Anglo-Jewry and Essaouira (Mogador), 1860–1900: the social implications of philanthropy*

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A certain foreign gentleman wanted, ironically, to know if Mogador belonged to the Sultan or to Queen Victoria. The response, with hand on heart, was ‘Bijujuhm ya señor’ – ‘to both, sir’. (R. L. N. Johnston, Morocco: The Land of the Setting Sun (London 1912) 40.)

Foreign visitors to Essaouira during the 19th century tended to express surprise at finding so much English influence in this southern Moroccan Atlantic coastal port. The sight of Moroccan Jewish men strutting the streets of the casbah in their top hats and fine Manchester suits was certainly unusual in precolonial society. The English, French, or German traveller, received in the home of a wealthy Jewish merchant, would sometimes find women in Victorian attire, practising the piano and speaking English (see plate 1). Although the houses of the casbah were in a traditional Moroccan style – several floors high, enclosing inner courtyards, with stores of merchandise on the ground floor – it was not uncommon to find a Victorian parlour decorated with English furnishings. A portrait of Queen Victoria might be found in the room where foreign visitors were received. Jubilee festivals were enthusiastically celebrated by the Jewish élite of Essaouira; many would go by steamer to London to participate in the festivities.¹

The establishment, in the second half of the 19th century, of regular steamship services between England and Morocco, assured reliable and constant contacts.² Developing transport brought increased imports of clothing, furniture and various luxury items. The Attia synagogue of the casbah, for example, is a replica of a now defunct synagogue in Manchester, its interior decorated with prefabricated wood imported at the end of the 19th century by

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Attia, a Swiri merchant who divided his time between Essaouira and Manchester. 3 The exchanges were not only material: the transport provided greater opportunity to travel, and some Swiri merchants who went to London and Manchester to handle their business affairs also settled there, or gave their children an English education. Since England was the principal trading partner with Essaouira, it also made sense to have a member of the family there to observe the fluctuations of supply and demand. 4

Commerce originally created the contact with England, and it now helped reinforce the connection. Established as a royal port in 1764, within a decade Essaouira became Morocco’s principal port of trade with Europe. England assumed a preeminent position in this commerce, and it was above all through Essaouira’s Jewish merchants that English–Moroccan ties were extended.

By the first decade of the 19th century, members of important Swiri merchant families were settling in London – Guedalla, Macnin, Pinto, Abitbol,
Afriat – and were even marrying into some of the most prominent of London’s Sephardi community, such as the Montefiores. 5 Judah Guedalla was elected as Elder of the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue in 1809, and in 1814 Meir Cohen Macnin was elected. 6 These Swiris in London achieved prominence and, at times, notoriety. 7 They also maintained contact with Morocco and were at the forefront of philanthropy throughout the 19th century.

ANGLO-JEWISH PENETRATION

The origins of Anglo-Jewish philanthropy in Morocco date back before the mid-19th century. The event which most impressed itself on the minds of the Anglo-Jewish leadership was the bombing of Essaouira by the French in 1844, which led to the pillaging of the mellah (mīlāḥ), the Jewish quarter, by the surrounding tribes. Letters reached London describing in horrid detail both the pillaging and the subsequent flight of the Jews to the countryside. 8 As a result, a Committee for the relief of the Sufferers at Mogadore was formed in London, presided over by Sir Moses Montefiore, in order to raise charitable subscriptions for the victims.

Yet only in 1860 did the intervention of Anglo-Jewish philanthropists become a permanent feature of Morocco’s relations with Europe, as it was to remain for the rest of the 19th century. By the turn of the century Franco-Jewish influence, particularly through the expanding Alliance Israélite Universelle schools, began replacing the English. 9 It is therefore in the forty-year period from 1860 to 1900 that Anglo-Jewish influence was most important at Essaouira. Some of the more significant events for the Jews of Essaouira should first be outlined. 10

The Moroccan relief fund and the Picciotto mission

When the Spanish invasion of Morocco appeared imminent, hundreds of Moroccan Jews, mostly from Tangier, fled to Gibraltar. By the end of 1859 some 2700 refugees had arrived. As Spain’s campaign advanced in the north of Morocco with the occupation of Tetuan, Essaouira was also threatened with bombardment. The Jews, fearing that once again their lives would be threatened by pillaging, began to flee the town: those with means left by ship, thousands of others sought refuge outside the town. Some 6000, writes Moses Abitbol of Essaouira to the editor of the Jewish Chronicle, ‘in a state of destitution, living in the open fields, without habitation or sufficient subsistence to keep life in them. 11 As in 1844, a committee established the ‘Morocco Relief Fund’,
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presided over by Sir Moses Montefiore. A local committee was formed in Gibraltar to channel the funds to the refugees. Appeals went out to world Jewry, and, by August 1860, particularly due to the generous contributions of American Jewry, subscriptions to the fund reached an unexpected £12,812 sterling.12 Since the refugees had already returned to their homes, discussions began as to how best to employ the surplus funds. Since January, the Jewish notables of Essaouira had been imploring Montefiore to aid the poor Jews of Essaouira, who were unable to benefit from the Gibraltar fund.13 It was decided to send a commission to Morocco that would report back to the committee. Moses H. Picciotto, a prominent member of the Board of Deputies, in London, was delegated to the task.14

During his visit to Essaouira, Picciotto was particularly disturbed by what he saw as the division of the community into two castes:

one of merchants, and one comprising all the other middle and lower classes. The former consists only of some 50 or 60 families, who are permitted to dwell in the casbah – a privileged European and Moorish quarter – are free from most of the ordinary inflictions, and enjoy all the common rights of citizens; the latter forming by far the largest portion of the community, are obliged to live within the confined mellah and are subject to all the vexatious restrictions which oppress the generality of Jews in Morocco.15

This caste distinction, Picciotto continues, ‘diminishes in the hearts of the rich the interest in, and care for, the welfare of the mass.’ Unlike in Tetuan where a certain desire for reform exists, in Essaouira Picciotto found ‘a tendency to apathy and callousness’.16

Picciotto’s report is interesting because it introduces two issues which are to reappear frequently. First, the idea of ‘rights of citizens’, and second, the ideas of ‘caste’ and of social reform. The concept of caste had no legal status in Morocco, yet its gradual imposition by European pressures was to have an important effect on Muslim-Jewish relations in Morocco. Social reform was also alien to Moroccan Jewish society, but the increasing involvement of Anglo-Jewry and of anglicized Swiris imbued with the notion of social reform was to have a significant effect on the internal relations of the Jewish community.

Picciotto concluded that the distribution of money in Essaouira would have little effect on the masses of poor, but that the charity would best be expended in a public school, and that an allowance of £10 to £12 a year should be used for cleaning the Jewish quarter, the mellah.17 By 1862, the school was in operation, receiving £70 a year from the Morocco Relief Fund.18 This fund was to last until the 20th century.

Soon after the Spanish-Moroccan war, Anglo-Jewry was drawn again into
Moroccan affairs. Much has already been written about Sir Moses Montefiore’s philanthropic missions, and his Moroccan journey of 1863–4 is no exception. The immediate reason for his mission was the execution of a Jewish boy in Safi and the imprisonment and beatings of others for allegedly poisoning a Spaniard. Montefiore decided to seek a dahir (royal decree) from Sultan Muḥammad IV in favour of the Jews. The idea of obtaining a dahir to extend legal equality to Moroccan Jews was not new; Montefiore had been trying since 1844 to obtain a decree for Moroccan Jewry similar to the Ottoman firman of 1840. He was finally successful in obtaining a dahir promising that Jews would be treated with justice and equality, and the sultan assured him that he would put an end to corporal punishment.

Enroute to Marrakesh, Montefiore stayed in Essaouira in the house of Abraham Corcos, the most influential Jewish merchant in the town. Disturbed by the poverty of the mellah (see plate 2), Montefiore brought up with the wazir, at-Ṭayyib al-Yamānī, the problem of overcrowding, and requested that new housing be constructed. This idea was supported by the British consul of Tangier, Reade, who had accompanied Montefiore on his mission.

Although a plan to expand the living quarters of the ‘new mellah’ into the

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2 Map of Essaouira with the two mellahs demarcated as ‘Old’ and ‘New Jews Town’. (From Arthur Leared, *Morocco and the Moors* [London 1876] 68.)
Shabanat quarter failed to materialize, the two mellahs were thoroughly cleaned and their streets were paved for the first time.²⁵

The impression left by the Montefiore visit on the Jews of Essaouira cannot be underestimated. The spectacle of the 79-year-old Montefiore, received with pomp and fanfare by Essaouira’s officialdom and then escorted to Marrakesh by Haha tribesmen who carried him under a canopy on a sedan, was unprecedented in Moroccan history.²⁶ The Jews of Essaouira felt that they now had a powerful Jewish protector in England, fully supported by the British Government. For Essaouira’s Jews, England and Anglo-Jewry had now become paramount. The veneration by Essaouira’s Jews of Sir Moses Montefiore may henceforth have surpassed that of the sultan of Morocco.²⁷

The beginnings of Franco-Jewish philanthropy

Shortly after the Montefiore visit, French Jewry began to take an active interest in Moroccan affairs. In Essaouira, French efforts were vigorously supported by the French consul, August Beaumier. His intervention was instrumental in the realization of two ventures: the foundation of a hospital for the poor, run by Dr Thevenin, and the creation of a school belonging to the Alliance Israélite Universelle, a recently established Jewish benevolent organization in Paris.²⁸

Both ventures lasted for only three years. In 1869 both the hospital and the Alliance school were forced to close their doors when the notables of the community suspended their contributions, suspicious of foreign ventures. But, moreover, the French had to compete with the predominance of English influence; as Beaumier remarks to Cremieux: ‘Il faut noter, monsieur, qu’ici tout ce qui n’est pas marocain est anglais ou se dit anglais.’²⁹ Finally, with the outbreak of cholera in 1868, the pupils stopped attending the school, so at the beginning of 1869, the school was closed.³⁰

In 1875 the Alliance made a second attempt at starting a school, but once again it failed to get a foothold in Essaouira. Although this time the Jewish notables ostensibly supported the school and even formed a regional AIU branch and a committee for supervising it, their general indifference to the French school coupled with the outright opposition of the traditional rabbis – and, lastly, the competition with the largely ineffectual English school – prevented the Alliance from developing. The famine and epidemics which devastated Morocco from 1878 to 1879 compelled the Alliance, once again, to close its doors.³¹

It was only in 1888, that the AIU school reopened in Essaouira, but this time it was to stay. Largely due to the Alliance, backed by the French Government, French influence was to supersede English.³²
The Anglo-Jewish Association

In 1871 the Anglo-Jewish Association was founded in London. The organization soon became involved in philanthropic activities for Jewish communities around the world. Soon after its foundation, Jews of Swiri origin, such as Moses Aflalo of London and Levy A. Cohen of Manchester began furnishing the association with information about Essaouira and pressing for social action.  

In 1876 Cohen, whose brother lived in Essaouira, became the Mogador delegate of the AJA in England.  

Soon a vaccination programme was inaugurated, and the problem of the poverty of the mellah was raised with the British consul in Essaouira, R. Drummond-Hay (the son of the British minister in Tangier), who brought the matter before the town authorities. The project to establish a branch of the AJA in Essaouira never got off the ground, due to divisions among the notables.  

Morocco famine relief fund

In 1876 disaster struck the Jewish community of Essaouira once again. Drought and crop failures led to famine, and masses of starving migrants moved into the town. Reports on the starving refugees drew attention in Europe to Essaouira’s plight.  

In June 1878 a committee was established in London to aid the starving population – both Jews and Muslims – of Essaouira. Consul R. Drummond-Hay was instrumental in organizing the fund. Moses Aflalo was the honorary secretary of the committee in London, and those directly involved included the elders of London’s Jewish community and the principal merchants living in London – Jews of Swiri origin and British Christians alike – engaged in the Essaouira trade.  

The activities of Stella Corcos

Perhaps the most important influence on Anglo-Jewish culture in Essaouira in the last fifteen years of the 19th century was Stella Corcos. This English Jewish woman had married in London a Corcos of Algerian origin who settled in Essaouira. In 1885, through her initiative, an English school for girls, the Strength and Honour National School, was created under the auspices of the AJA and the Alliance. Her school, which lasted well into the 20th century, formed a whole generation of Moroccan Jewish girls by providing them with a proper Victorian English education. Through the untiring initiative of Stella Corcos, this school was to meet with much more success than the English Boys school.
The community activities of Stella Corcos were many, and one of her major efforts was to obtain more housing for the poor. In 1898 she travelled to Marrakesh to obtain authorization from Sultan ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, to enlarge the mellah. The sultan authorized the construction of housing for 150 families outside the mellah, but nothing was built. Nevertheless, this was certainly no small feat for a foreign woman in the context of 19th-century Morocco.  

SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF ANGLO-JEWISH INVOLVEMENT

The progressive increase of Anglo-Jewry’s influence in Moroccan affairs was to have far-reaching consequences. Not only was the legal status of Moroccan Jews modified in Essaouira, but the very structure of relations between the Jews and the Moroccan authorities. This change could hardly have been foreseen, and it was certainly not the original aim of the foreign philanthropists.

It could be argued that the Montefiore mission and the sultan’s dahir had a minimal effect on changing the Jews’ status, except in some of the coastal ports which had an influential European presence. But the psychological impact on the Jewish population, including many of the rural communities of the interior, was considerable. No sooner had Montefiore left Morocco than it was reported that the Jews in Essaouira – and even in some towns in the interior – were beginning to act as if they were no longer under Moroccan jurisdiction. The French consul of Essaouira observed that they were even insulting Muslims publicly.  

John Drummond-Hay, the British minister in Tangier, began receiving letters from various vice-consuls, as well as from the Moroccan authorities, reporting that the Jews were displaying arrogance and defiance in their relations with Muslims. The British minister sent around a circular directing the vice-consuls to inform the elders in their respective consular districts that Montefiore had come in a private capacity and that the Jews were still subject to Moroccan authority.  

A few months later, after receiving similar reports, Moses Montefiore circulated a memorandum to the same effect, admonishing the notables to make sure that Jews obeyed the Moroccan authorities lest they lose all the benefits recently gained.  

Although the Jews of Essaouira appeared to have moderated their tone, as Beaumier observed several years later, the long-range effects of the Montefiore visit were still present. Symbolically, on the death of Sir Moses some twenty years later (and years after the death of the Sultan Muḥammad IV), it was believed in London that Sultan Mawlay Ḥasan had nullified the dahir since the governor of Marrakesh had ordered the Jews to go barefoot in that city. Although there is no evidence of a connection between the governor’s action and Montefiore’s death, it is important to note that the 1864 dahir was still being invoked.
The immediate effect of the Montefiore visit and the continued lobbying of Anglo- and Franco-Jewry was that the Jews of Essaouira increasingly sought foreign intervention when crimes were committed against them. Reports of thefts and murders filled the columns of the European Jewish press. The notables of Essaouira sought the aid of the AJA and the AIU to press their respective governments to secure justice.44 Circumventing the traditional system of protection and compromise, whereby the influential Jews in the community would seek redress through a Muslim patron, the Jews of the interior would now have the notables of Essaouira appeal directly to the AJA and the Alliance, or to both at the same time. Beaumier, who was aware of the complications this was creating in Moroccan-European relations, urged the Jews of Essaouira to have disputes settled first by the elders of the Jewish community, and only at last resort to appeal abroad.45 The Jews of Essaouira generally ignored this suggestion. Very rarely did these reports of murders and thefts connect with the general insecurity prevailing in the countryside, a factor which the consuls sometimes remarked.46 The rural revolt in the Haha in 1873, or the famine of 1878–9 in southern Morocco, certainly made life for the itinerant Jewish trader precarious. But foreign archives are generally silent on how many Muslims were killed in the countryside.

In fact, the town’s economy was dependent on the itinerant Jewish pedlar who tied the town both to local and distant markets. Under normal economic circumstances, the Jew was protected by a network of patron-client relations with the Muslims of the countryside. As conveyers of needed commodities the itinerant Jewish merchants were assured protection by Muslim rural leaders. Even in years of hardship, this system operated to a certain degree.47

As foreign penetration grew, the hinterland became increasingly subservient to European merchants or Jewish town-merchants who had official status as protégés of foreign powers. The traditional system of assuring security in the countryside was by then breaking down. The Jewish pedlar – for most itinerant traders in Essaouira were Jews – was threatened by an increasingly unsafe situation, exacerbated by the economic hardships of the countryside.48

One of the principal factors contributing to the weakening of the Moroccan economy was the system of foreign protection. The question of protection – the granting of extra-territorial rights by foreign powers to Moroccans – was the most critical problem in European-Moroccan relations in the 19th century. It was the means by which foreign powers, without investing in military conquest, were able to exercise considerable influence in Morocco. By freeing their protégés from paying taxes and from the jurisdiction of Moroccan courts, Europeans were able to assert their commercial interests and penetrate markets which historically had been inaccessible.49
Many of the recipients of foreign protection were Jews. Already installed along the coast as protégés of the sultan and acting as royal merchants (*tuḥjar as-Suṭḥān*), the Jewish élite, with their network of familial ties and trading partners, were well placed to serve the Europeans as agents of penetration. All the notables of the Essaouira Jewish community were protégés of one foreign power or another. The influential merchant Abraham Corcos (see plate 3) maintained close personal ties with the royal palace in Marrakesh; as United

3 Abraham Corcos, c. 1880 (From the archives of the Corcos family.).
States vice-consul he extended protection to his own agents.\textsuperscript{51} The interests of the Hapsburgs in Essaouira could not have been considerable, yet for two generations in the second half of the 19th century, Chief Rabbi Joseph Elmaleh, succeeded by his son Reuben, represented the Austro-Hungarian Empire as consular agent,\textsuperscript{52} combining their talents as rabbi, head of the elders (ma'amad), merchant, landlord and agent of a foreign power.

The Jews of Essaouira sought not only foreign protection, but nationality as well. It was easy to obtain a French passport in Algiers or Oran, returning to Essaouira with new rights. Constant traffic between Essaouira, Gibraltar and London enabled Swiris, after a sojourn in England, to return as British subjects.\textsuperscript{53} In 1864, of 153 British subjects registered with the British consulate of Mogador, only 31 were born in England, as opposed to 35 born in Essaouira and 65 in Gibraltar, and most of the latter were of Moroccan Jewish descent.\textsuperscript{54} In 1871, 172 British subjects were registered and nearly half appear to have Moroccan Jewish names.\textsuperscript{55} Already a new generation of Anglicized Moroccan Jews was being born in Essaouira.

Competition between foreign powers was the principal cause for convening the Madrid conference of 1880 to regulate the abuses of protection. To Anglo-Jewry foreign protection seemed vital for Moroccan Jewry and was the main reason for the improvement of their status in coastal towns where foreign consulates were present. Jews from all over Morocco and from all social classes sought protection. With the removal of this system, in Anglo-Jewish eyes, the Jews would once again revert to their humiliating status, subject to Moorish law, as before the Montefiore mission. With this in mind, the Board of Deputies and the Anglo-Jewish Association began lobbying the Foreign Office earnestly in anticipation of the Madrid Conference:

It may be true that protection sometimes leads to a few abuses, but these are infinitely counterbalanced by the manifold advantages which accrue to an unoffending and useful portion of the inhabitants of Morocco, and the door is left open to the extension of those civilising and beneficent influences by which the Moorish Empire may be redeemed from its present unhappy condition.

If protection is removed, the memorial continues, the Jew in Morocco will ‘be subjected to endless indignities and acts of injustice and oppression’. Even though the actual number of protected Jews is small – 103 according to the report – ‘the influence of this privilege is felt far beyond the area of protected persons, and constitutes an effective restraint upon the lawless portion of the Moorish population.’ Despite this restraint, the report describes the growing outrages committed against unprotected Jews.\textsuperscript{56}

In general, the conference did nothing to stem the flood of protégés of
foreign powers. In fact the Europeans gained recognition of their right to obtain property in Morocco. The concession made to the Moroccans, that protégés must pay agricultural taxes, was ineffectual and finally abandoned a few years later.\textsuperscript{57} As for the question of Moroccans naturalized abroad, it was agreed that upon returning to Morocco, after an equal amount of time had elapsed as had been spent abroad, the native had to choose between submitting to Moroccan jurisdiction or leaving the country. This new regulation, which in a sense implicitly recognized the existence of Moroccan nationality as a legal concept, remained largely ineffectual in its application.\textsuperscript{58}

It is questionable if the Jewish lobby really influenced the Europeans at the conference, but the interests of the Board and the AJA did not go unheeded.\textsuperscript{59} Muhammad Bargāsh, the Moroccan representative, signed a statement on religious liberty in Morocco, virtually invoking the Montefiore dahir of 1864. In addition, Sir John Drummond-Hay, the most influential foreign diplomat in Morocco at this time, sought to regulate further the administration of justice for Moroccan Jews, and personally brought up the matter with Sultan Mawlāy Ḥasan. It was suggested by Drummond-Hay, and agreed upon, that Jews could appeal to Bargāsh in Tangier if they felt that the governor in their area had acted unjustly.\textsuperscript{60} This injunction was unacceptable to the Board and the AJA, who further appealed to Earl Granville, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, suggesting that the Jews could never obtain justice from the Moroccan authorities: 'All amelioration which has been effected has been obtained through the humane and energetic interposition of the Representatives of the Foreign Powers'.\textsuperscript{61}

This foreign intervention in favour of protégés was to have a negative influence on Muslim-Jewish relations. There is also substantial evidence to suggest that protégés were making false or exaggerated claims on thefts in an attempt to exact maximum indemnities, aggravating an already deteriorating economic situation.\textsuperscript{62} Due to these difficulties, in 1885 a dahir was sent out to all the governors informing them that all goods must be registered by four notaries before being sent out of the town, due to the exaggerated claims of protégés and Jews.\textsuperscript{63} Essaouira's creditors had higher claims than any other town, and the debtors in the hinterland were unable to pay.\textsuperscript{64}

The growing claims of Jewish protégés, backed up by their consuls, was provoking an already disconcerted ulema, who saw the Jews as agents of foreign intervention, and hence the primary cause for the weakening of the Moroccan state.\textsuperscript{65} The system of protection which the Anglo-Jewish lobbyists defended as the only means of assuring any security for the Jews of Morocco, not only provoked the attack against the Jews by the 'ulamā', but contributed to the growing impoverishment of the masses.\textsuperscript{66}
The Jewish notables of Essaouira in a sense became prisoners of the system that foreign intervention created. As they became more associated with European commercial interests the Jewish merchants became reliant on the system of protection which the Europeans created. When Reuben Elmaleh, the head of the community, wrote to the AJA pressing them to extend protection to the interior, the case for protection was presented by Anglo-Jewry as the only defence against persecution. But commercial interest was probably the primary motive for Essaouira's Jewish notables. In 1888, with the approach of another Madrid conference to regulate the abuses of protection, the merchants of Essaouira wrote to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce: 'since the establishment of protection, foreign trade had quadrupled, and we have had some security in the recovery of debts in the interior. Without the full assistance from the foreign authorities, the recovery of debts in the interior is absolutely impossible.' Clearly, the situation had evolved in such a way that the primary means perceived by Jewish merchants to recover debts was through foreign intervention.

Foreign intervention influenced the Jewish community in another important way: the notion of the need for social reform in the community was instilled for the first time. This first appeared during the Picciotto mission. Although Picciotto discovered some indifference in the community, a sufficient number of westernized Swiris responded to the call. At times notables tried to thwart the efforts at reform, but they could not disconnect themselves from Anglo-Jewry, now perceived as powerful new protectors. As wielders of power, and patronage-brokers themselves, the Jewish plutocracy dispensed charities and monopolized philanthropy.

Picciotto found a powerful advocate of reform in Abraham Corcos, of Essaouira, who, trading on large advances from the palace, appears to have been the sultan's chief supplier of English luxury goods. He became the American vice-consul in Essaouira in 1862. Both through his capacities as American vice-consul and his relations with the court, Abraham Corcos used his good offices to assist the cause of social reform. The head of the Jewish community, Joseph Elmaleh, who was involved with English trade and acquainted with Europe, became a supporter of social reform as well. Indeed, no reform could be achieved without his sanction. When the dispensing of charity could strengthen his authority over the community, Elmaleh became the strongest advocate of social reform. At the same time, since foreign initiative was a threat to his authoritarian rule, Elmaleh could equally staunchly oppose their efforts. Hence, throughout the second half of the 19th century, Joseph Elmaleh, and later his son Reuben, are at times praised for their benevolent
assistance, or condemned for the impediments they threw in the path of reformers.72

Prior to the Montefiore visit no organized communal fund existed for the poor or for undertaking improvements. His cleaning and paving of the streets had repercussions on public welfare policy. Two years later a communal fund was established: a meat tax of 10 mithqal per head of beef slaughtered was established, to run for three years.73 In addition, merchants were to pay $\frac{1}{4}$ per thousand of all profits on imports and exports. This fund was to be used in support of the newly created Alliance school and the hospital for the poor. In 1869, after the three-year period, there was a public demonstration for the suppression of the meat tax. Furthermore, many of the rich refused to pay the subscription to the hospital and school, claiming that the only real problem was hunger and that there was no need for the school or hospital. The school and hospital had to close down, in spite of Elmaleh’s efforts to support them. Beaumier claimed that due to Elmaleh’s efforts, the cholera epidemic which devastated much of Morocco the year before hardly touched Essaouira.74

So long as initiative came only from the oligarchy, reforms had little chance of making headway in the community. It was only when voices were heard from the lower social strata that the concept of social reform became firmly implanted in the Essaouira community. This was partly induced by the establishment of new charitable organizations. After fifteen years of Anglo-Jewish and, to a lesser degree, French influence, charities and benevolent societies began to appear in Essaouira. In 1874 Meshibat Nefesh society (hebra) was founded by eleven young men to help the sick; eight months later it had fifty-five members. The Alliance director remarked that ‘it does not accept in its midst the big businessmen of Mogador. It is founded on modern and free principles at the initiative of European societies, and those who are at its head were elected by secret ballot.’ The accounts of the society were posted in the streets.75 The Anglo-Jewish Association decided that its vaccination programme could be carried out under the auspices of the newly formed society.76

If the intention was initially to exclude big merchants, a few years later the merchants’ sons were running the society: Meir Corcos, son of Abraham, was first president and then treasurer; Aharon Elmaleh, son of Joseph, was later president. In fact all the benevolent societies were soon directed by the oligarchy. In 1875, soon after the founding of Meshibat Nefesh, another society of young men ‘Oz Wehadar, was established with the aim of providing a place for poor girls in the English school; Reuben Elmaleh became the honorary president, and his close associates were on its committee. Meshibat Nefesh had difficulties competing with the superior resources of the new society.77 The following year, a branch of the Alliance was established, headed by Joseph
Elmaleh. The initiative to form an AJA branch in Essaouira, which Abraham Corcos was to head, never got off the ground due to divisions in the community. Probably Elmaleh wished to preserve his predominant position as head of the Alliance branch.\textsuperscript{78}

Nevertheless, a certain social consciousness seems to have been instilled in the mellah. The next year, in 1877, another society, \textit{Marbi\`{e}se Torah}, was formed in the mellah in order to put under its direction all the talmud-torah schools, and to create other schools for poor children who had none. This can be seen as a kind of response to the casbah school initiatives, which were more secular and served the élite. The notables from the casbah contributed nothing to this venture, and, like other attempts at social reform, without the backing of the oligarchy it could make little progress.\textsuperscript{79}

The following years of hardship, from 1878 to 1882 when the town suffered from famine, epidemics and masses of rural migrants, caused the cessation of almost all community activities and created new problems and tensions in the community. Many Jewish merchants went bankrupt during the crisis, but others seemed to have saved themselves through speculation in real estate. If Essaouira’s commerce was beginning to wane, a class of landlords and creditors was emerging. In the Jewish community, as the mass of impoverished rural immigrants increased in the mellah, the divisions between the rich and poor became more glaring than ever before.\textsuperscript{80}

In 1882 the \textit{ma’amad} was reestablished in the house of Joseph Elmaleh, who was elected honorary president ‘by a majority of the community’, according to Jacob Aferiat, the elected president of the \textit{ma’amad}, in a letter to the Alliance in Paris (see plate 4). The composition of the \textit{ma’amad}, with Elmaleh’s close associates and members of his family, left little room for reform.\textsuperscript{81}

That same year, the AIU branch was reestablished in Essaouira under the auspices of the oligarchy, but, according to Judah L. Yuly, an anglicized Swiri merchant who often supplied the AJA with reports, ‘the object is evidently to divert any funds that may be forwarded from being sent through the French consulate, and it hopes that the same may be entrusted to the said committee for distribution . . .’ Yuly then adds that the collection and distribution of the communal fund (\textit{kupah}) is ‘shamefully managed’, suggesting that the funds should be sent through the French consulate who ought to appoint a committee consisting of two-thirds Europeans and one-third natives to distribute to the poor and starving Jews. Several years later the issue of the misappropriation of the community’s fund was to tear apart the community.\textsuperscript{82}
The challenge to the oligarchy

It had now become apparent that the traditional pattern of relations within the community were in a poor state. Abraham Corcos, whose work for the community was exercised with great diplomatic sagacity, did not live to see dissension dividing the Jews of Essaouira. His death in 1883 marked the end of an era; no longer was the plutocracy of Essaouira closely tied to the sultan. Although a number of merchants were still officially and advantageously recognized by the palace as royal merchants, their connection to the Makhzen no longer carried the same weight in the community. The plutocracy was no longer delivering the goods.83
The Jews of the mellah now realized that they could turn to their European protectors without the intermediary notables. There already was an indication of this in 1882 when some 150 artisans, not official beneficiaries from the pauper fund, signed a petition describing themselves as being in a state of starvation, and sent it to the Alliance in Paris, pressing for assistance.\(^8^4\)

In 1889 the rift between casbah and mellah Jews was reaching a breaking point. During a visit to Essaouira by Edward Meakin, the editor of the *Times of Morocco*, a delegation of some 200 Jews from the mellah came to solicit his help. For the first time, the poorer classes of Jews used the press to put forward their demands: the poverty of the mellah became an international issue. Descriptions of the dire conditions of the mellah filled the pages of the *Times of Morocco* and other Tangier papers. In London and from Paris to Warsaw the Jewish press began reporting the developing struggle. Meakin found the poverty unbearable—people living among animals and refuse, sometimes with forty families in one house:

> Every home, and every nook and corner were freely thrown open to his inspection, and the sights and scenes he witnesses were terrible. Such awful calamity as must be seen to be properly understood. It is impossible to convey any adequate idea of it in words.

According to the report, the poor complained to Meakin that they had to pay the meat tax (restored several years earlier) which the rich, who distributed that which was collected, did not pay.\(^8^5\)

Once again, Elmaleh was accused of misappropriating the funds which he controlled. The sources for the *kupah* came from two sources: the first, as already mentioned, came from the tax on meat (this included a tax on goat skins sold – 2 centimes for every six skins); the second came from a percentage of the freight of the Forwood Merseyside Steamship Company.\(^8^6\) Reuben Elmaleh (his father, Joseph, died in London in 1886), who was now both president and treasurer of the *ma'amad*, was accused in the Tangier press of using these funds to buy support.\(^8^7\)

The *Times of Morocco* reports that a newly formed committee, the 'United Congregations of the Dwellers in the Jewry of Mogador', was called to inquire into the management of the *kupah*. As a result of these démarches, the *Times* appealed for the advice of world Jewry.\(^8^8\)

The Meakin reports subsequently produced accusations and counter-accusations between the social reformers of the mellah – together with a few of the wealthy merchants – and Elmaleh and his supporters, over the president's heavy-handed tactics. Several major incidents took place during the next few years before the community could again tactically and temporarily reconcile their differences.
After the resignation of the chief rabbi (who was the dayyan at the head of the rabbinical court), the mellah, together with some of the more affluent Jews, demanded the nomination of Rabbi Abraham Sebbah, a French protégé recently arrived from Palestine but of Swiri parentage. This demand, independent of the ma’amad, was considered an act of defiance by Elmaleh who had three of the principal instigators of the ‘United Congregation’ arrested by the qa’id and put in prison. Two were released immediately, since they were protégés of foreign powers, while the third, who was not a protégé, was freed only after two sheep were sacrificed before the local authorities. The correspondents to the Times of Morocco, and the Alliance schoolmaster, wrote that, above all, Elmaleh and the notables were opposed to having a foreign protégé as chief rabbi, since he might act independently and hence deprive the oligarchy of some of its closely guarded authority. By the end of December a compromise was reached, with the decision to appoint two rabbis, Sebbah and the casbah’s choice, Abraham Muyal, who were to act with equal powers and independent of each other. Yet in 1894 the controversy was still not settled; appeals were received by the AJA and efforts were under way to have Sebbah dismissed.

This incident dramatically demonstrates the deterioration of the community structure. Not only does it show how foreign protection had divided the community over the allocation of patronage, but the non-protégés had seen fit to seek the intervention of Muslim justice against fellow Jews, a process traditionally disdained by the Jewish community. On a number of occasions the AJA felt compelled to admonish the Jews of Essaouira for resorting to the Muslim authorities for disputes between Jews rather than settling the problem among themselves.

The compromise over the dayyanim did not prevent the continuation of the flood of accusations against Elmaleh in the Tangier press. It became necessary for Elmaleh to find another means of asserting his authority: on 8 January 1890 he offered his resignation as head of the community. The next day a meeting was held to persuade Elmaleh to withdraw his resignation, but it seems that other matters were discussed at the meeting. On Saturday 11 January papers were sent to all the synagogues threatening, in the name of the two new rabbis, that anyone who had written or would write against the Elmaleh would be excommunicated and denied burial in the Jewish cemetery, and that Jews who in future formed societies without the advice of the casbah elders would also be excommunicated. Appeals began reaching Essaouira from the ma’amad of Tangier for Elmaleh to change his decision. In early February, Elmaleh resumed his position as president of the ma’amad with control of the kupah, promising stricter accounting of the fund in future. The Alliance director, in a
letter to Paris, seemed to suggest that the resignation and return to power had all been orchestrated by Elmaleh.  

Despite this remarkable coup, the problems of the ma'amad were still far from being solved. The central cause of the social reformers, that of enlarging the mellah, had still not been realized. By 1890, reports estimated that over 6000 Jews lived in 156 houses in the mellah. The Jewish population of Essaouira, now representing nearly half the entire population of the town, had more than doubled over the last forty years. In all these years of population growth, the area of the mellah remained the same, all expansion being vertical. In the context of these demographic pressures the social reformers were able to gain some popular support.

In the summer of 1890, Moses Lugasy, a Swiri businessman who had grown up in England returned to his native town. Shocked by the conditions of the mellah he began organizing the poor. It was probably through Lugasy's initiative that a group of mellah Jews went to the local authorities with a petition to enlarge their quarter, sacrificing a bull and a sheep. A delegation from the community was sent to Marrakesh, with the backing of Elmaleh and the British legation of Tangier. At the same time, appeals went out to the AJA in London, requesting it to seek the intervention of the British Government. Although an engineer was sent by the sultan to Essaouira to make plans for enlarging the mellah, nothing came of it.

Lugasy was determined to confront the oligarchy, and in December 1890 he established a mellah branch of the AJA composed of a committee of social reformers, without the sanction of the casbah. According to Lugasy, there were three reasons for establishing the mellah branch. First, because the poor were subjected to humiliation by their wealthy brethren; second, to expand the living quarters for the poor; third, for the purposes of charity, since the rich Jews and landlords never visited the poor, but only sent soldiers to collect their rent.

This constituted a direct challenge to the authority of the casbah. But now Elmaleh had an even more formidable task, since Lugasy was using the Anglo-Jewish establishment to challenge his authority. According to Yišḥaql b. Yaʾish Halewi, one of the vice-presidents of the mellah branch, who was also a rabbi, book importer and correspondent for the Warsaw-based Hebrew newspaper Hasfira, the casbah Jews had to turn to Stella Corcos to help them form their own branch. Halewi writes that when the casbah Jews held meetings, sometimes five or six mellah Jews would be sent for, but these were not chosen by the community at large and had no influence at the meetings. Since the mellah Jews were not really represented, the rich Jews were losing their capacity to rule the community.
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It was through Stella Corcos, who had by then secured a position of considerable prestige in the Jewish community, that the ma’amad sought legitimacy. The casbah branch, according to Lugasy, was established to frustrate further efforts to expand housing for the poor. Léon Corcos, their proposed vice-president, he adds, was one of the noted landlords subletting government property to the poor.\(^{101}\)

The AJA, not convinced by Lugasy, was satisfied with Stella Corcos’s account of the controversy. The parent branch in London insisted that the unification of the two branches was in the interests of the community. Lugasy resigned and they were amalgamated.\(^{102}\)

Elmaleh now appeared to be playing a major role in the reforms, supervising the cleaning of the mellah, distributing money to the poor from the kupah, and approaching the sultan for enlarging the mellah.\(^{103}\) However, the project for expanding the mellah was never realized, and accusations against the landlords continued. The AJA decided to request the Chief Rabbi of London, the Chief Rabbi of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, and the Grand Rabbi of France to address letters to the rabbis of Essaouira asking them to use their influence to induce landlords to withdraw their opposition to the improvement of the mellah.\(^{104}\) Until the end of the decade various proposals and démarches for enlarging the mellah were put forward, and the British Government intervened on a number of occasions.\(^{105}\) Apparently the sultan had received so many complaints against the landlords – who were in fact subletting Makhzen, or ‘government’ property – that he demanded of Stella Corcos during her mission to Marrakesh that some of the merchants sign a letter stating that they were not opposed to building new housing. She claimed to have been able to achieve this only with great difficulty.\(^{106}\)

In 1899 the lingering controversy over Elmaleh’s authoritarian control of the communal fund once again came to a head, when he was accused of using the money for his own profit. A large sector of the community, including a number of influential merchants and French protégés, began to demand reforms. Under these pressures, Elmaleh abolished the meat tax and refused to receive the reformers.\(^{107}\) In a rare departure from tradition, the reformist faction led by V. Lumbroso, an Italian Jewish merchant, complained to the sultan of Elmaleh’s mismanagement of the community’s affairs and sought his support to have a new shaykh appointed (the Jewish liaison between the Muslim authorities and the Jewish community, responsible for policing the mellah).\(^{108}\) claiming that they needed the sultan’s support to submit the affair before the rabbinical court. The Alliance, the AJA, and the American and British representatives in Morocco were also requested to intervene.\(^{109}\)

The sultan gave his support to the legitimacy of these claims, although the
principal wasīr, Aḥmad b. Mūsā b. Aḥmad, did not want to intervene in the affairs of the Jews. A new committee was formed with the support of the sultan, and a dahir was granted appointing a new shaykh. This led to Elmaleh’s resignation once again, but now it was agreed that no president would be elected in the future. Instead, a committee of twelve would administer the fund, seven members from the casbah and five from the mellah. The new committee was to meet in public periodically. Finally the meat tax was restored.

THE QUESTION OF SOCIAL CLASSES

It would be tempting to view these tumultuous events as symptomatic of class struggle between a burgeoning class of capitalists and an increasingly exploited working class. However, one must take into account the fact that the principal sources of information on these struggles come from either the élite of Essaouira, or from foreigners and westernized Moroccan Jews who were influenced by liberal notions of social classes current in Europe at the time. Hence, shortly after Lugasy successfully formed a Zionist society in Essaouira in 1900, after returning from England once again, he wrote to Theodore Herzl attacking the ‘miserable money changers’ who opposed the establishment of the Jewish Colonial Trust. The seven stars of the triangle in the Zionist banner Lugasy designed, ‘remind’ us of the Jewish Institution or State which will adopt for its working classes daily 7 hours labour. . . .”

In Essaouira, by the last decades of the 19th century, all classes had become subordinate to European interests and subject to foreign rivalries. For this reason, indigenous merchants lacked what might be regarded as class solidarity. Halewi remarked, in an article to Hasfiraḥ, how the rich were always divided.

These quarrels among Essaouira’s casbah Jews – of which there were more than in any other Moroccan town – were the result of two interconnected factors: the decline of commerce, and foreign rivalries over the growth of ‘protection’.

With the decline of Essaouira as an international port of trade, there was competition for fewer commercial opportunities, since Jewish merchants, who previously had reaped great profits from their intermediary role, were now becoming increasingly subservient to European interests. Halewi pointed out in 1891 that the rich were earning more from subletting property than from commerce. In other words, real estate had now become one of the most valuable commodities. But Halewi also asserted that among the large property owners in the mellah, some, such as Meir Corcos and his brother Aharon, were concerned about the interests of the poor.
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In fact Meir Corcos (who succeeded his father as American vice-consul), Lumbroso and various French protégés, as well as those of other countries, were all involved in the quarrel with Elmaleh and his supporters of whom many were British protégés. The merchants, in their declining importance in the European trade, were vying for foreign patronage be it British or French. The divisions in the élite of Essaouira were symptomatic of the competition between the European powers.

Indicative of this competition for patronage is the dispute which broke out over contracts with the steamship companies.115 As was pointed out above, Elmaleh controlled the funds paid by the Forwood Steamship Company. The monopoly that this afforded Forwood had for some time been opposed by smaller shippers who claimed that vessels of other companies would not come to Essaouira. In 1892 the Salvador Steamship Company was formed by shippers of Essaouira to sell by contract the shipping service monopoly to the port. The purpose was to press for certain advantages: first, to pressure Forwood into starting a line between Essaouira and Marseilles, and second, to compel the steamship company Paquet of Marseilles to pay an amount equal to that of Forwood to the poor tax. A number of merchants, refusing to participate in the Salvador venture, went ahead and signed with Paquet. A compromise was reached between Salvador and Paquet, but this broke down in 1897 when the contract was about to end. According to Elmaleh, a number of shippers who were French protégés were attempting to break the Salvador company. The latter claimed that the shares of the company were only paid by the small shareholders and not the large.116

The accusations and counter-accusations continued for some time; what is important here is that the diminishing commercial opportunities in the port created additional tensions between protégés of different foreign powers, between big merchants and small.

But who were the followers of the social reformers, the faction in the mellah who were pushing for reform? Less is known about the social structure of the mellah, since the poor are not represented in our archives. It is therefore possible only to make tentative speculations. It does seem clear that just as the casbah class cannot be viewed as a single unit, neither can the mellah. Although portrayed by foreign observers as a chaotic and inhuman cesspool of misery, disease and immorality, the mellah appears to have had a number of important class distinctions.117

The artisan class—relatively small in Essaouira, since the town was essentially an entrepôt for trade—seemed to represent traditionally a stable element of the population. The 150 who signed the petition in 1882 may have represented the majority of the artisans in the town.118 After four years of
hardship, with supply and demand significantly diminishing, their traditionally stable livelihood must have been threatened. There were also small merchants in the mellah: shopkeepers and itinerant pedlars some of whom were protégés of foreign powers, and may have made some minor gains in the growing European presence, although they were certainly somewhat dependent on the wealthy casbah merchants. Their level of westernization was at best minimal, which perhaps explains why they heeded the call of a firebrand like Lugasy, with the prestige of his English nationality and education. Unlike Lugasy, it was more difficult for them to abandon the plutocracy who still exercised considerable symbolic leadership. Yet at the same time, they were one notch above their pauper co-religionists; it was they who were the rabbis, the butchers and other officials in the mellah.

This class – the shopkeepers, artisans, rabbis – may have been influenced from abroad. But if that were so, it was above all by the haskalah, for it was from their ranks that articles were contributed to the Hebrew newspapers in Eastern Europe.119 While never abandoning the strict observance of Jewish law, they criticized the superstitions practised by the community at large. While continuing their devotion to kabbalah – evidenced by the many works of Yosef Khnaffo120 – they formed a secret society for the secular study of Hebrew, the sacred tongue. The committee of the mellah AJA Branch – Yiṣḥaq Halewi, Dawid Ilaḥ, Ḥananiah Abenḥaim – and other scholars of the mellah such as Dawid Alqa’im and Yosef Khnaffo, were probably all members of this secret society.121 The one hundred or so subscribers to the AJA mellah branch, who paid their five shillings subscription,122 were not the beggars, the petty street hawkers. In fact, many in 1890 were the same who had signed the artisan hunger petition of 1882.

With the arrival of the new mass of poor and homeless migrants from the Sous in the 1870s, the small gains they may have made were now being threatened by the difficulties of which these immigrants were a manifestation – the growing pressures of overcrowding and poverty. One of the routes open to them was social reform, and their new patrons were the European consulates and Jewish organizations. The majority of the Jewish population of Essaouira – beggars, petty traders and women – do not have a voice in our archives. They seem to have been manipulated by both sides in the dispute, by the casbah rich and mellah reformers.123

With mostly good intentions, the Board of Deputies and the Anglo-Jewish Association sought to ameliorate the social conditions of Essaouira’s Jewish community. Their newly hard-won rights in British society, and their ability to exercise some influence on the British Government, were used by Anglo-Jewry
to advance the emancipation of Jews around the world. In their monolithic conception of what an advanced society entailed. Essaouira, like many other towns with sizeable Jewish populations, became the object of cultural imperialism, the other side of philanthropy.

For British commerce in Morocco, the intervention of Anglo-Jewish philanthropists could usefully aid penetration. By detaching certain Jews from the legal structure of Morocco, and by forming new cadres of protected merchants, Essaouira’s Jews could serve the cause of imperialism well.

This intervention in Moroccan affairs, both by Anglo-Jewry and the foreign powers, sowed the seeds of discord in the community and undermined its traditional leadership. In the 20th century the French were to carry this even further.

In 1904 Reuben Elmaleh was reinstated as head of the community, but his ability to exercise any real authority was reaching its last days. Shortly after the French Protectorate was established in 1912, Elmaleh sent a plea to the Alliance in Paris:

As I want to retire from Mogador and live in Jerusalem, and taking into consideration that on my father’s as well as my mother’s side we are descended from great rabbis, and taking into consideration the services rendered by my father for 25 years, and then mine for 25 years to the Alliance, I should like to request from you at present, to be so kind, if it would be possible to grant me a charity or a monthly pension in Jerusalem, since for a long time I no longer do any business, and I am in a precarious state; as I know your religious sentiments, may I beg of you to keep my request a secret, in other words, not to publicize it, for having lived in the position I had in the past and to find myself as I am today, it would only add sorrow upon sorrow. . . .

Evidently, the AIU never supported his demand: on 3 May 1925 Reuben Elmaleh was buried on the southern side of the increasingly overcrowded Jewish cemetery of Essaouira, outside the northern gate (Bab Doukallah) of the town’s ramparts. As it is far from the entrance no one visits it today, and Elmaleh’s tomb will soon be covered with the encroaching undergrowth and sand that swirls around this desolate part of town.

NOTES

Abbreviations

AE/CCC Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Correspondance Consulaire et Commerciale (Paris)
AIU Alliance Israélite Universelle (Paris)
AJ Anglo-Jewish Archives, Mocatta Library, University College (London)
Daniel Schroeter

AJA-R  Anglo-Jewish Association Annual Reports (London)
AL-M  Al Mughreb Al-Aksa (Tangier)
CA  Corcos family private archives (Jerusalem)
DAR  Direction des Archives Royales (Rabat)
FO  Foreign Office archives at the Public Record Office (London)
JC  Jewish Chronicle (London)
MI,MII,  
TM  Times of Morocco (Tangier)


3 It is the only remaining synagogue still used in Essaouira today. H. S. Attia was naturalized British in 1883, see FO 99/208, 26-10-1883, and FO 99/209, 11-9-1883. Attia to Earl Granville.

4 Cf. MII pp. 92–8, 574–80.

5 Information on some of these families was provided to me by Richard D. Barnett; see A. M. Hyamson, The Sephardim of England (London 1951) 207, 263.

6 Archives of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, unclassified.

7 Meir Macnin, for example, as official merchant of the sultan, made numerous bad debts in a number of European countries: MII p. 40; James Riley, An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the American Brig Commerce (New York 1817) 40. His debts and the official protection accorded to him by the sultan caused great concern in the Foreign Office: FO 52/24, 24-11-1823; 52/27, 28-11-1826; 52/28, 28-4-1827; 52/36, 2-6-1832; 174/287, 23-3-1833.


11 JC, 13-1-1860.


13 JC, 2-3-1860.

14 JC, 17-8-1860.


17 Ibid.

18 JC, 7-11-1862.


20 The dahir is found in the Diaries II (see n. 19) 152–3.

21 Hodgkin (see n. 19) 45; Diaries II (see n. 19) 152.

22 Referred to as ‘l’homme le plus riche et le plus influent de la communauté’, see
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23 Diaries (see n. 19) 155.
24 FO 174/83. 1 Ramaḍān 1280 = 7-2-1864, Reade? to al-Yamānī, and in Sha'bān 1280 = 9-2-1864. al-Yamānī to Reade. Abraham Corcos was also using his influence at the court with the aim of enlarging the mellah: CA. 14 Ramaḍān 1280 = 22-2-1864, al Yamānī to Abraham and Jacob Corcos; this letter is discussed by a descendant of the family who was an historian: David Corcos, Studies in the History of the Jews of Morocco (Jerusalem 1976) 127–8.

25 Some improvements were made and new shops constructed in the new mellah in 1865, but this served the merchants rather than the poor. On these constructions, see DAR/Essaouira 1, 20 Rabi‘a I 1282 = 13 August 1865, ’Abd al-Wāḥid Ḍahašī to Muḥammad Bannis.

26 JC, 5-2-1864; Hodgkin (see n. 19) 46.
27 On the importance of this visit in the eyes of Essaouira’s Jews, see Ohayon MS (see n. 1) 6; M. Obedia, ‘Les juifs de Mogador’. MS (n.d.) ff. 7–10. This MS typed in 17 pages is a resumed of a longer article written in 1904 (by Mas‘ud Khnaffo?). I thank Professor Mige for providing me with a copy.


32 Cf. Laskier 1982 (see n. 9) 201–2.
33 AJ/95/ADD 4. AJA Executive Committee Minutes, see for example, 20-12-1874, 21-2-1875, 28-3-1875, 14-11-1875. According to David Corcos, a committee of Swiris in England was established in 1874 and met with a Moroccan ambassador in London in 1876. Through this envoy, authorization was granted for allowing Jews to reside in any quarter of the town, and some 20 families returned to Essaouira from England after 70 years to live in the medina: Corcos (see n. 24) 128, n. 155. I have found no other information on this.
34 AJ/95/ADD 4, 24-2-1876.
35 AJA-R-V (1876) pp. 31–3; AJ/95/ADD 4, 8-3-1877; 19-9-1877.
36 Charles A. Payton, Moss from a Rolling Stone (London 1879) 307–26; FO 631/6, 20-6-1878, 4-7-1878, 19-7-1878, 24-7-1878, 1-8-1878, 8-1-1879, letters from R. Drummond-Hay to M. Afalo.
37 Foreign visitors as well as local consuls appeared to be surprised by the rapid progress of her school. AJ/37/3/3/3-37, Visitors Book (1885–1910). The number of pupils in the school grew from 60 in 1886 to 130 in 1893 to 171 in 1899. In comparison, the AIU school grew from 45 in 1888 to 122 in 1899 (from AJA Annual Reports and AIU reports sent from Mogador to Paris).
38 AIU/MAROC.XXV.602, 26-8-1898, and 26-12-1898, Stella Corcos to the AIU. After her trip to Marrakesh, she continued to petition the palace for the realization of the project. DAR. 22 Muḥarram 1320 = 1-5-1902. I thank Arrik Delouya for providing me with a copy of this document.
39 AE/CCC-Mogador-4. 2-7-1864, Huet.
40 FO 99/121, 16-7-1864, and translation of a letter from Muḥammad Bargāsh to Hay 7-8-1864.
41 JC, 21-9-1864.
42 AIU/FRANCE.VIII.D.42, Mogador, 24-12-1967.
45 AIU/FRANCE.VIII.D.42, Mogador, 22-10-1868.
49 There have been many studies which have dealt with the question of foreign protection from the diplomatic perspective: e.g. E. P. Cruickshank, Morocco at the Parting of the Ways (Philadelphia 1935); F. V. Parsons, The Origins of the Morocco Question, 1880–1900 (London 1976) 63–86; Leland Bowie, 'The Protégé System in Morocco, 1880–1904', (Michigan, PhD thesis, 1970); 'Abd al-Wahab b. Mansur, Mushkilat al-hamayyath al-Qansul-vijya b-al-Maghrib min nasihatib ila mu’tamar Madrid sanat 1880 (Rabat 1977). For the effects that protection had on social change: MII pp. 549–60, MIII pp. 263–92; and especially: Mohammed Kenbib, 'Les protections étrangères au Maroc au XIXème siècle début du XXème', thèse de doctorat de 3ème cycle (Université de Paris VII, 1980), and his 1981 article (see n. 48).
50 See these royal merchants and their evolution see Kenbib (see n. 48) 449, 454–5: Michel Abitbol, 'Un aspect des relations judéo-musulmanes au Maghreb à la fin du XIXème siècle: les négociants du Roi et la bourgeoisie marocaine à la veille du Protectorat', in Les relations entre juifs et musulmans en Afrique du Nord: XIXème–XXème siècles (Paris CNRS, 1980).
52 DAR, 25-8-1876 (unclassified dossier).
53 MII pp. 574–8: Fo 99–84, Tangier, 3-9-1858, Hay.
54 FO 631/2 'List of British subjects at Mogador'.
57 MIII pp. 288–90.
58 Bowie (see n. 49) 261–4, 274.
59 Cf Parsons (see n. 49) 85.
60 Bowie (see n. 49) 245–7.
61 AJA-R-X (1881) p. 49
63 The dahir was received by various governors as was acknowledged in the response to the sultan at the end of Safar, 1303: DAR, copies of letters furnished by A. Delouya.
64 Bowie (see n. 49) 184.
66 Kenbib (see n. 48) 463–4.
69 Cf. Geertz (see n. 47) 165–6.
70 Most of the Corcos correspondence deals with the regular supply of luxury goods to the palace.
71 Although the palace may have been disconcerted, see Abitbol (see n. 51) 40–1, n. 5.
72 For example, in 1867 Beaumier praised Joseph Elmaleh, but in 1873 criticized him: AIU/FRANCE.VIII.B.42, Mogador, 24-12-1867 and 26-10-1873.
73 This was common practice in Morocco, probably of Spanish origin, see: Haim
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74 AIU/France.VII.D.42, Mogador, 30-6-1869, Beamleur to Crémieux.

75 AIU/Maroc.XXXIV.E.584, Mogador, 21-1-1875, Benchimol.

76 AJA-R-V (1986) p. 60; Aj/95/Add/4, 13-5-1880.


78 AIU/France.IX.A.73, Mogador, 13-8-1876, Halevy; Halevy (see n. 77) 48–9; Aj/95/Add/4, 8-3-1877.

79 AIU/MAROC.XXXIV.E.584, Mogador, 19-7-1877, Benchimol; AIU/France.VIII.D.42, Mogador, 23-4-1878, De Vaux.


81 AIU/MAROC.III.C.10 and AIU/MAROC.III.B.14 (in Hebrew). There is little information on the historical evolution of the *ma'amlad* in Essaouira, but it appears to have functioned intermittently throughout the 19th century. The terminology suggests western Sephardic influence, perhaps modelled after the *ma'amlad* in Tangier (e.g. 'presidente', 'secretario', transliterated in Hebrew). On this institution, cf. Zafrani (see n. 73) 109–12, and Geertz (see n. 47) 165.


83 At the death of Abraham Corcos, *tājir* status was extended to his two sons, Meir and Aharon: CA. 1. Muharram 1 1301 = 2-11-1883, *dāhir* of Sultan Hasan I.

84 AIU/MAROC.II.C.9, 20 Sivan 5642 = 7-6-1882.

85 TM, 30-11-1889.

86 Ibid; and Yiṣḥaq Ben Ya’ish Halewi, *Hasfira* 18 (1891) 311, 565. Halewi, a native of Essaouira, was the correspondent for this Warsaw Hebrew newspaper.

87 TM, 11-1-1890.

88 TM, 30-11-1889.

89 TM, 30-11-1889, 14-12-1889. The Makhzen also had some reservations of having a French protégé as *dayyan*, and only agreed when assured by the Jews that the question of protection would not affect judgements: DAR, Essaouira 4, 6 Jumâdh I 1307 = 29 December 1889, *qā'd* ar-Ragrâjî ad-Dublâlî to Sultan Hasan.

90 TM, 11-1-1890, 18-1-1890; AIU/MAROC.XXXV.E.620, Mogador, 6-1-1890, D. Haym.

91 Aj/95/Add/4, 1-1-1895.

92 Aj/95/Add/5, 2-10-1887.

93 TM, 18-1-1890, 25-1-1890, 15-2-1890; AIU/MAROC.XXXV.E.620, Mogador, 20-1-1890, 10-3-1890, Haym.

94 TM, 25-10-1890.

95 This is evidenced today by the particularly high buildings in the mellah in contrast to other quarters. For Sefrou, cf. Geertz (see n. 47) 165.

96 Halewi (see n. 86) 350; AJA-R-XX (1891) pp. 32–5; TM, 25-10-1890, 13-12-1890 and 10-1-1891.

97 Other members of the committee (as they are spelled in the AJA report) included Isaac Ben Yeish Halivy, David Elle, Hananiah Ibn Haim, Abraham Bohbot, and David Ilah, AHA-R-XX (1891) p. 109; TM, 28-2-1891.

98 TM, 28-3-1891.

99 Information on Halewi from an interview with Shlomo Knaffo (Lod, 24-1-1982).

100 Halewi (see n. 86) 350.

101 TM, 1-8-1891.

102 Aj/95/Add 4; AJA-R-XXI (1892) p. 106; TM, 3-9-1892.

103 TM, 15-10-1892, 26-1-1892; Aj/95/Add 4, 17-5-1892.

104 Aj/95/Add 2, 12-6-1892.

105 AJA-R-XXI (1892) pp. 24–5; XXVI (1897) p. 16, and XXVII (1898) p. 22.

106 AIU/MAROC.XXXV.E.602, Mogador, 26-12-1898, Stella Corcos.


108 The *nagil* in Hebrew; on this institution see Zafrani (1972) (see n. 73) 106–9; cf. Geertz (see n. 47) 166–7 and n. 77. I would tend to compare the role the *shaykh* played in Essaouira as parallel to that of the *muftasib*: "

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Please note that the above text is a snippet of a larger document and has been extracted for illustrative purposes only. The full context and meanings of the text require a comprehensive understanding of the historical and cultural background of the period and region discussed.
the principal function of the shaykh was to police the mellah and his power was limited by the Makhzen who appointed him and his influence was subordinate to that of the Jewish oligarchy. He seems to have played no part in the ma'amad. This contrasts with the shaykhs of the interior, who tended to rule over their communities with an iron grip.

109 AIU/MAROC.XXIV.E.588, Mogador, 17-6-1899. Bensimhon; AL-M. 10-6-1899, 17-6-1899, 24-6-1899.
110 Ibid.
111 AL-M. 24-6-1899, 1-7-1899.
12 Gaster Papers (at Mocatta Library) GP/91/140, Lugasy to Gaster.
113 Halewi (see n. 86) 311.
114 Ibid.
115 Cf. MIV p. 373.
116 TM, 6-2-1892, 12-3-1892, 16-4-1892, 1-10-1892, 1-12-1892; AIU/MAROC.III.B.14, Mogador, 1-4-1897, R. Elmaleh; AIU/MAROC.XXIII.E.582, Mogador, December 1896, and January–February 1896.
117 In an unfinished article published posthumously, David Corcos views Jewish society in terms of class divisions whereby town dwellers are broken down into three classes: the aristocracy, patrons-artisans, and finally workers, pedlars, etc. In the coastal towns the first and second classes represented 30 per cent and the third class 40 per cent, see ‘Trois documents inédits sur les relations judéo-musulmanes dans le vieux Maroc’, in Michael V (Tel-Aviv 1978) 85–7. Although these proportions are probably inapplicable to Essaouira, his analysis of social stratification remains relevant. 118 A survey was carried out of the Jewish artisans of Essaouira by the Alliance in 1894. Excluding apprentices, I have added a total of 225 out of which 80 are cobblers AIU/MAROC.XXIII.E.582. Mogador, 22-2-1894. Benchimol. In 1903 another survey was carried out and I have added 123: AIU/MAROC.VII.B. Mogador, 5-7-1903, Taourel. Finally, I have counted 216 in the survey of 1913: AIU/MAROC.XXVII.bis.Eb.
119 I have found articles in Hamagid and Haşfirah in particular.
120 He wrote some 30 books many of which were published.
121 Information provided by the grandson of Yosef Khnaffo, Shlomo Knaffo (Lod, 24-1-1982). He refers to Dawid Alqa’im as the ‘Leonardo Da Vinci’ of Essaouira, reputed to be talented in carpentry, art, sculpture, piyyutim, ketubot, etc. Dawid Illah, who was a shaykh al-Yahūd (see n. 108) known as ‘Shaykh Dawid’, published a book of song and piyyut together with Alqa’im: ‘Shir Yedidut’, see Hai’M Zafrani, Poésie juive en occident musulman (Paris 1978) 297-8.
122 A list of subscribers is found in AJA-RR (1891) pp. 109–10.
123 Each side of the conflict accused the other of coercion in obtaining signatures for petitions sent to the Tangier press, e.g. TM. 25-1-1890.
125 AIU/MAROC.III.B.14, Mogador, 18-12-1912 (translated from French).