

## RESEÑAS

JOSEPH CHETRIT, *Notre Judéo-arabe. Les dialects judéo-arabes du Maroc: structures, usages et diversité*, Haifa, Pardes Publishing, 2023, 512 pp. (In Hebrew) + י"ב-ח (in Hebrew) and iii-Xii (in French: Table des matières et présentation).

The book is divided into four long chapters: Chapter 1: The Judeo-Arabic Dialects in Morocco: Diglossic Foundations and Morpho-phonology (pp. 1-118). Chapter 2: Characteristics and Specificities of Three Categories of Dialects: *qal. k'al* and *'al* (pp. 119-234); Chapter 3: The Judeo-Arabic Dialects of *kal* (sic.) of Spanish-speaking (*Haketia*) Communities in Northern Morocco. Based on Manuscripts from the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (pp. 235-352); and Chapter 4: The Hybrid Judeo-Arabic Dialect *k'al* of the Jews of Oujda: Morpho-Phonology, Diglossia, Narrations and Proverbs (pp. 353-465), ending with an interim summary of the book (pp. 465-468). This chapter is followed by a list of Bibliographical References (pp. 469-488), a List of the Poems (in alphabetical order), the Texts (in order of appearance) (pp. 489-492); Index of Names and Places (pp. 495-498) and, finally, a list of Key Matters (in Hebrew) (pp. 499-512). This is followed by an abstract in French (Présentation).

The first chapter of the book has the following subsections: Introduction (pp. 1-2); The Formation and Fixation of the Judeo-Arabic Dialects of Morocco (pp. 3-50); The Internal Diversity of the Judeo-Arabic Dialects (pp. 51-74); The internal diversity of the Judeo-Arabic dialects (pp. 75-85); Morpho-Phonological Structures and Phonetics (pp. 86-112) and an Internal Summary (pp. 113-118). This chapter also deals with the Moroccan Judeo-Arabic dialects of the Middle Ages and their modern features, i.e., diglossia and secret language. In addition, there is a discussion on

inter-linguistic hybridization, socio-pragmatic functions of Hebrew components, semantic-syntactic hybridization, laminated internal diversity, lects, polylects, sociolects and panlects. The fourth subsection contains a discussion of the consonants and vowels, intonation and the structure of the syllable. During the chapter, various texts are combined, which confirm phenomena such as diglossia or secret language. The chapter concludes with an internal summary.

The second chapter of the book is divided into four subsections and, as in the first chapter, ends with an internal summary. This chapter deals with the three dialectal groups of Moroccan Judeo-Arabic, *qal. k'al* and *'al*, and describes them in detail not only linguistically but also culturally (pp. 119-129). Chetrit concludes a description of each dialectal group with textual samples beginning with the *qal* group in Marrakesh and South-West Morocco, the *k'al* dialectal group in Tafilalet and the south of Morocco and, finally, with the *'al* dialectal group of the Jews of Meknes, Sefrou and Fes. The linguistic dialectal description is followed in most subsections by textual samples (pp. 198-234) and an internal summary (pp. 194-197).

The third chapter, which discusses *kal*-dialects, consists of five subsections and an internal summary. This chapter deals with manuscripts from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that are characterized by dialectal features. The chapter is comprised of seven manuscripts from Tetouan, Tanger, al-Qsar l-Kbir, Arsila, Chefchaouen and Gibraltar (pp. 237-278), followed by songs from North

Moroccan Jewish communities, from central Morocco and from the south (pp. 280-317). It continues with a discussion of morpho-phonology among the Jews of Tetouan and a description of the consonants (pp. 323-328) and vowels (pp. 329-332). The fifth subsection of the chapter deals with the Hebrew component as a constituent element in the *Haketia* in Andalusí Arabic and the Jbala population. This subsection examines proverbs in *Haketia* which have a Judeo-Arabic source, the emergence of a communal language and the secret language in *Haketia* (pp. 333-349). The chapter ends with an internal summary (pp. 349-352).

The fourth chapter sheds light on the mixed Judeo-Arabic dialect *k'al* in Oujda, in North-East Morocco, which had approximately 4,000 Jews at its peak before they left from 1949 until 1974. It starts with a survey on this community which reveals details on Chetrit's linguistic informants in this area (pp. 353-358). This is accompanied by general remarks on the timeframe of the fieldwork. The author covers the phonological elements of this dialect (consonants and vowels) and then also the structure of the syllables and the intonation (pp. 359-375). He then surveys the diglossic elements of the mixed dialect (pp. 376-377) and the peculiarities of the dialect's lexicon (pp. 378-380), which contains a vast layer of Hebrew elements. The chapter continues with the *Sharḥ*-translations and interpretation of the Torah, especially in Psalms (pp. 402-410). The author intermingles narrative texts of the dialect of Oujda, songs (some of them lamentations) and proverbs (pp. 411-465). This chapter also ends with an internal summary (pp. 466-468).

This book is a very important contribution in Modern Hebrew in the domain of Moroccan Judeo-Arabic. In his research, the author does not focus only on modern dialects in this community—which reached hundreds of thousands at its peak—but also completes the entire picture by providing the missing links and parts of the puzzle by adding Medieval Judeo-Arabic dialectal texts. This is crucial in order to have a complete understanding of the emergence of these dialects. In addition, Chetrit gives the reader a geographic-historical survey of the distribution of the sub-dialectal groups of Moroccan Judeo-Arabic. He does it by

combining the linguistic data with the Andalusí dialects, al-Andalus being from where many of the Moroccan Jews originate. He also surveys the characteristics of *Haketia* and their relation to the local Judeo-Arabic dialects.

The book is a sophisticated work which concentrates not only on pure language analysis with pure dialectological tools but also combines historical, geographic and folkloristic domains which give the book an interdisciplinary dimension. It also elevates the domain of micro-linguistics, which is purely linguistic, and shifts it into macro-linguistics, namely a mixture between linguistic and other major domains, something that has become significant in our day and is breathing new life into the field of traditional linguistics. Mixing texts in the same chapters also makes the picture very vivid.

The book was so exciting that I read it in three days despite its large scope. I did find some repetition such as the discussion of the secret language among the Moroccan Jews, or a repeated discussion of the text שתיק, שתיק א חכם (be silent, be silent oh wise person!). I would also have liked a fifth chapter of the book which would have provided a global overview of the dialects together with a summary and future outlook. These marginal remarks do not spoil the indispensable contribution of this work which enables the reader to obtain a deep comprehension of Moroccan Judeo-Arabic.

Joseph Chetrit was born in Morocco in 1941 and is the most prolific Israeli researcher in the field of Arabic dialectology among Jewish communities, especially in Morocco but also in Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. He began to conduct fieldwork in these communities in Shlomi (North Israel) between 1978 and 1981 and wrote not only about their dialects but also on their history, traditions and customs. He has also contributed significantly to the research of Judeo-Berber. In addition to his work as a researcher, he has written many articles and books, Chetrit did not remain in an ivory tower, but also created the *Tsfon-Ma'arav* (Hebrew: צפון-מערב), a musical ensemble that aims to preserve musical traditions and poetic creations among Maghrebi Jews and to raise the audience's awareness of this magnificent legacy. The tireless work of the author over many years has enabled discussion in the field

of Moroccan Judeo-Arabic flavours which could not have otherwise been saved.

The Jewish Moroccan communities were numerous in their numbers and their geographical distribution. They existed in this corner of the world with Arabic as a mother tongue since the beginning of Islam. Without documenting these dialects, when time still allowed it in the

seventies of the last century before most of the Jews left, these glorious traditions and legacy could not have been preserved, and it would have been as if they had never existed.

Aharon Geva-Kleinberger

University of Haifa, Israel

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3740-1401>