


Felipe Benjamin Francisco

**The Arabic dialect
of Essaouira (Morocco):
grammar and texts**

Colección ESTUDIOS DE DIALECTOLOGÍA ÁRABE
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To Laura

Foreword

This book is a presentation of the results of the PhD dissertation entitled *O dialeto árabe de Essaouira: documentação e descrição de uma variedade do sul do Marrocos* [The Arabic Dialect of Essaouira: Documentation and Description of a Variety of Southern Morocco]. The research was supervised by Prof. Dr. Safa Abou Chahla Jubran, and the dissertation text was defended in September 2019 at the Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences of the University of São Paulo, Brazil. This project received the financial support of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), which granted me a PhD fellowship and funding of a one-year research stay abroad (PDSE-CAPES) at the University of Cádiz, Spain, where I was hosted and supervised by Prof. Dr. Jordi Agudé Bofill.

It is important to mention that this book is an adaptation of the original text in Portuguese and, as such, some parts were edited out due to their introductory nature, which by that time was necessary to present the Historical Arabic dialectology of the Maghreb to a Portuguese reading audience. Thus, I thought that basic information on Arabic Dialectology, such as its methods, history, and terminology could be left out of the present work, opening space to updated and revised linguistic data on the varieties of the Arabic dialect of Essaouira. This book also contains new transcriptions and new data not present in the previous work.

Acknowledgements

This work was only possible with the help and advising of many professors and colleagues. I thank Federico Corriente Córdoba (*in memoriam*), to whom I owe my first contact with the Arabic dialectology of the Maghreb after a class on the Arabization of North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula in a course on Arabic loanwords in Romance languages offered by him at the University of São Paulo in 2011. I also thank my supervisors Aguadé and Jubran, who always took great care in my work and motivated me in pursuing a career as a researcher. I would like to thank my Spanish colleagues, who since my first contact with them in 2014, advised me and introduced me to the Arabic Dialectology world, which was by then a new discipline in Arabic Studies in Brazil. These people helped me in innumerable ways – from helping me to access bibliography to inviting me to participate in events and collaborate in different projects. My thanks to Ángeles Vicente, Jairo Guerrero, Joaquín Bustamante, and Montserrat Benítez.

I would also like to thank Peter Behnstedt (*in memoriam*), who I had the privilege to be with and who, thanks to Aguadé, we could visit a few times at his place in Chipiona. He was always very helpful and very humble and ready to help with my research. He was also very generous to add some of the data of Essaouira and Aquermoud in the 4th volume of the *Wortatlas der arabischen Dialekte* (2021).

Finally, I would never been able to collect the data on Essaouira Arabic without the disinterested help and collaboration of my Moroccan peers in Essaouira city and its surroundings: Ahmed Harrouz, Joseph Sebbag, Ghizlan El Khalfi, Asher Knafo, Jo Kakon, Hafid Sadeq, Soufiane Goufal, Abdeljabbar El Guerd, Sanae El Bargui, Nabil Abdulaziz. I also mention here Mr. André Azoulay, who played an important role in putting me in contact with members of the Jewish community of Essaouira.

0. Introduction

Essaouira is located on the edge of the Arabic linguistic territory – the Arabic of the Hilalian or Bedouin type –, which stretches from Arzila (north) across the Atlantic plain towards the south up to the Berber zone (Colin 1945, 1986). However, the linguistic reality of this part of the Atlantic coast, both of the city and its surroundings, has always been a gap in research on the dialects of Morocco. The few studies dedicated to Essaouira speech have focused on its Jewish dialect, while the Muslim variety has been neglected. This variety was the subject of a single work published in the 19th century.

That study, entitled *Zum Arabischen Dialekt von Marokko* (“On an Arabic Dialect of Morocco”), written by the Swiss orientalist Albert Socin (1893), consisted of two texts in dialectal Arabic transcribed into phonetic symbols accompanied by a translation and notes.¹ Apparently, his informant was from Essaouira, on the border of the Arabic-speaking territory. His speech had traces of Arabic of old urban centers and Bedouin Arabic (rural), in addition to resembling the Arabic spoken by Berbers (Socin 1893: 154-155).² Since then, Moscoso (2002) published one single study describing the Essaouira dialect based on Socin’s work. However, it does not present updated data on the local variety.

For Jewish dialects, Lévy (1994, 2009) was the first to collect representative data on this variety in a meeting with a group of at least four individuals in 1973. Heath (2002) also described the Jewish dialect of Essaouira based on four interviews. He classified it as belonging to the group of dialects of the Atlantic strip, along with the varieties of Al Jadida,

¹ According to the author, he “received” the texts written in Arabic in the form of a manuscript (Socin 1893: 157), but evidence suggests that, to transcribe them, his informant would have dictated the texts to him. The meeting with the informant took place in Basel, sixteen years before the publication of the work.

² After coming into contact with a troupe of “*slōh*” (sic), that is, Berbers – among whom were Arabic speakers –, visiting Leipzig in 1892, Socin noted that the Arabic of his informant from Essaouira was very similar to that of these individuals (Socin 1893: 154). However, he does not make it clear how his data resembled the speech of that troupe.

Azemmour, and Safi (p. 26). More recently, Chetrit (2012)³ published a linguistic-literary study on a song-poem written in the Jewish dialect of Essaouira.⁴ However, in the works of the two authors above, Socin (1893) is the only available source on the dialect of Muslims.

Apparently, for Heath (2002), collecting data from Muslims in Essaouira was not relevant. As the author explains, “I did not collect M[uslim] data in Sw [Essaouira], in the belief that its muslims were mainly ethnic Berbers” (p. 26). And he follows: “For Sw [Essaouira] I collected no M[uslim] data since I consider the area to have been mainly Berber-speaking until recently” (p. 28). This argument is partially valid because the Berbers of the Haha tribe indeed made up the population of the city, but one cannot ignore the Arabic speakers from different parts of Morocco who have also been present in Essaouira since its foundation. Furthermore, native speakers from the neighboring Chiadma territory form a representative part of the city's Arabic-speaking population.

The Essaouira dialect represented in the speech of both Jews and Muslims is a gap we try to fill with this work. It is not possible to ignore the Arabic spoken in the city of Essaouira and its rural area due to the ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity that exists there. Thus, knowing the insufficiency of previously collected data, this book aims to document and describe the urban Arabic variety in the city of Essaouira.

From a synchronic point of view, I ask the following questions: a) what are the characteristics of the urban Arabic dialect of Essaouira today? b) Is there any influence of the dialect of the Chiadma territory, through rural linguistic variants, in the urban dialect? If so, what are they? c) How is the Essaouira dialect similar to other Arabic varieties in southern and northern Morocco? Can we identify pre-Hilalian traits as in other ancient urban centers? Which are specific Saharan Bedouin traits? d) What are the similarities and differences between the Jewish and the Muslim dialects?

Mogador seems to be in the list of cities that have a decadent urban elite and a population renewal resulting from the arrival of individuals from nearby rural areas, as is the situation in most ancient urban centers in the Maghreb (Miller 2004, 2007). The dialect of the *medina* of Essaouira – its oldest quarter – seems to differ from that of cities such as Rabat or Fez, where pre-Hilalian (urban) traits have predominated. The variety of the oldest

³ The author informed me about another study he authored in Hebrew, to which I did not have access: “*Judeo-Arabic as Technical and Specialized Language in Mogador (Morocco). Description and Analysis of the Contents of Yale Manuscript 1825-0016.*” In M. Bar-Asher and S. D. Fraade (eds.), *Studies on North African Jews: Documents Edited and Commented*. Jerusalem – New Haven, 2011, pp. 199-245.

⁴ The poem about the preparation of the *sxīna* (*skhina*), a typical Jewish dish served on Saturdays, was written in Essaouira’s “Judeo-Arabic,” that is, dialectal Arabic written with the Hebrew alphabet, by David Iflah (1867-1944) (Chetrit 2012: 90).

inhabitants of Essaouira, in turn, presents a greater number of Bedouin and rural traits that mix with old urban traits, as occurs in the neighboring Marrakech (Lévy 1998: 22-23).

In order to answer the questions above, I carried out a linguistic documentation of the local urban dialect of Muslims and Jews, as well as of the speech of individuals from the countryside of Essaouira, whenever possible. This provides us with a detailed panorama of the dialectal Arabic spoken in that region and its internal dynamics. Then, when describing the dialect, I compared the data obtained to data on other Moroccan varieties, resorting to sources other than Heath (2002): for the north, Vicente (2000) and Guerrero (2015); for the south, Cohen (1963) – Hassaniya –, Aguadé and Elyaacoubi (1995), Sánchez (2014), and Behnstedt (2004); and for the Atlantic strip, Singer (1995).

0.1. History of Essaouira (Mogador)

The city of Essaouira (Mogador): origins and settlement

Essaouira, in local Arabic *الصويرة* *ṣ-ṣwīra*, is a small town located 177 km west of Marrakesh, more precisely on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, between the cities of Safī and Agadir. Compared to other urban centers in Morocco, its foundation is quite recent, dating back to 1764 (or 1765?) by order of the Sultan Sīdi Muḥammad Bin ^ʿAbdillāh, who chose this location to establish what would later become the most important international port of the kingdom of Morocco in the 19th century.

Its recent emergence and its commercial role in the local and international spheres directly resulted in a very diverse population regarding its ethnic and religious composition. Its marks are still present in the local Arabic dialect. Thus, it is necessary to present the reasons for the city's foundation and the different groups and tribes that made up the inhabitants of the narrow medina, highlighting the contact between Arabs and Berbers and the coexistence of Muslims and Jews. Then, I present the demographic evolution of the city in the 20th century until the present day.

Essaouira-Mogador: Etymological Issues

Long before being called Essaouira, the locality was known among Europeans as Mogador, a name used by the Portuguese since at least the 16th century, as attested by Duarte Pacheco Pereira (1505-1508?),⁵ who mentions

⁵ *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis*, pp. 31-33.

the *Ilha de Mouguador*, and by Damião de Góis (1567)⁶ while describing the construction of the *Castelo Real* fort during the short Portuguese occupation there from 1506 to 1510 (Ricard 2013: 27, 61). Its origin seems to refer to a Berber toponym present in the works of Arab geographers, such as Al-Bakrī (1014-1094), who mentioned the port of 'Amgdūl⁷ أمجدول and Ibn Saʿīd Al-Maġribī (1214 -1286), who mentioned the mouth of a small river called *Amgdūl* امكدول, most likely the mouth of the Oued Ksob River in Diabat, to the south of today's city.⁸ To date, several locations in Berber territory in southern Morocco are called *Amagdoul*, *Amigdoul*, or *Amegdoul*, most located in the Taroudant region near Agadir (Lakhdar 2015b: 10). The toponym is also related to the name of a local Marabout (saint), Sīdi Mogdūl, the patron of the city of Essaouira and its sailors, whose mausoleum is located to the south of the city and has been visited since time immemorial (Laoust 1923: 247, 353; Mauny 1949: 59). It is interesting to note that *Amgdoul* means “guardian” in Berber (Mana 2014: 167).

As for its etymology, the most accepted hypothesis is the Phoenician origin of the word since the Phoenicians settled on the Atlantic coast of Morocco in Antiquity.⁹ In Phoenician (Punic),¹⁰ the root \sqrt{gdr} denotes “wall” (Krahmalkov 2000: 137). The name of the city of Agadir seems to corroborate this theory, as it originates from *agadir* (pl. *igudar*), “fortified collective granary,”¹¹ which would have entered into the Berber dialects as a lexical loan. These dialects would have adapted it with the addition of the prefix *a-*, typical of masculine nouns. This is also clear when we examine the name of the Spanish city of Cádiz, very close geographically to Essaouira and Agadir, and which was founded by the Phoenicians: *Gader* (*Gades*, *Gadis*, gr. Γαδεира) is its original name (Krahmalkov 2000: 137). According to Jodin (1966: 4), on the coast of Syria and Lebanon could be found the toponyms *migdol* or *mogdoul*, meaning “fortified place” or “observation tower.” The author's suggestion is consistent with the meaning of the Semitic root \sqrt{gdl} , which connotes “great,” being *migdal* “tower” in Hebrew.

⁶ Chronica do Felicissimo Rei Dom Emanuel: “*defno rio Dazamor átte ho Mogador delongo da cofta (...)*” (Vol. III, fol. 30) and “*Mandou fazer ho castello Real nas Ilhas do Mogadó[r], a quem do cabo de guer*” (Vol. IV, fol. 110).

⁷ *Al-Maġrib fī dīkr bilād ʿIfriqīyya wa-l-Maġrib*, p. 86.

⁸ *Kitāb Al-Ġuġrāfiya*, 1970, p. 123.

⁹ It is estimated that the Phoenicians remained on the islets of Mogador between the 7th century BC and the first half of the 6th century BC (Al-ʿAzīfī 1994). The purple dye was produced there and continued to be sold by the Romans, who also visited this part of the Atlantic coast (Desjacques and Koeberlé 1955).

¹⁰ In the first millennium BC, Punic Phoenician was spoken in western Sicily, Sardinia, Malta, the south of the Iberian Peninsula, and North Africa after the colonization of the Western Mediterranean by Tyro and Sidon. Even in the Roman period, Punic continued to be used in North Africa both as an everyday language and in literature (Krahmalkov, 2000, pp. 10-11).

¹¹ Adam, “*Agadir*,” Ad-Aġuh-n-Tahlé, *Berber Encyclopédie* 1985.

As for the current name of the city, the most likely hypothesis is that it originates from the diminutive of *sūr*, in Arabic “wall,” originally pronounced with /s/ * *s-Ṣwīra* السويرة, but which has become /s/ in the local pronunciation of Berber speakers, resulting in *ṣ-Ṣwīra* الصويرة. In *ʿIqāḍ*, Aṣ-Ṣiddīqī¹² (1969) draws attention to the fact that, although the most common way in his time was to pronounce it as *ṣ-Ṣwīra*, the ancient literati of the city and other parts of the kingdom¹³ spelled it with *sīn* /s/ (p. 19). This was due to the origin of the name, as he explains:

“This name is old and is the correct one, as it derives from the Qaṣba in the Ḥāḥa territory called *əṣ-Ṣwīra lə-qdīma*¹⁴, 16 km away. The Qaṣba was founded by the kings of the Ḥāḥa before Islam. However, the current construction is the work of the Sultan Muḥammad Aṣ-Ṣayx bin Zaydān, of the Saadian dynasty, who died in 1064 H. [1557 AD]. The construction was completed by his son, the Sultan ²Aḥmad Al-Manṣūr, who died in 1096 H. [1603 AD])”¹⁵ (Aṣ-Ṣiddīqī 1969: 19).

This spelling correction corroborates the etymology according to which the name Essaouira would be related to “small wall,” or even “small fortification.” Furthermore, the official spelling “Essaouira” only began to be adopted in 1957, so that until then *Souira* or *Souera* was used, with reference to the toponym at the mouth of the Tensift River (Jodin 1966: 4). This hypothesis is further supported by the fact that the current Berber name of the city, *Taṣṣurt*,¹⁶ is an Arabic loanword formed by adding the inflections of the Berber *ta-...-t*, a feminine noun mark, to *ṣūr* (*cl. Ar.* < *sūr*) “wall.”

It is worth noting that currently there are cities with similar names in other Arab countries, such as *aṣ-Ṣuwayra*¹⁷ in Iraq and the Phoenician city of

¹² Muḥammad Bin Saḥīd Aṣ-Ṣiddīqī (1893-1975) was a scholar, imam, and historian from Essaouira. His work *ʿIqāḍ as-sarīra li-tārīx aṣ-Ṣwīra* (*The Awakening of Consciousness to the History of Essaouira*) is an important source on the History of the city, its characters, neighborhoods, and monuments. He also describes historical facts, such as revolts and conflicts, and curiosities, such as the day a whale ran aground near the city. The only edition we had access to in the *Bibliothèque Nationale du Royaume du Maroc* in Rabat, published by Dār Al-Kitāb in Casablanca, is undated. The library catalog lists the date as 1961(1969); however, the author states that he finished the book in 1349 H., or 1930 AD (p. 10).

¹³ Aṣ-Sūsī, in his work of 1966, *ʿĪlīg, qadīman wa-ḥadītan* (*ʿĪlīg, Yesterday and Today*), points out that scholars, including himself, spell the name of the city with *sīn* based on the word *sūr* “wall” (p. 66).

¹⁴ Located at the mouth of the Tensift River, it is mentioned as a port in the oldest Arabic sources under the name *Agūz*, spelled أفوز or أگوز.

¹⁵ All the excerpts of Historical Arabic sources in this introduction were co-translated from Arabic into English by Rafael Rocca and me.

¹⁶ El Mountassir (2009: 150). I kept the author’s transcript.

¹⁷ It is not known whether the Sultan Sīdi Muḥammad Bin ⁵Abdillāh was aware of its existence when he named the port city Essaouira.

Tyre, *Ṣūr*, in Lebanon. However, in the latter case, the name does not seem to have an Arabic origin, but rather a Phoenician one, in which the consonants ṢR may be read as *ṣir* “the city of Tyre” or *ṣur* “rock” (Fuentes 1980: 218), like the Hebrew *tsur* (צור) “rock.” Moreover, the Romans of Punic origin in North Africa called themselves *Sorem*, that is, born in the city of Tyre (Krahmalkov 2000: 11).

These semantic “coincidences” in a territory dominated by Phoenicians, Romans, Berbers, and Arabs seem an indication of a secular linguistic contact that resulted in a common meaning for the three toponyms: Mogador among the Europeans, Essaouira among the Arabs, and *Taṣṣurt* among the Berbers. The use of different names shows the diversity of the population that has inhabited the port city from the late 18th century onwards.

The foundation of the city

The formation of the population of the city of Essaouira is directly related to the project of its foundation created by the Sultan Sīdi Muḥammad Bin ^ṢAbdillāh, who ruled Morocco from 1757 to 1790. Considered a humanist, open to contact with the outside world,¹⁸ Sīdi Muḥammad redefined the foreign policy of the Kingdom of Morocco, prioritizing international maritime trade, an activity controlled by the Europeans, and maintaining a peaceful relationship with the latter from a warfare point of view.

Essaouira emerges in this context. It is a commercial port and a *ṭagr*, that is, a fortified city.¹⁹ At the same time the city began to concentrate all the kingdom's international trade, it also had the largest armed contingent after Tangier, which is located a few kilometers from Spain (Harrak 1992: 198).

As historical chronicles of that period show,²⁰ the objective of such an opening was the consolidation of a strong Alawite State and a defense against

¹⁸ His reign was characterized by a new diplomacy with European and American countries, which resulted in international treaties not only for trade but also for peace. This diplomacy brought consuls and merchants from different nations to the kingdom, in addition to returning Christian prisoners (Harrak 1992: 194). Also noteworthy are facts such as the peace agreement with Spain, a historical enemy of Morocco, and the fact that it was the first country to recognize the independence of the United States of America in 1777.

¹⁹ Originally, the Arabic term *ṭagr* (pl. *ṭuḡūr*) “opening” referred to access points between *Dār al-ʿIslām* and *Dār al-ḥarb*. In the Mediterranean and Atlantic, more specifically in North Africa, the term is used to refer to fortified cities on the coast that were subject to offensives by sea.

²⁰ Among the main sources for understanding the context in which the decision to build the city of Essaouira took place are the writings of contemporaries of the city's emergence: Muḥammad Bin aṭ-Ṭayyib al-Qādīrī (1712-1773) and his work *Naṣr al-Maṭānī li-ʿAhd al-Qarn al-Ḥādī ʿĀsr wa-ṭ-Tānī* (*Book of Chronicles of the 11th and 12th Centuries*), Dār al-Maḡrib (1977), who tells the story of characters and historical events of his time; and Muḥammad Aḍ-Ḍuʿayyif Ar-Ribāṭī (1752-1818), with his work *Tārīḫ Aḍ-Ḍuʿayyif: Tārīḫ ad-Dawla as-Saʿīda* (*The History of Aḍ-Ḍuʿayyif: The History of the Blessed Dynasty*), Dār

Christian attacks (Harrak 1992; Bin as-Ṣaġīr 1989). An-Nāṣirī, in *Al-ʿIstiṣṣāʿ*,²¹ mentions the account of Al-Ġazzāl²² of the reasons that led to the establishment of the city:

“Said the Secretary ʿAbū l-ʿAbbās ʿAḥmad bin al-Mahdī l-Ġazzāl, in his travel report, which is summarized below, regarding the reason for the construction of the city of Essaouira: Sīdī Sultan Muḥammad bin ʿAbdillāh wished to fight by sea, so he decided to make use of the warships that remained most of their time in the ports of Rabat-Salé and Larache, traveling for a period that was limited to two months a year, during the winter, since the ports were connected to the Udayas. Furthermore, beyond the winter period, as the water level decreases and the sand level rises, at the mouths of ports, the passage of vessels is obstructed, which ends up making travel difficult. For this reason, the Sultan, may God have mercy, had the idea of allowing ships to travel every day of the year, and so he built the fortified city of Essaouira, arming it with the aim of protecting its port from the situation described here.”²³ (p. 21)

He also mentions other reasons related to the situation of domestic politics:

“In addition to Al-Ġazzāl, others have indicated that the Sultan’s motivation cited here for building Essaouira is that the fort of Agadir was surrounded by insurgents from the Sous, such as at-Ṭālib Ṣāliḥ and others, who wished to obtain the goods of the fort by treason in order to profit from them. The only alternative to avoid this problem was to build another port closer to that region, a more internal one, inside the kingdom, [close] to Agadir, in order to avoid the action of these insurgents, so that no one could reach it. So, the city of Essaouira was planned. They perfectly outlined its location, building it with excellence. The two circular islands in its harbor, the larger and the smaller, had cannons and a tower was erected on a rock in the sea, likewise armed. In this way, whoever intended to enter the city would

Al-Maʿtūrāt (1986), which covers two centuries of the reign of the Alawite dynasty in Morocco.

²¹ An-Nāṣirī, Ġaʿfar; an-Nāṣirī, Muḥammad. *Al-ʿIstiṣṣāʿ li-ʿaxbār duwal al-Maġrib: ad-dawla al-ʿalawiyya (Examination of the Chronicles of the Dynasties of Morocco: The Alawi Dynasty)*, vol. 8, Casablanca: Dār al-Kitāb, 1956.

²² ʿAḥmad bin al-Mahdī l-Ġazzāl al-Fāsī was a Moroccan diplomat of Iberian origin, author of the *Naṭīġat al-ʿiġtīhād ft l-muhādana wa-l-ġihād (Fruits of Efforts to Negotiate Peace and War)* – a manuscript available at the BNF Gallica –, a travel account of a diplomatic mission to Spain at the behest of the Sultan Sīdī Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdillāh. The mission departed from the city of Ceuta to Madrid in 1765-1766.

²³ The two excerpts from *Al-ʿIstiṣṣāʿ* quoted below are our translations; however, we chose not to make the original Arabic text available here as it compromises the aesthetics of the text.

only do so under the fire of cannons from the tower and the islands concomitantly. [...] When it was finished, they brought Christian merchants to trade there, exempting them from paying customs fees as an incentive, which quickly attracted them, as well as people from all over. In the meantime, the city was being built, and they were granted a license for a period of a few years. Later, its condition returned to that of other ports with regard to the payment of export taxes and other obligations. It is currently in that condition and its future belongs to God.” (pp. 20-21)

Essaouira emerges in this context, and a diversified settlement begins resulting from the summoning of populations originating from different tribes, be they Arabs or Berbers, belonging to different religious communities: Muslims and Jews, in addition to European Christians and converts, as we will see below.

Origins of Essaouira’s population

The original population of Essaouira comprises mostly migrants from the countryside, from the Chiadma and Haha territories,²⁴ but also from other parts of southern Morocco, notably Marrakech and Agadir. However, among its inhabitants were also individuals from other ancient urban centers such as Fez, Tetouan and Rabat, Muslims and Jews, Arabs and Berbers, as well as European Christians. This resulted in a type of melting pot (Schroeter 1988) that is consequently reflected in the Arabic spoken locally.

According to Aṣ-Ṣiddīqī (1969: 22), the first people who were summoned to move to Essaouira consisted of Muslims, sailors and gunners²⁵ from Agadir, but also Jews. He also cites labors coming from the extreme Sous²⁶ for the construction of residences that would receive those who would organize the army and settle in the city. Little by little, more delegations from Sous and Agadir would arrive. They were individuals from different tribes who would be assigned specific functions by the Makhzen.

²⁴ This is the most common romanization of the names of both tribes, more frequent in the literature on Essaouira and in contemporary sources than the other tribes that will be listed later.

²⁵ Locally known in Arabic as *ṭabẓīyya/ṭūbẓīyya*. In DAF (vol. 8, p. 249) transliterated as *ṭobbẓī/ṭabẓī* [*<* Turkish *tobgi* “gunner”], meaning *canonnier, artilleur*.

²⁶ Toponym referring to the south of Morocco. This area is normally divided into *Sūs al-ʿadnā* “Near Sous,” which extends from the Sous River وادي سوس to the Massa River وادي ماسن; and *Sūs al-ʿAqsā* “Extreme Sous,” which covers the area stretching from the Massa River to the Noun River وادي نون and the Sahara Desert.

Ar-Rağrāğī²⁷ (1935), in *aš-Šumūs*,²⁸ mentions the tribes that made up the population of the city as coming mainly from the south of Morocco (pp. 11-12).²⁹ Among those coming from the Sous were š-Šabbānāt³⁰ الشبانات, Arabs belonging to the Banū Ma^ʿqil from the plains of the extreme Sous,³² Masgīna³³ مسكينة, Berbers from the east of Agadir, from the territory closest to the western High Atlas ([?]Afā 2017: 63); the Berbers Ayt Tama^ʿīt³⁴ أيت تمعيت; lə-Mnābha المنابها, belonging to the Ma^ʿqil Arabs (Bin Maṣṣūr 1968: 425); plus inhabitants of Adawwār³⁵ أهل أدوار. According to the author, among the tribes were also the r-Rəḥḥāla³⁶ الرحالة, whose territory borders the lə-Mnābha, east of Taroudant. Furthermore, the Banū ^ʿAntar بنو عنتر are

²⁷ In Morocco, it is common to find in names of Berber or Arabic origin the phoneme /g/ represented in Arabic script by *ğim* ج, especially in ancient sources, since this phoneme is not present in Classical Arabic. Today, this sound is represented by two graphic variations of *kāf*: ك and گ. For example, “Agadir” is spelled أكادير by ar-Rağrāğī, but اكدير and اكدير by aš-Šiddīqī; yet currently أكادير predominates. As for the author’s name, a gentile from the Berber Reğraga tribe, I chose to Romanize it with *ğ* because the author himself spells his name الرجراجي, while he writes all other names with /g/ with an adapted *kāf*.

²⁸ *Aš-Šumūs al-munīra fī ʿaxbār madīnat aš-Šwīra (The Sunlight on the Chronicles of the City of Essaouira)*. Rabat: *Al-maṭbaʿa al-waṭaniyya*, 1935.

²⁹ Both Aš-Šiddīqī (1969) and Ar-Rağrāğī (1935) have very similar information with regard to the groups that formed the population of the city in its foundation. Even so, the former contains more detailed information on this subject and describes the origins and functions of the first settlers in the city. When his ^ʿ*Iqāḍ* was published, he criticized in his introduction the supposed pioneering work of *aš-Šumūs* explaining that his book was already ready but that ar-Rağrāğī had gone ahead with the publication of his own work. He also points out that other authors, such as As-Sūsī (1966) and Al-Kānūnī (1932), had already written about the city before (aš-Šiddīqī 1969: 8).

³⁰ Also transliterated as š-Šbānāt. Ibn Khaldun, in *Kitāb Al-ʿIbar* (2011: 2396), vocalizes this same name as *aš-Šubbānāt* and points out that they lived close to the Ḍwī Ḥasān, both belonging to the Ma^ʿqil, or Mi^ʿqal, according to the author.

³¹ The Arabic spelling of the name of this and of the other tribes mentioned here varies, whether in Arabic or in English, between the authors we read (Aš-Šiddīqī, Ar-Rağrāğī, Schroeter and Hoffman); for this reason, we chose to present our own transcription of its dialectal pronunciation accompanied by the official Arabic spelling used in *Ma^ʿlamat al-Mağrib (MM)*.

³² MM, vol. 16, pp. 5283-5285.

³³ With different spellings in Arabic sources: مسكينة; ماسكينة; مسكينة ([?]Afā, 2017, p. 63).

³⁴ *Ayt* is unique to the names of Berber tribes and villages and means “sons of,” as does the construction *banū + noun* in Arabic (*Encyclopédie Berbère*, vol. 3, p. 383).

³⁵ In Aš-Šiddīqī, it appears accompanied by *ʔahl* “people, folks,” which leads us to believe that it is a toponym of the Sous region and not the name of a tribe. Probably, its origin is from the dialectal Arabic *dūwwār* “village,” with an added prefix *a-*, a mark of masculine nouns in Berber.

³⁶ Also transliterated as *Rḥāla*.

mentioned. They played an important role in infantry and artillery but its origin is obscure, probably Arabs from the western side of the High Atlas.³⁷

With regard to the language spoken by the groups above, as-Sūsī (1966: 10) explains that the Banū Hilāl tribes that occupied the Sous desert have preserved the Arabic language to the present day, while most Arabs from the center of Sous had been “Berberized” (*taṣalḥata*) (sic), adopting the Tachelhit language. However, he points out that Arabic has been preserved in Ulād Žərrār, around Tiznit, and in the tribes surrounding Taroudant, such as the Huwāra³⁸ in the west and the Ulād Yaḥya and lə-Mnābha in the east. Therefore, it appears that Sous contributed to Essaouira with speakers of both languages.

The city also received a large contingent of black enslaved soldiers known as lə-Bwāxər³⁹ البواخر, or ʿAbīd al-Buxāri, brought from the tribes of š-Šəbbānāt and the Haha, according to Schroeter (1988: 13). Others who came were the renegades, or lə-ʿlūž العلوچ,⁴⁰ Christian converts to Islam responsible for building the city's defense system. It is also known that the Sultan ordered the arrival of craftsmen, elite soldiers (*rumāt*), and ulamas from Fez because of its *ḥādira* character, an urban center with a civilizational role, which the founder of the city wanted to imprint on Essaouira (Aṣ-Šiddīqī 1969: 22; Schroeter 1988: 15).

The authors above mention that the surroundings of the city also initially provided a small number of individuals from the Chiadma and Haha tribes who would later become the majority because Essaouira is located on the

³⁷ This is Schroeter's (p. 14) interpretation of the location cited by Ar-Raḡrāḡī (p. 11): “*min aṣbāla bi-ḡihat al-ḡarb.*” Still, its origin is obscure, as one cannot be sure what Ar-Raḡrāḡī is referring to by “*aṣbāla*,” a clearly Berber toponym referring to mountains. In Aṣ-Šiddīqī, “*aṣbāla*” appears listed next to tribes as if it were another one.

³⁸ On the dialect of this tribe, see Socin and Stumme (1894), “*Der Arabische Dialekt der Houwāra des Wād Sūs in Morokko.*”

³⁹ Army of black men created by the Sultan Mūlāy Ismaʿīl (1645-1727 AD) whose name refers to the book *Šaḥīḥ al-Buxāri*, a celebrated book of the *Ḥadīḥ*, upon which they swore allegiance to the Sultan (MM, vol. 4, pp. 1091-1094).

⁴⁰ Dialectal plural of ʿalž (<cl. Ar. ʿilǧ). At the end of the Middle Ages, the term referred to everyone who changed their religion, whether Muslims who converted to Christianity or Christians who embraced Islam. Later, forms such as *al-ʿalāḡ-ʿulūḡī* ~ *al-mawālī al-ʿulūḡīyyūn* ~ *al-maʿlūḡī* are often applied to renegades in service of Muslim rulers (Dozy 1881 I: 159). The renegades consisted of European officers converted to Islam who could marry Muslim women. They used to be deserters from the armies of their home countries or fugitives after being sentenced. The sultan used to benefit from their technical knowledge. They often occupied the role of ship captains, although Europeans saw them as mercenaries. The Danish diplomat Höst, in his travel report to Morocco between 1760-1768, describes the renegades as men who came above all from Ceuta and enjoyed little confidence precisely because they called themselves “Moors” among the Arabs, cursing Christians, while among Christians they vilified the Prophet Muhammad and his family and ate pork and drank wine (Höst 2002: 103-104). In Essaouira, there is a street named after them, the *Rue Laalouj*.

border between both territories. Among them were individuals from the region of Tawrīrt⁴¹ أهل تاويرت, probably not the homonymous city in the northeast of Morocco, but the tribe in the Chiadma territory close to Regraga, or else coming from Sous.

The settlement of each of these groups, whose men brought their wives and children with them, took place separately within the city walls, occupying specific neighborhoods, in local Arabic *ḥūma*, which would later bear their names. However, Schroeter explains that over time the city's importance attracted an increasing flow of migrants from rural areas in the Haha and Chiadma territories, resulting in the dilution of ethnic specificity within the city's medina (Schroeter 1988: 14-15).

The Haha tribe

The Haha (Ḥāḥa), in Arabic حاحة ~ حاحا, are Berbers from the Mašmūda tribe, speakers of Tachelhit, who have inhabited southern Morocco since pre-Islamic times. Its territory greatly changed over the centuries; however, after the 12th century AD, with the arrival of the Banū Hilāl and the process of Arabization, its territory became delimited to the north by the place where the city of Essaouira would be founded later and to the south by Agadir (Bin Maṣṣūr 1968). Currently, they make up an important percentage of the origin of the city's inhabitants.

The Chiadma tribe

Addressing the origin of the Chiadma and their role in forming the city's population requires an even more detailed study because the vast majority of the Arabic-speaking population of Essaouira is native to the territory of this tribe, from which a strong rural exodus began towards Essaouira throughout the 20th century.

The tribe's origin is not clear, although its members declare themselves Arabs probably to distinguish themselves from the Tachelhit⁴² speakers in the neighboring territory of the Haha Berbers. Ar-Rağrāğī (1935: 88) states that the Haha speak mostly Tachelhit, while the Chiadma are speakers of Arabic. Rare are those, among the latter, who master the Berber language, even though they are geographically close.

⁴¹ Or تاويرت, "plateau" in Berber (Afā, 2017: 64). There is a street with the name *Rue Taourirt*.

⁴² Tachelhit (*tašalḥī*), or popularly in local Arabic *šalḥa*, consists of one of the three varieties of *amāzīg*, known as Berber, besides Tarifit (*tarīfīt*) and the Tamazigh (*tamāzīgīt*). Tachelhit speakers live in the southwest of Morocco and inhabit the mountainous regions of the western High Atlas to the Anti-Atlas up to the plains of the Sous and part of the Draa valley.

The name of the tribe became the toponym of the current territory to the north of Essaouira, bounded to the north by the ^ϕAbda and the Tensift River, to the south by the Haha and the city of Essaouira, to the east by the territories of ^ϕAḥmar and Al-Ḥawz, and to the west by the Atlantic Ocean. The same region, before the arrival of Arab tribes in the 12th century, received the name *Regraga* (An-Nāṣirī *apud MM*, vol. 16: 5437), the name of a famous Berber tribe of the Maṣmūda, which was later incorporated to the Chiadma.⁴³

Local authors seem to agree with the Arab origin of the Chiadma. Apparently, the first to claim this was Al-Kānūnī (1932),⁴⁴ who states that they are “Arabs who descended from Muḍar, as well as Al-Ḥārīt and others, and include among them Arabs from the Ma^ϕqil as well as *Maskāla* and *Regraga* Berbers” (our translation) (p. 34). The etymology of the name “Chiadma,” in the local pronunciation *š-Šyāḍma*, reflects the apparent Arabic origin of the tribe. According to the *Lisān Al-^ϕArab*, the names *šayḍam~šayḍamī*, denoting “tall, burly, and young” (*aṭ-tawīlu al-ḡasīmu*)⁴⁵ derive from the root $\sqrt{šḍm}$. That term can be used for humans and animals, such as horses, camels, and lions. In plural, there is *šayāḍima*, as in *riḡāl šayāḍima* “big men,” the form that gave rise to its name in Moroccan Arabic.

References to the name “Chiadma” begin to be found in historical sources only in the Saadian era, around the 16th century, in a way that the Chiadma are constantly appearing as neighbors of the Al-Ḥārīt, and belonging to the Banū Hilāl.

Leo Africanus, in his *Descrittione dell’Africa* (1528), refers to the Chiadma when mentioning the Banū Hilāl: “*Elcherit* [Al-Ḥārīt] live in the plains of *Heli* [Banū Hilāl] in the company of the *Saidima* [Chiadma] and collect tribute from the people of *Hea* [Haha]. They are men of low birth and

⁴³ The name *Regraga*, as the term is commonly romanized, is locally pronounced *r-Rəgrāga* الركرآكة or *r-Rəḡrāḡa* الرجراجة. It is a tribe belonging to the Maṣmūda who dwell within Chiadma territory. It is said that in remote times, some of its members undertook a journey to Mecca, where they met the Prophet Mohammed. On that occasion, they spoke to him in the Berber language, and the latter responded in the same language, leading them to convert to Islam (*Qabā’il*, p. 324). Popularly, and as our informants confirmed, it is believed that this episode gave the name to the tribe since the Arabs who were there would have told the Prophet that a people with an obscure and incomprehensible language had arrived. Indeed, in Classical Arabic, the root $\sqrt{rḡrḡ}$ denotes “confusion,” and there is the expression *mā^ϕ rāḡrāḡ* “turbid water” (Dozy 1881 I: 511), which would corroborate the hypothesis of the name’s origin. Even today they play an important local religious role with their annual pilgrimage through the Chiadma territory, known as *mawṣim r-Rəgrāga*.

⁴⁴ Aṣ-Šiddīqī quotes *ipsis litteris* the statement above of Al-Kānūnī without mentioning him, while Ar-Raḡrāḡī also mentions the Arabic origin of Muḍar of the Chiadma but citing the latter.

⁴⁵ Ibn Mandūr. *Lisān Al-^ϕArab*. “تنظم”, Ed. 1984, Iran: *Naṣr^ϕ Adab al-Ḥawza*, vol. 12, p. 323.

of few resources.”⁴⁶ Luis de Mármol, in his *Descripción general de África* (1573), clearly modeled on the text of his predecessor, states about the groups that made up the Banū Hilāl, or *Pueblo de Hilela*, as follows:

“The ninth is called *Vled el Querid* [Al-Ḥārīt], and they live in the plains of *Helin* [Banū Hilāl] in the province of *Heha* [Haha], which is in the kingdom of *Marruecos* [Marrakesh], in the company of the *Vled Saydima* [Chiadma], and although they reap tribute from the Berbers of that province, they are vile and poorly armed people (our translation).”⁴⁷

On the other hand, Ibn Khaldun, in his *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, does not mention the Chiadma when addressing the Al-Ḥārīt and what would correspond to the region they lived in, but he cites the tribe of the Kilābiyya in their stead, which could suggest some relationship between the Chiadma and the latter, as noted in:

“The tribe of Sofyan settled down permanently, occupying the borders of the province of Temsna, on the side of Anfa, since the Kholt took over vast plains of that territory. Among their families, only the Hareth and the Kelabīa continued to travel with their troops through the territory of the Sous and the desert, inhabiting the plains of the lands of the Hèha, a branch of the Masmouda”⁴⁸ (De Slane 1852: 63-64).

In the *Chronica do felicissimo rei Dom Manuel* (1566-67), by Damião de Góis, the distinction between “*Arabes*” as opposed to “*Barbaros*” (Fol. 88-89) is quite clear. The Chiadma are mentioned several times with the spelling “*Xiatima*” with regard to the tributes collected by the Portuguese from the tribes that occupied the territory between the Oum Er-Rbia river and Mogador (Fol. 30), which remained their territory until today. The relationship between the Chiadma territory and the Arab presence is also evident in this excerpt: “*From the Daguz River [Tensift] to the south, & by midday is the land of Xiatima, in which there are many Arabs [...]*” (Fol. 89).

It is also known that a portion of the Chiadma were in the Doukkala territory to the north of the Oum Er-Rbia River (Al-Kānūnī 1932: 34).

⁴⁶ Our translation of “*Elcherit habitano nelle pianure hi Heli in compagnia di Saidima, & hanno tributo dal popolo di Hea. fono huomini vili, & male agiati.*” (Ramusio 1613, Fol. I. 4f). In this case, “vili” could mean “cowards, low-born or poor.”

⁴⁷ “*El noueuo es llaman Vled el Querid, y viuen en los llanos de Helin, en la prouincia de Heha, que es en el reyno de Marruecos, en compañía de Vled Saydima, y aunque folian coger tributo de los bereberes de aquella prouincia, fon gente vil y mal armada*” (Fol. 38).

⁴⁸ Our translation of “*La tribu de Sofyan était établie à demeure fixe: elle occupait les bords de la province de Temsna, du côté d’Anfa ; les Kholt leur ayant enlevé la possession des vastes plaines de cette contrée. De toutes leurs familles il n’y a que les Hareth et les Kelabīa qui ont continué à parcourir, avec leurs troupeaux, le territoire du Sous et le désert qui en dépend; ils fréquentent les plaines du pays des Hèha, branche des Masmouda.*”

According to Michaux-Bellaire (1937), in his work on the tribes of the Doukkala territory, the Chiadma were originally Berbers who became Arabized: “The Chtouka and Chiadma, Arabized Berbers, lost the use of the Tamazight language and spoke Arabic”⁴⁹ (p. 187). However, his argument for stating that they would have been Arabized consists of using lexica of Tamazight origin, such as *mūka* < Ber. *tamukt* “owl” and *mūš* < Ber. *amšiš* “cat” (ibid, p. 187). However, his argument is not very convincing, since these words are widespread in many Moroccan Arabic dialects, and does not seem to be enough to indicate a Berber origin for the tribe.

Apparently, the Chiadma today comprehend different Arab and Berber tribes in its origin, who were incorporated during the Arabization of the Atlantic plains. Even so, the Arabic language seems to be an essential element of identification of its speakers, distinguishing them from the *šlūh*, Berbers, associated with the Haha, in this part of the country.

The Jews of Mogador

Another fundamental human element in the composition of the city's population were Moroccan Jews, *l-ihūd* (Ar-Raḡrāḡī 1935; Aṣ-Šiddīqī 1969), who arrived in large numbers alongside the Muslims mentioned above from the times of the foundation of the city. Many cities in Morocco had Jews living in their medinas, but Essaouira would be a particular case due to the ratio of its population in relation to Muslims.

The first wave of Jews to arrive in the city was by order of the sultan. They would control the commercial transactions of international import and export carried out in the new port. Thus, prestigious Jewish families came from cities such as Agadir, Safi, Marrakesh, Rabat, and Tétouan. Known as *tuḡḡār as-sulṭān* “merchants of the sultan,” they resided in the Qasba, where Makhzen's properties were located, living side by side with some Muslim merchants – from Tetouan, Fez, and Rabat-Salé –, in addition to European consuls from countries such as England, Spain, and France.⁵⁰ Unlike Jews in other Arab countries, Moroccan Jews in the 18th and 19th centuries formed a prosperous and influential bourgeoisie characterized by an urban and European style. In the case of Essaouira, the prestige of this mercantile elite granted them the privilege of not suffering penalties from royal decrees applied to Jews, such as the prohibition of wearing European clothing or the obligation to live in the Mellah (*məllāh*), as happened in Marrakesh, Meknes

⁴⁹ Our translation of “*Les Chtouka et les Chiadma, Berbères arabisés, ont perdu l’usage de la langue tamazight et parlent l’arabe.*”

⁵⁰ Throughout the 19th century, several nations had consular representations and commercial offices in Essaouira, among which England, Spain, Portugal, France, Denmark, and even Brazil.

and Fez in 1807. Their children were educated in Jerusalem or England, and trips to Gibraltar and England were frequent. This is reflected in the presence of foreign words in their speech. Even so, they maintained their Jewish Arabic dialect in their daily communication and correspondence (Schroeter 1988: 50-56).

The second, a much larger wave of Jews settled in the Mellah and later in the “new Mellah” – or *l-məllāḥ əz-zdīd*, in the Jewish dialect pronunciation. This was the new Jewish quarter of the city established in 1808 close to lə-Bwāxər and Šbānāt neighborhoods. Unlike the Qasba Jews, this group lived under difficult economic and social conditions. They came mainly from the Sous, the Haha territory, and Marrakesh after being displaced due to the typhus epidemics and famines that devastated southern Morocco (Lévy 2009: 361).

Moroccan Jews are divided into two groups. The *toshavim* “residents,” also known as *bəldīyyīn* “natives, locals,” are the autochthonous Jews of Berber origin who have been in North Africa since before the arrival of the Arabs. The *məgorashim* “expelled” are those who fled from Spain after their expulsion in 1492 and from Portugal in 1496. The Jewish community of Essaouira would be composed of both groups, although it does not seem to be possible to notice such a distinction in the local Jewish dialect, as we will see below (Lévy 2009: 364).

If, on the one hand, this population grew exponentially throughout the 19th century, on the other hand, it suffered a vertiginous decrease in the first half of the 20th century due to various reasons, mainly economic and political ones, resulting in migration to other Moroccan cities such as Casablanca but also to Europe and, after 1948, to Israel, and even more intensely after the independence of Morocco in 1956 (Lakhdar 2015a).

Coexistence between Jews and Muslims

As for the relationship between Jews and Muslims in the city, its inhabitants remember the coexistence between both communities as very friendly and close, also with Christians. This is reflected in the national image of a city whose past was one of tolerance and which became a symbol of harmonious coexistence between the three religions.

The high number of Jews is considered an idiosyncrasy of the city, which became so large in proportion to the number of Muslims to the point of equaling them, or even surpassing them, according to some sources, as the Table below shows.

	Jews	Muslims and foreigners
1867 Beaumier ⁵¹	6 thousand	6 thousand
1875 Spanish consular report Beaumier	7,500	10,500
1878 French consular report	10,000	7,500
1879 <i>Alliance Israelite Universelle</i>	11,500	6,000
1896 George Broome	6 thousand	-
1927 French protectorate	7,500	7,500
1973 Simon Lévy	7,750	9,850
	150	-
Adapted from: Schroeter (1988: 219–220); Ottmani (1997: 271); Lévy (2009: 363)		

It is not certain whether the number of Jews was actually greater than that of Muslims, but it seems clear that the figures for both populations were quite similar. However, the number of Jews progressively decreased during the 20th century: 5,468 (1931), 4,989 (1947), 2,917 (1960), and only 150 in 1973 (Lévy 2009: 154, 363).

As we mentioned above, Jews and Muslims were in direct contact not only within the Qasba, but also in the medina, since the Mellah gradually received an increasing number of Muslims in the last century. Furthermore, from the second half of the 19th century onwards, the Jewish quarter seems to have the majority of the city's Jews; for example, in 1875 there were 7,000 individuals there, while there were 700 in the Qasba (Castellanos apud Ottmani 1997: 218). The informants in this work report such a coexistence during their childhood from the 1940s onwards, in which Jewish and Muslim mothers took care of each other's children and even breastfed them, and families from both communities shared the same building and participated in each other's festivities.

The city had dozens of synagogues. In Mellah alone, there were approximately forty of them (Lakhdar 2015a: 149). There are also two Jewish cemeteries to this day, which are under the care of Mrs. Malika, a Muslim, assisted by her husband and son. She is also responsible for maintaining the synagogue of the famous Rabbi Haim Pinto. This also occurs

⁵¹ French Consul in Mogador.

with the city's Christian cemetery, which is taken care of by a Muslim, Mr. Jamal.

Today, there is an abundance of material that records and revives the memories of this past of coexistence, such as journalistic reports from Moroccan and Arab channels, documentaries,⁵² exhibitions,⁵³ and literary works, such as the chronicles of Ami Bouganim, a French-speaking Jew from Essaouira.

The population of Essaouira today: demographic data

According to the last national census in 2014,⁵⁴ the city has a population of 77,118 inhabitants. It is the capital of the homonymous province, with 449,113 inhabitants, of which 343,537 (76.5%) live in rural areas. As of 2015, it belongs to the Marrakech-Safi region, formerly the Marrakech-Tensift-ElHaouz.

In the mid-1980s, half of the city's population had heads of households who were born in another municipality. In the 1982 census, among migrant families, 85% were of rural origin and the remaining 15% were of urban origin. In total, 57% of the families in Essaouira lived in cities and 43% in rural areas. Among the families of rural origin, 90% came from their administrative province, that is, mostly from the Chiadma and Haha territories, which seems to be a constant in the case of Essaouira; 40% of all families in this city come directly from its surroundings, while the remaining families (10%) come from the provinces of Marrakesh, Al Jadida, Safi, Agadir, and Tiznit (Laghout 1994: 246).

As for families of urban origin, their heads came from twenty cities, so that 78% of them are from southern Morocco, with Marrakesh at the top of the list, but with less expressive figures from Casablanca and Rabat. Urban immigration took place mainly in the second half of the 20th century, so that 85% of immigrants only settled in Essaouira after the independence (1956), certainly to compensate for the exodus of Jews and also to support the administrative structure of the city afterwards, which became the capital of the province, formerly administered by Marrakesh (Laghout 1994: 247).

⁵² I highlight the documentary “*aṣ-Ṣwīra madīnat at-taʿāyūṣ*” (“Essaouira, city of coexistence”) by Aljazeera (2017), and “*Sous les vents de Mogador*,” an independent production by the director Abdel Mouzi (2019).

⁵³ Such as the traveling exhibition “*Lieux saints partagés*” of the *Mucem (Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée)*, in Marseille, which premiered in 2015.

⁵⁴ *Recensement général de la population et de l'habitat* of 2014 carried out by the Moroccan High Commission for Planning. Available at <http://rgphentableaux.hcp.ma/Default1/>. Accessed at 2:00 pm on May 20, 2019.

Data on the formation of the city's population since its foundation until the present day allow us to understand the dynamics of the formation of dialectal Arabic in the city and its developments and changes in a diachronic perspective. As we will see in the next chapter, which addresses the current status of the local dialects in Essaouira, knowing the human elements that were in contact there makes it possible to confirm or refute statements and views regarding the local linguistic reality.

0.2. Method and Fieldwork

Data collection method

For the collection of primary data in documentation, two techniques are widely used in linguistic field work: (i) **application of a questionnaire or survey**⁵⁵ – stage at which I used the dialectological questionnaire for the Maghreb created by Peter Behnstedt, finally edited in 2019, and that of Caubet (2001). Both identify the points of the linguistic systems in North African Arabic varieties in which a greater variation is expected –; and (ii) **oral text collection or free conversation recording** by recording the informant's spontaneous interaction in different contexts.

As for the selection of techniques, the survey is recommended for collecting data on relatively fixed systems whose rules are more well defined, such as phonology, derivational morphology, and lexicon, while free conversation recording is appropriate for collecting data on lexical semantics, syntax (clauses and conjunctions), inflectional morphology (tense, aspect, and mood), among others (Payne 1997; Vaux and Cooper 2003). In this study, it was not always possible to apply the questionnaire to cover all grammatical topics of interest, which forced me to resort to free conversation recording to describe the linguistic systems as a whole. This strategy is not foreign to dialectological studies of Arabic because the two techniques are complementary for description.

In both cases, the documentation of the variety was carried out by recording, followed by a phonetic-phonological transcription of data obtained, according to the transcription system adopted here.

⁵⁵ In addition to the questions of the dialectological questionnaire, the survey technique includes three other types of questions: a) contextualizing survey: informants are asked to comment on and contextualize the use of words and constructions; b) translation: informants are asked to translate a given form into their mother tongue; and c) issue of judgment: informants are asked to assess the possibility or the grammaticality of a given construction (Himmelmann 1998: 186).

Quality of data

When using the above techniques, and mainly the survey, it was necessary to pay attention, to a certain extent, to the embarrassing effect of the presence of the researcher and the recorder device on the quality and nature of obtained data since the context of the interview increases the level of attention of the informant to her or his speech, which results in less spontaneous data, characterizing what we know as the observer's paradox (Labov 2008).

Since the context of the interview interferes with the informant's choice of variants, it may happen that the informant resort to 1) non-local dialectal variants that might belong to other urban centers of greater regional or national prestige, 2) linguistic forms⁵⁶ of Standard Arabic, 3) alternation between both varieties, including the use of intermediate or hybrid forms,⁵⁷ as observed in situations of interdialectal contact between Arabic speakers, and 4) words in other languages (codeswitching).

Thus, I assume that the interaction with both the researcher and other listeners in the collection event leads the informant to shape the speech to the audience (Giles and Powesland 1975; Bell 1984), which ends up affecting stylistic variation.⁵⁸ I then consider that the contexts or communicative events in which the interaction takes place and the quality of data are directly related to the different roles the linguist plays as a "listening observer"⁵⁹ (Labov 2008; Bell 1984).

To avoid the observer's paradox and obtain data that are representative of the local dialect, I opted, whenever possible, for recording oral texts or free conversations. Thus, I defined three collection contexts characterized by

⁵⁶ I use "form" to designate linguistic elements that alternate in speech but that come from different varieties – in this case, Classical or Standard Arabic and dialectal Arabic –, while I use "variant" for linguistic elements in variation belonging to a same variety.

⁵⁷ See Ferguson (1996: 38) and Mitchell (1986: 19).

⁵⁸ Here *stylistic variation* is not only understood as the traditional *diaphasic variation*, that is, the alternation between the formal and informal poles, or according to Labov (1972), for whom the notion of style is basically associated with the degrees of monitoring the person speaking. The concepts of *style* and *stylistic variation* encompass the speaker's linguistic choices that build social meanings, personas, or even identities in different interactions (Coupland 2007; Eckert 2012).

⁵⁹ Labov (2008 [1972a]: 244-245) points out some forms of observation by the sociolinguist during data collection: *systematic observation* during an interview in which informant and observer are face to face, *participant observation* in group sessions, and *unsystematic and spontaneous observation* in public places. In turn, Bell (1984, p. 172) proposes the term *listener* and presents categories corresponding to types of audience. The dialectologist may equally count himself in: *addressee*, the subject to whom the speaker refers directly in second person; *participant listener*, whose participation in the conversation is recognized by the speaker; and *absent listener*, whose participation in the conversation is not acknowledged, although her or his presence in the environment is.

increasing spontaneity of the informant's speech: (i) encouraging the production of narratives or reports based on everyday topics and personal and family experiences, such as marriage, death, and how to prepare recipes; (ii) recording of a conversation in which the researcher acts as a participant listener in an interaction with more than one informant; and (iii) recording of conversations between informants in which the researcher acts as an absent listener, that is, present in the environment but not participating in the interaction. I believe that this last situation was the most appropriate for obtaining spontaneous data, although I am aware that the presence of other listeners will always affect the speech of the main informant.

A “Lebanese” interviewer?

My interaction with informants always took place in Moroccan Arabic, more specifically the Rabat and Casablanca varieties. However, I am aware that my speech is the result of years of studying Standard Arabic and of oral practice of Levantine Arabic, influenced by my activity as a community interpreter in Brazil by that time.

Thus, I believe that, although I used Moroccan Arabic, my speech was contaminated at the phonological level by the varieties above. Also, there is the fact that the researcher is a foreigner who is “armed with a recorder device”– which conditions the informant's use of a *foreigner talk* in Arabic (Al-Sharkawi 2011). These factors often clearly conditioned the stylistic variation in the speech of certain informants, who code-switched between Moroccan Arabic, Standard Arabic, and French.

Confirmation that my Arabic did not sound “Moroccan” enough came right away in the first fieldwork in 2016 in the countryside of Essaouira, where a man in his sixties classified my Arabic as *lābnāni*, that is, “Lebanese.” Other strangers, in different parts of the country, in shorter-term contacts guessed closer countries, thinking I was Egyptian, Tunisian or Algerian, or simply stated that I spoke *fushā* or Classical Arabic. Therefore, it is important to recognize that, although I spoke in Moroccan Arabic, my interlocutors' perception was not in accordance with this, which certainly interfered with the collected data.

Even so, I consider that the vast majority of data obtained is quite spontaneous due to factors such as the lack of familiarity of some informants with foreign languages and even with oral communication in Standard Arabic. However, it was common for them to occasionally resort to synonyms in Standard Arabic or French in an attempt to paraphrase sentences or explain the use and meaning of certain words when asked about it.

I could manage better the nature of data as I gained the trust and intimacy of these people over the last few years so that little by little they became

more comfortable in front of the recorder. Furthermore, it was often possible to follow them in their interactions with other speakers, such as family members and acquaintances, allowing me to identify variations in their speech or confirm the use of certain variants that I had already documented.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork was carried out during three stays in the city of Essaouira, during which I had the opportunity to make two short trips to the countryside, more precisely to the municipality of Aqermūd (Aqərmūd), in villages close to the beaches of Bḥəybəḥ and Sīdi Ishāq, in the Chiadma territory. At each visit, in addition to e-mail and telephone contacts, I gradually managed to build a network of contacts to schedule interviews and meetings. The periods were:

- 1st stay: from January 21 to 26, 2016 (8 h 36 min of recording);
- 2nd stay: from December 24 to 29, 2017 (9h 45min of recording);
- 3rd stay: from June 7 to 13, 2018 (11h 35min of recording).

In times of social networks, I could also count on a large amount of material available on the internet, where it is possible to have access to the speech of the city's inhabitants. I focused essentially on the content available on the page of one of the informants, Mr. Hafid Sadeq. Identifying himself as a journalist and researcher of the memory of his beloved city, Hafid used to publish daily live videos on his Facebook page. These are interviews with native inhabitants of the city of different age groups about current problems in the region or even about the difficulties they face. He compares the current state of the city with a nostalgic past, from the 1960s onwards, and remembers old customs, local characters, names of neighbors and teachers, the coexistence with Jews, and what has changed over the last few decades. His recordings are quite natural and informal, as many interviewees are childhood friends or longtime acquaintances. For the purpose of this work, the videos are a treasure of speech samples, above all, of older individuals, over eighty years old, for example, expressing themselves spontaneously with a fellow countryman in the local dialect. Before starting his conversations, the interviewer asks when and where his countryman was born in the medina, which was of great value to this study.

Messenger apps were also useful to contact the Jewish informants abroad. The application was very useful in collecting personal reports and answers to specific questions about lexicon by audio messages.

Informants

Data collection took place with informants from the city, Arabic speakers exclusively, representative of different social groups: Muslims and Jews, men and women, inhabitants of the medina and extramural neighborhoods of more recent construction, belonging to different age groups. As for ethnicity, most informants considered themselves Arabs from the Chiadma tribe, not being familiar with the Tachelhit language. I obtained, however, data from some speakers whose parents or grandparents spoke Tachelhit, but, as will become clear later, their speech shared “typical” city traits with those who considered themselves Arabs.

My predisposition was to select informants whose parents were born in the city – in fact, some claim that their families have been in the city for generations. However, I did not rule out those whose families originated from the outskirts of the city because, as I pointed out previously in this introduction, the city has been receiving an influx of people from its vicinity for decades. Furthermore, some informants were born outside the city, deep in the province of Essaouira. They are referred to by Moroccans as coming from the *ḡrūbbīyya* or *bādīyya*.

I believe that the different origins of the informants’ families and the data provided by those who were born and live in the countryside help to verify the origin, continuity, and change of linguistic traits present in the local Arabic dialect. During the application of questionnaires, informants made value judgments in relation to certain variants, which were identified as typical of the medina, the city as a whole, or the countryside, although all were heard in the city.

There were also cases in which it was not possible to record people’s speech. Only the possibility of making occasional notes on relevant traits remained, such as the speech of some ladies inside the medina, which retains important traits of old urban varieties (Miller 2004) or even the speech of caretakers of Jewish and Christian cemeteries and merchants inside the medina.

Below, following the order I met them, are some of the main informants.

M1⁶⁰: 30-year-old woman born in Essaouira, of Chiadma origin. She lives in a popular, lower-middle-class neighborhood known as *Sqāla əž-ždīda*⁶¹ outside the walls of the medina. Her father is a native of Aquermoud, from a village near the beach of *Bḡaybəḡ* in the countryside of the province of Essaouira. Her mother is from Safi but has lived most of her life in

⁶⁰ M: Muslim informants born in the city.

⁶¹ Residential lots built in the 1980s located in the northern part of the city. Since its inception, it has been characterized by a disorderly growth and is known locally as a popular neighborhood.

Aquermoud, and in Essaouira for at least the last thirty years. M1 travels to her father's village, where most of her family has been since childhood. She is a primary-school French teacher in that same rural area. She has technical training in school administration and seems to have been one of the first members of her family to complete secondary school. She speaks the local dialect and French.

As for her speech, she does a rare code-switching between two languages, using the French lexicon only in a very isolated way and little use of Standard Arabic in oral speech. Even in messages written via WhatsApp, she always uses dialect. She manages to distinguish variants from other regions of Morocco, mainly from her own area, clearly separating rural variants from urban ones. According to her, there is an urban speech of Essaouira as opposed to that of the countryside, and she also identifies a speech of the old city within the walls of the medina (*lā-mdīna lā-ḡdīma*) spoken by women.

We recorded the informant's speech in the form of an interview and during free conversations with her mother, her sisters, and her uncles and cousins in her father's village.

M2 (Hafid Sadeq): 55-year-old man, civil servant and journalist, born in Essaouira, in the Bni Ṣāntār district, within the walls of the medina, on the Taourirt Street (*Darb⁶² Tāwrīrt*). His father is also a native of Essaouira. He had lived all his life in the city, but today he resides with his family outside the old medina walls. He speaks very well French and Standard Arabic.

I held meetings with this informant in different years. He presents himself as a researcher of the memory of Essaouira, taking pride in his ability to memorize street names, names of neighbors and families, and personalities of the city who were contemporary to or lived before him. He is also a collector of photos, documents and, above all, anecdotes and "stories" about the city. He writes articles for local newspapers about the city and has already given interviews on the subject to television channels. He is also frequently invited to give lectures at public schools, such as the *Lycée Akensous*, where he completed his studies.

The interviews with this informant were rich, as he sang popular songs from over forty years ago, in addition to providing us with a lexicon of the time of his parents and grandparents that is not heard among younger generations. These data could be compared with data provided by other informants of the same age and even confirmed in the videos he uploaded on social networks with his fellow countrymen.

I transcribed and described the speech of individuals interviewed by him who were born in Essaouira, more precisely in the medina, where they live until today. Among them are an 80-year-old tailor who works in the Sūḡ

⁶² *darb* "street, alley" < cl. Ar. *darb* "path."

Wāqa; an 87-year-old baker, visually impaired, who worked most of his life in the Mellah and had a close relationship with the Jews of the city; and a 43-year-old woman.

M3 (Ahmed Harrouz): plastic artist, 62 years old, coordinator of cultural events at Association Dar Souiri and researcher dedicated to local culture, cultural exchange in the city, and material (wood art and architecture) and immaterial traditions (history of some local *zawiyas* such as Ḥamdūši, Gnāwi, and ʿisāwi). He was born in the countryside of the Chiadma territory, but at the age of one his parents moved to the medina of Essaouira and began to live in the Šbānāt neighborhood. A few years later, they moved to the Mellah, where his family shared the same building floor with a Jewish family. Between 1967 and 1971 the family went to Safi, where he studied at primary school, and then returned to Essaouira, where he completed secondary school and lived there until he was twenty. From his time in Safi, he remembers how his colleagues noticed that his speech was different because of certain words he used. In 1983, he completed his higher education in Rabat and received a bachelor's degree in philosophy and human sciences, specializing in psychology. He spent a few years in France for a post-graduate course in sociology, but he did not finish his studies, returning to Essaouira to live as an artist.

Our meetings took place in his gallery in the medina, more precisely on *Sqāla* Street, in a tower listed as an architectural heritage inside the wall that separates the city from the sea. In the first interviews, although Standard Arabic occasionally appeared in his speech mainly due to subjects that required a more academic language and because of his cultural level, dialectal Arabic predominated.

Because he was familiar with Classical Arabic and its grammatical terminology and aware of the distinction between standard and dialectal varieties, the application of the dialectological questionnaire was very productive, especially regarding morphology and lexicon. I also listened to very interesting stories about local festivities, customs, life in the port, fishing techniques – as his father was a fisherman –, and the coexistence between Jews and Muslims in the city. Furthermore, as he was fluent in French and English, it was possible to ask him to translate some constructions and words into dialectal Arabic.

R⁶³: young man aged 19, of Chiadma origin, born in Sīdi Iṣḥāq, near Aquermoud. He is a secondary school senior at a traditional local public school, the *Lycée Akenous*, and has lived in Essaouira for two years. He often goes to his hometown and to the beach at Bḥaybəḥ, where there is a

⁶³ R: Muslim informants from rural Essaouira, Chiadma territory.

small community that lives off traditional fishing. He has no knowledge of foreign languages but can express himself orally in Standard Arabic.

I followed this informant on a one-day visit to Sīdī Ishāq and Bḥəybəḥ and recorded his speech in interaction with friends and acquaintances at *s-sūq l-ḥāmm*, a type of popular open-air market common in inland cities. I also recorded the speech of some fishermen in a species of fish “auction” in Bḥəybəḥ, and I conducted an interview with a thirty-year-old man who worked in a cooperative of traditional prickly pear farmers.

J1⁶⁴ (Asher Knafo): 84 years old, born inside the walls of the medina of Essaouira, more precisely in the Qasba, where he lived until he was 16 years old. His maternal grandparents were from Ifrane and of Berber origin. Today he resides in Israel but lived in Panama as director of a Jewish school. In addition to his dialect, he is fluent in French and Hebrew and speaks a little Spanish, a language he has not used for many years. From the first contact, our communication took place in Moroccan Arabic, extending over the last years via audio messages. In these messages, the informant told us personal stories from his family, jokes and customs of the local Jewish community.

J2 (Jo Kakon): 78 years old. His parents were also born in Essaouira. He lived in Essaouira until he was 11 years old, when he immigrated to Strasbourg, France, in 1955. He studied performing arts and speaks Arabic, French, Spanish, English, and Hebrew. I contacted Mr. Kakon after watching his interview *in loco* with another kinsman from the city in French and Judeo-Arabic. This interview was very useful since he quotes many people he used to live with in his childhood. He plays imaginary dialogues with the women of his youth, allowing us to distinguish between his speech with masculine and feminine interlocutors. We were in contact via a messenger app, through which he sent me the audio that I transcribed and presented in this book.

J3 (Joseph Sebbag): 60-year-old man. He presents himself as the last Jew in the city, in the sense of being the last one to live there. For this reason, he has already given several interviews to Moroccan and Arab channels, such as the Aljazeera network, because he was a witness and a representative of a time of coexistence between both communities. Both he and his parents were born in the medina, in the Qasba, Clock Street (*Dərḅ l-magāna*). His grandparents were born in the neighborhood of Šbānāt, close to the Mellah, and, according to him, his family has been in Essaouira for two hundred years. He mentions that his grandfather spoke Berber. He currently owns an antique shop, *Galerie Aida*, on Sqala Street, which belonged to his parents, businesspeople in the import and export sector. After years living in the United States, he returned to his hometown, in 1993, to take over his father's

⁶⁴ J: Jewish informants.

store, which remained closed for years. His mother and two of his brothers live in Casablanca, which he often visits.

He speaks fluent English and French and has a degree in computer science, although he has also studied Jewish jurisprudence. His Arabic speech has no forms of Standard Arabic, except for very specific words that are common to the local dialect, such as *dūla* (< cl. Ar. *dawla*) “State, country.” He also distinguishes the dialect of the Jews, *d-dāriža dyālna* “our dialect,” from that of Muslims (*d-dāriža dyāl lə-msəlmīn*) or Moroccans (*lə-mğārba*), in his words. It is noteworthy that many times he had difficulty remembering words from the rural context and nature. At most, he mentioned them in foreign languages, which is probably explained by a lack of life experience outside the urban environment. On the other hand, he was quite familiar with the names of fish in the region and elements of the city's port.

Our interviews were held in his shop in the company of his cat and his blind female dog, Rosa, who at times interfered with the recording. Being in the shop helped us to follow his routine, as we were frequently interrupted by visits from friends and customers. Some interviews were accompanied by a friend of his, also from Essaouira, and by his employee. I also witnessed his interaction with other people, in this case Muslims, some close and others only acquaintances who passed by the store offering services, such as shoe shining. I recorded his reports about the daily life of the Jews of Essaouira in the past, their traditions, their customs, and their way of speaking. Curiously, he also asked me many personal questions, mainly about Brazil, which allowed me to record interrogative pronouns and an unexpected lexicon. In addition to the dialectological interview, his interviews in Arabic for television channels allowed me to compare his speech in different contexts.

The informants in this work represent well the diversity of the dialectal Arabic of Essaouira from a synchronic point of view because speakers form a group from the medina and more recent neighborhoods whose origins are Essaouira or its countryside, and from a diachronic point of view because informants are from different generations. All this information is included in a same study. Furthermore, this work offers an insight into the differences and similarities of the Muslim and Jewish community dialects in the city over time.

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