewish veneration of holy men, although most of the ethnographic work on Moroccan Jews gives it at least a passing mention.

In most of the literature dealing with Muslim or Jewish hagiolatry, the approach to the phenomenon is strikingly similar. So too is the analysis when there is any at all. A strong distinction is usually made between official, higher, monotheistic religion and the popular, primitive, hagiolatry religion, which in its most debased form - as viewed by this kind of scholarship - becomes outright anthropopathy.

The etymology of the word "marabout" comes from the Arabic word مرابط murābiṭ, which meant to the origin "pious man who garrisoned in a border fortress" therefore "Moujāhid". The word marabout / āmurābit, resulting from this long evolution and having lost all military connotation, is used in the western Islamic world to denote a locally revered figure or a master of a mystical brotherhood.

In his book Judeo-Muslim Pilgrimages of Morocco, L. Voinot does not fail to make allusion to the category of anonymous saints. It thus draws up an important inventory of phenomenon of pilgrimages and offers a reading based on two types of veneration. It therefore evokes the pilgrimages intended for historically identified saints, established through a scholarly biography and a chain, "silsila", recognized. To this first category, it contrasts the pilgrimage where the identity of the saint is unknown; this last veneration occurs generally in pre-monotheistic places of worship in Morocco the "Ziyārah / Ḥilūlah" is seen as an emotional journey that is being prepared meticulously in order to sublimate the soul. It often consisted of moving physical, which is growing and becomes a danger to be franchised.

In this regard, the ziyārah is built around several common rituals:
• "N-niya", good intention, is the first rule for successful ziyārah.
• Purification: physical (ritual bath) and psychological (fasting).
• Preparation for the encounter with the sacred (Baraka): a saint, a sanctuary, a tomb, a spring, a cave...
• Offerings: animal sacrifices or natural gifts.
• A common ritual dish: "mārīūd".

In the Moroccan context, the ritual is very often linked to the reasons that justify the invocation of the saint. The rites of ziyārah are therefore different depending on the nature of the requests. The hagiographic poems "piyyut" sung in the ziyārah-s are often expressed in a symbolic language common to Jews and Muslims and bearers of values, codes and religious and magical symbols

Issa char Ben Ami said that 652 figures could be counted Hagiographic, of which Moroccan Jews and Muslims commonly venerate 126.

This last category is itself organized around three sub-Categories:
♦ 90 Jewish saints worshiped by Muslims.
♦ 36 saints claimed at the same time by the two communities.
♦ 14 Muslim saints worshiped by Jews

This common veneration of the saints results from the notion of Baraka (divine grace). Like the Muslim Marabout, the Jewish saint, in addition to his merit of divine origin, possesses the Baraka, which makes him a source of blessings for those who meet him. The Saint can confer his Baraka on people or objects that come into contact with him, or even on his tomb, if he is with his grave, if he is dead. Curiously, the Baraka of the grave where the Saint is buried is greater than that of the living Saint himself. A part of this Baraka of the Saint is often passed on to his transmitted to the members of his immediate family, and to his descendants, who take advantage of and may even derive some benefit from it.

The analysis and interpretation of the analysis and interpretation of the common veneration of saints shows that it is a religious phenomenon that draws on sources in time and is linked to ancient myths, but taking into account local specificities.

Tssaddiq concept
The concept of the Tsaddiq (Holy Man) was deeply rooted in the Jewish tradition
"The presence of a saint was a basic fact in the cultural reality of the Moroccan Jew, a central idiom around which his experiences were articulated"39

Within the various Jewish groups, Sephardic or Ashkenazi, outside North Africa, pious rabbis and charismatic sages were assigned attributes of sanctity and their pious rabbis and charismatic sages have been assigned attributes of sanctity and their tombs have become popular centres of pilgrimage. Accordingly, it is worth noting that the phenomenon analysed here, while intimately linked to indigenous Moroccan traditions, is also traditions, is also rooted in the Jewish religion, at least in its less formal and more popular aspects. In addition, popular aspects. The saints were charismatic individuals honoured for their learning and piety. They were believed to possess a special spiritual strength and the potential power of divine grace. This spiritual power, which does not disappear after the death of the holy man, can be after the death of the holy man, can be used for the help and benefit of his followers.


In terms of popularity and importance, the Jewish saints of Morocco can be classified on a continuum from the Tsaddikas to the continuum from local tzaddikim, known only to a particular congregation, to regional regional saints, to saints venerated by a very large number of worshippers throughout of the faithful throughout the country we can List of Important Jewish Saints in Morocco:

- Knar El Kbit – Rabbi Yehuda Jabari
- Ouezzane – R. Arman Bendiwane
- Fez – Lalla Solica Tasadika, Haim Cohen, Yhouda Ben Attar, Clock Tower of Maimonides
- Sefrou – R. Moshe Elbaz and the masters of the Cave, Eliahou Harrooch, David Arazil
- Rabat – Sale: R. Eliezer de Avila and Raphael Encaoua, Mohammed V, Chalom Zaoui
- Ben Ahmed – R. Yahia Elkhder

**Hilloula vs Moussem: similar rites and cultural symbiosis**

Beliefs and practices related to the veneration of saints have played a fundamental role in the life of many Jews in Morocco, role in the lives of many Jews in Morocco, as "Moroccan Jews felt connected to their saints felt connected to their saints and venerated them in an eminently Maghrebi way". In the case of the most renowned saints, thousands of people from all over the country gathered around the tomb for several days for extraordinary festivities, during which they danced, chanted, prayed and lit candles: this is the Hilloula. Similar to the Jewish Hilloula, Muslims celebrate the Moussem, 'the great one', once or twice a year. Moussem, the "great one", once or twice a year, in spring and autumn, only in the sanctuary.

The organisation of the festivities, which continue for several days, is the responsibility of the the organisation of the festivities, which continue for several days, is the responsibility of the marabout's descendants, the muqaddam or the person who has taken over the shrine. Symbolic signs such as the stone, the tree, and the spring, whose meaning is known, often reveal the sacred space, here the site of the saints. The time of Hilloula and Moussem is a sacred time that differs from ordinary time. Nature is therefore charged with a religious value that Jews and Muslims, from the earliest times, have respected.

**Saints and tourism?**

"there is no tourism without tourists, and only their presence, at a specific time and with specific means, makes it possible to identify a place that is or is about to become touristy" *Philippe Duhamel*

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* Philippe Duhamel

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riding.
- The job of a guide-accompanier: This is sometimes called an agent-accompanier or simply a travel guide. They are the ambassadors of the TO and must ensure that the trip runs smoothly. He is the guarantor of the tourist group.
- The job of the interpreter-guide: He is responsible for accompanying groups of tourists, commenting on organised visits to cities, monuments, sites and museums. These comments must be made in the language of the group concerned and be adapted to the level of each audience.

In addition to the direct jobs in tourism, there are also indirect jobs such as sales representatives, crafts men, museum workers, service providers, etc.

**Religious and cultural tourism: a diversity of practices**

Today it is difficult to classify the people who go to places of pilgrimage because of the multiplicity of tourist. The fact that the authorities of the sanctuaries hesitate about the term to be used to designate those who go to the places of pilgrimage, designating them sometimes as pilgrims, sometimes as religious tourists and more generally as visitors, invites us to study very precisely the spatial practices of these visitors.

**Conclusion**

The rituals of Jewish and Muslim pilgrimages in Morocco certainly have a number of points of convergence, but they also contain divergences, because it is in the cultural practices that one can distinguish the belonging of the other and consequently base oneself to recognise the identity of the subjects that one meets in a secular society.

Divergences, for it is in cultural practices that one can distinguish one's belonging from the other and consequently base oneself to recognise the identity of the subjects one meets in an indistinct secularity. As a result, cultural practices are the manifestations of belonging in manifestations of belonging in the real situations experienced by the actors of sociability.

The business resulting from Jewish heritage tourism in Morocco is so important then; the development of it needs to lead many travel agencies, and other tourism businesses to become specialists in this field. There are also direct economic benefits derived from the resident Moroccan Jewish community as well as the local Moroccan economies. The restaurant sector is also involved in order offer exclusively Moroccan Jewish cuisine calling in French “Cacher”.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


