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## **In This Issue**

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This study deals with a famous Arabic chronicle published by the rabbi Yaaqob Moshe Toledano in his book *Ner Ha-Ma'arab* (Jerusalem, 1911), which relates the so-called history of a powerful and legendary Jewish kingdom from its early beginnings until its destruction by Muslim troops in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. A new examination of the text leads to the conclusion that this chronicle is not a reliable historical document but rather a polemic text written by a Muslim scholar at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. This scholar apparently opposed the liberal politics of the Banu Marin sultans regarding the Jews, who were authorized to resume their Jewish faith and practice after they were forcibly converted to Islam by the Muwahidun, the former dynasty. At the same time, the author legitimizes the extermination of the Dar'a Jews by the Muwahidun's troops, because they refused to convert to Islam. During the study, new versions of the chronicle were uncovered and some editions are presented here. Finally, late developments following the chronicle's diffusion in 18<sup>th</sup> century are also considered, as well as its impact on Jewish memory and imagination in Morocco.

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Rabbi P. Joseph Teomim found shelter in Morocco during WWII, where he wrote a Holocaust elegy. This article compares the elegy to similar works written by Moroccan Jews and Ashkenazi Jews from Europe and Israel. The article examines the different perceptions of the war by different

authors, according to their personal or familial experiences, as reflected in the literary forms, narratives, and content of the different pieces. The full elegy is included in the appendix with some corrections and annotations.

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R. Judah b. Joseph Resh Kallah was a unique figure in 10<sup>th</sup> century Kairouan; a politically connected international merchant and an erudite Torah scholar. He encouraged Rav Hayya Gaon to compose his unique commentary to the tractate Berakhot and was instrumental in persuading the Apulian scholar R. Hushiel to take up residence in Kairouan. This article suggests that his influence brought about a series of far-reaching changes in Torah study in the Mediterranean.

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This article reassesses the place and year of publication of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Hebrew translation of “Amadis of Gaul” (Book I) by identifying its translator’s origin and analyzing a restrictive approbation which appeared in one of its copies. It argues that the translation was most probably produced towards the end of the third decade of the 1630’s in Salonika.

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The article examines the translation of the *Idra Zuta* to Judeo-Arabic, which was prepared and printed by A.D. Ezekiel in Pune, India, in 1887. The article presents a survey of the translation of the *Idra Zuta* and of the other books printed by A.D. Ezekiel. It discusses A.D. Ezekiel's printing enterprise, his connection with the Theosophical Society and the polemics it stimulated. The article will show that Ezekiel's interest in kabbalah followed his joining the Theosophical Society, and that theosophy had a major bearing on his perception of kabbalah and on his translation and printing venture.

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In the 1940s, the leading rabbis and the Federation of Jewish Communities in Algeria initiated the establishment of the first rabbinical school in Algiers. The aim of this school was to train rabbis and community leaders to eventually lead their communities in Algeria by giving them tools to understand the communities' contemporary needs and the ability to deal with them. Despite the relatively short lifespan of the rabbinical school, it succeeded in training several influential graduates who went on to serve in various rabbinical positions. These rabbis put the school's vision into practice by combining tradition with modern Algerian education. This combination reflected the worldview of the rabbis who led Algerian Jewry at the time, and the way they chose to deal with the spiritual challenges of modernity.

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This paper attempts to reconsider André Chouraqui's special links with his Algerian roots. Unlike many Algerian Jews who took a stand in favor of the idea of French Algeria, Chouraqui expressed his sympathy with the Algerian national struggle against the French colonizer. Even his emigration to Israel in 1957 could be interpreted as an attempt to overcome the conflict between those in favor of Algerian independence and partisans of French Algeria. Moreover, many aspects of Chouraqui's activism in the frame of Alliance Israélite Universelle and his role in the integration of Oriental Jews in Israel in the sixties can be considered part of a typically Jewish Algerian role as a mediator between East and West (such as the function of *turjeman*, "translator" – in pre-colonial or early-colonial Algeria).

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The Jewish community of Kutaisi, Georgia is located at a geographical and cultural crossroad, placed between the Christian countries of Eastern Europe and the Muslim countries of Asia. At the center of the Jewish quarter in the city are three synagogues which reflect the Jewish community which prospered there from the 19<sup>th</sup> century

until its members' mass immigration to Israel at the end of the twentieth century. This study examines the artistic styles of the masterpiece frescoes, part of the interior decoration and architecture of the three synagogues, and aims to present the unique identity of the Kutaisi Jewish community within the sphere of influence between East and West.

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The article by Moshe Ovadia in the Documents' Section discusses the biography and letters of Rabbi Massoud de Avila who was the Emissary of Rabbis on behalf of the Maghrebi *kollel* (ethnic committee) in Jerusalem for Portugal and Latin America. The article opens with a historical review of the Maghrebi *kollel*, its emissaries and the *kollel's* situation from a demographic, social and economic standpoint. The article goes on to discuss the findings regarding de Avila's biography, and analyzes and interprets the letters which are published here for the first time.

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