

University of London
School of Oriental and African Studies

The Cuisine of Morocco: Origins and Ritual Significance

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the reception, evolution and onward transmission of the Moroccan culinary legacy. The examination of the subject is divided into two parts, the first of which relates to the cuisine as it is today, whilst the second part traces in depth its historical origins.

The subject matter of the first part has been compiled from personal experience and fieldwork, supported by the accounts of XIXth century European travellers, including the ethnographic observations of colonial officials, however misguided and perverted these may have been. In addition to providing a description of the ingredients, utensils and preparatory techniques employed in this cuisine, an insight is given into its association with certain aspects of Moroccan life. In particular the relationship between food and religious and traditional festivals is examined, as is its pertinence to private ceremonies associated with all aspects of an individual's life from birth to death.

In the second part, the examination of historical references illustrates the salient importance of food ceremonies in the story of the inhabitants of Morocco. Here the research has been directed towards tracing the history of dishes and identifying transformations undergone under different cultural influences. In the latter connection the influence of Islamic expansion is examined with reference to the introduction of new agricultural crops and products, (sugar, spices etc.), and also with reference to the thoughts of the physicians of the "Moorish Empire", as depicted in the early Islamic cookery books. The historical study of the annual program of food rituals shows how this was adjusted to the new religious setting in relation to the solar/lunar calendar alteration.

This study is followed by a specific investigation into the significance of the names of certain dishes and the importance of their preparation, concluding that the "Amazigh" alias Berber tradition was preserved in a concealed form throughout history. This new dimension has been exploited in a retrocessive study of mythology through Roman, Phoenician, Greek and eventually Ancient Egyptian classical sources to conclude that culinary practices have acted as a repository for ancient Moroccan tradition.

Transliteration Key

Arabic character Latin equivalent

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| hamzah | ◌ |
| bā | b |
| tā | t |
| tha | th |
| jīm | j |
| ḥā | ḥ |
| khā | kh |
| dal | d |
| dhal | dh |
| rā | r |
| zay | z |
| sin | s |
| shin | sh |
| ṣād | ṣ |
| ḍad | ḍ |
| ṭā | ṭ |
| zā | z |
| ‘ayn | ‘ |
| ghayn | gh |
| fā | f |
| qāf | q |
| kāf | k |
| lām | l |
| mīm | m |
| nūn | n |
| waw | w |
| ha | h |
| yā | y |
| long vowels | ā ī ū |

Note on Transliteration

The above key has been used for the transliteration of all Arabic words in the text. Moroccan dialect and Berber have been transliterated according to local pronunciation where appropriate. The latter method of transliteration has also been used for proper names, with a few minor exceptions where forms in common English usage have been adopted. Place names have generally been written according to the French format, i.e. as they are usually found on maps, except where well-established English equivalents exist, (e.g. Marrakesh).

Summary of Contents

Chapter I provides an overview of the natural boundaries of Morocco, which have served also as a means of limiting access thereto, to the extent that, during its recorded history, it has only fallen under foreign domination in its entirety for a mere half century. This, coupled with a relatively positive climate pattern, has ensured that Moroccan society has been able to develop virtually unaffected by external influences.

Chapter II covers the two staple foods of Morocco: cereals and meat. There are several tables specific to the preparation and transformation of cereal products. Tables have been used as the most convenient way of displaying the large amount of bread types available, for to describe the preparation of each and the occasion for which it is prepared would have needed a book devoted entirely to cereals. The tables also provide a convenient reference guide to cereal products that are mentioned later in the text. Meat, revered by the Moroccans to the extent of being seen as “noble”, is examined in terms of production, butchering and the occasions when its consumption is obligatory. The symbolic value attributed to meat during celebrations is also introduced in this chapter.

Chapter III describes the various utensils available to the Moroccan cook. This is followed by detailed accounts of the importance of each ingredient used in the cuisine and the techniques employed for their transformation into food items and dishes. There are also descriptions of the form in which ingredients are bought in relation to their eventual purpose, i.e. for immediate consumption or for storage.

Chapter IV extends the discussion of dishes to the purposes of each one and the occasion(s) on which it is served. Using the words of R. Le. Tourneau, each meal has its own meaning and to use it outside its context would constitute a sacrilege or a lack of manners. Moroccans are accustomed to consuming foodstuffs only during their proper season. Thus, even during their travels abroad, they will avoid eating certain types of food outside their established season, e.g. pulses in summertime or watermelon in winter.

Chapter V investigates and notes the dishes used and their significance in a number of festivals celebrated in Morocco throughout the year. Some of the latter have a well-preserved form but others are in the process of extinction, particularly those that have been celebrated in the past according to the solar calendar. A case in point is the *Solṭan ṭolba*, the students' springtime festival that was officially abolished in 1961. An example of a dying celebration is that of the *ʿAnṣra*, which is celebrated only occasionally when people in rural areas remember to follow the solar calendar. The bulk of the information in this chapter is derived from multiple interviews backed by the content of secondary literature. However, the archival information of the latter, for reasons stated earlier, lacks any detail from within the household. Hence the importance in the present work of the inclusion of material from festivals such as "*Qadīda*: ladies only party" or the strictly private celebrations of *Shaʿbana*, both of which do not appear to have been previously reported.

Chapter VI. This chapter concludes the description of contemporary Moroccan cuisine as it enters the third millennium. It covers those celebrations that can be described as private, i.e. celebrated within the intimacy of the family group or within a small well-defined group or community. The object has been to cover all types of celebration from the cradle to the grave, focussing on the food element. The emphasis is therefore upon the latter rather than the details of ceremonial observances. In order to eliminate any possibility of bias the material of both this chapter and the previous chapter has been drawn from all types of social strata and identities, covering both rural and urban areas.

The Jewish festivals have been included in this chapter since they represent the most neglected part of Moroccan society in the literature of the colonial period. It would seem as if French colonial writers had assumed the eventual "assimilation" and "gallicization" of the Jewish population. Details of their celebrations are therefore scarce, despite the fact that, before the great exodus of the 1950s, Moroccan Jews with their special diet were to be found everywhere from the coastal plains to the Atlas and the Saharan regions. Fortunately a sufficient number of Moroccan Jews has preferred the ancestral homeland to the temptations of emigration, so that it has been

possible to obtain oral information about their celebrations and the appropriate related cuisine.

Chapter VII. This is the first of four chapters devoted to the extraordinary advances in agriculture and science that followed the Islamic conquests and their subsequent effect upon the development of the cuisine of the Islamic Empire, with particular reference to the Maghreb. A general historical introduction to the Islamic Period is followed by a more particular historical analysis of the Maghreb and Al Andalus, ranging from the immediate pre-conquest period to the XVIIth century. The section on the Islamic Agricultural Revolution covers the introduction of new plants and animals and the development of irrigation techniques, followed by the complete transformation of the ancient cropping system. Finally there is a section illustrating how the advent of new herbs, fruits, vegetables and all kinds of spices, coupled with the widespread sharing of knowledge, enabled the Islamic Physicians to make great strides in the field of medicine.

Chapter VIII. This chapter investigates the relationship between food and astronomy and its allied sciences that was noted during the examination of festivals/celebrations in Chapter V. Two distinct currents are identified and described. The first relates to how the Islamic sciences of astronomy, mathematics and the theory of music evolved from the legacy of earlier civilizations. The second illustrates how pagan practices have been kept alive within the same society.

Chapter IX. This chapter draws its material mainly from Arabic language primary sources in the form of medieval manuscripts. The latter represent some of the principal landmarks in the quest to establish the origins of recipes extant in today's Morocco. Also identified are innovations specific to the Islamic Period including the introduction of sugar, the creation of various types of cakes and sweetmeats and, last of all, the pre-Marco Polo appearance of pasta.

Chapter X. Certain elements described in Chapters IV and V are examined here in relation to their context in the Islamic Period. The Zawiyas: their role in society, their function of spreading Islamic teaching and the importance of the students and their annual *Soltan Tolba* festival. The tea ritual and its origins. The significance of the

Mawlid is also examined, as is that of the *Bujlud*, the *‘Issawa* and the worship of Mithras.

Chapter XI. In studying the Pre-Islamic Period, because of the paucity of specific subject literature, the investigation of myths has been used as a means of determining the symbolic motives behind the sanctification of food in rituals that date back to this era.

Chapter XII. This chapter represents the sum of several pointers that have appeared in the previous chapter indicating the similarity of beliefs prevalent in both Morocco and Ancient Egypt. An examination of one of the earliest recorded mythological works of the latter country, the *Tuat* (Book of the Dead), reveals probable explanations for the names of some of the dishes used in Morocco today. This is followed by a commentary on the whole question of the Ancient Egyptian connection, which concludes that the myths shared by both areas appear to have a common root, but that they could not have originated in Ancient Egypt. The same commentary also concludes that Morocco has in fact two cuisines, urban and rural. It suggests that the latter is indigenous and that its associated rituals derive from myths of great antiquity that it shares in a purely mythological context with Ancient Egypt. As to the urban cuisine, its sophistication is such that it could hardly be indigenous, but might have been transmitted to Mauretania Tingitana (Northern Morocco), during the reign of the Berber king Juba II.

Introduction

It seems appropriate that a socio-historical work about Morocco, with strong socio-cultural overtones, should be compiled at the end of the XXth century, bearing in mind that at the beginning of the same century, so little was known of that country that the well-known traveller Budgett Meakin had only a few years earlier described it as the “China of the West”. In fact, prior to the XIXth century, only a few Europeans had succeeded in entering the country. Thus, despite the fact that in the Middle Ages Morocco’s destiny was closely connected to that of the Iberian peninsula and southern Italy, the country itself, beyond the boundaries of a handful of trading enclaves, remained virtually unknown to Europeans. By contrast the trans-Saharan caravan routes established in the IXth century and still maintained in the XXth century are witness to the fact that at least parts of the country were known to sub-Saharan Africans. It is thus not surprising that there is very little on record in the public domain about Moroccan cuisine, apart from an increasing number of “art books”, whose purpose is hardly academic. Hence to the average Frenchman, despite his country’s half century of occupation of that country, its cuisine is viewed only in terms of couscous and *Meshwi* (spit-roasted meat).

The same paucity of recorded information is also manifest when attempts are made to establish the purpose of individual dishes within the social environment of Morocco. In a society where literacy is the exception rather than the rule, records of such everyday information as the dishes to be prepared for specific celebrations are of necessity oral in nature. In the preparation of food measurement is by eye alone whilst the quality of ingredients is assessed by sight, feel, smell and the purchaser’s trust in the seller. In these circumstances it is understandable that the compilation of recipes by the cooks themselves is the most unlikely of events. Hence even the quantities and recommendations set out in recipes contained in the “art books” sold in Europe lack any real authority. It follows that the essential tool for researching this cuisine is an intimate knowledge of colloquial Moroccan Arabic, coupled with a working knowledge of the structure of the Berber language. In this context I had no

difficulties, since I was raised in a traditional Moroccan family, which had relatives living in several areas of the country.

The initial research for the present work was carried out over a period of two years, beginning in 1994 and involving multiple visits. This was supplemented by further visits as and when specific aspects of the research raised further queries. In choosing my informants I set out to span the generations beginning with the aged, especially those with recollections pre-dating the arrival of the French in 1912. To these were added the recollections of the middle-aged group as the research ranged through all walks of life in the principal geographic zones of the country, from the Atlas to the Atlantic and from the fertile plains to the pre-Sahara. Both men and women were questioned about dishes used in rituals and the manner of the celebration of the latter, during their childhood and in later life. In comparing their answers with the colonial and pre-colonial secondary literature, it was possible to amplify and explain the less objective observations of the latter, whilst establishing beyond doubt the existence of certain practices beyond the span of living memory. Some of the informants were clearly embarrassed to find themselves talking about customs, which seemed primitive in a modern context. They constantly excused themselves by claiming that they were young and ignorant and lacking guidance. This was particularly noticeable when the mourning of “*Baba ‘Ashur*” and the “*‘Anṣra*” festival¹ were under discussion. This attitude of rejection of cultural heritage and identity was particularly noticeable amongst officials and academics, whose French-style education seemed to make them contemptuous of the culinary side of my subject. As for rituals, they were even more contemptuous, either pretending to know nothing about them or explaining that these represented the cult of the masses and the illiterate. In fact it was the recognition of this prejudice that prompted me to adopt a more dynamic style of investigation amongst those who were still sufficiently attached to their own culture.

It is important to note that much of the information obtained was only given when a certain trust had been developed with the subject. It was also necessary to equate with people’s values in order to grasp their understanding of the meanings of the rituals. It is in this context that the difference between oral and written language becomes

¹ Both covered in Chapter V.

evident in that the transcriptions of the colonial period² appear frozen in time, whereas in direct interviews the researcher feels closer to human life and to the situational world.

The link between rituals and the appropriate dishes to be served is an essential element of this study, since the identification of the origins of a particular ritual must automatically lead to that of the related dishes. Again the fact that such links exist only in an oral context gave some urgency to the research, since the modernization of Morocco is gradually causing many elements of traditional life to disappear. Hence the collection of surviving material became a priority in the light of the knowledge that such information may soon become unavailable. The rate of such disappearance is bound to be greater in areas of urban expansion and it is already evident that practices that were once widespread throughout the country can now only be found in remote mountain villages.

Having acquired and recorded the oral material available, it has been compared with the secondary literature covering the period of the XIXth and XXth centuries. This consists of the published observations of European travellers to the area and also the reports of French officials filed before and after that country's colonization of Morocco. In content these invariably follow the speciality of the writer, covering such subjects as geography, ethnography, local law and religion. It must also be appreciated that, particularly in the case of French colonial and pre-colonial observers, their motivations were invariably those of persons delegated to gather specific items of strategic intelligence. Thus their reports were designed on the one hand, to enable their masters to assess the possibility and economic desirability of territorial acquisition and, on the other hand were slanted to provide political or alleged moral reasons for an eventual French intervention. As such they can hardly be described as objective academic research. Furthermore, despite the specialized knowledge of their authors, it should not be forgotten that the latter were men operating in a closed "Islamic" society, with much of their reference material being channelled to them by male interpreters. Consequently, due to the limitations of their political bias, there was a tendency to adopt simplistic explanations for anything,

² D.F.Eckelman. Moroccan Islam: French writing looked like police dossiers. pp.21-29.

whose meaning or purpose they were unable to comprehend, with the result that their observations were often wide of the mark. Thus such expressions as “totem” and “mauvais génie” are all too frequent in works that epitomize apparent scientific neglect and lack of objectivity. It would seem that few of these gentlemen had progressed beyond Frazer’s interpretations of the significance of rituals in agrarian communities. Nevertheless, whilst it is better to disregard their essentially subjective comments, their written observations of what they physically saw have constituted an invaluable stock of recorded material, with which to compare the information obtained from oral sources. There is no doubt that the task of interpreting this material and the oral information it corroborates demands a much deeper knowledge of Moroccan social phenomena that might be accessed by a person raised and educated outside its unique environment. At the same time it is important to avoid the pitfalls of “going native”, i.e. to be the victim of counter-transference and of pointing out similarities merely to describe the lesser by the more familiar. On the contrary the interpretation of the information must diligently follow the pattern of continual verification in order to establish correctly the historical roots of the society.

In recording my work the aim has thus been to produce a general study where everything should link, knowing that social phenomena are never isolated in time or space. To integrate these phenomena it has been necessary to have recourse to linguistics, archeology and even cosmology, as well as consulting basic source material stretching far back into history. The thesis is therefore divided into two distinct parts, one descriptive and the other historical. The first part, consisting of Chapters I to VI, describes the cuisine, rituals and social background of the Moroccan people, from the XIXth century until the present day. The material used is derived from personal experience and observations during fieldwork, consisting of accounts collected from informants on what they have seen, heard and lived in different regions of the country as indicated on the map at p. 17. The results were compared to secondary literature based on the accounts of travellers to Morocco before, during and after the colonial period. The above was used as a backcloth to rituals witnessed at different periods of the year according to seasons in various areas during a series of visits.

A profound analysis of the local social structure allowed me to distinguish the different elements that define influences of the past upon each group of Moroccan society. This was necessary to understand the second part of the thesis, consisting of Chapters VII to XII, which is initially based upon the study of primary sources including literature of the Islamic period left by early Moslem scholars such as historians, geographers and physicians. It reveals how Morocco was affected by Islamic culture and the role its people played within this culture. The period has been analysed in terms of the general trends of the Islamic community and the effects of these in North Africa and in particular in Morocco and Al Andalus. Finally the last two Chapters (XI and XII) are based upon primary sources relative to the pre-Islamic period, especially those works left by classical writers, which relate to North Africa and Morocco. This final stage of the study has involved going as far back in history as evidence can be found that might provide explanations and interpretations of today's food rituals.

Record of visits

| Location(s) | Season/Year visited | Sites visited and Events witnessed | Informants and details of Regional Specialities (R.Sp.) |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Casablanca | 1994/1999 several visits | Ramadan, 'Id al 'Adhā 'ashura, 'Id al Mawlid Qadida party for women <i>Showāfa Sha'bana</i> Jewish festivals | Interviews about <i>Soltan Tolba</i> , <i>Bujiud</i> (recollections of 20 years ago, the 'Issawa festival at the Sidi Belyout Sanctuary (recollections of 40 years ago). Interviews about 'Ansrā and <i>Sha'bana</i> (recollections of 20 Years ago). |
| Essaouira and Azemmour | Spring 1994 and Autumn 1995 | Zawiya and sanctuary Moussein in Haha Gnawa celebration Norias and pigeon house(fertilizers) <i>Shabel</i> (shad) fishing in Um Rabi river | Interviews with the Ouled Bou Aziz, (as already witnessed By Westermarck), <i>Soltan Tolba</i> in Essaouira. Interviews about <i>Bujiud</i> 30 years ago, (still celebrated in rural areas). R.Sp.- Best fish tajjins, best Jewish food. |
| Taroudant Igili Ighrem | Spring 1997 | Preparation of <i>Amlo</i> and other argan and almond based foods. Sampling of olives, olive oil and argan oil. Distillation of orange blossom. | Preparation of <i>Amlo</i> and distillation of orange blossoms R.Sp.- Authentic Berber dishes, best tajjins, best <i>kesksu</i> , Barley bread, honey. |
| Marrakesh and Haouz | Spring, Winter 1996 Spring, Summer 1997 | Weddings, birth, circumcision <i>Nezāha</i> (concerts) in parks Preparation of calf <i>tanjiya</i> Berber ovens for roasting | Interviews about the training of cooks in the houses Of 'Lords of the Atlas', (Goundafi, Glawi, M'tougui) Interviews about <i>Soltan Tolba</i> , <i>Sha'bana</i> , <i>Gnawa</i> , 'ashura and 'Ansrā R.Sp.- More refined cuisine than Taroudant. Imperial cuisine. Sweetmeats, Calf Tanjiya. Traditional training of cooks Dating from competitions between Lords of the Atlas. |
| Haouz of Marrakesh (High Atlas) | Summer 1994 Summer 1996 Spring 1998 | Sanctuaries: Moulay Ibrahim, Shem Aroj Berber villages: Tahanawt, Aït Mizzane Ourika | Interviews about <i>Bujiud/Bilmawn</i> , Solar New Year Celebration, Harvest festival (Aït Mizzane) offerings to frogs. R.Sp.- Summer festival in main sanctuary of Shem Aroj |

Record of visits

| Location(s) | Season/Year visited | Sites visited and Events witnessed | Informants and details of Regional Specialities (R.Sp.) |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| Ouarzazate and Zagora | Spring 1996 | Rose festival in Qal at Mgouna Saffron collection in Talouine | R.Sp. - Rose festival in Qal at Mgouna, Saffron collection in Talouine. Goat tajjins. |
| Settat Khouribga | Spring 1995 | Visited weekly markets. | R.Sp. - Lamb shearing festival, <i>Taghanja</i> and <i>'Ansra</i> . |
| Oued Zem Bouja d Tadla | Summer 1998 | Summer <i>Marwsem</i> Sherqawi zawiya | Interviews about offerings to the birds, seasons and Solar Calendar, food for <i>'Ashura</i> <i>Bujjad</i> , (called <i>Sba^c bul Btain</i> = Lion with skins) <i>Taghanja</i> , <i>Biharis</i> - "Shoulder-blade prediction", Hagoosa, <i>'Ansra</i> , Harvest and Ploughing ceremonies. |
| Salé Rabat | 1994/1999 several visits | <i>Mawlid</i> and wax festival Zawiya " <i>Dar Dmana</i> " (Sufi order, that until 1960s was dispensing traditional learning) - Quranic school (boys) Embroidery/cooking school (girls) | Similar cuisine to Safi and Azemmour, due to old maritime Influence of Salé upon these two towns. R.Sp. - Cupola Pastilla, Aristocratic parties with sweetmeats And fruit juices but no meal. Fresh and cooked salads are Served with each meal. Sweet dishes in springtime. |
| Gharb Kenitra Benslimane | Spring 1996 | Honey and beeswax production | R.Sp. - <i>Tarfes</i> (truffles) from the local forest. Honey. Wax For the Salé lantern festival in the <i>Mawlid</i> . |

Record of visits

| Location(s) | Season/Year visited | Sites visited and Events witnessed | Informants and details of Regional Specialities (R.Sp.) |
|-------------------|----------------------------|--|--|
| Fés | Winter 1996 Spring 1997 | <p><i>Sha'bana</i> party - <i>ʿIssawa</i> & <i>Gnawa</i> Private parties ('aristocratic') Preparation of <i>khif</i> Flower distillation Olive pressing & pickling</p> | <p>Mainly refined cuisine. For <i>kesksu</i> and <i>tajins</i> Fés is second to Marrakesh. Interviews about Soltan Tolba R.Sp. - Private parties, including aristocratic parties with sweetmeats/juices, - no meals. Special sweetmeats: <i>filaiya</i>, <i>kenafa</i>, <i>meheisha</i>, <i>qataif</i>. Minces camel meat. <i>Khif</i> preparation, flower distillation, olive pressing, olive pickling. <i>Bawarid</i>: fresh and cooked salads.</p> |
| Meknés | Summer 1998 | <i>ʿIssawa</i> festival | Interviews about <i>ʿIssawa</i> , <i>Sha'bana</i> and <i>Mawsem</i> in the past. |
| Tangier Tetuan | Spring 1997 summer 1997 | Harāqiya Zawīya (Urban teaching of Islamic studies until the late protectorate: Quran, poetry, astrology and music) | <p>Mixture of Mediterranean and Moroccan cuisine. Tetuan is More traditional with a varied repertoire of Andalusí dishes. Pulses: chickpeas and broad beans are daily dishes. R.Sp. - Tangier and Tetuan, fresh cheese in springtime. Tetuan: sweetmeats - <i>qtaif</i>, <i>kenafa</i>, doughnuts with cheese.</p> |

I-Geography

General topography

Morocco is bounded on four sides by well-defined geographical features:

- The Atlantic to the West, with a coastline of some 3000km.
- The mountain ranges of the Rif (2440m) and the Atlas (4165m). The former is situated in the North of the country, whilst the latter lies generally to the East but is orientated from Northeast to Southwest. Along this axis the Atlas range is further sub-divided into the Middle Atlas in the North, the High Atlas in the Centre and the Anti-Atlas in the South.
- The Sahara desert to the South and Southeast.
- The Mediterranean Sea to the Northeast.

Within the above boundaries lie three distinct environmental areas:

- The well-watered plains.
- The mountain hinterland.
- The pre-Saharan and Saharan zones.

River Systems

The country is endowed with several perennial watercourses whose annual flow in millions of cubic metres ranges from 6,600 for the Sebou to 90 for the Dra^ca. All these rivers rise in the two mountain ranges already mentioned. They can be sub-divided into three categories:

- Those flowing towards the Atlantic Ocean: Loukkos, Sebou, Bugregreg, Um Rabi , Tensift, Souss, Dra^ca and Saquiat al Hamra.
- Those flowing towards the Mediterranean Sea: Martil, Lao, Ghri, Nakour, Kert and Moulaya.

- Those terminating in the Sahara: Dades, Dawra and Sawra.

Rainfall

Whilst the mountain ranges to the East provide protection to the country's forests from the hot Saharan winds, the peculiar aspect of the Morocco's geographical location makes it vulnerable to the Southern margin of Northern mid-latitudinal cyclonic storms.³ This means that the country suffers, from time to time, from strong irregularities in the amount and timing of precipitation, a feature that is highly detrimental to a country, whose precarious economy is basically dependent upon agriculture⁴. Nevertheless, when rainfall is normal the plains yield a sufficient harvest of cereals, (hard wheat, soft wheat, barley and maize), to cover a significant proportion of basic staple foods. Under normal conditions the summers are dry. The rainfall varies from region to region, occurring mainly between October and May. Rainfall levels tend to decrease from north to south and from East to West. The following are examples of rainfall levels:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| • Tangier, Al Hoceima, Rif mountains | 200mm to 2,000mm |
| • Moulouya , Oujda | 200mm |
| • Gharb | 500mm to 700mm |
| • Abda, Doukkala | 300mm to 500mm |
| • Saïs (Méknes/Fés) | 500mm to 700mm |
| • Oued Zem, Kenifra | 500mm to 900mm |
| • Souss | 200mm |
| • Dra ^e a | 25mm |

The Plains

Most of the arable land is located in the following plains: Gharb, Fés-Saïs, Tadla, Doukkala-Haha, Marrakesh-Haouz, Tamesna (Chaouia) and Souss-Massa.

³ W. D. Swearingen in *In Search of the Granary of Rome: Irrigation and Agricultural Development in Morocco -1912-1982.* -p. 8.

⁴ The proportion of the Moroccan population living in rural areas was 90% in the 1920s and 56% in the 1980s.

Land Exploitation

Cereal production, cattle and horse breeding are centred upon the Doukkala, Chaouia and the Tadla. The Gharb and the Saïs yield olives, citrus fruit and wheat. The more arid Souss produces olives, barley and argan trees, whilst Tafilalet has dates. In the North Taza and Ouazzan have fruit orchards and the mountainous Rif produces barley, maize and broad beans.

General Statistical Data

Total area: 710,850 sq.km.

Population 29 Million (1998 est.)

Age structure

- 0-14 years 36%
- 15-64 years 59%
- 65 years and over 5%

Level of illiteracy⁵

- 1970 78.5%
- 1988 69%

⁵ L'Etat du Monde 1989-1990. Annuaire économique et géographique mondial- Editions Découvert Paris 1989, p.216

Agriculture

Livestock (1977)⁶

| | |
|--------|--------------|
| Cattle | 3.5 millions |
| Sheep | 14 millions |
| Goats | 5 millions |
| Camels | 1 million |

Meat production

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Red meat (1982) ⁷ | 234,000 T/year |
| Poultry (1983) ⁸ | 120,000 T/year (of which 30% was traditional. i.e. "free-range") |

Milk production (1980)⁹

780 million litres/year

Sugar (1984 est)¹⁰

600,000 T/year

⁶ Taj Kacem Choix Technologiques et Système Alimentation. Le cas du Maroc- Editions Harmattan. Paris 1987. p. 26.

⁷ ibid p.26.

⁸ ibid p.27.

⁹ ibid p.27.

¹⁰ ibid p.28.

II – Meat, Cereals and Vegetables

Meat

By far the most widespread element of Moroccan livestock is the sheep, which outnumbers the sum of all other domestic animals by two to one. There are several breeds available in the country and skilled breeders ensure that a high quality breeding stock is maintained. Saharan area varieties are the most prolific and normally lamb twice a year. On occasions when the ewes lamb only once in the year, they invariably give birth to two lambs. The lambs are usually quickly slaughtered for food because of the lack of grass. Their meat has a distinct taste, due to having been fed dates. Better quality and quantity of meat is found in the Tadla/Chaouia sheep-rearing country. In this area the best quality meat is raised in the grazing plains of the Tadla, where the long-legged sheep of Beni Meskin is considered to be one of the best breeds. The latter fetch a very high price when fattened in the traditional manner on barley and alfafa. Finally the merino sheep of the Oujda region, though less prized for their meat, produce excellent wool that has caused this breed to be introduced into many parts of the world.

Meat in the life of the Moroccans reflects the environment in which they live and their relationship to it. Thus, in the well-watered plains meat is a necessity at each meal, or at least once a day. In the semi-arid areas meat is eaten a minimum of once a week, effectively from *sooq* (market-day) to *sooq*. Even in an arid environment with only sparse vegetation, where animal protein is less available, the *taswiqa* (shopping from the local market should always contain meat, either goat or camel.

In general the Moroccan prefers to eat his meals in the comfort of the home in preference to a restaurant. Hence contacts between friends and relatives are always around a meal, where the visiting group is fed by the receiving group. Occasionally the visiting group may inform their relatives in advance that they are bringing food for everybody with them, either in cooked or uncooked form. In the latter case the food is cooked by the womenfolk of both groups, thereby giving them an opportunity to be together, whilst the men folk can assemble elsewhere and wait for the meal to be

prepared. The principal item on the visitors' shopping list would always be meat in generous quantities, so that the paying host could not be accused of meanness. The sharing of food is very important in establishing a relationship. Once a group of friends, neighbours or colleagues has shared a meal (*mesharkīn ṭaʿam*), it means that the bond between them is sealed and trust has been established.¹¹

All occasions, whether sad or joyful, are marked by meals with meat. The consumption of both red and white meat is linked to the concept of power and importance, where the animals are used as metaphorical operators. Thus chicken is used by the poor or for events of little importance. Lamb is clearly more important than chicken and when it is slaughtered it denotes either the importance of a guest or the solemnity of the occasion: a birth, a circumcision, an engagement, a marriage,¹² a pilgrimage or a death. The importance of meat meals in relation to key events is underlined by the existence of individual names for meals linked to specific occasions. The following is a list of the more common names of such meals:

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| <i>Al qira</i> | invited guest |
| <i>Al māʿduba</i> | dinner party |
| <i>Al walīma</i> | banquet |
| <i>Al khorsā</i> | birth party |
| <i>Al ʿāqīqa</i> | first hair cut party |
| <i>Al ʿadira</i> | circumcision party |
| <i>Al wadīma</i> | funeral meal |
| <i>Al nāqīʿa</i> | welcome home meal (travels) |
| <i>Al wakīra</i> | Meal for building a house/ Putting on a roof |
| <i>Khārja/dākhla</i> | Meal for going and coming back from pilgrimage |

¹¹ Westermarck, Edward Ritual and Belief in Morocco in two volumes- MacMillan and Co Ltd - London 1926. p. 259.

¹² It was only with the advent of the nation-state and the need for passports for travel that certain couples, after forty years of marriage, found that they had no valid marriage document. Their weddings had been celebrated by a meal (*lahlal*) with people reading the *Fatiha*, this being considered enough to seal the marriage bond. The amusing side of the situation is that the eventual and necessary marriage contract was often witnessed by their grandchildren.

On all the above occasions, the bigger the animal the more important the event. In each and every case the animal is viewed in terms of its strength over and above its protein nutrient value. The symbol of animal power is thus very significant to both the presenter and the receiver. This is particularly true for marriage ceremonies, where the woman's social position must be carefully respected. In order to make the wedding lawful the groom has to include amongst his presents for the bride a live animal, which symbolizes her social position, *Dbāh ʿalihā* ("he slaughtered in her name" or "he brought her").¹³ This reflects the social attitudes towards meat and its symbolization. Thus if people are asked about a meal they had at a ceremony, they might reply "*ghir djāj*" (just chicken), meaning that the host was too poor or too mean to prepare a meal with meat. Again, if meat is bought by weight from the market instead of being from a home-slaughtered animal, the answer would be "*ghir shraw lahām*" (they just bought meat).

In a feud,¹⁴ if the problem is severe, the offending party should ask for forgiveness if the wronged party is dissatisfied with previous attempts at settlement or if the wrong done appears irreparable. In such a case the wrongdoer should slaughter a sheep (*ʿār*) in front of the doorstep of the house of the offended person. This is an extreme form of surrender and humiliation and the shame would be upon the wronged person if he/she does not forgive the wrong done. The act of *ʿār* implies an intricate function of the ritualistic significance of meat. The wronged party, by refusing forgiveness requested in the form of sacrificed animal, becomes an "offender" in the eyes of society.

Lamb seems to have a high status in the symbolic ranking of meat and it is noteworthy that camel and goat's meat are never seen between Rabat and Agadir. However in the North, including Fés, camel is much appreciated as minced meat for

¹³ A calf, cow or bull, according to her and his means and social importance.

¹⁴ This could be an injustice done, a trade dispute, a murder/manslaughter case or, after a divorce, asking a wife to come back. See D. Eickelman op. cit. pp. 62, 141- 149.

winter consumption. In the Sahara area, camel and goat's meat appear to be the Sahrawi's main source of protein. Beef seems to be of lesser importance than lamb in the diet of the Moroccan. However in Marrakesh¹⁵ veal is much valued for long-simmering *tajīns*.¹⁶ Beef tends to be used in ceremonial meals as a secondary dish after lamb and before chicken.

In days when dairy produce was less easily available than at present, families would keep a milch cow the whole year round, yielding milk for about eighteen months. Each family would make its own butter and buttermilk. After this productive period, if the cow were not sold, the butcher would be called to slaughter it. Unlike Western countries, domestic slaughtering is permitted in Morocco and no authorisation is required. The slaughtering process is sanctioned by Islamic law and both the family and the butcher ensure that the animal is not impaired by any disease and is fit for consumption. The ethic of the butcher is very important in relation both to the family and the animal he is to kill. His activities are performed from dawn to dusk but never at night.¹⁷ The attitude of the butcher in relation to the animal at the time of slaughter is intriguing. He praises the animal for its health and looks; he calls it *waldi* or *benti* (my son or my daughter) and makes sure that no other animals are present at the time of slaughter. For instance, if he has more than one sheep to kill and there is insufficient room to keep it away from the second animal, he blindfolds the latter and asks it for forgiveness. He makes doubly sure that his knife is well sharpened so that death occurs quickly. People believe that this delicate point is very important for the reputation of the butcher, whose skills and efficacy are deemed to determine the taste of the meat.

Submission to certain observances is fundamental as this is considered to affect the food itself. For instance, women are rarely present at slaughtering¹⁸ and never if they are menstruating. In large households women should avoid cooking during their period as the taste of the food and also their own judgement are deemed to be

¹⁵ The Haouz of Marrakesh being semi-arid, the pasture land has only a short grazing season. The herds are maintained, but the calves are slaughtered.

¹⁶ *Tajīns* are described in Chapter IV.

¹⁷ For rituals such as *Sha'abana* (see chapter V) the hosts have their own private butcher, who for the purposes of the ritual, will slaughter at night.

¹⁸ Women are denied entry to public slaughterhouses.

impaired at this time. Although the domain of cooking implies a world of integrated collaboration between the sexes involving the preparation and processing of foodstuffs, each gender has its specific domain. As an example, women are forbidden to slaughter any animal; the entire labour including the skinning and cutting of the meat is incumbent upon men only. Male potency is reserved for heavy-duty work such as grilling and roasting large quantities of meat, preparing and cooking *khli*,¹⁹ baking large batches of bread and frying doughnuts on a commercial scale. Operating public oil presses and flourmills are definitely men's work. It is clear that the pattern of activities in terms of the division of labour decrees that the men's role is in the field producing the best grain, the best varieties of market produce and the best breeds of animal. Women for their part are cast in the role of converting the above raw materials in the kitchen into the most skilfully produced and savoury food.

Cereals

To judge by the care taken in their utilisation, cereals represent an ingredient of prime importance in the life of Moroccans. Wheat is treated with great reverence to the extent that a passer by, on seeing a piece of bread lying in his path, would kiss it and keep it to give to a bird. For bread should never be wasted or thrown with the rubbish; to do so is effectively a sin.

Even in almsgiving the value of cereals is recognised, since the Moroccans are the only Muslim nation to distribute charity in the form of grain. Hence it is plainly evident that cereals are the dominant element of their diet. This is also borne out by the multiplicity of their forms of bread, with each region rivalling its neighbour, with their efforts centred upon the quality of the wheat, which is assured by the men folk and the skill of its transformation, which is incumbent upon the womenfolk.

My fieldwork showed me that even today each recipe remains intrinsically linked to a particular area and it is evident that this element of the national culture has escaped the distorting processes of industrial production methods. Hence one need not hesitate

¹⁹ Covered in Chapter III.

to talk in terms of authentic and traditional methods of preparation, a situation, which can only have developed over many generations of a stable agricultural and social environment. The resultant diversity of cereal products is amply witnessed by the sets of tables in the pages that follow.

CEREALS Table N°1

Dough based products -
A

| Name(s) | Ingredients | Blending | Consistency | Shape | Thickness or size | Cooking utensil/method | Cooking time | Consumption |
|--------------------------------------|---|------------------|--------------------|--|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Rgha'if</i> | white flour water, salt | hand kneading | elastic dough | small ball, dipped in oil, flattened and folded into an envelope | 1cm | deep pan fried in oil | immediate cooked on each side | with butter & honey instant breakfast afternoon tea <i>Şuħār</i> in Ramadan |
| | pan or public oven | | | | | | immediate turned over | |
| <i>Msemen</i> | white flour, water, salt | hand kneading | Elastic dough | Small ball, dipped in oil, Flattened and folded into a square envelope | 1cm | pan lightly fried | immediate turned over | With butter & honey Instant breakfast Afternoon tea <i>Şuħār</i> in Ramadan |
| <i>Khobz Samida</i> | semolina + flour, yeast, spices | hand kneading | firm dough | round loaf | rises to 10cm | outside oven | 30min | Breakfast also with tajjms |
| <i>Sferij</i> (<i>Sifferij</i>) | wholemeal flour, yeast, salt and water | hand kneading | semi-firm Dough | left to rest overnight in a container | 4cm | ring shaped by hand ** | fried in hot oil | breakfast |
| <i>Feqqas</i> <i>Bejmat</i> | flour, yeast, salt water, fennel seed almond/raisins gum,sugar, butter | hand kneading | firm dough | long strips | 4cm x 20cm | oven | 1st cooking sliced 2nd cooking | afternoon tea,parties travellers fare |

** Unlike other types of doughnuts the shape here is achieved by picking up the lump of dough and perforating the centre with a finger just before frying.

CEREALS Table No2

Dough based products - B

| Name(s) | Ingredients | Blending | Consistency | Shape | Size | Cooking utensil/method | Cooking time | Consumption |
|--|---|------------------|---|---|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|--|
| <i>Ka'ak</i> | flour, yeast salt, water sugar | hand kneading | firm dough | large ring decorated on the outside | 3cm x 15cm | oven | 30min | breakfast afternoon tea childrens' parties |
| <i>Qrāshel</i> or <i>Qors</i> | flour, yeast, salt, water, eggs sugar, spices seame seeds raisins(optional) | hand kneading | firm dough | buns | 4cm x 15cm | oven | 30min | breakfast afternoon tea travellers fare |
| <i>Khobz</i> <i>Lenzawaq</i> | flour, yeast, salt, water sesame seeds | hand kneading | firm dough | large loaves | 4cm x 25cm | oven | 40min | bread for parties and special occasions |
| <i>Beghrir</i> | wheat flour, fine semolina, water, salt, yeast | hand mixing | Liquid left 4 hours to rest | ladle-full poured on hot pan | 1cm x 30cm | pan | 2min | special breakfast Afternoon tea |
| <i>Reqaq</i> or <i>Fatayer</i> | flour, water, salt | hand kneading | firm dough | galette | 1cm x 20cm | pan | 5min | served with grilled meat Afternoon tea |
| <i>Khobz</i> Urban & Rural | wholemeal flour, salt, yeast, water (fennel, sesame -optional) | hand kneading | firm dough | round loaves | 10cm x 20cm | public oven | 25min | all meals that Include a sauce |
| <i>Batbut</i> <i>Bāshiyār</i> <i>Mekhtamin</i> <i>Merwi</i> | wholemeal flour, water, salt yeast | hand kneading | soft dough left 1-4 hours Before Cooking | round gallettes | 1-2cm | pan | cooked on each side | with butter & honey Instant breakfast Afternoon tea <i>Ṣubūr</i> in Ramadan |

CEREALS Table N°3

Dough based products - C

| Name(s) | Ingredients | Blending | Consistency | Shape | Thickness | Cooking utensil/method | Cooking time | Consumption |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|--|----------------------|--|--|--|
| <i>Wārka</i> | white flour water,salt | hand mixing | very soft dough | daubed on the back of a hot pan and peeled off as leaves | paper-like sheets | exterior of concave pan | 1min | for wrapping pies, samosas and rolls |
| <i>Trid</i> | white flour water,salt | hand mixing | firm but Elastic dough | small ball immersed in oil and left until needed for cooking | sheets 2-3mm | exterior of concave terracotta vessel sprinkled with oil | immediate sheet detaches when cooked | special meal shredded with chicken & sauce |
| <i>Rafisa Arbāz</i> | white flour water, oil | hand mixing | firm but Elastic dough | flat square envelopes | 5mm | pan, both sides | 5min | shredded with chicken & sauce |

s

CEREALS Table N°4

Grilled and pounded products

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---------|---|---------------------|--------|--|
| <i>Sefjif Sello</i> | flour,sesame, almond, sugar (honey), butter, spices | - | - | pounded | - | oven/pan grilled | 1 hour | afternoon tea, special occasions Ramadan/Birth travellers fare, (stored in jars) |
| <i>Zameja Tqawet</i> | chickpeas & seeds (linseed/caraway) | - | - | pounded | - | grilled | ½ hour | snacks in the countryside travellers fare |

CEREALS Table N°5

Semolina based products

| Name(s) | Ingredients | Blending | Consistency | Shape | Thickness | Cooking utensil/method | Cooking time | Consumption |
|-----------------------------|---|---|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------------------|--------------|--|
| <i>Kesksu</i> (Couscous) | Coarse semolina, White flour, salt, water | semolina, hand rolled in fine flour | Dry | small lumps | - | Steamer | 45 min | Served with vegetables/meat whose stock is poured over it |
| <i>Samid</i> | | | | larger lumps | - | boiled in Milk | 30 min | served for breakfast |
| <i>Berkakesh</i> | | | | - | - | boiled in Milk | 30 min | served for breakfast |
| <i>Herbel</i> | wheat grain semolina, water, butter, salt | soaked overnight | - | - | - | - | - | served for breakfast |
| <i>Hersha</i> | | hand kneaded | firm dough | round 20cm diameter galette | 2cm | Pan | 10min | afternoon tea or to accompany grilled meat |
| <i>Belbala</i> | Barley, salt water & milk olive oil | - | grains | - | - | Steamer | 45min | served with vegetables/meat stock |
| <i>Dashsha</i> | | - | liquid | soup | - | pot on stove | - | breakfast and dinner in arid and semi-arid areas |
| <i>Badz</i> | coarse maize semolina | - | - | - | - | Steamed | 40min | with vegetables and meat sauce |

CEREALS Table N°6

Pasta-like products

| Name(s) | Ingredients | Blending | Consistency | Shape | Thickness | Cooking utensil/method | Cooking time | Consumption |
|---|--|-------------|-------------------------|--|--|-------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| <i>qata'if</i> | White flour, water & salt | hand mixing | Liquid | poured from a funnel with small holes over a hot pan and recovered as strands | similar to "angels hair" pasta | pan | 1min then fried after filling | used for making cakes filled with either cream or nuts and honey |
| <i>Mekeffa</i> | | | | spaghetti | thin & long | | - | |
| <i>Fidawsh</i> or <i>Tarashita</i> or <i>Atriya</i> | fine semolina, salt and water | hand mixing | firm dough | small threads 1cm long | - | | - | dried in the sun and kept for use in daily Dishes |
| <i>Shaf' riya</i> | | | | shape of barley grains ½cm long | - | | - | |
| <i>Drihmat</i> | fine semolina, salt and water meat(optional) | hand mixing | firm dough | small squares 2cm x 2cm | ½cm | | - | dried in the sun and kept for use in daily dishes |
| <i>Rezza</i> | white flour, semolina, water, salt, butter | hand mixing | firm dough | thread, obtained from cylinder shape via four "stretch and rest" operations (with oil) | like a ball of wool, then flattened to 2cm | pan, cooked both sides | steamed for 15 mins and shredded | same day on special occasions with chicken and sauce or with honey & butter for afternoon tea |
| <i>Fertāna</i> | fine semolina or white flour, water, salt, yeast | hand mixing | From firm to liquidised | shredded dough | 3cm | cooked in chicken stock | - | special occasions birth or bereavement |
| <i>Fiāi</i> <i>Shetba</i> | flour, water and salt | hand mixing | firm dough | small strips of dough | ½cm x 2cm | - | boiled | water & spices winter soup |

Warqa

This pastry is the base of several dishes, it is made with flour and water, but the skill of making it rests in the technique of removing the wafer from the girdle on which it is cooked. In Morocco the specialists in preparing this type of pastry are mainly women and their training begins at an early age. They must learn how to mix and handle the special kind of dough, which is of a consistence lying between liquid and solid. Measures of this dough are placed on a heated cylinder of earthenware or metal, to be removed almost immediately in the form of a sheet or leaf. This is a task requiring great dexterity and the technique is jealously guarded by the initiated. Several thin layers are required to make a dish called *bastella*. Other preparations require it also, such as the sweets called *mehenshā*, *briwāt* and *qanānit*, which are filled with sweet almond paste. The last two items may also be filled with minced meat and used as savouries.

Bastella/Pastilla

A true *bastella* is always prepared with pigeons. Once the *warqa* sheets have been made, they are used to wrap a mixture of hard-boiled eggs crushed with spices, honey-sweetened grilled almonds and pieces of whole cooked pigeon. The whole dish is assembled in wrapped layers in a circular shape, and then lightly cooked in an oven, until it has begun to brown. Finally it is sprinkled with icing sugar, over which lines or star-shaped designs are traced with ground cinnamon.

Notwithstanding the fact that this dish is invariably served at the beginning of important ceremonies, it is very highly prized and it is a great honour to be served it as a guest. It is one of the dishes that the mother sends to the bride in her new house the morning after the wedding night. Only the mother should prepare it on this occasion and there is great secrecy about the recipe she uses. There are other types of *bastella*; in coastal towns it is made with fish and thus not sweetened. The Slawi (from

Salé) *bastella* is called *bastella bil qebab* whereby a special recipient is made to contain seven cupolas and each of them is filled with different ingredients. *Bastella* can also be served as a dessert, using cream, honey, almonds and orange blossom water.

Public ovens

There are public ovens in all towns. These are very important in the life of the community, each area has its own public oven: *farān al homa*. All types of bread and cakes are cooked in it, as well as meat or fish dishes. For the latter, the *ferrān* i.e. the oven attendant is told which type of heat is required for the dish:

- Hot: next to the furnace,
- Medium: the centre of the oven,
- Slow cooking: the dish stays in the ashes overnight.

People pay a certain amount of money for this service on a daily or monthly basis, including a small portion of whatever cakes that may be made. One can have the luxury of hiring a *tarāh*, a person who collects bread from the house on *wasla* (wooden platters), whose size depends upon the number of loaves to be cooked. He also delivers the cooked bread back to the house from whence it came.

Yeast

Within Moroccan households yeast is made from barley and bran. Many housewives treasure their yeast to the extent of “adopting” it like a pet, which they must keep alive throughout the year, checking its temperature and size each day to ensure that it remains in optimum conditions. There are several beliefs and taboos about yeast.²⁰ The person should always be clean *ṭahera* before making it or even touching it. For

²⁰ A newborn baby is put in a *gas'a* (dough mixing recipient) so that he grows like yeast. (i) E. Laoust *Eléments d'Ethnographie Marocaine*- Librairie coloniale et orientale Larose. Paris 1932. p.88. (ii) H.

instance a wise housewife should never lend her yeast, except in the most extreme circumstances and then never after sunset. If yeast is lent, the loan should be repaid by the borrower in the form of dough. Yeast is considered to be a symbol of prosperity and joy, so that wherever families are renowned for their *baraka*, people make a point of borrowing or “adopting” yeast from them.

However it is in the countryside that the reverence for yeast assumes almost cult-like proportions. The people make it in *Ḥagoosa* (Agrarian New Year) and maintain it alive until harvest time. Since yeast can easily die in cold weather, this is a challenge for the housewife and only the more efficient and skilful ones succeed, being referred to as *ḥādqa*, “her yeast never dies”. Because of its associations with joy, yeast is never used in times of bereavement. The family in mourning does not make yeast for several days and they allow whatever yeast they have in the house to die. They eat only an unleavened bread called *fatyr* or *fatāyer*, (opposite of *mākhmar*).

Vegetables

Whilst no celebration in Morocco is valid without meat and no meal is complete without bread, the place of vegetables is definitely secondary. Thus no festive food includes fresh vegetables, as it would be lack of respect for the guests to present such a dish. Hence all *ṭajīns*²¹ are prepared with dried fruit, prunes, raisins and nuts.²² At meals for the family and close relatives, vegetables are present every day. The inhabitants of all the ancient imperial cities excel in garnishing their daily tables with fresh and cooked salads. Fés seems to be the leader in this field and its inhabitants are accused by those of the grazing plains of concentrating too much on vegetables and neglecting meat. For its part Marrakesh appears to achieve the required equilibrium between the two. As for the people from rural areas, they describe urban dwellers

Basset, *Culte des Grottes au Maroc*- Jules Carbonel Alger 1920. Yeast is not borrowed from the house in which there had been a recent bereavement. p. 247.

²¹ Described in chapter III.

²² The only permitted exceptions are lemons (pickled) and honeyed onions.

disparagingly as “salad-eaters”, giving this as the reason for their alleged poor health.²³

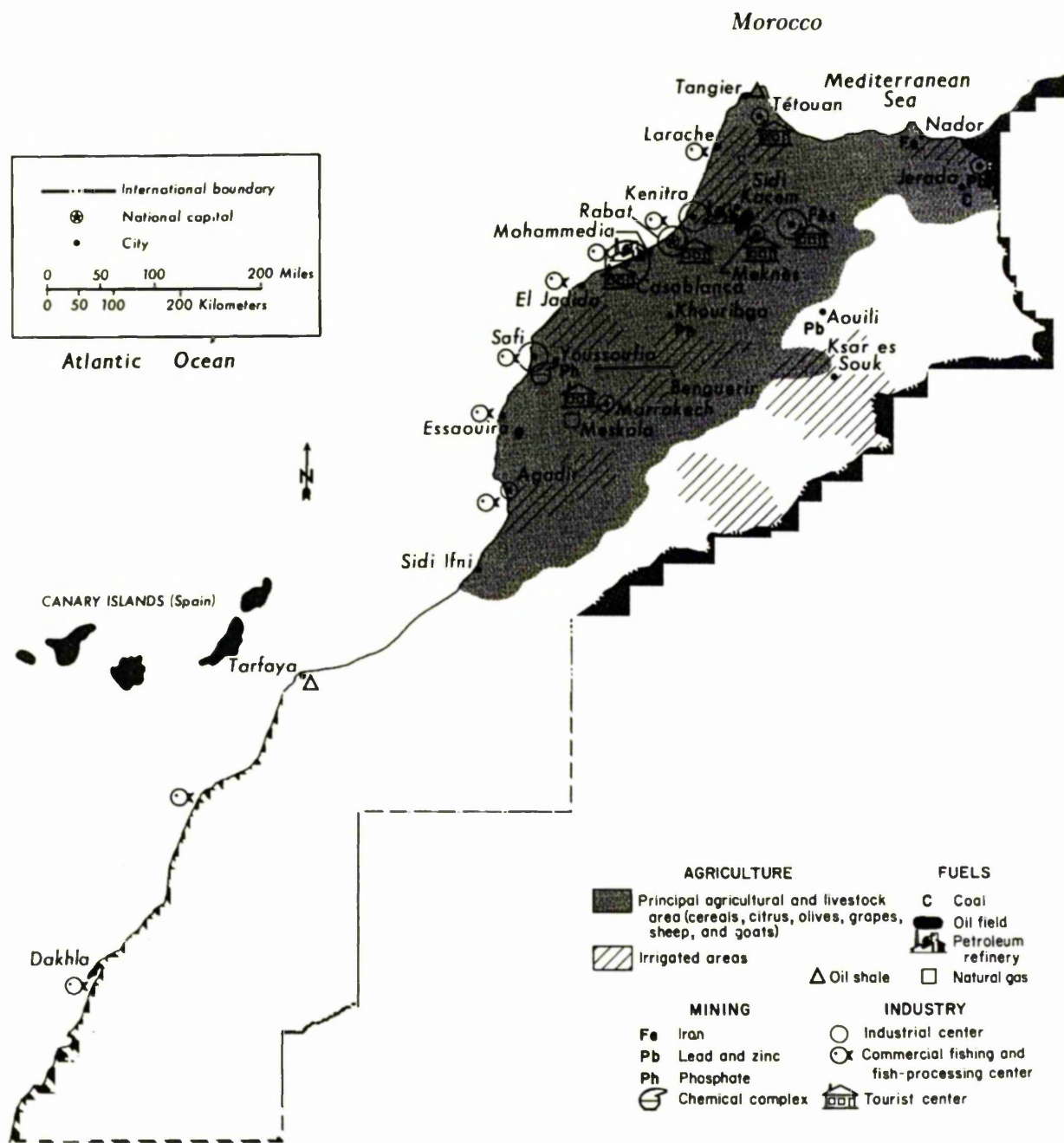
Vegetables are nevertheless an important element of the Moroccan diet, a fact that is borne out by the wide fluctuations in the price of tomatoes, which reach extreme levels in Ramadan, due to heavy demand. To a lesser extent, onions become particularly expensive in the summer, as this is the time of weddings and circumcisions.²⁴ Also in demand during the summer are seasonal vegetables such as cucumber and aubergines, as people tend to eat more fresh and cooked salads than in winter. Households with higher incomes can afford such summer delicacies as avocado, artichokes (cardoons), whilst in both summer and winter they might add beetroot and spinach to their diet. The less fortunate can only afford whatever is least in demand. Pulses are thus regarded as food for the poor and are seldom used by more fortunate housewives, except to balance or to decorate a dish. Broad beans tend to be consumed mainly in the north of Morocco, commencing with Fés. They are regarded as staple food for all seasons. In the springtime they are served every day in poor families as the main dish, whilst the better off use them as a side dish. In winter they are used to make morning soup, which is also sold as street food.

As to the production of vegetables it is necessary to differentiate between crops for home consumption and crops for export. It would appear that the only information on record covers the latter. Commercial export-driven production seems to be concentrated in areas around Casablanca, Agadir, Fés and Berkane, all of which have ready access to airports. Production for the home market tends to be concentrated around urban areas to meet the needs of local markets. Although such areas are self-sufficient, there is no real incentive for specialization as large-scale production is too risky because of high transport costs, the generally poor infrastructure²⁵ and the perishable nature of the produce. Hence virtually every vegetable sold in local markets has been grown in the immediate area.

²³ C. Lecoq, *Le Rite et l'Outil*- Librairie Felix Alcan Paris 1939. pp. 162-163.

²⁴ See chapter IV.

²⁵ Since Independence in 1955, despite a three fold rise in population, the transport infrastructure is effectively the same as in colonial days, with the solitary exception of 90 km of dual carriage between Casablanca and Rabat.



Economic Activity, 1985

from Morocco: A country study
The American University 1985

III- Cooking Utensils and Ingredients

Utensils

Amongst the means of providing heat for cooking purposes, the most popular is the brazier or *mejmar*. The *mejmar* is a bucket-shaped thick earthenware pot with three flanges at the top protruding inwards that serve as a support for a cooking vessel. Heat is produced by burning charcoal in the *mejmar*, which has up to four holes pierced in its wall, serving both as normal ventilation and as access for a pair of bellows.

Mejmar can vary in size from about 25cm in diameter to much larger dinner party models called *frenna*. It is a highly convenient device and can be moved to any part of a house or compound. Thus in cold weather, it can be a welcome source of heat indoors, whereas in hot weather, it can be placed outdoors, hence avoiding any inconvenience to those sheltering indoors from the heat of the day. The portability of the *mejmar* is an asset to domestic cleanliness, since it could be taken out of doors for the emptying of ashes. The latter also have their value for, when mixed with lemon skins, they are used for polishing brass utensils and cooking pots. *Mejmars* are made from whatever materials are dictated by the purse of the owner, the more sophisticated and permanent types being copper or brass. They are constructed on the fire and grate principle and consist of two chambers, separated by a perforated platform, upon which the fire is made. The ash from the fire falls into the chamber, which has a small trap, used both for extracting the ash from the fire and for controlling or damping the draught of the fire. Ventilation or draught is also achieved by blowholes in the upper chamber, which can also serve as access for the nose of a bellows.

The traditional modes of cooking are quite varied in Morocco. The following, to name just a few, show what can be achieved by a combination of ingenuity and economic prosperity:

- Radiant heat in a closed chamber *inoor* (*ta inoort Berber*), the domed oven, for baking.
- Direct exposure to flame *meshwī, shwā* grilled meat.
- Indirect heat in hot ashes, *tanjiya*.
- Gratin *muḥmmer* or *mujammer* with a dish above containing charcoal.
- Frying *mqalī*, in oil or butter and sautéed.
- Steamed *mubakhar*.

The *Tajīn*

The standard form of cooking vessel has always been of low open bowl or dish type, made of fired clay i.e. earthenware. The vessel can be enhanced by having a rim and by the addition of a conical cover or by being glazed. Its size may vary from a dish suitable for one person to sizes catering for any number up to twelve. Such vessels might be placed on the prongs of a *mejmar* or over an open fire and used for frying, simmering or stewing. They may also be used in an oven for casserole or baked dishes.

Spices

In Moroccan cuisine spices have a special importance. Since girls are trained at an early age in their use and application, it is very difficult to give a recipe to somebody alien to this cuisine. People work on the principle of “*‘ainīk mīzanīk*” (literally: your eye is your gauge!). Thus it is only by training that the required taste can be acquired.

Spices, aromatic flavourings made from flowers, stems, barks, berries, leaves, roots and entire plants, are usually applied to enhance the flavour of meats. Some of them are naturalised in Morocco; some are still imported from their country of origin (China, India, Java etc.). Herbs are grown for their fragrant leaves, mainly in the hills of the Atlas Mountains. In the case of saffron, the most expensive spice in the world, the variety grown in the Sahara has a particularly strong flavour. The cultivation of the saffron²⁶ plant, *crocus sativus*, is concentrated in the area of Warzazate and Taliwin, where a yearly festival of saffron collection takes place. Saffron production requires a great deal of endeavour and considerable labour. To produce one pound of saffron in weight, 400.000 crocus stigmas must be hand-collected, as no machine can perform this task. Large quantities of saffron “threads” are carefully picked from flowers one by one²⁷. This work, which requires great dexterity, lasts from sunrise to sunset, as no dew should be left on the stigmas. The collection is done mainly by groups of women, who can be seen singing their Berber songs in the mauve-coloured fields. These gatherings still retain their traditional style and take on a festive character. The season is in autumn and lasts for 20 to 60 days. The crocuses are collected in *zḡawā* and brought to where parties are waiting to separate the stamens and stigmas. The latter are collected and placed on special frames to dry. This process has remained for centuries and has passed from generation to generation. The product is used mainly in Morocco²⁸ but it is also sought after by international laboratories.

Rās al ḥanūt spices

The name *ḥanūt* meaning: the Spicer originates from an antique word, meaning embalmer. Each spicer has his own particular way of mixing spices and the expression *Rās al ḥanūt* meaning: the head of the spicer, refers to a special mixture,

²⁶ There are three types of saffron that grow in the wild in Morocco in specific mountainous areas: near Azrou, Ifrane and Oujda. According to M. Zahwili the birthplace of saffron is the Middle East from whence it spread towards Iran and India. If he is right, this would also explain the origin of its name, which in Arabic means “yellow”. M. Zahwili *asrar wa jawaher al ‘ushub* (Secrets of plants). Maktabat At Taisir Casablanca 1995. p. 172 In Morocco saffron is also used in inks for writing manuscripts, in medicines and for assisting in the preservation of fresh fruit. I have also been told that it may be used in the embalming of the dead.

²⁷ Five or six collections per season.

the secret recipe of which exists only in his head. In making up his mixture, the spicer draws from the range of spices in use in his own area and, whilst these local ranges are in themselves numerous, they nevertheless vary significantly from area to area. A really professional spicer makes his *Rās al ḥanūt* to order, the nature and varieties of the spices varying according to the quest of the individual, the size of his pocket, his horoscope and the season. The number of spices in such a mixture can vary from a minimum of seven to several hundred. Another name for the *Rās al ḥanūt* mixture is *lemsākhen*: the one that gives heat, but Mostapha A. Zahwili²⁹ traced the name as far back as Ibn Khayr al Ishbili³⁰, who explained that the word derives from the Berber *isafarn ārghanim*, which means “to thwart black magic”. At one time it used to include cantharidines³¹, because of its supposed aphrodisiac properties.

Distillation

Orange blossom

The Moroccans use several types of distilled flowers in their cooking, but the two major ones are orange blossom and rose water. Orange blossom is more delicate and is made throughout the country. It is in springtime that the orange trees start blossoming. The area where they are cultivated is fragrant with the perfume of their flowers. The flowers are collected in baskets and the petals are separated from the green leaves or any other matter. After their collection, housewives purchase them fresh from the market and organize their distillation at home either by borrowing or

²⁸ Saffron is best sold dry, some dishonest merchants add oil to increase the weight.

²⁹ M.A. Zahwili *Asrār wa jawāher al ʿushub*- (Secrets of plants). Maktabat at Taissir-Casablanca 1995. pp. 14-15.

³⁰ Ibn al Khayr Al Ishbili, 12th century Agronomer.

³¹ Also known as “Spanish fly”, *debana al hindiya*, (Mor. i.e. Indian fly). It has some effect upon stones in the kidneys and also eases the menstrual flow. However, there are undesirable side-effects in the form of swelling and bleeding of tissues. In North Africa a similar fly is found in ash trees, *aslen* (Berb.) and elm trees, both of which it eventually destroys. The red variety of cantharidine is toxic.

hiring an alembic *qetṭāra*³². The petals are carefully scattered on white sheets in order to be distilled the following day.³³ Bottles are fumigated with benzoine and sandalwood³⁴ before being used for storing the distilled essence. The bottles are then sealed and exposed to the sun from sunrise to sunset for 40 days without being opened³⁵. This preparation is used to enhance the taste of cakes and drinks and is often added to fruit *tajīns*. It is also used as an herbal remedy with milk or simply as drops for the eyes, ears and nose. In the case of rose-water distillation, the petals come from the Zagora and Qalaat Mgouna region. The rose-trees grow at an altitude of between 1200 and 1500m, are very resistant (−15° to +50°) and give several flowers. The collection of roses occurs slightly earlier than that of the orange blossoms, around the end of February; the rose petals are picked between dawn and 9 a.m. when the light and temperature are still low and more favourable to the essence in the petals. The harvesting is done manually by women and the season lasts about four weeks whilst the roses are still in bud. The rose festival takes place after the collection of the roses by the farmers, who bring their products to the rose wholesalers' markets. At this stage the merchants decide to buy rose petals for cosmetics³⁶, or for food (i.e. jams). The buds are small and strongly fragrant (*rosa damascena*). Once the roses have been distilled the rose water is sold throughout the country. However the bulk of the production is domestic, destined for private use which is more common. Rose water is present in all households; it is used for sprinkling the guests to welcome them in and also when they are leaving the house as a mark of honour. Rose water is seldom used in food because of its cold nature; it is suitable for sweet confection but not for dishes. The white rose is not cultivated because of its indifferent perfume and poor quality. Rose buds are used in *Kesksu* in the South of Morocco perfumed with rose petals and cloves.

³² At times they are privately owned and are booked in advance by each household. They differ in sizes depending on the required quantity.

³³ Bottles of orange blossom water are offered between relatives.

³⁴ Benzoine *jawi* and sandalwood are known for their sterilisation properties and are also used in cosmetics as they are substances that have aroma-fixative properties. See Dr. M. Stuart *Encyclopedia of Herbs and Herbalism*. Published by Edgerton International Ltd U.K. 1994. pp.95

³⁵ There is a great deal of superstition surrounding the viewing and the opening of these bottles before the magical 40 days. In real terms the essence needs about one month after distillation for settling down..

³⁶ In cosmetics the petals are used dried and ground for hair treatment or as a hair fragrance.

Distillation with an alembic is widely used. The simplest method, with water as a medium, is used for rose petals and orange blossoms. A more skilled technique is required for some leaves and seeds, in particular aniseed and fennel. Another extraction technique is maceration, used for making vinegar from apples, quinces, pomegranates and grapes. The material is placed in a receptacle with water for a week in a sunny position. The fruit breaks up gradually and mixes with the water. Once the maceration is achieved the liquid is sieved with a silk cloth and placed in bottles.

Other distillations are made for drinks such as aniseed, cinnamon or mints and herbs, especially those that are devoid of acidity. Mint³⁷ essence is mixed with sugar and served in hot weather with water. Before the advent of industrially prepared syrups, herbal remedies were commonly prescribed and were often effective. For instance carob and almond oil were extracted and mixed with other ingredients to cure abdominal ailments. Other essence extracts were used for flavouring sweets and nougats. In Morocco the traditional perfumers and sweet merchant's shops are always next the biggest mosque in town or next to the tomb of a saint, so that people may buy sweets (*halwa*) to take with them on visits to relatives. The sweets *Jabān koolīban* ("all the nuts can be seen") and *nwā* are made with types of nuts and seeds, and vary in colour from pink with rose water essence, to dark brown with grilled linseeds. For parties they are often formed in the shapes of fruits for distribution to the guests.

Conserves

End of summer, dried fruit and vegetables

In the South of Morocco, people dry vegetables for their *Kesksu* later on in the year. On the red-clay roofs in the Berber villages, fruit and vegetables such as carrots, turnips, aubergines, plums, peaches, carob, Barbary figs³⁸, figs, raisins and dates are

³⁷ Mint is distilled in two separate sessions: first getting the mint water *na^c na mahlool* where as an example 9 sacks of mint yield 1/10 of their volume in liquid. The second distillation produces *roh a na^c na*, which is the "spirit" essence of mint. The total working time is 600 hours.

³⁸ *Opuntia ficus indica* brought from America in the 15th century and successfully established in Morocco. It is called *karmos nasara* (Christian figs) but the French call them 'figues de Barbarie'

left to dry. All dried vegetables are soaked overnight and used in the morning, mainly for *Kesksu* or meat *tajīns*. In other areas of the Kingdom, when the fresh fruit season is over, people make jams, *maraba* or *ma^casal*. People in general make just a few of these jams, but it is the aristocracy of Imperial cities such as Fés, Meknés, Marrakesh, Rabat and Salé that is fond of these delicacies. Jams and preserves are made from orange zest, green tomatoes, prunes, carrots, raisins, figs, aubergines, orange blossoms, strawberries and apricots. The traditional taste is kept by making them with honey: pumpkin preserve, called *sha^car lem'look* (*angel's hair*), raisins, figs, quinces and prunes.

Olives and oils

Zaīt arqan or argan oil

The argan tree (*Argania Spinosa* L.) is unique to North Africa and Morocco in particular. The rainfall pattern and consequent soil erosion have always been a major problem in North Africa. The cedar still survives on the peaks of the Middle Atlas, as a living witness of a more humid past climatic era. The argan tree, which flourishes in the South West of Morocco, is the most unusual relic of this same era. Sunding³⁹ states that it must be considered a relic of the humid subtropical flora that covered Europe and North Africa until the Miocene and Pliocene periods, beginning about 25 million years ago. Today the argan tree is of manifold interest to the botanist, the ecologist, the forester and the local inhabitants because of its role as a stabiliser of soil and as a source of fuel and food for the goats. From a nutritional point of view 80 % of its fatty acids are the unsaturated acids oleic and linoleic. Compared with olive oil, argan oil has more unsaturated acids as a whole, being richer in linoleic, but poorer in oleic acid and so nutritionally more beneficial.⁴⁰

³⁹ P. Sunding, Origins of the Macronesian flora, In Bramwell, D. ed. Plants and Islands. Academic Press London 1979.

⁴⁰ The argan tree is in great danger its numbers have dropped : from 1,500,000 ha in 1925 to 600,000 ha today. Attempts to grow it elsewhere have not been successful. Information supplied by Hew Prendergast from The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew- in 'The Argan': multipurpose tree of Morocco The Kew Magazine volume 9 part 2 May 1992.

In Taroudant the nuts are harvested during autumn⁴¹ and stored in an *agnur* (loft for provisions)⁴². When the women are free from the chores of autumn, they feed it to goats in a courtyard. The latter eat the outer skin *afiyāsh*, but they discard the stone containing the nut. The nuts are again collected and women and children sit down and break down the stones to get at the kernel. The *qushur* i.e. the broken stones are used as fuel for cooking and the nuts are grilled in an earthen dish *farāḥ* and ground in a hand-mill called *raḥa*. The latter has a spout, which allows the oil to be separated from the skin. The liquid is like thick soup. Water is then added to it, a little at a time, some lumps start to form and the argan oil is gradually poured off to be stored in bottles. As the process continues the residue containing the skin of the kernels becomes bigger until it reaches the size of a large loaf. This loaf-like mass is called *tazegmoont* (very bitter), the ladies collect some to treat their hair and the rest is fed to the cows. Apparently the cows are satiated for the whole day and they produce more milk. As the argan trees grow mainly on communal land, the distribution is made according to the number of households and the number of individuals collecting the nuts, for instance, two baskets per head for each household.

Amlo argan and almond paste (Preserve)

Amlo is a treat for a king. It is made only in the South West of Morocco. It is made at home and is rarely seen in commerce. It is kept throughout the year and eaten with bread. *Amlo* is made with argan oil, almonds and honey. It is extremely rich in calcium and it is fed to women who are breast-feeding. *Amlo* is the pride of the Soussi (inhabitants of the Souss- South of Morocco). Like *khlī*⁴ is to the *Fassi*, so there is no *Soussī* house without *Amlo*.

⁴¹ This tree does not lose its leaves in autumn i.e. it is non-deciduous. The goats are particularly fond of it.

Zaït al 'ood or *zaït zitoon* olive oil

Olives are harvested in the autumn. After picking they are taken to *ma'sra* : the mill.⁴³ There are, in Morocco, four ways of obtaining oil from olives. There is the modern mill, constructed of steel, to which people bring their olives to be pressed, against payment. In certain areas there are traditional stone mills driven either by waterpower, producing *zaït al ma' or* by human or animal effort⁴⁴. There are various types of vertical press, *zait el budd*, all of which involve placing *qafa*: baskets of olives on top of each other and applying a vertical force. This is achieved either by the weight of stones, sometimes amplified by a lever⁴⁵, or in a more modern context, a steel beam descending under the power of a manually-operated capstan, working on a screw mechanism. Finally, though this produces oil of poorer quality than the cold-pressing operations mentioned above, there is the method of boiling the olives until all moisture has been extracted and the oil has been liberated. This is called *zait matbukha*. It is worth noting that before any olives are pressed, the lady of the house prepares a *Talahwant* (*Berber*) or *dowāqa* (*Arabic*), i.e. a sample of what will be produced. She breaks about 3 kg of olives and boils them with water in a *lakhdima*: clay jar. The mixture is boiled until no water remains. She then sieves it and retains only the oil. With this she prepares thick soup with barley, *dashīsha* and serves it with the new olive oil in a *matrid*: a large dish. As only 14% by weight of the olives is obtained as oil, the remnant is mixed with ashes to make traditional soap. The residues from the latter process are used as fuel.⁴⁶ The usefulness of the olive tree does not end here, for its leaves are used as animal forage. This occurs particularly after pruning, which is also when pieces of stem from high-yielding trees are planted in bags to grow as cuttings, this being the preferred method of propagation. During the Protectorate, the French encouraged imports from France of colza oil as a substitute for olive oil. It is unfortunate to note that even after Independence, olive oil

⁴² In the South people have barns in the first floor of their dwellings.

⁴³ R. Le Tourneau *Fes in the age of the Marinides*- University of Oklahoma Press 1961. See p. 87 for oil press technology. There are more than 5,000 traditional mills in Morocco either water-powered or turned by animals.

⁴⁴ Payment to the mill operator is based upon three litres of oil per pressing, one for the operator, one for the donkey and one for the mill.

⁴⁵ In the ruins of the Roman city of Volubilis, there are fine examples of both stone mills and a lever vertical press.

⁴⁶ The Fassi potters are still continue with the tradition of using this rich fuel to fire their pottery whilst those in Salé are now using eucalyptus trees grown in the region.

has not regained its former place as the major oil for cooking, this being mainly due to its high price, provoked by its scarcity. In fact the State has not encouraged the expansion of olive plantations, presumably because of specific personal interests and thus the production of olives has stagnated at traditional levels.

Zait nashfa, old oil, kept for about thirty years until it dries, then it is used as paste for medical purposes.

Preserves and Honey

Zitoon mraqad or preserved olives

After the harvest some olives are not pressed but are set aside for making preserved olives. The final colour of the olives is decided before they are pickled: from green to pink, red and finally black. They are left on the tree for a few more days until the colour required is achieved and then they are harvested, washed and put in buckets of water, which is changed every day, for a week or ten days. Following this, when the bitterness of the olives has been removed, salt and cedrat (or bitter orange without its pips) are added with cooled boiled water before storing in a newly purchased: *khabia* jar. After a month they are ready for tasting and can subsequently be kept for several months.

Mashqoq or incised olives

This is a specially calculated bitterness. The olives are incised before being pickled; since they are used for special *tajīns* e.g. fish. Therefore they are cut without removing the stone in order to keep the pungency of the olives. This is a technique that retains the slight bitterness that olives may impart to a sauce.

Zitoon mehares

Called broken olives, as the stone is broken to decrease the taste of bitterness from the flesh of the olives. They are used as appetisers.

Olives with *līmon bošera* (wild nipped lemon)

These are pickled with wild cedrat and are used mainly for salads and for decoration. They are consumed fresh to keep their fragrance.

Olives *meslala*

These are broken olives. Before they are pickled, the housewife, often aided by children, uses a flint to crush the olives. These are pickled like the other types of olives and at times some cedrat is used. The taste of these olives is softer because the stones are removed. They can be used fresh (pickled) or cooked in different dishes.

Zitoon lakhal black olives

These need special care in their preparation, since in the Fés-Meknes region they are the staple food and are consumed with bread and sweet mint tea. The olives are left until they are ripe and turn to a black colour. They are then rolled in rock salt⁴⁷. Subsequently, they are taken to the roof⁴⁸ of the house in *midoona*: platted palm frond baskets on top of which large stones are placed. The olives are taken out every morning so that the salt and the sun help to extract the moisture in the olives. After nearly two months,⁴⁹ the olives are washed and returned to dry again in the sun for a few days. Before storing them in new *khabiya*, they are rolled in argan oil to give them a shiny black look. They can now be kept for a whole year.

⁴⁷ These "rocks" of salt are carefully ground as they contain earth which can spoil the effect of salting. The colour of the salt varies from white to pink or brown salt. It is the best quality of salt and is called *milha al hiya* live salt. After the caravan trade stopped, Marrakesh and Fés became the main suppliers of this commodity.

⁴⁸ Flat roofs in Morocco are mainly used for drying all sort of spices and food. In the old quarters of towns anyone on the top roof can see an amazing spectacle of all sorts of colours. The roof area is considered as a place for women only. Consequently men are not normally allowed on roofs and then only for special reasons and when prior permission has been asked of the neighbours. See H. Terrasse Histoire du Maroc des Origines à l'établissement du Protectorat français- Editions Atlantides-Casablanca 1949- p. 170.

Līmon mseyyar or pickled lemon

There are several types of lemon in Morocco. There is one in particular, which is rarely seen in Europe. *Limon bosera* or cedrat has a strong flavour. The other kinds are *līmon ad doq* (light skin), *līmon ash shat* (common type), cedrat and bigarade. A mixture of two kinds, thin skinned and light skinned lemons, is necessary to give *līmon addoq* a strong flavour. They are kept in water that is changed daily for five days to soften them. Then they are slit open *shoq* in four un-severed segments, filled with salt and are left for a month or so to pickle. Once they are ready for use their liquid has a honey-coloured tint. Although salty this liquid is used to replace vinegar in certain types of salad⁵⁰

Felfla harra: pickled pepper.

These small hot peppers are pickled to serve with salads and are mostly used in the summer, mainly for *qat^a*. i.e to serve with appetisers. In Morocco only a small number of the population eats hot food. In fact, in certain traditional conservative families hot sauces and hot pickles are not allowed on the table, because they are associated with the idea of consuming alcohol. Women tend to like hot sauces, but these have to be prepared separate from the family food. Nevertheless in the South of Morocco and Saharan regions, people sometimes enjoy eating hot dishes to stimulate their appetite.

Muraqad or *mukhalal*

⁴⁹ This procedure occurs in autumn when the sun starts to become weaker, therefore a longer sun-drying time is required.

⁵⁰ Lemons are used everyday pickled or fresh. They are used for medicinal purposes. For instance, when a cook has spent a great deal of time sitting next to the hearth she applies two drops in each ear and rubs half of it on her forehead to revive herself. Women suck lemons to increase their appetite in the early months of their pregnancy. Also after making lemon juice the pulp is used with ashes to shine *fedda* silverware.



Mixture of pickled vegetables: peppers, carrots, radishes, capers, turnips, fennel, artichokes, cauliflowers and small cucumbers (gherkins) all stored in glass jars to be used with salad.

Smen or clarified butter

This melted butter comes from a lengthy process, which begins with sour milk. It is made mainly in springtime, since in Morocco, the green pasture lasts only for a few months. Calving is normally in spring and it is during springtime that most of the milk is obtained. Butter is extracted from *leban*: buttermilk. This milk is put in a *shekwa*: goat skin and churned for a few hours until the butter is separated from the *leban*. The sour milk is either drunk fresh or mixed with steamed *Kesksu*.⁵¹ The butter *zebda beldiya* is obtained on a daily basis and served for eating in the household at breakfast with honey over *beghrir* or *rghaif*. The remaining part is melted, salted and drained off as *leba*: milk water flavoured with thyme *za^ctar* and kept in a *qadra*: small jar. Wealthy and well to do families keep jars of *smen* in their larders. The longer it stays in jars the better and stronger tasting it becomes, and hence only small quantities need to be used⁵². It is used for making special *tajīns*, to flavour *Kesksu*, to baste a grilled lamb or simply, in honour of an important guest, a sealed *qaloosh* of *smen* is opened to try it. Another variety is special to the southern towns where *smen* is preserved with a few dates to give it a different taste.

Muhalabat / Maqshada or dairy products

Although milk products are available throughout the year, springtime appears to be the favoured period for milk. The pastures are green and the herds enjoy grazing this fresh grass, so different from the kind they have to survive on for most of the year. Street traders ply the streets of old medina carrying *leban*, *raib* or *jben*: sour milk, yoghurt and ricotta-type cheese, in baskets made of plaited palm fronds.

⁵¹ This preparation is called *saykook*. In summer time the harvesters are fed this type of *Kesksu* for lunch and once a week a meat dish is offered by the employer. *Saykook* is also a form of staple food throughout the countryside.

There are three ways of making fresh cheese and yoghurt. The simplest way is by buying from the *attār*: spice merchant, some wild artichoke hair: *niyaq* (Fés) or *hok* (in Tadla). It is powdered and added to milk, after which the *raib* is ready in two hours. Some people add orange blossom water and sugar to flavour it. The second preparation is a recipe for summer time when the fig trees are bearing unripe fruit. One spoonful of fig's milk, added to one litre of milk, will provide a firm and prompt yoghurt. The next recipe is seldom used and only when the family can afford to do so, or when the operation is pre-planned. A kid is forced to drink as much milk it can from its mother's teats. It is then left with the milk to ferment in its stomach for three or four hours. It is then killed and its stomach is taken suspended full with its contents for a week. Then the contents are distributed or sold. One teaspoonful added to a litre of milk will make yoghurt⁵³.

As in many agriculture-based economies, Moroccans do not eat hard cheese. The climate is hot therefore hard cheeses are not required as survival food for cold winters. Also, they do not appreciate strong smells in their food; hence hard cheeses are avoided. But a much-appreciated soft cheese comes from the Rif region (*Shamāli*). Cows grazing on thyme grown in that area produce perfumed milk, which gives a delicate taste to the soft cheese. It exists in three forms: soft and salt free, half-hard and salted hard.

In Marrakesh, in certain families, milk is boiled and curdled with lemon. It is then preserved and dried in gauze in the sun to use in lumps in winter in soups and *Kesksu* as a source of calcium. This is called *Klila* and it exists only in this area⁵⁴.

Energising dairy products

If one is suffering from cold or somebody is convalescing, boiled milk flavoured with fresh *fliyoo* marjoram is given as a drink. *Raib* because of its soft nature is fed to

⁵² In medicine *smen ghawi* old smen is used as a base for ointment or eating mixed with herbs.

⁵³ See Mme Z. Guinaudeau *Fés vue par sa cuisine* –Editions J.E. Laurent, Rabat 1966. p 45

⁵⁴ See Fatima Hal, *Les Saveurs et les Gestes* -Editions Stock, Paris 1995 p 72.

convalescents. When a woman has just given birth the following recipes are prepared to make her regain her strength: beaten eggs are thrown in boiling milk and *hab rashad*⁵⁵ (Cruciferae: *Lepidium sativum* L.) or grilled and crushed wheat mixed with olive oil and honey.

Khlī^c or preserved meat

This is generally made from the meat of calves, bullocks or camels. It requires long hours of preparation and supervision, so that it usually involves the work of several men. Strips of boneless meat (*qadīd*) are soaked in a mixture of spices and vinegar. They are left to marinate for three days exposed to the sun during the day and taken in at night. On the third day, a large cooking pot *tanjīr* which could be 1.50 m in diameter is brought, into which are placed meat, spices, olive oil, argan oil, vinegar, water and fat (lamb or beef fat or camel's hump sliced in small pieces). The mixture is cooked for several hours until no water is left. It is then allowed to cool down, put in glazed jars *khabiya*, sealed and subsequently shared between families or sold in the market. In Fes, there is no house without *khlī*^c. Tables at lunch or dinner always contain a dish with *khlī*^c. The *Fassi* are very fond of *khlī*^c. It is the ideal food⁵⁶ for breakfast, for a bachelor, a student living outside his family home or simply for when unannounced guests arrive after lunch or dinner; *khlī*^c is prepared for them.⁵⁷

Honey

One of the distinctive attributes of the Moroccan civilization is its high consumption of honey. According to economic statistics some 30,000 tons of honey are consumed each year, of which 70% is used in the month of Ramadan. This figure would be much higher, were it not for the availability of sugar as a replacement. In fact

⁵⁵ Known for the following properties :tonic, active expectorant, galactogogue etc. see L. Boulos *Medicinal Plants of North Africa*- Reference Publications, Inc. Michigan 1983. p. 71.

⁵⁶ R. Le Tourneau op. cit p. 87.

⁵⁷ *Khlī*^c can be prepared with pulses in winter, as a cold dish in summertime or with *rghaif* for afternoon tea.

Morocco is a country that eats a great deal of sweet dishes and is the only Arab country that has this feature.

Honey is considered as a magic potion, it is a drink and also a rich complete food. It is present in all ceremonies from birth, to give force to both women in labour and the newborn, to the rites for the dying in order to make death easier. Because of its chemical properties and its ability to conserve without corruption that, which is entrusted to it, honey is used to preserve the cooked meat of the sacrificial ram from the *‘Id al Kebir mūrozīya*. This dish, prepared with *rās el ḥanūt*, raisins, almonds and honey can be kept for months.

Moreover, honey cannot be replaced; there is always a pot of honey stored in the house, either used for medicine or as a treat for a special day. Sugar has not replaced honey in the making of traditional cakes despite its rarity or cost, as it is known for its nutritional and health preserving qualities. The cakes that were traditionally made with honey have not changed except for *bastella*, where sugar proved to be more suitable than honey mainly for aesthetic reasons. It is thus easier to decorate a *bastella* with sugar and cinnamon than with honey. On the other hand there is a cake that still bears the name of its place of origin *ḥalwa al filāliya* from Tafilalet⁵⁸, which would not be a success without pure honey. Its preparation consists of frying dough in oil (or butter) and then in honey. It should cook for two days with spices and particularly with gum Arabic. As the process of cooking is lengthy, the cooking is done by several people or by stages until it reaches the final golden look required. It is prepared for important ceremonies such as weddings and circumcisions. *Filāliya* is kept for months as the spices in it permeate the cake even further, thus enhancing its keeping qualities.

Shebakiya is made mainly for the month of Ramadan. Flour is mixed with sesame and fennel seeds, yeast, vinegar, orange blossoms water and about ten other spices. The mixture is kneaded and cut with a pastry wheel *jerāra* into seven⁵⁹ layers to be interlaced into a crown-like shape, hence its name *shebakiya*, (the laced one). This

⁵⁸ This cake is also called *ḥalwa rghifa* or *ḥalwat far ‘on* depending on the area.

cake is also fried in oil and dipped hot in honey. It is a cake that stores well, but it is mainly made for the month of Ramadan when it is served as a 'first course' with the *ḥarīra* soup. A somewhat strange combination of a rich and fortifying soup with a honey-cake as an entrée!

The demand for *shebakiya* and *mekharqa* is often so great that several of the doughnut makers have become large-scale producers. Although certain families make these sweetmeats at home, using superior ingredients to obtain a better taste, large-scale production requires separate premises, which invariably include a small shop. Some of these shops are renowned for the original taste of their wares and people will travel a long way to buy them. The *shebakiya* of one such shop in Casablanca is referred to as "Hitler's" *shebakiya*, because the crowds that throng around it holding their money above their heads with one arm outstretched are reminiscent of film scenes of crowds giving the Nazi salute. Each major town or city in Morocco has its own way of forming and making *shebakiya*. Of all these, the Marrakesh variety, with its nest like shape appears to be the most authentic and traditional.

Mekharqa, also known as *zalabiya* (the holed one), is made with liquid dough and shaped like a rose.⁶⁰ After frying it is dipped in hot honey.

Qata'if is a rope-like cake, demanding a long and strenuous effort to make, and because of this endeavour it is prepared in households and is seldom sold in shops. It is available in places like Marrakesh, Oujda and Tetuan.

The *sfenj* or *shfenj* doughnuts of Morocco have special features; they are made of wholemeal wheat and yeast. The dough should rest over night to acquire a sour taste. The *sefnāj* (or *shefnāj*) (doughnut-maker) always shares the furnace with the *ḥammām*, as they function at the same hours. Since a Muslim should always wash thoroughly from head to toes after *janaba* (sexual intercourse), the public bath for men functions from 5.a.m to 10 a.m., when men should have washed and accomplished their *fajr* prayers, ready to start their day's work. On their way home

⁵⁹ In Marrakesh they make up to 24 layers and it is shaped like a nest.

from the *ḥammām* one may see them buying and bringing with them *sfenj* for breakfast. In Ramadan the doughnut trade suffers because of the fasting, so for this month all doughnut makers prepare honeyed sweetmeats.

Other preparations with honey are:

Sello (*Assello*: Berber), best known as an aphrodisiac in Morocco and also for invigorating women who are breast feeding or just wanting to be plump. It contains sesame seeds, almonds, honey and spices. There are several types of powdered preparations recommended by traditional doctors, but *sello* seems to be the one favoured by the Moroccans.

Azenbo made with green barley dried in the sun. This typical Berber dessert is made for special occasions; the broken grains are steamed several times until soft, and then they are mixed with argan oil and almond paste (*amlo*) before presenting to the guests.

Tqawat, *Sefoof* and *zameṭa* are also powders prepared for different occasions but *zameṭa* is used as a staple food in Berber regions for herders and travellers. It is made with grilled and ground barley, sesame seeds, fennel seeds and thyme and before being used it is mixed with milk or honey and hot water.

⁶⁰ *Julab* rose in Persian.

Sugar in the life of Morocco

The existence of sugar plantations in the past⁶¹ demonstrates that an extensive sugar-culture had established itself in the life of the Moroccans. Thus, to this day, there is no event celebrated in this country that escapes the eternal presence of sugar. Presents of sugar are only really acceptable if they are in the traditional form of loaves. Also, despite the fact that well refined modern style cube sugar is readily available in any corner grocer's shop, the Moroccan takes a special pleasure in buying loaves of sugar and systematically breaking them into pieces in front of his guest, before inserting them in the *barād*: tea pot. Sugar loaves are sold in bags of 50 kg, which contain 25 two-kg loaves. Depending on the pocket of the giver they are given as presents at weddings, births and circumcisions and also during visits of condolence.

The Moroccans are noted for having a sweet tooth to the extent that the only unsweetened drink that passes their lips is water. They even sweeten orange juice, despite the fact that they have some of the sweetest varieties of orange in the world. When a guest is served mint tea or coffee in a Moroccan home, he is never asked how sweet he would like his beverage to be. On the contrary the person serving automatically adds a large quantity of sugar. Even in the spoken language the idea of sweetness is regarded as synonymous with beauty or value. Hence a beautiful person is *hloowa*, a present or even a bribe is referred to as *lahlawā*.⁶²

⁶¹ See Paul Berthier *Les Anciennes sucreries du Maroc et leurs réseaux Hydrauliques*. Etude Archéologique et d'Histoire Economique. Imprimerie Française et Marocaines 1966- Rabat

⁶² Marrakesh was a selling point for sugar and a *funduq* was a building where dealers and buyers met to strike deals. Each wholesale merchant had a counter and in the last century English and Dutch merchants had several counters. There were also mews behind the *funduq* for all sorts of transport.

IV-Cuisine description of dishes

Kesksu (“couscous”)

Kesksu, the national dish of the whole Maghreb, can be found in a variety of forms and tastes. It is a sanctified part of the national ethos, to the extent that the food element of all celebrations begins with it, whether the occasion be a joyful one or a sad one. In a domestic environment, it is the solemn dish that follows the Friday prayer and brings the family together, eating it from a common dish in a demonstration of kinship that is itself an institution. In the same surroundings, it provides the relaxed atmosphere required for meetings and introductions, it accompanies departures (*kharja*), rejoices at returns (*dakhla*) and ritualises farewells and reunions. Beyond the family circle the sharing of *kesksu* symbolises the cementing of a bond between two persons or groups of persons *shirk ta'am*, ranging from the informality of neighbourly relations to the conclusion of a formal business contract.⁶³

Each area has its own specialities, the smaller rolled the better it is appreciated. There are more than a hundred ways of preparing the sauce for it, but the steamed semolina remains unchanged for all of them, except that the grains could be wheat, barley or maize according to circumstances and region. Barley *Kesksu belbola* is appreciated in winter with tripe, animal's feet and head with root vegetables (parsnips, turnips (*left mahfora*), whereas maize semolina *badāz* seem to be more favoured in summer. In general when the temperatures are high *Kesksu* is avoided as it is supposed to induce heat. Coastal towns enjoy sweet *Kesksu* with fish and only with conger and eel.⁶⁴

⁶³ L. Chénier, *The Present state of the Empire of Morocco* -Johnson Co Ltd reprinted London 1967.“The cooscousou very nourishing and very agreeable dish.” p. 123.

⁶⁴ For this type of *Kesksu*, the sauce is sweetened with honey and cinnamon. See Magali Morsy, *Le Monde des Couscous*. p.122.

Magali Morsy⁶⁵ has managed to collect more than fifty recipes, but their true number is almost limitless, varying from one family to another and from one region to the next, but in all cases dependent upon the housewife and her skills and techniques.

Although the sauce, vegetables and meat are cooked together, the only way to cook *kesksu* is by steaming, for which there is no alternative. The secret of good *kesksu* lies in the steaming technique. The process should be gradual and should be repeated three times, with a ten-minute cooling down period between each steaming operation, during which it is sprinkled with water. After the third operation butter or olive oil or argan oil are substituted for water. It is then served in a pyramidal shape, with the meat and vegetables placed at the top, over which the sauce is poured. Consequently, the latter should be neither too light nor too heavy.

Whilst there exists a multiplicity of recipes, the ingredients used tend to follow a seasonal pattern:

- **Spring.** Spring greens, broad beans, sweet onions and chard.
- **Summer.** Raisins, quinces, courgettes, aubergines.
- **Autumn.** Broad beans, chickpeas and cabbages.
- **Winter.** Root vegetables including turnips and parsnips of several varieties, chickpeas, offal and dried meat.

Kesksu can also be used as a dessert with a variety of additions: almonds, raisins, orange-blossom water, cinnamon and icing sugar.

The utensils for steaming *kesksu* vary from a rustic varieties to more sophisticated urban models. In the former case, the essential receptacle for holding the *kesksu* can be either a semi-rigid basketwork “bowl” that can be placed above a cooking pot or an earthenware vessel suitably perforated. In the latter case the receptacle and the pot containing the sauce and ingredients are both made of tinned brass with the perforated receptacle fitting perfectly into the mouth of the cooking pot.

⁶⁵ Magali Morsy. Le monde des Couscous - Edisud, Aix-en-Provence. 1996

Tajīns, Meshwī and Tanjiya

During my description of culinary techniques later in this chapter, I will explain how some dishes are sealed and cooked in ashes to allow the sauce, meat and the vegetables to simmer together for a long time. The point here is that slow cooking procedures are the most frequently used in Morocco, to enable all ingredients to be impregnated with the spices, the *tajīn* being ideally suited for this purpose. In fact the *tajīn* is the cooking pot of all Moroccans, whether they be rich or poor, the difference being in what it contains. The food is either served hot where everyone dips his fingers (after washing them) to serve himself or the food is transferred to one or several dishes for eating. On a daily basis a dish called *tajīn ʿadi* is prepared everywhere for lunch or dinner. Depending on availability in summer time, a *tajīn* made with pickled lemon or *Khanzor* or *qambi* (cooked pears) is much favoured, whilst in springtime a *tajīn bil kharshof* or *guernina* (cardoons or marshmallow⁶⁶) is popular. However, there is a large variety of *tajīns* and techniques for cooking them, a number of which are listed below:

The *tajīn maqfool* or *maghmoom*: the sealed *tajīn*.

Here, the *tajīn* has not been uncovered to let the moisture out, a speciality of Marrakesh and Rabat the '*tajīn maqfool*'. Similarly this dish can be a *tajīn* with several vegetables with just the right amount of water added. It is understood that the lid should not be removed because it will spoil the vegetables or the meat, the first would become *lawya*: faint and the second becoming *mkazez*: tough. Hence it is uncovered only at the table.

⁶⁶ Belonging to the family Malvaceae.

The Moroccans have always hated to see uncooked meat. Apart from the taste, the look is very important, so dishes may be cooked a second time from the top, as an “au gratin” to reach a golden colour. This is called either *mejammar* or *meḥammar*. Amongst the various dishes that are cooked on both sides beside meat is the *bastella*. Once the pie is golden it is then decorated with sugar.

Baīn Narayn (cooked between two fires), although public ovens exist, the *baīn narayn* technique is a cheap and quick method of domestic “au gratin” cooking, used normally for birds and pies. The system of cooking over a charcoal fire suffers from the disadvantage that the heat is generated at the bottom of the dish. This method is not suitable for achieving a golden colour on the surface of the food. Glowing charcoal is therefore placed on top of the closed dish. This ensures a uniform cooking heat for the dish and avoids burning at the bottom. In the case of birds it ensures that the dish has the sought after golden colour. This is the way people used to cook in the Moroccan domestic environment before the advent of domestic ovens, although the technique is still used in remote areas of the countryside.

Needless to say the modern domestic oven is not ideal for traditional cooking, as it does not produce the same results as the *baīn narayn* since it drives the required moisture from the dish, resulting in a golden but somewhat dry bird.

The *tajīn mḥammer* “golden”

This contains chicken or lamb (mainly the shoulder with several ribs). The meat is separated from the sauce to bronze it in the oven. When serving it the cook makes sure that the sauce does not touch the meat so that it stays crispy. Also called *mḥammer* are: *‘ijja*, *‘aqda* or *ma‘qoda*, *mguīna*: omelettes, *tajīns* thickened with eggs, almonds, leaf vegetables, brain or boned chicken. They are served hot or cold, especially by people from the North as cold dishes in summer.

Tajīn meqallī : fried *tajīn*

These *tajīns* stew in the normal way but the meat, either lamb or chicken is fried in olive oil and butter or *smen* just before serving, so that the spices are sealed inside the meat.

Tajīn mesharmal “in sauce”

These types of *tajīns* usually have a red paprika sauce contrary to the rest, which are basically made with saffron or carcum. The meat, either beef, chicken or fish is marinated in garlic, spices and herbs such as fresh coriander and parsley, and cooked like a stew for ordinary days.

Tajīn muḥammer shwā qdar: grilled in a pot

The chicken or lamb is cooked in a sauce until the water has evaporated then butter is added to the remainder, after which the meat is sealed in a clay pot and cooks in its own juice.

Tajīn ma^cammār “stuffed chicken or lamb”

The meat (shoulder and ribs or leg of lamb or whole chicken) is stuffed with cubed liver and *Kesksu* or rice with almonds and raisins. Occasionally with only fresh parsley, coriander and *Līmon mseyar* (pickled lemon).

Tajīn medarbel: *tajīn* in rags and tatters

The chicken, beef or lamb is cooked in a normal *tajīn*, but served with a pumpkin preserve on top of the dish, which has been prepared separately. In the process of cooking the pumpkin loses about 80% of its weight in evaporated water and the

residual filaments look like tatters. The dish is then sweetened with honey and sprinkled with cinnamon. Some people prepare it with aubergines when it is called *baranīya* (the foreigner).⁶⁷

Tajīn qammama or *qwarma*

This is the same preparation as above but with a tomato preserve; both recipes are made in ʿId al Mawlid in Fés and Salé but also in springtime too.

Tajīn mezguildi

Tajīns with chicken, pigeons, lamb or beef, with whole spring onions or shallots. Once the dish has cooked, honey is added before serving it to thicken and sweeten the sauce. This dish is served in springtime with an optional variation: fresh parsley on top.

Tajīn tefaya

Lamb, beef or chicken served with honeyed onion, chickpeas or fried almonds. Chopped onions and spices are cooked separately; they simmer with saffron for a long time in their own juice. When they are golden, honey and raisins are added to caramelize them. The dish is sprinkled with orange blossom water before serving for reception and festivals.

Tajīn mūrozīya

This is a *tajīn* for a special occasion as it involves long hours of cooking and special spices mainly *rās al ḥanūt*. Several spices are involved which allows it to be preserved for several weeks; it is prepared for ʿId al ʿAdhā, (see Chapter V).

⁶⁷ S. Guinneaudau op. Cit. p. 114.

Djāja tāret (the bird has flown)

Most *tajīns* are made with chicken, lamb, beef or fish but the ones which are made without meat are called *hazīn* meaning sad. *Marqa hazīna* is a sad sauce because the *tajīn* only contains vegetables. In Marrakesh this is referred as *djāja tāret*.

Another *tajīn* that is called *kabāb maghdoor* meaning the betrayed kebab. It is meat or liver cubes cooked with spices à l'étouffé (stifled: steamed in a tightly shut pot), which is uncovered only at table to preserve its moisture.

Meat is very important in the life of Moroccans; this is witnessed by the importance of the *'id al 'Adhā* festival when people get into debt to purchase their sheep. A family with a respectable income must always have a meat dish each day, usually at lunchtime, the most important meal of the day. There is a popular proverb in the country that says *djazzār we t 'asha bi laft*: he owns a butchers' shop but he eats turnips for dinner. Fish on the other hand has a lesser importance. The type that is sought after is *shabel* (shad, *Alosa Vulgaris* L), which is a river fish⁶⁸. Since Morocco has the benefit of a 3,000-km coastline the people enjoy eating fish in fried or baked form, but never steamed or boiled. For celebrations, *shabel* is the only fish presented to the guests.

Meshwī or roast.

When one talks about *meshwī* it is obvious that this refers to roasted lamb. The best way of preparing it is in the open air. The lamb is roasted on a spit and basted with spices and herbs. Normally lamb-roasting is the task of men. *Meshwī* is served for important occasions such as weddings, circumcisions or any big celebration. At times it is served filled with cubes of liver, hand made vermicelli or *Kesksu*, raisins and

⁶⁸ Apparently the norm for welcoming and feeding a guest is three days, on the third day he is fed fish as a reminder of the third and last day saying *diafa de nbi telt ayam* "because of the Prophet you have been fed free for 3 days"; thus a fish dish is used as reminder.

fried almonds. In private *diafa* (special dinner parties), a lamb is usually filled with a cooked kid, the latter is filled with a cooked chicken etc., finishing with a cooked egg. There is another method of preparing a *meshwī* that is peculiar to Marrakesh and its surrounding area. This involves the digging of a large pit to a depth of about two metres. In the centre of this pit a large cairn of stones is built. This is then covered with clay, which has been mixed with straw, until a dome-like shape is obtained. The dome is left for two or three days to harden, after which an entrance is made in the top, through which the stones are subsequently removed. In the centre of the dome a vertical spit is now placed, to which four or five sheep carcasses are attached. A charcoal fire is lit and the dome is sealed, the earth is put back around it so that it looks like a well. After about twelve hours the meat is ready for serving.

Tanjiya

Tanjiya or as the people of Marrakesh call it *bent remād*: daughter of ashes (as it cooks by indirect heat). This dish is peculiar to Marrakesh and Taroudant and each individual has his or her own way of preparing it. It is an interior-glazed cylindrical pot with two handles, like a waterwheel pot. It can be prepared with any meat: lamb, beef or calf, camel-foal and the following parts: head, feet and offal. It could be also sweetened with dates or raisins. Once all the ingredients have been inserted, it is sealed with dough and sent to the *farnatshi*⁶⁹ to be cooked in the ashes overnight. Some people, in winter, have it ready at five o'clock in the morning for breakfast. The *tanjiya* is also the subject of competition between merchants in the bazaar as to who can create the best *tanjiya*. As the whole success resides in the ingredients and the measurement of the spices, it requires nothing further from its creator, who just sends it to the *farnatshi*. Another method is to place the *tanjiya* in a lime-pit⁷⁰ to cook for two days, using the heat generated by the treatment of the lime, *Bogha di jīr*.

⁶⁹ The attendant of the hammam furnace, who at times cooks sealed dishes in the dying ashes.

⁷⁰ When people are preparing quicklime, they leave rocks to "cook" for several days before they start using it. This is also a chance to make use of lime "heat" to cook a *tanjiya*.

Marrakesh is famous for its *nezāha*, which are parties organised in public gardens. In the past, when the main activity of Marrakesh was commerce, they were more frequent. Thus if someone fails to keep a promise, his forfeit could well be a *nezāha* or, if somebody has a business success he calls for a *nezāha* to celebrate. An orchestra⁷¹ is brought in the afternoon to the *riyād*⁷² and everyone is welcome. Mint tea and cakes are served and at times meals. If the *nezāha* is organised by bachelors *solṭan al ṭolba*, then several *ṭanjiya* of various types are served, otherwise, families will bring their food and eat it whilst they are entertained until late at night. It is at such parties that the *ma^cjoon* is made available. *Ma^cjoon* is a cake fortified with hashish that is used to enliven gatherings and parties, by releasing the high spirits of the participants.

Laham m'bakhar

This is a steamed meat dish, which is put in the *cascās* (steamer), separated from the water whose steam rises through the holes of the separator. It is served with salt, cumin and steamed vegetables and is mostly used in hot summer time.

Qalian ḥoot fish frying

Fish, a symbol of fertility and prosperity, is present in all ceremonial dishes of the coastal cities of Morocco. It is prepared dusted with flour and fried or cooked in a *tajin* with vegetables. Amongst various types of fish the one that is highly rated is *shabel* (shad *Alosa Vulgaris* L.). The best quality is in the Um Rabi^c River. It is born in the river and remains until it reaches 40cm in length, then it travels to the Atlantic coast where it remains four years after which it returns to lay its eggs between

⁷¹ The orchestra in Marrakesh is reputed for a special drumming called *daqqa marrakshiya*. The musicians play it the whole night and everyone participates.

⁷² Gardens or parks normally built by wealthy people and bearing their names.

November and May. Unfortunately, (from an ecological point of view), the best taste is found in the female when still full of eggs.⁷³

⁷³ C. Lecoœur op. cit. He states that in 1917-1918 about 45,728 shad were caught. During the Spanish and Portuguese wars, Morocco had to supply the Spanish Market with several thousand specimens as war damage compensation. p. 117.

Beverages

Coffee

Coffee is generally drunk white in Morocco and it is only during the last ten years that strong black coffee has become popular. Coffee is much appreciated by women who drink it with spices, particularly in winter when a warming blend of ginger, black pepper, cinnamon and nutmeg is used. For Ramadan and breakfast parties, coffee is now preferred to tea. Black coffee is also drunk when people are mourning. Although coffee was known to the mass of the population before tea, it is the latter that has left its mark on the nation.

Tea

Having dealt with food, it seems appropriate to turn next to tea, Morocco's national beverage, which plays a prominent role in all forms of social exchange and hospitality. The Moroccan ranks high amongst the world's heavy tea-drinkers. He has no set time for this pleasure, since any hour or any occasion may be considered valid. Tea drinking and tea making can vary greatly from poor to rich households and from day to day consumption to special occasions. However, even for the most informal occasion, the European practice of putting tea in a pot and pouring hot water on it would be considered inadequate. There must always be a tea set and there must be a competent tea-maker. The Moroccan tea set equates to what would, in English parlance, be described as a tea service. It consists of two trays, a small one, which carries the three lidded-containers for tea, sugar and fresh mint, accompanied by a larger tray, on which the teapot and the tea-glasses⁷⁴ are placed.⁷⁵ The tea-maker, regardless of whether the household be rich or poor, must follow the tea-making ritual and be competent to do so. The choice usually falls on the oldest member of the family, who sits cross-legged, surrounded by the tea set. The tea is always made in front of the persons, who are going to drink it. The quality of tea used can also vary.

⁷⁴ The number of glasses must always be greater than the number of guests.

A special brand for offering to guests is kept under lock and key, whilst a less expensive brand is kept for daily use.

The tea set is a very important element of the household inventory and also of the dowry of a young girl. The wealthier the family, the more elaborate is the tea-set, which can range from simple wooden boxes in rural areas, where the "tea" box is kept hermetically separate from the pieces of sugar, to delicately engraved silver or gold sets, consisting of a goblet for water with its spoon and three containers: large for sugar, medium for fresh mint and small for tea. Sometimes a small hammer is added to help the tea-maker break the sugar loaf.⁷⁶ Tea making is never left to a young person but is a task that falls to the head of the family or the mistress of the house. It would be impolite, even offensive, to serve to a guest tea that was made before he arrived, or was prepared in the kitchen before being brought to him. In the etiquette of tea making, tea should be prepared by the master/mistress of the house in front of the guest, using a full tea-set with its two complete trays.

At ceremonies such as weddings, pilgrimage etc. specialists may be brought in to make tea. On other special occasions, such as women-only or men-only parties, the tea-makers will have already been selected. Such persons are invariably of mature age, with a reputation for mental stability and are known for the quality of tea they have made in the past. The tea-maker is seated in a special corner, surrounded by the various utensils and the two trays: the larger one with glasses and the smaller one with the three containers plus a matching goblet with a spoon. The latter is to be used for the initial operation, which consists of putting the green tea-leaves in the teapot, pouring in hot water and stirring it with the spoon to allow the leaves to open. This water, known as *teshlīla* (the mashing of tea), is subsequently poured into the goblet

⁷⁵ There are always at least two tea-sets in the home, one being for everyday use and the other, a more expensive one, for entertaining guests.

⁷⁶ The Moroccans are greatly attached to the shape of loaf-sugar. From the 9th century onwards, Morocco was producing one of the most renowned types of sugar in the known world. Traditionally, this was made in loaves of a weight equivalent to a modern 2 kilograms, wrapped in thick white paper imported from Egypt and India. The exterior wrapping is coloured blue, to differentiate it from the inner one, since it is waxed as a protection against dampness. This form of sugar in its traditional wrapping exists to this day, despite the advent of sugar cubes and castor sugar, since sugar-loaves are still highly favoured for tea-making. Thus, the difficulty of breaking the loaves not only adds to the charm of the ritual, but is also a challenge to the tea-maker to succeed in serving tea with the right measure of sweetness.

on the small tray where it remains until the whole set is removed for cleaning. At this point some incense, (sandalwood), is lightly wetted (to retard its burning) and is placed in the incense-burner situated next to the tea-maker. On her left is another tray, carrying perfume, rose water and orange-blossom water, for the attendant to sprinkle on the guests. The tea-maker has a system of silent communication with the attendant. Once a guest is seated, the hand-washing basin is brought with a towel. Then an eye is cast at the trays to check that everything is ready for the start of the tea making. An eye-signal to the attendant means either, bring the *boqrāj*: kettle or take the teapot to the samovar: *bābbor* to put a little water for the *tashlīla*. The tea-maker now has the task of gauging the amount of tea, mint or sugar to put in the teapots. She might ask for the teapot to be placed on the stove if a *tashhira* is necessary, (the latter assists in obtaining a stronger infusion). The tea is tasted to adjust the level of sugar,⁷⁷ after which it is served to the guests.

The tea-glass is always half-filled, to allow room for the guest's fingers to hold the warm, rather than the hot part of the glass. The tea-glass has in fact been designed with this in mind, so that its capacity is double the amount of tea it is destined to contain. The decoration of the glass is also intended to indicate to what level it should be filled and, needless to say, it is ill mannered to fill the glass completely. The best tea is the one that has a "crown" *rozza* (turban) on it in the glass, i.e. a foam-like substance forming at the top of the liquid, produced by the viscosity of the juices derived from the leaves. Thus the tea-glass, although highly decorated, must always have a filigree design to allow the foam to be seen by the drinker. This "foaming" effect is achieved by the tea-maker stirring the tea leaves with a spoon before adding the mint. Once the mint has been added, the tea-maker will avoid lifting the lid of the pot, as this would allow cold air to reach the mint, which, having already been in hot water, would blacken as if damaged by frost. Hence there is no opening of the pot for stirring at this stage, but instead the tea-maker pours some of the liquid into a glass and, with a deft movement, returns it to the pot, whose lid is only partly lifted for a second or two. This is repeated two or three times, the object being to assist the melting of the sugar. The tea is served hot and should be drunk in small sips, without blowing on it to cool it and without making any noise when swallowing it.

⁷⁷ Tea is always served sweet.

Qualities of the tea-maker

As we have seen, this person enjoys a certain status within the family. He/she is first of all chosen because of age, then for his/her piety and mental stability. Such a person could well be one from whom people tend to seek advice on personal matters or has a reputation for settling disputes.⁷⁸ The service of tea making is a twofold philosophical lesson in itself. Firstly, there is a respected and highly-regarded person sitting and serving the guests in an expression of humility towards them, in that he/she is taking the trouble to do something that one might otherwise consider to be the duty of the younger and less important members of the gathering. The second lesson is that, when a respectable and pious person is left to perform a task, he/she performs it with grace, serenity, and stability of mind and action to serve the other members of the gathering. The contemplative state of the tea-maker allows the guests to enjoy the tea even more, to the extent that they congratulate its maker for the benefit it has produced in them.

Varieties and types of tea

Although tea is now grown in Morocco, it was in the past always imported from China and in fact, all good quality tea is still obtained in this manner. Gunpowder is the only type of tea that is drunk throughout Morocco⁷⁹, although there are various brands, which vary significantly in price. One of the best Gunpowder teas is batch 4011, producing a dark-coloured tea with a strong astringent taste. In particular, it has the reputation of settling the mind.

The other major ingredient of Moroccan tea is the mint. Since green-leaf tea is now more widely available than in the past, the concern of today's connoisseurs tends to

⁷⁸ Tasks such as midwifery or advice on religious matters are entrusted to such persons, who are noted for their discretion.

⁷⁹ Black tea with lemon was drunk in the 1930s but it did not have any success.

be focussed upon the quality of the mint. Mint has its categories of quality and there are areas noted for producing mint of good quality, which is related to the local soil and water, e.g. *Ouled zian ʿabdi, Broj, Meknes*. In setting up a mint field, a plot of land is planted with root cuttings, (seed is not used) yielding several collections per year. After four years the plot is renewed by re-planting with new cuttings. According to connoisseurs, tea is affected by two elements, the water of the area and the soil. Thus springs are usually a good source of tea-making water. Wells are also good, provided they are not affected by salinity; i.e. they are *shloqi* (brackish). Mountain water is also good, provided it is not high in mineral content. However, the worst of waters is in coastal areas, where it is affected by salinity. Thus in these areas, not only is the water bad, but the mint grown their soil is of poor quality.

In the markets of Morocco one may find mint originating in several different regions. The mint distribution network, although informal in nature, is on a scale comparable with that of the Milk Marketing Board in the United Kingdom. In the past one could see donkeys, heavily loaded with freshly cut mint, being driven towards towns in the very early morning, in order to deliver fresh mint for breakfast. Today the same peasants, urged on by the need for speed, deliver their mint on motorcycles to their selling point. They may even deliver from house to house, since mint is a major preoccupation of the mistress of the house, who must ensure that she has enough mint for the day, otherwise she will be reduced to borrowing from neighbours. In a dietary context, tea drinking is not only for relaxation, but constitutes one of the two essential elements of the diet of the poor. *Khobz wa attai* (bread and tea) is the basic frugal meal that is all that some poor families can afford. At times it may be accompanied by black olives in the North of Morocco, by butter or olive oil in the South or by dates in the Sahara. However, in today's Morocco, with its high percentage of unemployed and the increased cost of making a glass of tea, the bottle of Coca-Cola is replacing this costly and indispensable drink of the poor.

The best season for tea drinking is in springtime, when a wide variety of mints is available. In the month of March it is impossible to resist the temptation to add orange blossom to one's tea, since the trees are in full flower. Other *liqim attai*, (things that are added to tea) are balsamic mint, lemon mint, pennyroyal, geranium

and *shiba* wormwood.⁸⁰ The latter is used as an appetiser before meals. In the South of Morocco, from Marrakesh to Agadir, tea is at times drunk with saffron. In Saharan areas tea drinking is more elaborate than elsewhere. Etiquette dictates that a guest should drink three glasses of tea, since it is understood that this stimulant contributes to one's vivacity. The first glass of tea served is bitter and light in colour, since the tealeaves have not yet completely infused, so that only the taste is delivered. The second glass is strong and sweet, since the leaves have now completely infused and the sugar has added its sweetness to the tea. The third glass is honeyed and astringent, since the bottom of the tea-pot gives a sweeter liquid as the heavy sugar has concentrated there, whilst the tea-leaves, although having yielded their colour in the second glass, now deliver their strongest taste, which reaches its optimum in the remaining water of the tea-pot. With tea like this, the nerves start to quiver with energy. This Saharan tea is made without mint, hence the quality and strength of the gunpowder tea is all-important. Moroccans may also flavour their tea with various additives such as aniseed and peppercorn, which are popular in winter as a warming drink. In a more luxurious vein, there are two other additives, the first of which is only found in rich families and palaces.

Amber tea or "Aristocratic" tea

Tea with amber is made in the following manner: amber is placed in a piece of wool, which is pushed into the recess forming the top of the bell-shaped cover of the teapot. The steam rising from the tea penetrates the wool and reaches the amber, which brings down with it the taste of amber to flavour the tea, without the amber itself being in direct contact with the liquid. Tea with *Meshmum* (ambergris, musk and jasmine), is prepared in a similar manner.

⁸⁰ Although these herbs are much appreciated, they are not used for important events and ceremonies, their use being confined to daily tea-drinking. For important ceremonies only good quality gunpowder tea and peppermint are acceptable.

Tea for private parties

This tea is admitted only in permissive families and/or for entertainment between close friends. *Ma'joon* tea is served containing a special mixture, based on hashish. Tea is made in the normal way, the mixture being put in the tea, which is left to brew for a longer than usual time before serving.

The Moroccan Cook and her training

Miniature cooking sets are more frequently to be seen amongst a little girl's toys than are dolls. The sets themselves are true replicas, since the potter makes them himself and as such they play an essential role in the child's early education. The little girl is eventually initiated into kitchen work by her mother giving her small tasks to perform. Furthermore, whenever bread is made, she is given a little dough to handle to familiarise her with the malleability of this vital ingredient. By the time the girl reaches her teens, she is already familiar with the usage of several spices and herbs and is also well aware of which herbs are for use in emergency first aid.

Sometimes a girl who is shortly to be married is sent for a few days to stay with relatives so that her culinary abilities may be put to the test, whilst giving her experience of cooking away from her home environment. This trial not only demonstrates her competence but also serves as a kind of rehearsal for the seventh day of her wedding, when she has to cook her first meal for her in-laws. (Cf. Chapter VI under Weddings). If she then proves to be a good cook, her mother will be complimented and bachelors will be encouraged to enquire about her unmarried sisters.

The Family cook

In addition to the Makhzen (royal) cooks and those employed by aristocratic families, there are also women, who cook for the general public in their domestic environment. Each family, whether rich or poor, has its own set of cooks to take care of their

celebration meals. These can be employees, if family finances so permit, or they can be members of the family, who have acquired their know-how over several years.

In this environment, the problem is not so much the knowledge of the recipes and their preparation, but coping with the numbers of persons to be fed. In the latter context it is the estimation of quantities of meat, the nature and quantity of spices and the amount of salt to be used that are the sole responsibility of the cook. She never works on her own as she always has several helpers, but above the hubbub of the kitchen it is only her voice that counts in deciding ingredients and quantities, for if anything goes wrong the blame will be hers alone.

The menu she produces is quite restricted and is in no way sophisticated. Her norm tends to be *Kesksu* dishes served with vegetables or honeyed onions, chicken *m'hammer* or beef/lamb *tajīns*. The desserts she prepares are invariably sweet vermicelli, rice or *Kesksu* with cinnamon. In the countryside the dishes are similar, except that *meshwī* is more common, this being outside the realm of the cook, since it is prepared outside the kitchen premises by men.

In large cities such as Casablanca, Fés, Marrakesh, Meknés, Rabat and Tetuan, the public are assisted with their catering requirements by the Guild of Hairdressers, *hajāma*. The connection between this trade and catering is peculiar to Morocco. Traditionally a *hajām* was trained by a physician, who would teach him basic anatomy, hygiene, bloodletting and circumcision.⁸¹ Once he was competent in these skills, he would learn the barber's trade, which also involves the shaving of heads.⁸² However, once established as a barber, he can also involve himself in the organization of parties.

The explanation for this last involvement derives from the fact that the *hajām* is reputed to know everything about everybody, because of a tendency on the part of the

⁸¹ H. Basset op. cit. The author, not understanding the qualities, qualifications and the role he plays in society refers to him as "L'opérateur de la circoncision est d'ordinaire un perruquier de la ville" p. 224.

⁸² It is only since the time of French colonization that Moroccan men began to grow their hair. The traditional practice was to shave the head, except during periods of mourning.

public to trust him with their private problems. This means that he is not only the person who knows which bachelors and spinsters are suitable matches but he is also the “information bureau” of the area. Thus, if anyone is giving a party, he knows about it and can find cooks, pastry-cooks and even persons known for their good tea. He is probably the most resourceful person in his area and, when he organizes parties he handles everything from the hire of crockery and glasses to the provision of cleaners and waiters. It is noteworthy that waiters are called in Moroccan Arabic *hajāma* (sing. *hajām*) instead of the usual Arabic word *al monadil*. His competence extends to finding orchestras for parties and even, in the event of bereavement he may be entrusted with handling the reception of guests and the organizing of food for the bereaved and for visitors. Finally, even an “aristocratic” cook may consult him about finding new customers or a new family to work for.

The professional cook

Her apprenticeship begins with a period during which she must carefully observe the actions of her elders, whilst working alongside them day and night. Her age should not exceed eight and she should be willing to perform all kinds of cleaning tasks. Initially this would involve the washing of dishes but later on the cleaning of the larger utensils and eventually, being entrusted with the more delicate tasks of cleaning spices and pulses. This is a craft that must be handed down like a precious inheritance from a source that is itself reliable and competent, an art that is accumulated throughout a lifetime. Competence is established in an environment of professional skills, not only in the mastery of tools and techniques, but also in the sequence of their usage. However, one cannot learn from a book how to handle ingredients. Hence to ensure success, it must be inculcated from an early age. It is in this manner that these women, who guard their domain jealously, have succeeded in perpetuating a craft inherited from bygone days. Consequently there is no theoretical training since the know-how is strictly sensory and cannot be depicted by images. Whilst theory can be communicated by the printed word, know-how needs physical contact for its transmission and, in the absence of such contact it can only remain static, locked within the person of its creators.

The apprentice must also develop her sensory organs when serving in the kitchen by :

- On-the-job observation of each technique.
- Learning to recognize the noise of what is cooking, simmering or grilling.
- Accumulating her olfactory experience so that she can recognize newly ground spices and rare spices and can hence give them the necessary delicate treatment.
- She can also by force of habit even recognize whether a dish is well or poorly seasoned. This applies also to the degree to which a dish has been salted, for salt is never present on the table, since a good cook should know the right amount for each and every dish.⁸³

In the palaces of the families of the aristocracy cooks are worth their weight in gold, since they can enhance the reputation of their masters. Until the 1950's it was fashionable to organize a *diafa* for one's friends, where the number of dishes could attain fabulous proportions. The dishes would not be finished by the participants, but merely tasted. If the dishes were really exceptional, then from thenceforth the name of the master of the house would enter into legend. Cooks of this calibre could either become the mistresses of other cooks and their names would be repeated for several generations or they could be "offered" to important personalities, if indeed their reputation had not already caused them to be "stolen" out of jealousy.

The best cook is one who has no family ties. Until quite recently the family would acquire a young black girl⁸⁴ from the Saharan region, whom it would arrange to be trained by another cook so that the know-how would not be lost. In the more important and prosperous families there would be an establishment of several cooks, with a cycle of renewal to ensure the preservation of the art. The training not only

⁸³ Asking for salt at table is an insult to the mistress of the house since this implies that she is a poor cook and hence risks her incurring the displeasure of her husband. In the last century this could be used as an excuse for taking a second wife or even as grounds for divorce. In such circumstances even her beauty might not compensate for her culinary shortcomings.

⁸⁴ It was explained to me that the people of the Sahara are considered to have a greater tolerance of heat than their paler sisters but also I believe that, as secrets of recipes should be kept between families, the more remote the origin of the cook is the more secure they are. Even when slavery was banned, there were cases of stolen children being brought to cities like Fés, Marrakesh and Rabat. Apparently, today, a form of "adoption" is still being carried out with the agreement of the youngster's parents against a monthly or yearly payment. See M. Ennaji *Serving the Master*- Mac Millan London 1998.

consists of making dishes but also in the distillation of several fragrances and the making of syrups.⁸⁵

Interviews with these people left a distinct impression. Despite a difficult and arduous life, they seem almost haughty, proud of their past and of the numbers of persons they have fed and the compliments and gifts they have received. Nor do they forget their gratefulness to their “teachers”. Sometimes they become close friends with the latter and “adopt” each other. In a domestic context, if a cook is really exceptional the master may at his death, leave her/him an inheritance. In other circumstances cooks may be passed from one family to another, i.e. to another part of the family or to friends or colleagues of the same socio-professional background.

Makhzen Cooks

Makhzen cooks are the descendants of past slaves of the palace. Their training takes place in their early childhood in the royal kitchens, so that the ancient skills are secretly handed down from generation to generation. It is usual for them to be married to other members of the palace staff, the arrangements being made by the palace administration, which provides them with a dowry and allocates them suitable lodgings. Their training includes elements of palace etiquette and consequently, with the sole exception of employment in diplomatic and other government missions, they are not allowed to work for the general public, in case they divulge the secrets of the recipes.

In the past century the Tuārga were the professional employees of the royal court⁸⁶ and were always quartered within the palace. Apparently they were originally recruited from the Sahara, close to the Royal family’s place of origin Tafilalt, because of their links of kinship. However during the last few decades they have been

⁸⁵ J. & J. Tharaud Fez ou les bourgeois de l’Islam- Librairie Plon Paris 1930. pp. 35-40.

⁸⁶ Tuargas and Oudayas have been employed by the Alaouites’ court since their arrival in power in the 17th century. L. Chénier : “ c’est en 1883 que le sultan Moulay Abderrahmane installa dans la kasba de Rabat le guich des Oudaia, tribu arabe du sahara, que les chérifs avaient utilisés comme soldats, depuis le règne de Moulay Ismael. In P. Grillon, Un chargé d’affaires au Maroc- La correspondance du consul Louis Chénier- Paris, 1970.p. 17.

despatched hither and thither, whilst their quarters have been taken by other state employees, so that only key personnel now remain within the palace precincts.

Nearly all the Moroccan diplomatic missions have palace-trained cooks whose presence ensures that the cuisine of the mission is both authentic and traditional. Even when the Ambassador's wife is of foreign origin, Moroccan cuisine prevails on every important occasion. Moreover, the pursuit of authenticity is practised to the extent that, where there is a lack of particular ingredients in some locality, the problem is solved by resorting to the expensive alternative of despatching dishes by air.

V-Festivals

°Id al Mawlid or °Id Seghir and Mawsem

Islam has only two canonical festivals: the *°Id al Adhā* (festival of the Sacrifice) and the *°Id Fitr* (end of fasting in Ramadan). There is an additional festival, known as the *°Id al Mawlid* or *°Id Seghir* (the small festival), which commemorates the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. North Africa, and in particular Morocco, is the area where this festival is celebrated with great emphasis. There is no set form or ritual for this festival, which each family celebrates in its own manner. Perhaps the only common feature is that it is treated like a real birth. The women wear attractive clothes and decorate their hands with henna in the same way as they did when they were *Nafisa*, (having just given birth). The birth is announced in the early morning with panegyrics and *Zagharit*. In Fés, they even fire muskets and children play with firecrackers. At breakfast pancakes in the form of *beghrir* and *msemen* are served with butter and honey, after which gifts of cakes are exchanged between relatives and neighbours⁸⁷.

Since it is not a proper canonical festival, there is no *salāt al °Id* at the mosque, but people treat it as a social event, visiting friends, drinking mint tea, eating cakes and having a generally relaxing day. Despite its lack of canonical authenticity, this festival is carefully preserved in Morocco, since the founder of the Kingdom Moulay Idris was the great grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. Hence it is essentially a reminder of Morocco's heritage. It is therefore not surprising that the celebration of the Mawlid takes many forms and that the family, the community and the State all take part in its observance. In every district the local authority organizes a reception during which the male children of the poor are circumcised in an atmosphere of great pomp, all at government expense. Cakes and sweets are served, whilst presents in the

⁸⁷ The gifts are usually brought by children, who receive presents or gifts of money for their trouble. It is an exciting festival for children, as new clothes are also bought for them.

form of foodstuffs (oil, sugar loaves and wheat flour) and clothes are distributed to the indigent families, who were unable to pay for a proper ceremony for their children.

In cities like Fés or Meknés the food for the occasion is more elaborate and its preparation more painstaking. A preserve made of pumpkins⁸⁸ is served for seven days. Either at lunch or dinner a *trīd* dish or chicken *mḍerbal* is served. In the afternoon, the latter is provided at afternoon tea. The serving of this vegetable continues as a table ritual until the seventh day.

In Salé, the celebration is more colourful. During the month preceding the festival, wax is collected from the local beekeepers⁸⁹, to be used to make multicoloured lanterns in very intricate designs. This work is carried out by families, to whom the craft has been handed down from generation to generation. These lanterns are carried in a procession bearing a heavily decorated mantle for the tomb of the local saint. The parade of lanterns is followed by the *Mawlid* dancers and musicians as it threads its way through all the large thoroughfares of the city en-route to the mausoleum of the local saint. In the evening the educated members of society chant panegyric songs about the Prophet and, in a similar vein, all *zawiyat* and *madrasat* organize *sama*^c and similar *milodiya* ceremonials⁹⁰ including *Kesksu* with *tefaya* for the attendants. On the seventh day, a lantern is sent to each of seven local saints (including a lady saint) and the followers of each saint organise their dinner party with *sama*^c and *dīkr*.

In the countryside the celebration by the masses is quite different. The festival is called the *Mawsem*⁹¹ (season) and is the only celebration that is still linked to the solar calendar. For this reason, although it is intended to celebrate the birth of the Prophet, which itself is defined according to the lunar calendar, the two seldom coincide. In this case the summer festival takes place after the harvest and is thus not held on the

⁸⁸ It takes several hours to prepare this vegetable, since it contains a great deal of water. Hence a large quantity is required to produce only a few kilos of preserve.

⁸⁹ The nearby forest of Ma 'mora is well-known for the quality of its honey.

⁹⁰ The reading of Quranic verses and religious poems. In several *zawiyat* of the country, a party called *Milodiya* is organised. Furthermore some families, in Fés, Safi, Marrakesh mark the event with private entertainment in their homes by a group of *Issawa* or *Gnawa*.

⁹¹ There are more than six hundred *mawsem* in Morocco, most of which take place in the summer at the end of the harvest season. From North to South, every year each area has its own way of celebrating.

12th Rabi^c I. Instead, throughout rural Morocco there are celebrations in honour of the local patron saint. These last for seven days and, for the benefit of the masses participating, rows of marquees are erected. Hence the participants can camp free of charge and spend several days enjoying themselves with free food and entertainment. Various groups of singers, dancers and storytellers from each area participating in the *Mawsem* are available to entertain the crowd. Horse-riders exhibit their riding skills and perform “fantasia”, charging an imaginary enemy, and firing their ancient muzzle-loading muskets in the air. There is also another practice that is opposed until today by Muslim scholars, namely: the manner in which many people slaughter bulls and other offerings in the ‘name of the saint’. It should be noted that it is normal in Islam, whenever animals are being slaughtered, for the act to be in the name of Allah (God).

Ramadan

For Muslims this is the holiest month⁹² of the whole year as it was during this period that the first verses of the Quran were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. The faithful must fast⁹³ from sunrise to sunset; that is to say, they must refrain from eating, drinking and smoking cigarettes or tobacco. So in effect the clock is reversed during this month for, in terms of living, night becomes day. This period is also referred to as *shahr al ghufrān* meaning that all grudges must be forgotten and that visits between friends and relatives should be encouraged. Since the Muslim calendar is lunar-based, Ramadan can fall in winter or summer. The food to be eaten is therefore adjusted to the season, light dishes with salad being served in the summer, whilst hot dishes with warming ingredients are served during the cold months.

Despite being a month devoted to prayer, Ramadan⁹⁴ is the busiest month of the year for tradesmen, who begin their preparations well before its onset. Shops are cleared of

⁹² In Ramadan there are more salat than in any other month: *salāt at tarawih*. Verses from the Quran are read every night especially on the eve of the 27th day of Ramadan.

⁹³ The duration of fasting varies from winter to summer: from eight hours in winter to about fourteen in summertime. The travellers, the sick and the old that cannot fast, are excused and it is even forbidden for them to fast if they are not in good health.

⁹⁴ R. Le Tourmeau op. cit. describes Ramadan with a special reference to Fés. p.134-137.

old stock and re-stocked with ingredients appropriate for Ramadan. Honey has to be stockpiled, since during this holy month the population uses seventy percent of its annual consumption, (30,000 tonnes in Morocco in 1994). The *sefnaj* alters his timing and prepares *sferj* for *fotor* in minimal quantities, since the bulk of his effort is directed towards *shebakiya* and *mukharqa*. Again these are stored in quantity, since they can be kept in jars for months. Shops specialising in dried fruits *sahib al fakiha* or *mul fakiya*, multiply, since everyone tends to break his fast by eating dates first. Hence the markets carry a wide variety of dates from all countries, ranging from soft juicy ones to the hardest; the latter being a dried variety from the Moroccan Sahara called *daqqa*. In addition to dates the market vendors offer figs on strings called *shariha*⁹⁵, raisins, sultanas, almonds, walnuts, sesame seeds, coconut, groundnuts, prunes, apricots and peaches. In fact the demand for shop space is so great that the vendors put rugs in the street and pile their goods upon them.

Before the onset of Ramadan, the housewife makes sure that she has bought the spices required for *ḥarīra*⁹⁶, a special soup made for Ramadan. The latter is labour intensive, requiring several ingredients and must be prepared fresh every day. Hence, where appropriate, the spices for *ḥarīra* are washed and dried in the sun, or in the *kanoon* (oven). They are subsequently ground and stored in jars for daily use. This process is necessary because the housewife buys in large quantities, to last her at least a month, thus saving a great deal of time, as she will be kept busy throughout the day, even though the meals are only for the evening. Strangely enough, despite the fact that it is supposed to be a month of sharing the poverty and hunger endured by those who can not afford three meals a day, Ramadan tends to be the month when most food is bought. In fact the Moroccans are more extravagant in Ramadan than in any other month. It is also during this month that large quantities of milk are consumed and orders are placed well in advance with *Maḥlaba*⁹⁷. Fresh parsley, fresh coriander and

⁹⁵ In Morocco figs are not called *tin* as in Arabic but *shariha*, which means thread, since figs are dried after picking on strings and sold in this form.

⁹⁶ The *ḥarīra* soup is always green and there are several types of *ḥarīra*. The bulk of the population distribute this soup to the needy or those who cannot make it such as : old people, bachelors, porters and wardens. Their ration of *ḥarīra* continues until the end of Ramadan.

⁹⁷ *Baqal* (lit. green-grocer) but, with the French protectorate, towns became larger and all names were confused, so that now there are: *Baqal* (grocer) *Maḥlaba* (Dairy) *ḥanūt* (spicer) *Khadar* (greengrocer).

fresh celery are brought to the market in bulk every day. Obviously more hectares have been planted to cater for the occasion. At times tomatoes are the greatest problem, as tomatoes are vital, since without them, there is no *harīra*. There is a great deal of speculation in this commodity, so the authorities at times have to intervene as loads of tomatoes are hidden to keep the price high. But people are still prepared to pay the price, because it is Ramadan.

However important all these preparations may seem, the principal preoccupation of the believers is the correct identification of the beginning of the fast, the accuracy of which is always closely scrutinised. For, despite all the advances of modern technology in time keeping it is only the local mosque that can let the believers know convincingly when to start or break the fast. Thus, because of the small but noticeable time variations caused by the geographical position of the mosque, the *Muwaqit* not only has his office/observatory on the roof of the mosque itself, but also lives in the precincts of the building.

After the *naffār*⁹⁸ announces the end of the *ṣohūr*, the streets become those of a dead city until around midday, when markets start to be filled with the produce of the day and the entire hubbub begins again. The noise of Ramadan differs from one town to another. In large cities where people start their work at around 9 o'clock and where the European community is still significant, the traffic congestion starts earlier than in smaller towns, whereas in remote villages, everything remains dead until after the *salāt ad-dhuhr* (1.00 p.m.). Then the hustle-bustle of market and buyers is animated again until a few minutes before *foṭor*, when people are rushing to get home for breakfast. If people are caught in the street whilst the siren announces the end of the fast, in large cities like Casablanca it is like wartime, when people are looking for shelter. Taxis fail to stop, buses will avoid certain stops and traffic lights become more dangerous.

The first course in the Ramadan *foṭor* breakfast is the sacred *harīra*, whether the season be winter or summer, since *harīra* is intrinsically associated with Ramadan. It is accompanied by figs, dates, *shebakiya* and also a powder, which people eat to increase their resistance against the hunger of the day. This is called *seffoof* or *sello* and its preparation reveals the wealth of the household. It should contain a great deal of almond and sesame seeds, although some people cheat by adding more flour than these two ingredients put together. After the *harīra* course comes the coffee, with either *sfenj* or *melwi* or one of the following: *kefta tajīn*, fried fish or brochettes. If Ramadan occurs in winter the *foṭor* is earlier, meaning that there are more eating hours and also being winter or cold weather, people have greater appetites. Whereas, if it occurs in the summer, lighter meals are prepared, so the session after *harīra* could be cold cooked dishes, cooked salads, offal, *briwāt/qanānit* “cigar-shaped pastries” of meat. Other possibilities, depending upon the locality are: in the area of Marrakesh/Zagora, milk and *laban* (sour milk) with dried fruit and fresh seasonal fruit, (watermelon, melons etc) or, on the shores of the Mediterranean or the Atlantic ocean fish and salad are more usual. But if it is winter, more meat is served and pulses are used with meat dishes, *loubia / °adas bil khli*⁹⁸. Dinner follows, which is a complete meal, as if it were a proper lunch or dinner, which, depending upon the pocket of the household, ranges from a one-course meal to several, but meat is essential. The last meal must be taken before dawn. Again depending upon the financial standing of the family, the region and the season, this could vary from being a light meal consisting of *jben* and *būshiyar* or *melawi* with butter and honey and mint tea to a proper meal with *tajīns*. This is the daily fare of Ramadan, except that on the 15th people prepare *trīd* for dinner. The children⁹⁹ from the age of seven are also encouraged to fast a day or two. A small party is organised for the child who fasts for the first time, and he/she is treated like a guest on that day. The children wear new

⁹⁸ A sort of “knocker up” who blows a long trumpet to wake the people for the *suhur* : the last meal before dawn. He is also called the *daqaq* or *sahār* or *tabāl* depending on the instruments he plays to awake people.

⁹⁹ See Westermarck *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*- MacMillan and Co Ltd -London 1926, Vol. II p. 98.

clothes and they are showered with compliments and presents. Some children start fasting like adults from the age of puberty.

The Ramadan fast seems most onerous during the first week but after this one gets used to it. The most hectic days of the month are the last three days, for it was specifically during these days that the first verses of the Quran were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. There is a religious connotation to the food too. On the 26th day, just after *fotor* people group together either as a family or amongst friends and spend the night praying at the mosque: *lailat al qadri* (the sacred night). *Kesksu* is prepared by households and sent to the poor, who crowd the mosque. A separate meal is prepared by the family, the common dish is either *trīd* again or *Djāj mūhammer*. When the husbands have gone to the mosque, the women remain to pray at home, often in the company of relatives or friends. When *salāt tarawah* is finished, people have a meal before dawn with dried fruit and tea. Thus the streets are animated throughout the night as if it were day. The following day women bake *qrashel* small loaves of bread (with sugar and fennel seeds) and distribute these with figs, when they visit (*ziyara*) the tombs of their dead relatives. The Quran is read at each tomb by *fuqaha*¹⁰⁰, wearing white djellabas, who have come to the cemetery, hoping to be hired by families to recite a few verses.

Islam recommends *zakāt*, (alms giving) in the month of Ramadan. On the penultimate night, each family makes donations in the form of *fiṭra*¹⁰¹ wheat in grain. A *Ratl* of wheat for each head in the household is measured and given to the poor before the end of Ramadan. The *sadaqa* (charity) is supposed to leave the house before the *‘id* celebration. Instead of wheat, the price of a *ratl* could be converted into money and given to the poor and needy. The latter are either known to the family, or they knock on doors to collect alms.¹⁰² This does not disturb the house, as the women are busy the whole night through, baking cakes and making *beghrir* and are expecting such

¹⁰⁰ It could be a young student or people from other trades coming to earn a few dirhams by reciting Quranic verses.

¹⁰¹ See Westermarck op. cit. p.100.

calls. When the *°Id* is announced¹⁰³ either by public siren or by *neffār*, in the early morning of the *°Id*, a special breakfast is prepared for men going to the *Salāt al °Id*, which normally takes place in the *msalla* on the outskirts of towns or villages, where they listen to the *Khoṭba* by the local imam¹⁰⁴. For this *salāt*, people leave their houses early to be able to find a place for prayer. Therefore before leaving for the *Salāt al °Id*: a soup is made with either semolina and fennel seeds with milk or rice with milk, sugar and orange blossom-water or *shā°rya* (hand-made vermicelli) with buttermilk *zubda bildiya* and milk. In larger households the house is animated by male friends grouping in one house, either because it is closer to the mosque or because they have arranged for those who have cars to leave from there. In this case, the soup is served to everyone between 5 a.m. and 6 a.m.

At about 10 a.m. the crowd from the mosque has dispersed and the head of the family is often accompanied by his friends to the house wishing everybody a happy *id* or having a full breakfast together. This consists everywhere of *beghrir*, *malwi*, fried *raghaif* and *msemen*, all drenched in butter and honey, served with hot mint tea. What follows this *°Id* breakfast is common to all households, during the majority of festivals. But it is important to exchange cakes and *msemen* dry without butter or honey, (presumably to keep them fresh). These delicacies are sent as dishes with children either to neighbours or relatives. The children are very happy to do this, because they are complimented on their new dresses and given some money. So that, at the end of the day, they are counting their money and comparing their gains with each other.

¹⁰² R. Le Tourneau op. cit. each family had its regular poor. p. 137.

¹⁰³ Being a lunar month, unless the *hilal* (crescent) is seen, no guarantee is given to assume that the *id* is the next day. But today, as meteorology is so advanced, the Ministry of *awqaf* works very hard in assuring the population that the crescent was seen and confirmed.

¹⁰⁴ The imam is only the head of the mosque, with no religious power whatsoever. Morocco being a Sunni Muslim country, all religious power is invested in the King. *Khoṭba* (discourse).

^{sc}Id Al Adhā or ^cId El Kebir

Often referred to as the Sacrifice of the sheep but in Berber it is referred to as ^cId *Amoqran* (meaning the great festival) or *Ta Feska*¹⁰⁵. The native Moroccan sheep is slaughtered in quantity at this festival. Amongst the breeds available the black and white-faced race *sardi* in the Tadla is reputed to produce good meat, as does that of the Chaouia. The *hamrat ar rās* (red headed) sheep of Oujda is less prized and is cheaper, for here the fodder is mainly doum and alfafa, unlike the better fare of the highly agricultural regions¹⁰⁶. It is suggested that meat from the mountainous regions should be avoided, as this meat is tough. In contrast to Europe, herds are taken in early morning to graze and brought back in the evening to get water, sometimes to be fed with *sha ^cir*, (rye). Hence because they have been fed on dried grass, (hay or rye), their meat has a better taste, especially so if the herd comes from a breeding farm, where special care is taken about their diet. Lamb is sought after, not only for its meat, but also for its wool.¹⁰⁷ The streets of towns and villages are crowded with herds being driven hither and thither. However, big cities now have market areas where a special viewing is possible before choosing one's sheep.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ For Ta Feska see Westernmarck, *Belief and Ritual in Morocco* Vol. II p. 116.

¹⁰⁶ Aoudad, the wild horned sheep of North Africa, *Ammotragus lervia*, of the subfamily Caprinae, in the order Artiodactyla. They are also known as Barbary sheep. Seven subspecies are found from Morocco to Tunisia and southwards into the mountains of the northern Sahara. The sandy colour of the Aoudad in the wild provides natural camouflage against the sand and rock of the habitat. About 1 metre high at the shoulder, the animal is one of the larger inhabitants of the Atlas Mountains. It has massive horns up to 76 cm long, terminating in points, and a thick mane hanging from the chest and forelegs. The aoudad gets water from sparse vegetation and dew. The females and their young gather in small herds that the rams join during the mating season. It was domesticated about 6000 years ago. This type of Ram is different from the Middle Eastern variety which is found as far west as the South of Tunisia (short and fatty tail : *Btar*). The remainder of North Africa breeds descend from the Aoudad race, in particular the *Sardi* i.e. the black and white face, is much prized. Encarta Encyclopaedia Funk & Wagnall's Corporation 1993.

¹⁰⁷ A *haydora* is made from the ^c *id al kebir* animal's skin. The wool collected from the sacrificed lamb is treated with great care, it is called *Lalla Meni* and children are not to play with it. It is washed and stored to make a blanket (its sanctity makes an ideal cover for a dying person) or prayer rug. Foreign Muslim scholars frown upon the latter. E. Laoust op. cit (Eléments d'Ethnographie) p. 81: Skin from the sacrifice to help women when they give birth. When women decide between them the day they are going to work on their wool, which is called *ghassa tadot* (Berb.), they celebrate the first day with tea served with *amlo*, bread and olive oil. In the plains *shghil soof* is celebrated with *Kesksu*.

¹⁰⁸ It is important that the sheep should have horns and the bigger they are the more it is valued. The age of the sheep should be either *tmi* (two years old) or maximum *raba^ci* (four).

The markets are transformed during this period and, at times, shops are so crowded with buyers that new merchants establish themselves right on the roadside, just as in Ramadan, so that dried fruit piled up in pyramidal shapes: prunes, raisins, sesame seeds (for making *mūrozīya*) etc. But new shops also appear: people specialising in selling herbs for *naḥqa*, i.e. dried rosebuds, myrtle, cloves, lavender, myrrh and henna plus white squares of cotton cloth. These herbs are used by women and girls only, who take the opportunity, whilst the men are busy slaughtering the sheep, to apply these herbs, mixed with rose water, to their hair, in order to prevent the smell of blood and animals disturbing them. This mixture stays on their hair for one or two days, covered with the light cotton cloth bought for the occasion. The odour of this mixture becomes stronger as it dries and it even clings to the hair after four to six washes.

Prominent in the streets during *ʿId al Adhā* are knife-sharpeners, skewer-makers, rope-sellers and makers of rectangular *mejmar* for kebabs. People from the mountains and arid areas invade towns too. They make a special collection of medicinal herbs: *shīh* (artemisia) for relief after eating an excess of meat and thyme for coping with fatty food. So each household buys a special reserve of these herbs just in case, since all chemists' shops are closed for the week and these herbs are known to have worked as far back as anyone can recall.

Spices for *mūrozīya* are also purchased, especially *Rās al ḥanūt*. It is used in two dishes in *ʿId al Kebīr*. First in the *mūrozīya*, this recipe being less frequently used than the second. It is shared or tried between friends and relatives and could be kept for a month or so without being in a refrigerator. The second recipe is called *lemjabna*. It is a sort of haggis, Moroccan style, consisting of the stomach of a sheep filled with cubes of meat seasoned with a *Rās al ḥanūt* called *lemsakhan*, a Berber word meaning "the one that makes you hot". The stomach is filled with the above ingredients, sewn up and left to dry in the sun, being taken out each morning for this purpose and subsequently being brought in at dusk. This "bag" is used in *ʿAshura* cooked with either semolina *Kesksu* or *shīʿir* (barley) *Kesksu*. If it is not used for

°*Ashura*, some people keep it until *Sha°ban*, to celebrate *sha°bana*¹⁰⁹. This dish would by then be very strongly flavoured, having been kept in its spices for nearly eight months. If the *mejabna* is kept for °*Ashura* then *kurdās* is used instead. *Kurdas*¹¹⁰ is prepared later in the few days that follow the °*Id*. Tripes, after being cleaned, salted and spiced are filled with *sheh̄ma* (caul fat) and small bundles and layers of *sheh̄ma* and tripes are stringed with intestines. They are all left in the sun to dry like the other preparation. The *Kurdas* is added to give more taste to *Kesksu*, which is consumed within a close circle of family and friends, but never presented to guests¹¹¹. Hence for all these long-lasting recipes, buying the right spices and having them prepared before the festivals is vital.

The day before °*Id al Adhā* is called *yom °Arafa*, corresponding to the day the pilgrims in Mecca mount the hill of °*Arafat*. This day is sacred to the Muslims and some families slaughter a sheep and organise a *Sadaqa*. *Kesksu* is prepared and either sent to mosques, or *fuqaha* come to the house and recite verses of the Quran and dinner is served to them; traditionally it is *Kesksu*. Alternatively, money is distributed to the poor for *Arafat*.

On the eve of the °*Id al Adhā*, some women, before going to bed at night, put some *khol* on the right eye¹¹² of the sheep and a red mark with henna between his eyes. The spices are ready to be used, the knives are sharpened, and the ropes are slung on a ladder to hang the carcass in order to skin it. A *moghazla*¹¹³ is borrowed from the lady of the house, as are buckets and towels for washing hands and also the area where the slaughter is taking place, which is preferably next to the *mejra* (gutter), where water can flow freely. At dawn, just as at all °*Ids*, the same soup is prepared for people going to the *Msallā*. When the men return from prayers, it is a tradition in Morocco that no-one is supposed to start slaughtering before the King, being the *amir*

¹⁰⁹ See chapter V under *sha °bana*.

¹¹⁰ "the bundled one".

¹¹¹ All dried meats, (except for *khl̄°*), for consumption at breakfast, are used within the family and it would be insulting to present these dishes to guests.

¹¹² See Westermarck op.cit. p. 116.

¹¹³ *Moghazla*, a distaff, to help in the blowing of the skin, to separate it from the meat.

al mu'minin (Prince of the Believers), has killed his first sheep. Usually people take their cue from the imam of the mosque who, in any case, would never kill his sheep before the king had done so. Nowadays people see the *dabīha*¹¹⁴ on the television, so no-one concerns himself about the activities of the imam of the mosque, but before the arrival of television, people waited until the imam of the mosque in towns and villages began slaughtering and then followed suit.

The butcher is normally the head of the family, a friend or, at times, a real butcher, some of whom acquire the reputation of having *benna* i.e. his slaughtering technique is so special that it enhances the taste of the meat. Strangely enough, some people wait for hours to have their sheep killed by such a person¹¹⁵. Thus slaughterers can become accredited to particular families and may be called in for other occasions, such as slaughtering for a birth, circumcision of a boy or weddings. Normally the average weight of a carcass is about fifteen kilograms. It stays hanging up for the whole day until the blood has been drained. The *dowāra* (offal) is consumed the same day, making kebabs called *būlfāf* meaning the “wrapped kebab”. Indeed, cubes of liver and (rarely) lung are wrapped in strips of caul-fat before being grilled. There should be enough for everybody in the house¹¹⁶ and even for skewers of *būlfāf* to be exchanged between neighbours and relatives. As it is the first bite that people have tried, it is at this moment that the quality of the meat and the *benna* is discussed and disputed, i.e. if the *yād* (hand) of the *jazzār* is *benina*. Then for the evening, people prepare either *dowāra* (tripe) or a meat dish, but the tradition is not to touch the meat on the first day. The following day steamed head is served for breakfast and all the bones are collected for *būharus*¹¹⁷. Although the first day of the *‘Id* is a busy one for both men and women, men tend to do more work on the second day too, as they have to butcher the carcass, so that the housewife can carry on with her different

¹¹⁴ Slaughtering.

¹¹⁵ The *jazzār* (slaughterer) has the duty to be clean, i.e. free from *janaba* (sexual contact). He is also a person known to perform his daily prayers.

¹¹⁶ Special bread for eating with *būlfāf*, called *bushiyyar*, is made in the house, since the public ovens are closed for the day.

¹¹⁷ The housewife makes sure that she has collected all the bones of the skull and has thrown them out with the rubbish. If she misses a single bone, the belief is that she will be breaking cooking vessels all the year round. See Westermarck op. cit. p.130. & Doutté *Marrakesh* II p. 369.

preparations. A section of the meat is distributed amongst the poor, (*sadaqa*). The husband and wife decide what is to be cooked for the *tajm*, what they will take when visiting relatives and what they will cook when the latter visit them, (*la^crada*)¹¹⁸ but it is usually *lektef* the shoulder,¹¹⁹ either left or right according to the region.

Exchanges of cooked dishes and visits take place for a few days, then the rest of the meat¹²⁰ is prepared in *mūrozīya* and *qadīd*. The former is prepared from the four shins and the spine of the animal. The meat is left on the bone and cut into small pieces. These are mixed with *rās al hanūt* spices and the meat itself is stabbed many times with a sharp knife to ensure that the spices are absorbed. Water and olive oil are then added and the meat is cooked for about four hours, until there is no water remaining. Honey and raisins are subsequently added and the whole batch of *mūrozīya* is placed in jars, which are sealed and kept for use in *°Ashura*. As for *qadīd*, its preparation stems from an old method of preserving meat. Special ingredients are mixed with boneless meat, cut into long strips hung on cords, which are exposed to the sun from sunrise until sunset everyday, until they are as hard as stone. As the mixture contains garlic and vinegar, this also helps to keep away insects. *Qadīd* is used throughout the year. This period is also the opportunity for little girls to try their hands since meat is plentiful. The mother might therefore give them a small portion of fresh meat to make *khaylota*.¹²¹ The potter makes small *tajms* and *brema o cascās*¹²² to involve young girls in cooking at an early age, whilst their mothers give them some spices. They can then refer to her for any advice they may need and, between them, they will decide what dish they are going to prepare.

¹¹⁸ Invitation.

¹¹⁹ It is customary to cook the shoulder for dinner on the second day of the *°Id* but people from different regions cannot agree whether it is the left or right shoulder they should eat first. In the countryside though the practice is still considered important as they use the scapula to forecast the next agrarian year. (i) H. Basset : "l'omoplate du mouton de l'*Aid Kbir* est conservé pour y lire des présages sur l'avenir ou des indications météorologiques". p. 106 (ii) Doutté op.cit p. 369 (iii) Westermarck op.cit p. 128, (iv) M. Laoust *Etude sur le dialecte Berbère* - Paris 1918 p. 320. (v) H. Basset op. cit. "Bouharoos est célébré le deuxième jour de l'*Aid Kébir*." p. 108,

¹²⁰ Depending on the numbers in the family, at times more than one lamb may be killed, or may be a calf, but the norm for a couple with small children is a lamb.

¹²¹ S. Biarnay *Notes d'ethnographie et de linguistique nord africaines*- Ernest Leroux Paris 1924. p. 79.

¹²² Receptacle for *Kesksu*.

The skin of the sheep is left on the roof or in a courtyard, sprinkled with salt, until the family decides what is to be done with it. They can send it to the tanner to make a *haydora* or the wool may be removed and the skin sent to the tanneries for making *ta^crija* (drums), as ^c*Ashura* is getting close¹²³. The horns are collected by the *meshāt*, the traditional comb-maker, who also makes *m'kaḥel*, (sticks for applying kohl) or *qarshel* to knit blankets.

The Bujlud/Bil Mawn festival

This festival has several names in Arabic and the Berber dialects, but all of them refer to “the one with skins” :

Arabic names: *Bulb ṭain* (sing. *bṭana*), *Sba^c bul Bṭain* (the lion with skins),¹²⁴ *Saṭ* or *Sa^csa* (snake), *Baba Sheikh* (old father), *Sheikh Shyouch* (oldest of all) - *herma* (the decrepit).

Berber names: *Buhuidar* (sing. *Haidora*), *Bu Islikhan*, *Bil Mawn* (in sing. skin *Ilim* , plu. *Ilmawn*, thus the one with skins=*Imawn*).

On the second day of this ^c*Id al Adhā* festival, the masquerade of *Bil Mawn/Bujlud* occurs and lasts between three and seven days.¹²⁵ A bachelor¹²⁶ is chosen as *Bil Mawn/Bujlud* and paid for his services by the community. Several skins are donated for making the *Bil Mawn/Bujlud* dress. The *Bilmawn* or *Bujlud* outfit is made with the skins of the animals that were slaughtered for the ^c*Id al Adhā* or *Ta Fesca* (Berb.).¹²⁷

¹²³ See ^c*Ashura*.

¹²⁴ For names see E. Westermarck *Ritual and Belief in Morocco* vol. II p. 134.

¹²⁵ H. Basset op. cit. *Le Culte des Grottes au Maroc* : ‘ La mascarade n’a lieu qu’ à l’occasion de L’*Aid Kébir*.’p. 107.

¹²⁶ Normally it is preferable that the person who plays *Bil Mawn/Bujlud*, suffers from a skin disease, such as eczema, because of a belief that wearing fresh skins on his naked body will have a healing effect. In Fés this role was usually performed by the local *ferran*, the baker. C.f. E. Westermarck op. cit. p143.

¹²⁷ Laoust *Hesperis I*, p. 269. And for *Bil Mawn* p. 280.

He covers himself from head to foot with sheepskins and hooves are attached to his hands and feet. He blackens his face with soot and wears a mask¹²⁸. On his head he wears two long spiral horns on each of which is stuck an orange, whose purpose is to carry long feathers. Around his neck are hung necklaces made with snail shells, but the most striking feature of the *Bil Mawn/Bujlud* outfit is its set of genitals¹²⁹.

Bil Mawn/Bujlud carries a long stick of up to 4 metres in length, so that he can strike the people who are outside the range of his hooves. The 'blows' that he strikes appear to be beneficial to the crowd that follows him and even babies and old people are presented to him for this purpose. Westermarck¹³⁰ has noticed in the Souss that people call him "Lord": "Lord give us a good year", "Lord we hope to see you next year and the year after".

The character of *Bil Mawn* is accompanied by his servant *Ismakh*, who wears long ears¹³¹ and carries ashes in a bag to throw at children when they attack his master or tease him. The characters of *Bil Mawn* and his servant are devoid of speech, their communication being by provocative gestures.

The group of *Bil Mawn's* entertainers varies between six and twelve in number and they are all men or young boys. The latter wear women's clothes to perform female characters, such as *Bil Mawn's* fiancée, called by such names as the 'mad Aisha, Halima, Suna, 'Attiqa etc.' She is a clumsy bride, who cannot cook properly and all her complaints relate to sexual deprivation. The team has a Qadi, who passes burlesque sentences on old *Bil Mawn's* impotence. Satirical attacks are made on the local governor or the country's financial wazir in his dealings with foreign ambassadors.¹³² The play centres around irrational behaviour in normal daily life, such as ploughing the threshing floor with ashes scattered upon it. *Bil Mawn's* party is

¹²⁸ The tanner makes the mask for the masquerade. It has a woollen beard attached to it and incorporates a small stick for the performer to hold in his mouth for the purpose of moving the face.

¹²⁹ I was told by my informants in Azemmour that these were carved by the local joiner before the festival takes place.

¹³⁰ (i) Westermarck op. cit. p. 138. See also Mouliéras, *Une tribu Zénète anti-musulmane au Maroc*- p. 103-148 (ii) Laoust in *Hespéris I*, pp.280 & 303 (iii) H. Basset op. cit. p. 107.

¹³¹ A pair of traditional shoes *belgha*, one on each side, to give him prominent ears like a donkey.

¹³² The tendency is to lampoon contemporary political personalities.

accompanied by musicians and dancing. Both Douттé¹³³ and Westermarck observed that *Bil Mawn* entered houses, his favourite place being the hearth¹³⁴, where he overturns pots and pans and rolls in the ashes.¹³⁵ Only the women remain at home and *Bil Mawn's* party is very abusive to them. Despite this the women give them presents in the form of foodstuffs: *Bil Mawn's sebt*¹³⁶ contains eggs, poultry, flour and at times money. In the evenings of the festival the team of actors shares the offerings between them and cooks a meal. After a short rest they perform in the town/village square whatever satirical play they have devised with its immoral and allegorical settings. Although in the past the performance had a religious content, the people regarded it mainly as entertainment *frajā*. However, because of its bawdy nature, European authors¹³⁷ expressed their shock and deep concern at such masquerades. Westermarck¹³⁸ relates that the festival had other manifestations such as racing between villages. The skin of the sheep was fought over between riders and the play could take the whole day, with a record being kept of the winners of that year.

Today the tradition is fading away and only small towns and villages still perform the masquerade. Furthermore *Bil Mawn's* party is no longer admitted in the house, but presents are exchanged for blessings at the threshold. However, in Douттé's time *Bil Mawn's* festival was still in its heyday and was celebrated everywhere in rural and urban Morocco.

Muḥarram and ʿAshura

This is the Muslim New Year. Normally people do not mark it with any special celebrations. Good wishes are exchanged and some families prepare *Kesksu* with seven vegetables. A few days later the markets are full of new kinds of goods. There

¹³³ Douттé *Magie et Religions* p. 507. & Destaing "Fêtes et coutumes saisonnières chez les Beni Snous" in *Revue Africaine* 1, (Alger, 1906).

¹³⁴ The first house he visits gives him the scapula of the sacrificial lamb to foretell the agrarian year for them. Similarly the professional scapula reader *ketafa* collects them to make charms. C.f. Westermarck op.cit vol II, p128 and Douттé *Marrakech*, p.369.

¹³⁵ A. Moulrières op. cit. "une caisse remplie de cendre qu'il jette à la figure." p. 103.

¹³⁶ *Bil Mawn's Sebt* in certain areas is made of the large intestine of the sacrificed lamb, filled with eggs, meat, flour and butter. See Abdellah Hammoudi *The Victim and its Masks* –an essay on sacrifice and masquerade in the Maghrib. The University of Chicago Press- Chicago and London 1993.

¹³⁷ Westermarck op.cit. p. 137 "indecent dance". Also see E. Laoust in *Hesperis* I, p.259.

¹³⁸ Westermarck op.cit. p. 133.

are drums of all kinds and toys, dried fruit appears on all the stalls. Some shops, where normally a cobbler or a haberdasher used to trade, are changed into *ta[°]rija* and *bandir*¹³⁹ sellers (drum-sellers) for a week or two, to cater for the demand. Potters from different regions of Morocco will have produced a wide variety of models to tempt the people to try their luck and buy a nice-sounding drum. There is thus a real *din* in the market for a week or so before the festival of *°Ashura*. In Morocco the festival begins with mourning for ten days, which takes distinct forms, with varying degrees of intensity in different parts of the country. In general the men wear black and do not shave.¹⁴⁰ The women are also in mourning, they wear no perfume, dress soberly and do not work at their looms nor are the young girls attending their schools with their *ma[°]lma*.¹⁴¹ Also, no wool or silks are dyed and all artistic crafts are left untouched. Furthermore, during these ten days no marriages are celebrated. In rural areas the mourners weep (some women even scratch their faces), they weep in this case not for Hossain but for *Baba °Ashur* who has died and is to be buried. The young girls and women bring out the bones they have gathered¹⁴² for *°Ashura* with pieces of new cloth as a burial shroud for *Baba °Ashur*.¹⁴³ Whilst the girls chant *°Ashur*, the men build a fire. Generally, the women cut off a little of their hair and throw it in the fire, whilst some also cut pieces of clothing to offer in the same manner. A little meat-fat from *°Id al Adhā*, particularly from the *dialā* (tail) is also thrown in. Other practices involve jumping over the fire and, in the countryside, the *f[°]hāl*, (ram) “King” of the flocks, is carried to jump across the fire.

¹³⁹ R. Le Tourneau op. cit. the mourning could last a whole month during which no music is played and toys are bought for children p. 141. *Bandir* (pendere Latin) is a circular instrument made like a sieve, covered with skin, with three strings in the middle. *Ta[°]rija* come in different lengths from 30cm to the *da °do[°]* (Marrakesh), nearly a metre long and carried on a man’s shoulders for drumming. The potter, after painting this instrument, sends it to the tanner, who adds a sheep or goat-skin, along with one to four strings. It is then delivered to the shop. The *Ta[°]rija* is peculiar to Morocco.

¹⁴⁰ H. Basset op. cit. “Il est defendu aux hommes de se raser la tête, aux femmes de se teindre au henné..p. 105. It is said that they also abstain from sexual contact.

¹⁴¹ Embroidery, weaving. See (i) Gaudefroy-Demombynes “La fête de Ashura à Tunis “ in *Revue des traditions populaires XVIII* Paris. 1903 p.11. (ii) Castells- Note sur la fête de Ashura à Rabat- Les Archives Berbères. Vol I Paris. 1916 p.5.

¹⁴² Principally from the *°Id al Adha* , one month earlier.

¹⁴³ H. Basset op. cit. “Les petites filles font des simulacres d’enterrement une poupée faite d’un os et de chiffons”. p. 80.

This is a time when the people *°ashar*¹⁴⁴ i.e. give alms or an offering, of anything they deem appropriate. The belief is that the more that one *°ashar*, the more one will receive during the year. The eve of the tenth night is the night when the men are most afraid, for it is on this night that the women who practice witchcraft are believed to be most successful. Babies are well guarded and protected and are not taken outside. Amulets are put on them, as are scorpions fashioned out of black beads, to protect them. The ceremonies, praising the goodness of *Baba °Ashur*, last most of the night. During this night *Baba °Ashur* is buried, that is to say, a small grave is dug in some appropriate spot, for example at the foot of a tree. Into this grave is placed *Baba °Ashur*, in the form of bones wrapped in the funeral shroud mentioned earlier.

During the days of mourning, the diet is light. A thick soup *dashīsha* is boiled and eaten with *smen* and olive oil. Lentils are prepared without meat, as is *Kesksu* with seven vegetables, fresh or dried. However, on the eve of *°Ashura*, meat is served. One should eat dried meat preserved in spices, kept from the *°Id al kebir* (Festival of the Sacrifice). Either one keeps *dialā* (Tadla, Sale and Rabat), the most fatty part of the sheep, or simply a *qadīd* with vegetables or even a *lemjebna* (stomach), stuffed with cubes of spiced dried meat, which has been kept for the occasion.¹⁴⁵ It is the custom throughout Morocco to serve *Kesksu* as the funeral meal. It is a sacred duty to serve this dish, whenever there is bereavement, whether one be rich or poor. Therefore it is very significant to have a *Kesksu* served with meat kept from the Festival of the Sacrifice. If the family is numerous, some fresh meat may be added, but the *qadīd* is symbolic for this evening. In certain regions, especially agricultural ones, they organise *loozi°a*¹⁴⁶, whereby a whole village subscribes to the buying of an ox to be shared amongst the villagers.

¹⁴⁴ *°ashara* = verb to give a tenth either in money or in any commodities according to the Islamic precept of almsgiving. There is here a connection between the 10th of Moharram and giving a tenth of one's wealth, the proportion being a matter of personal accountancy.

¹⁴⁵ H. Basset op. cit. p. 105.

¹⁴⁶ *Loozi °a*, a practice widespread in the Moroccan countryside, is a method of celebration, which emphasises group solidarity in the communal purchase of an animal to be slaughtered and eaten collectively for a specific ritual purpose.

All households have bought a good measure of dried fruit: almonds, walnuts, dates, raisins and chickpeas.¹⁴⁷ Each head of the family uses a measure of either a bowl or a large pot, depending upon the finances of the individual, to distribute a share to each member of the family. This they keep over several days, as it is impossible to eat it all at once. Then toys and especially *Ta'rija* are bought for girls.

As *°Ashura* identifies with bonfires, the latter are organized in each area and boys and girls jump the fire and spend the night praising *Baba °Ashur*, singing and drumming until dawn. The parents are busy counting their money, as it the custom that each individual should pay a tithe on what they earn, or simply, to evaluate their belongings and distribute alms to the poor. Some people cut a little of their hair or clothing and throw it into the bonfire, in order to have more of these the following year. So *°Ashura* is a special time for giving, in order to receive in plenty the following year. The second day is the *ziyara*, visit to the cemetery. Special small clay pots, *qaloosh*,¹⁴⁸ are made to be brought filled with water and given to young children, along with figs and bread for the poor. At the end of the day, the latter can be seen dragging along sacks of a mixture of bread and figs collected in the cemeteries. It is surprising to see that *°Ashura* is celebrated with such euphoria. It is supposed to be a period of mourning, as it commemorates the killing of Hossain, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. Some people in Morocco do in fact mourn, wearing black clothes during the ten days of *Muḥarram* and allowing their beards to grow. But the bulk of the population carries on with different festivities, in marked contrast to what occurs in Middle Eastern countries.

After the tenth day the meals are copious. First of all, dried fruits are exchanged with neighbours, (almonds, walnuts, dates, raisins, grilled chickpeas, figs etc.). Special bread is prepared *Khobz al manqosh* (a delicacy for children). It is a sweet bread cut unto decorative shapes. Doughnuts are cooked, *qrashel*, *gors*, *faqas* (all types of bread with different grains of hard and soft wheat). In the coastal towns such as Azemmour

¹⁴⁷ Salted chick-peas are roasted in sand by shops specialising in selling salted sunflower-seeds, pumpkin-seeds and groundnuts. All of these are eaten by children in the street, but not eaten in the house, since they soil the carpets and the floors and are thus frowned upon.

¹⁴⁸ E. Laoust op. cit. (*Éléments d'Ethnographie*): Il est méritoire d'acheter des cruches et d'en faire don aux pauvres enfants orphelins... Les tombes sont littéralement inondées le jour de Achoura. p.113.

and Salé, *shabel* (Shad) is cooked, especially the female, when full of eggs, because she has a better taste than the male.

The Qadīda - women only party

This is a private festival, which is celebrated as a fertility orientated ceremony being celebrated throughout the country on an occasional basis. It is usual for a mature woman to be given the task of collecting *qadīda* (dried meat) from the Festival of the Sacrifice (°*Id al kebir*). No other type of meat may be substituted. The person in question is required to collect the *qadīda* immediately after the Festival of the Sacrifice. She does this by going to families that are of good faith and who assure her that they are giving her *qadīda* from their own *qadīd*, which is in the process of drying. The people themselves are very sincere regarding the ceremony, to which they are contributing indirectly. The woman must, in principle, collect 101 *qadīda*, which obliges her to visit 101 households. She keeps this “treasure” of dried meat, until the day that it is decided to announce the festival of the *qadīda*, few months later. The festival is celebrated by women alone, who visit the *hammām* on the eve, followed by an elaborate and beautifying toilette.

The quality of the ceremony depends upon the financial resources of the host. It could be a group of playing *shikhāt* (female entertainers), giving a spicy atmosphere to the party, where some of the women taking part are sterile. The *qadīda* are used to make a *Kesksu* with spices known as *lemsakhen*¹⁴⁹ (cf *sakhana* = to heat up), i.e. “heating” spices to help women to conceive. In some families the °*attār* (spicer) is asked to be generous in his mixture and even put some *ma°joon* (hashish), to enable the women to reach a state of uninhibited happiness¹⁵⁰. All kinds of perfume and cosmetics are

¹⁴⁹ Alleged to have the following properties : stimulation of the circulatory system, regulation of the menstrual cycle, anti-depressive.

¹⁵⁰ In the Sahara this mixture is made with pickled dates for the same purpose.

distributed: *ḥenna*¹⁵¹, *kḥol*¹⁵², *swak*¹⁵³ and *nefqa*¹⁵⁴, which is a confection of aphrodisiac fragrances. Thus they leave for home to rejoin their husbands, full of joy and determined to conceive. Those who do not wish to become pregnant do not touch the *Kesksu*, for there are other types available. Usually, when recalling dates of childbirth, these are invariably memorised in terms of having eaten the *qadīda Kesksu* at the house of this or that person and giving birth nine months later. There is, in their minds, no doubt that the “spiced” and “fertilising” *Kesksu* has been the cause of several conceptions.¹⁵⁵ Thus this women only party, which occurs after *Ashura*, is called *qadīda*, a party to conceive and for women to enjoy themselves.

Sha^cbana

The month of *Sha^cban* has always been a period when people hold parties, during which they eat plenty of food, since the fasting month of Ramadan will soon be upon them. Women organise a party in which all the participants contribute towards the cost. In the past this custom extended even to the *ṭolba* (students), who would gather in the parks for *nezāha* picnics.

The second type of ceremony is a lesser known Festival celebrated in *Sha^cbana*, which is called *mlook* (sing. *Malk* spirit). This Festival is known only to believers and devotees of whom only a small number take a direct part in its celebration. The key personality in this celebration is the diviner or seer, called *Showāfa*, who is usually a woman, although male diviners or seers (*Showaf*) also exist. However, it seems to be a profession for women, possibly for religious reasons, since women are usually left undisturbed to indulge in practices that are not countenanced by the religious authorities. Once a year these women hold their *ḥadrā* (party), in which the devotees

¹⁵¹ For decorating the hands.

¹⁵² For the eyes.

¹⁵³ Bark for cleaning and polishing the teeth.

¹⁵⁴ A mixture of cloves, rosebuds, rosemary etc. for the hair.

¹⁵⁵ Several people believe in the myth of the dormant foetus *ar raqed* (Arab.) or *amejjoun* (Berb.). The claim is that the foetus can go to sleep for years and a woman attending a ceremony like this can trigger her pregnancy. See E. Laoust op. cit. (*Éléments d'Ethnographie*) “C'est une croyance générale que la grossesse peut durer plusieurs années” p.79.

participate or, as is often the case, send an offering to their favourite *Malk* (spirit) as a substitute for their physical presence and thus avoid attendance.

Dabīha lakkīra , which is a major sacrifice of a bull or a sheep, takes place in the early hours of the morning in order for the meals to be prepared for the evening party. Then follows the *Dabīha essaghira*, the small offering, consisting of colourful varieties of chicken. These are selected according to their colours, which are chosen by the devotees in accordance with advice given by the *Showāfa*, with specific reference to the ailment or problem to be cured or resolved. The colours of the chicken's feathers are selected according to the spirits¹⁵⁶ :

Black for *Mimon*, *Mimona*

Red for *Hamo*,

Yellow/gold for *Mera*,

Metallic green for *Merika/Malika*

Several colours for *Nas M'hala*,

Black and white for *Aisha Qadisha/ qandisha* and *Saih*.

With these offerings the *Showāfa* cooks a meal, making sure that salt is not added to any of the dishes; this is obligatory.¹⁵⁷ The following ingredients are included in the colourless meal: cinnamon, gum Arabic, dried coriander, olive oil and sugar/honey. Each devotee eats the meat without breaking the bones. This is the normal practice with *dabiha essaghira* (the chicken sacrifice). The devotee drinks the sauce and he or she takes a little to sprinkle in the house. Once the food has been served, those who eat it are called *waklin lahloo* “those who eat the sweet (dish)”, meaning that they have eaten the sacrificial food and from now on should eat it annually to remain healthy. Dances take place the whole night with a theme for each colour and spirit. As the *Showāfa* goes into a trance, during which her powers of prediction are at their greatest, anything she utters is taken very seriously, including the answers she gives to

¹⁵⁶ See A. Chlyeh, *Les Gnaoua du Maroc*-Editions Le Fennec Casablanca 1998. p. 41.

¹⁵⁷ For cooking the *dabiha lakkīra* rock salt is used, but this is kept to a minimum.

questions posed by her followers. The following day the *zr̄ba* “gathering” is dispersed and *tb̄iqa* (a tray which was exposed to the sky all night) containing seven bowls¹⁵⁸ dates, boiled eggs and *nefqa* are distributed amongst the departing guests. Following this the *Showāfa* goes on a pilgrimage to the mountains to the shrine of *Shem Arooj* (the Sultan of Spirits), where she makes her own sacrifice. Having served her *Mlook*, the *Showāfa* has a rest for the month of Ramadan and starts afresh a month later, with her forces renewed.

The third type of private ceremony is one at which both men and women are present and are entertained by one of the many religious sects, which abound in Morocco. E Laoust¹⁵⁹ relates that each sect had its adherents according to the craft or guild¹⁶⁰ of the individual, hence:

- The *Issawa* sect has followers amongst blacksmiths, tanners and butchers (as their work implies the usage of dangerous equipment).
- The *Darqawa* sect has tailors, bookbinders and booksellers.
- The *Gnawa*¹⁶¹ sect has travellers and merchants.
- The *Naciri/Touhami* sect has cobblers.
- The *Touati/Taibiya* sect has weavers.
- The *Toghra* sect has *sraifiya*: well diggers and those who build and maintain qanats/noria.

¹⁵⁸ The bowls are filled with the following: milk, honey, water, olive oil, daghnoo, blood from the sacrificed animal and one for fumigation.

¹⁵⁹ (i) a) Laoust in *Mots et Choses Berbères*. Callamel Paris- 1920 p 531 -b) *Les éléments d’Ethnographie Marocaine*- Librairie Coloniale et Orientale Larose Paris 1932 “Une survivance tenace d’une ancienne organisation des métiers que l’Islam ni le Makhzen ne sont pas parvenus à détruire. “pp. 224-227. (ii) L. Massignon, *Enquête sur les corporations musulmanes d’artisans et de commerçants au Maroc*- Extrait de la Revue du Monde Musulman, Paris 1925.(iii) Michaux-Bellaire *Essai sur l’histoire des confréries marocaines*- in Hespéris tome I, 1921 Paris.

¹⁶⁰ (i) R. Le Tourneau op. cit. in Fés there were several legends about saints, corporation councils and corporation festivals. Guilds have their own patron saint : Sidi Mimoun the Potter, Sidi Bu Ghalib patron saint of barbers *hajāma* and also circumcisions were held in his mausoleum etc.. p. 98. (ii) J. and J. Tharaud op. cit. pp. 117-118.

¹⁶¹ *Gnawa* was banned by Moulay Abdel Aziz (1902) supposedly because it was involved in the practice of magic, according to “Affaires indigènes et Service des Renseignements”- in *Villes et tribus du Maroc : les villes. Rabat et sa région avant la conquête*. Editions Ernest Leroux Paris 1918. Vol. 3-4 p. 214- According to A. Laroui this sect being from the South of Morocco was against the Sultan for surrendering the Touat to the French in Algeria. *History of the Maghreb* – Princeton University Press New Jersey 1977. p. 363.

Amongst other sects are *Jillala* and *Hnaishiya*.¹⁶² Individuals with psychological, emotional or physical problems allegedly benefit from attending a nightlong *hadra* of *Issawa* or *Gnawa*.¹⁶³ The sick may enter a trance to come to terms with the spirit that is spoiling their enjoyment of life. The music they perform is so exhilarating that the audience cannot resist the impulsion to participate in ecstatic dances. The songs are shortened or lengthened by the leader to provide the needs of the dancers in trance. One of the peculiarities of the *Hmadsha* sect is the *frissa*¹⁶⁴, in which, (though rarely today) the devotees devour raw meat.¹⁶⁵

It is known that families belonging to many of the town-based guilds have a special relationship with this Festival, which occurs towards the second half of the month *Sha^cban*. Although the main participants in the Festival are invariably drawn from the more uneducated families, it is also far from unusual to encounter people from different strata of society. Such persons come from a well-educated background, with good positions or are involved in business and are attending the ceremonies as friends or close relatives of the host of the *Sha^cban* party. In the evening the salons in the host's house start to fill up, prior to the arrival of the orchestra. The latter will have been selected for the type of music to be performed:

- If the organizer belongs to the *Jillala*, then flutes and *bendir* are played "moderato".
- If the host is an *Issawa* member then drums and cymbals, (*tar^cija* plus *bendir*) are played "allegro".

¹⁶² The *hnaishiya* (snake handlers) enjoy a rather strange reputation. They can treat with some success both snakebite and scorpion stings. People even say that the *hnaishi* are the brothers of the snakes and scorpions, with whom they are joined by a pact, (*ahd*), since both have "fed at the same breast (*bezoala*). Thus, they do not kill their own kind and both snakes and scorpions are sacred to them. L. Chénier recalls seeing people eating scorpions and performing ecstatic dances. op. cit. (1967) p. 182.

¹⁶³ *Gnawa* a word meaning black in Berber, in Arabic it is written with a 'j' al djinawi. A. Chlyeh in *Les Gnaoua du Maroc* p. 18, cites other sources that indicate that this word amongst the Tuaregs and Berbers from the Sahara means 'slave'. See R. Basset "Notes de Lexicographie berbère" in J.A. 1883.

¹⁶⁴ Several *fatwas*, Islamic religious edicts, have been issued forbidding such celebrations. The latest were by the Qadi Haj Ali Awad in 1904 and in 1937 by Muhammad Qorri, Imam of Fés and poet.

¹⁶⁵ (i) René Brunel, *Essai sur la confrérie religieuse des Aissaouas au Maroc*- Ed. Afrique-Orient, Casablanca (1926) reprinted 1988. p.130 (ii) L.Massignon *Tarika* pp. 700-705. 4 vols. Première Edition Alger 1906.(iii) K. Naamouni, *le Culte de Bouya Omar* - Editions Eddif Casablanca 1993.

- If the host's sect is *Gnawa*, (from the Amazigh "Iganow" meaning black), then cymbals, crotala and °*aj°ūj*: a large three-string¹⁶⁶, skin-wrapped, guitar-like instrument, giving a deep heavy sound, are all played "largo". In this instance, the orchestra usually includes black musicians selected for their voices.

The host selects his orchestra according to which spirit he wishes to celebrate. If he is wealthy, he could even hold several *mlook* parties, with a different orchestra/instrument combination for each night.

The celebration, which I shall now describe is a *Gnawa* party that I attended¹⁶⁷ in Fés in December 1996, my host was a wholesale butcher who has been celebrating the *Sha°bana* party on a yearly basis. Each year he gives two parties, one for °*Issawa*¹⁶⁸ and the other for *Gnawa*. The day chosen for this *Sha°bana* party was the third Saturday of the month *Sha°ban*. The principal colour was black and the musicians were black as this applied to food, music and fumigation. The dancers commenced by wearing white, represented by a long robe *Tshamir*, plus a headscarf. For those guests, who wished to participate in the dance, shawls were distributed. During the time that the orchestra was playing in honour of the *Melk al Mekawi* spirit, milk was distributed to the guests. The white colour was then followed by the black, called the Guardian Mimon Soudani, "°*Bowāb Mimon*"(the doorman Mimoun). Black frankincense was burned and black coffee was served, whilst the performers, dressed in black, danced in frenetic trances. The lyrics consisted of lamentations and calls upon the spirits to cure them from illness and protect them from misfortune. This was followed by the blue colour, bringing with it songs about "°*Sidi Mūssa Smawī*" (the Sky blue colour)¹⁶⁹. Water was sprinkled on the floor to allow the dancers to make splashes with their hands to the rhythm of the music. But the most striking colour to be celebrated was the red. This dance was led by the host, who danced with a knife in his hand and, apparently unconsciously, struck his arms and feet with it

¹⁶⁶ An instrument limited to one octave.

¹⁶⁷ The family had dinner several hours before the party started.

¹⁶⁸ The lyrics of the °*Issawa's hadrā* emphasize more a call on God and the spirits to purify the attendants minds and oversee their proceedings.

causing bleeding. At this point the guests were served a specially made juice based on red raisins, (to produce a blood-like drink), which had been boiled with *rās al hanūt* spices, gum Arabic, cinnamon and orange-blossom water. The lyrics ran as follows:

“We are calling upon the spirit *Hamo*. Salute to the blood lover, the one prone to swords and knives. We beg of you to be lenient to us. This party is the blood you desire.”

The green colour dance is called *Booḥali* and the dancer here carried a cane. Bread, prepared without salt, was distributed to the guests. The fumigation consisted of sandalwood and white frankincense. The lyrics here were:

“You spirits, who possess me, cure me of my illness in the name of the local saints and the spirit *la^ʿfu*.”

The last of the masculine spirits, as they are viewed by the cult followers, is *Sidi Boghaba*, (brown colour), from *al Ghaba*, (forest). Here, some of the performers received a mixture of raw egg-yolk, sugar and mint, with ground coffee, whilst the guests were served with a drink derived from coffee and cinnamon. A black goat was brought forward with lighted candles attached to its horns. At the conclusion of the dance, the animal was slaughtered¹⁷⁰ and given to the orchestra as a present. Then a dish called *Zameṭa*¹⁷¹ was served, consisting of sweetened grilled and pounded wheat, which was scattered on a tablecloth on the floor. This was eaten by the dancers, who got down on all fours to do so, imitating animals eating. After this dance there was a break in the celebrations before moving on to what are termed the *la^ʿyalat*, the lady spirits, it being understood that the spirits are male and female.

Just before dawn, the first of such ladies to be celebrated is the spirit *Lalla Mera* with yellow serghina fumigation and yellow dresses for the participants. Here those of the

¹⁶⁹ In coastal towns, the name used is *Baḥri* (Sea-blue).

¹⁷⁰ This is unusual, as Islam forbids the slaughter of animals at night.

adept, for whom *Mera* is the favourite *melk*, stood and danced. Then followed *Lalla Melika*, the green colour. Perfume was distributed to the audience, whilst some applied henna mixed with cloves and other aromas. Fumigation was made with green serghina. The lady spirit part of the celebration closed with *Lalla Aisha qadihsa/qandisha*, in whose honour a multicoloured dress was worn by the performers, whilst songs praising her and her miracles were sung. Salt-free bread and black olives were served to the guests. In the lyrics used here, the spirit *Aisha* is referred to as “the wanderer of *Liyali hiyal* (winter), the cave dweller, who inhabits springs and rivers. The one who possesses trees and attacks children”¹⁷².

The last dance of the party is about a spirit called *Saih* (the far strider). For this character, a man from the orchestra appeared dressed in tatters and with a long beard. He seemed to be exhausted and supported his body on a long cane, whilst his “wife” appeared wearing black and white, purporting to be about to give birth. The audience took part in prayers for the host and the believers of the spirits to give them a good year with everything they might wish, such as relief for all sufferers. At daybreak *harīra* soup was served, after which the party finished and people went to their homes.

To the adept, once the mind has become relaxed through the exhausting effects of an all-night celebration, then life force is achieved, not in the physical sense, but in the form of pure “spirit energy”. This is a phenomenon in which they believe, but which modern medical science cannot see or recognize.

¹⁷¹ In Marrakesh this mixture is called *daghnoo*, it is sweetened with crushed dates.

Solţan Tolba, King for a day

The Festival of *Solţan tolba*¹⁷³ used to be celebrated in Morocco on an annual basis until the 1960s, when the authorities abolished it. It was regularly celebrated by the students of Fés¹⁷⁴ and Marrakesh¹⁷⁵ etc., where it was subsidised by the local merchants. For this Festival the students would elect one of their number to be Sultan for the day, with the (accepted) power of being allowed to give completely ridiculous orders to the local ruler. Thus in the imperial city of Fés, when this city was the capital of Morocco, the person who was summoned to accept the students' ridiculous jokes was always the Sultan himself. Despite the awe in which the latter was normally held, he would be summoned to the *tolba*'s regal tent, where he might for example be instructed to send a *meshwī* every day to the *zāwiya*. Whilst the targeting of the Sultan himself and the ensuing lese-majesty no doubt served to make this Festival notorious, the object of the students' humour did not necessarily have to be a ruler. Any notable, whether secular or religious, would suffice, as the following paragraphs will show.

In the course of my fieldwork, I visited the coastal town of Essaouira, where I met a group of old men, who claimed ages ranging from 100 to 130. All of them remembered the visit of the Sultan Moulay Hassan (1878-1894) as a major event. At the time they were young boys, cheering as the Sultan's suite passed in the street. They also recalled the coins they used, since each Sultan had his own coins minted at *dar assaka* (pl. *skook*= the house of the Mint). Those of Moulay Hassan were referred to as *Hassani*, subsequently followed by *Azizi*, *Hafidi* and *Youssoûfi* for each Sultan until the arrival of French. One of these old men, Si Omar Al Batni, remembered

¹⁷² There is a great fear of this spirit especially on the part of men. In the countryside people never go near a source of water at night.

¹⁷³ See A.B. Mojwetan, *The Rise of the Alawite Dynasty*- Ph D. Thesis 1971- School of Oriental and African Studies London.

¹⁷⁴ See (i) Westermarck he noticed that this Festival was celebrated in Springtime in Fés "mocquery was made of the qadi, the shereefs and other highly respected men." p. 153 Vol. II (ii) Budget Meakin *The Moorish Empire*- London 1899 p.138 The author quotes a Moroccan source. Also in *The Moors* p. 132. (iii) E. Doutté "La khotba burlesque de la fête des Tolba au Maroc" in *Recueil de mémoires et de textes publié en l'honneur du XIVème Congrès des Orientalistes à Alger* (Alger 1905). (iv) Lecoœur "Le Rite et l'Outil" p.153 : Solţan Tolba à Azemmour.

¹⁷⁵ G. Deverdun *Marrakech des origines à 1912*- Editions Techniques Nord Africaines Rabat, 1959: the Solţan tolba party was organised in Riyad al 'Arus park in springtime in Marrakech. pp. 570-571.

how, when he was a young *ṭalib* at the Quranic school, they used to celebrate their “graduation”. There were several levels and each one had its equivalent in food for the teacher. *Tadena* means the teacher will receive bread with a bowl of fresh butter and honey. The second level was *khobz wa zenān* meaning bread with kebabs. The levels increased in food quality until the final one *attakhrija dial selka* or *ḥedqa*, which signifies completing the course, celebrated with a sheep or a cow, according to the financial status of the student’s family.

However, the most memorable party for Si Omar was the *Solṭan ṭolba*’s party that was celebrated in spring. The students would collect money from the local merchants, after which they would announce to the public when and where the party was to take place. This would normally be on the outskirts of the town, so that the people would have enough space to eat the food they would be bringing for the day. Everyone was interested in this burlesque Festival, where the students make fun of the teachers¹⁷⁶ of the Quranic School. Thus the normally stern-looking teacher would be playing *taba* or *kora*, i.e. kicking a woollen football, or participating in some other game with the *lemhadar* (students). Perhaps he would be made to do something, which he would normally find objectionable, but on that day he has to co-operate, because the students are granted full licence to do as they wish. The most hilarious part of the Festivities was the *khoṭba* of the Imam. The *Solṭan ṭolba* of the day, having donned a disguise giving him a large belly, would put on a large pair of spectacles and grasping a cane, mount a large stone similar to the *minbār* (pulpit) in the mosque. From here he would deliver his *khoṭba* (sermon) to the audience as if it were the prayer for an important religious Festival. The rhythm and incantations were similar to those of a religious discourse but the students had modified the words and instead they pledged the Imam to be more clement towards the *ṭolba*. They demanded a *zerda* (banquet) every day, with *meshwi*, *ṭajīns*, *Kesksu*, doughnuts, sweetmeats and sugared almonds, instead of the meagre diet they received at the *zāwiya*. If one was not listening carefully, the sermon might sound like a proper religious discourse, as after each stanza the *takbir*

was said three times by all the other *ṭolba* ("Allah is great"). Following this the *fatiḥa* prayer was read, summoning the Imam to fulfil such demands instantly. The student *Ṣolṭān ṭolba* would then, at the end of the day, swiftly quit his place before the crowd could shower him with blows. After this daring display, the students held their peace until the next year, when the criticism and ridicule would recommence.

The Zāwiya and its role in the community

Within the confines of the Islamic world, Morocco stands out as the cradle of religious sects or brotherhoods (*tariqa*), which are widespread throughout the country. These sects such as the *°Issawa*, *Gnawa*, *Jilala*, *Ḥmadsha* etc. all bear the names of their founders. Furthermore, as each master has gathered together a group of disciples, to whom he has passed on his spiritual qualities, some of these have moved on to form their own *tariqa*, so that the number of names of the latter has multiplied. Within the *tariqa* succession is strictly spiritual, the role of the incumbent being essentially that of ensuring the continuity and survival of the brotherhood.

The *Zāwiya* structure has always been deeply rooted in the community that sustained it until the 1960s and remains so today, although to a lesser extent. From the time of the *Almohades* onwards the *Zāwiyas*, through their *Madradas*, propagated the teachings of Islam and with them the wider use of the Arab language, thus playing an important role in the cementing of society. There were two kinds of *Zāwiya*, rural and urban. In either case they were notably present on both the political and the social scenes: as meeting places, as places of learning and for the propagation of Islamic teaching and as providers of shelter for travellers.

¹⁷⁶ As there was no Sultan in Essaouira, the most esteemed person was the Imam of the mosque, to which the *Zawīya* (school) is affiliated.

In rural areas, in addition to their habitual activities noted above, the *Zāwiyas* were responsible for all the arrangements, both religious and administrative, relating to the celebration of the *Mawsem*. Furthermore, they often acted as mediators between individuals and the government authorities. Their funding came from donations of various kinds: estates, plots of land, orchards or even individual fruit trees, plus a variety of donations in kind to maintain the *faqīh*'s wages and victuals of the *ṭolba* (students) and also to cater for travellers and visitors.¹⁷⁷

The urban *Zāwiya* served as a kind of social club for its followers; a place to visit between work and home.¹⁷⁸ Besides informal weekly and monthly social gatherings, celebrations were held at the *Zāwiya* at the *Milodiya* and during *Shābana*. The bond with the families of the community was maintained by the practice of the adherents marking all their major private celebrations either at the *Zāwiya*¹⁷⁹ itself, or by the sacrifice of an animal or other form of gift made simultaneously with the holding of festivities at home. In this manner, the family was linked with the *Zāwiya* for births, circumcisions, marriages, bereavements and pilgrimages. The religious role of the *Zāwiya* also made it a guardian of national culture for, whilst offering religious education it also provided entertainment¹⁸⁰, through the singing of litanies¹⁸¹. Listening to music and poetry (*sama*^c) often play a prominent part in *Zāwiya* life, which symbolizes the idea of transcending human existence and achieving divine ecstasy through art, especially music, since music is seen as being located above and away from the material world.

¹⁷⁷ A.Laroui *Les origines sociales et culturelles du nationalisme marocain-(1830-1912)* Librairie Maspéro Paris 1977. p. 147. M.Berque, *Structures sociales du Haut-Atlas-* P.U.F. Paris 1955. p. 276.

¹⁷⁸ J. & Tharaud op. cit. pp. 103-109.

¹⁷⁹ G. Drague : *Esquisse d'histoire religieuse marocaine-* Paris 1950. 'Rites alimentaires dans Zawiyas de Al Yusi'. p. 81.

¹⁸⁰ Today the best *Ala* music singers come from such *Zawiyas* : Abdessadeq Sheqqara represents the Tetouan "*Zawiya al Haraqiya*" and Abderrahim Swiri comes from the "*Regraguia Zawiya*" of Essaouira. During their studies they had learnt *dīkr* (the singing of litanies) and the playing of accompanying instruments.

¹⁸¹ R. Brunel refers to the large library in the Meknès *Zawiya*. See p.12-

Some *Zāwiyas* are less important in the realms of culture¹⁸², but have their own special functions. However, their practices and rituals are excluded from the precincts of the mosque. The principal brotherhoods are the *Rahaliya*, the *Sharqawa* and the *Issawa*, all of whom are involved in healing and therapy. The *Boya Omar Zawiya*¹⁸³ in the Haouz of Marrakesh belongs to the *Rahaliya* brotherhood that specializes in healing at the sanctuary of a 16th century *Sufi* saint dispensing treatment for psychological problems. Here, in a solemn ceremony, the descendants of the saint use their inherited “*Baraka*” to cure mental disorders, their method of treatment consisting of musical therapy,¹⁸⁴ in which the music is used to identify the “spirit” that is troubling the patient. The therapists are greatly respected by the local community since, during their “*hadra*” (Therapeutic dance), they drink boiling hot water without being in the least affected. During the *Mawsem* their public performance involves walking into hot ovens¹⁸⁵ without being affected by the heat, drinking boiling water¹⁸⁶ and eating venomous snakes¹⁸⁷ and scorpions, as witnessed at the time of E.Laoust, Doutté and Brunel¹⁸⁸. This ceremony always concludes with the distribution of dried fruit and nuts to the faithful to whom “blessed” tea is served.

The *Sharqawa* brotherhood in Beja^cd in the Tadla, performs its *hadra* in the presence of the public, when the members of the sect perform a dance with red-hot charcoal, which they touch and on which they walk without being burned. They also drink boiling hot water¹⁸⁹ with no ill effects. Finally they injure themselves with daggers and axes, appearing indifferent to the wounds caused thereby.

¹⁸² R Brunel emphasizes that there are two types of rituals in the *Zawiya* : one is purely educational with libraries and biographers of the different sheikh and is restricted to spiritual mysticism whilst the other is sectarian with its proper illiterate adherents from the superstitious mass and is shunned by the first group. Only oral tradition has kept the rituals alive. pp. 12-

¹⁸³ K. Naamouni *Le Culte de Bouya Omar*. Editions Eddif Casablanca 1993.

¹⁸⁴ A. Chottin Communication sur les airs populaires recueillis à Fés. *Hespèris, année 1923 2ème Trimestre* p.278.

¹⁸⁵ E. Doutté, *En Tribu* – P. Geuthner Paris 1914. ‘ce miracle est indiscutable’ p.192.

¹⁸⁶ E. Laoust, *Mots et Choses Berbères*- p. 174.

¹⁸⁷ E. Doutté op. cit. p.267.

¹⁸⁸ (i)E.Laoust, *Mots et choses Berbères* –“Les enfants de Sidi Rahal détiennent de leur grand ancêtre une baraka puissante qui leur permet impunément de manger des vipères, d’entrer dans les fours brulants et de boire de l’eau bouillante” p. 174 (ii) E.Doutté *En tribu* p.192 - Paul Genthner Paris 1914, also pp. 162-205 (iii) René Brunel op. cit. p.146.

¹⁸⁹ R. Brunel p.169.

The *Issawa* sect is divided into two groups, the first of which is highly literate and essentially Sufi in its practices. They assemble on a yearly basis in the summer after the harvest season at the shrine of their master Sheikh Hadi Ben Issa Al Kamil in Meknés.¹⁹⁰ They share a meal called a *lemma* (meal of the gathering) and spend the whole night in Sufi dancing, meditation and the reading of *qasida*, which are poems connected with the brotherhood. The dancers are all dressed in red and white woollen *wendiya* (tunics). On their return to their own areas, they repeat the above ceremony at their local *Zawiya*.

The second group, which is numerically the largest of all the sects of Morocco, has an essentially popular following and is noted for the spectacular nature of its public celebrations. This group has a specific hierarchy, the different levels of which are given the names of animals;¹⁹¹ lions *sbu^ʿa*, panthers *nmūra*, jackals *diab*, wild boars *ḥalūf/ḥlalef* (Berb.), camels *jmal*, and seldom, for women only, lionesses *lbiyāt* or hyena *dab^ʿāt*. This group also holds its festival annually at the same time as the Sufi group at the shrine in Meknés, where they are joined by the members of the *Sharqawa* and *Rahaliya* sects.¹⁹² The festival begins with the *dawrā*, the parading in the streets of a black bull decorated with gleaming ribbons. The onlookers try to touch the animal and to snatch a few hairs to use as a talisman. Musicians and dancers follow the parade as it wends its way through the streets. Up to the 1960s the local authority also presented its sacrifice of a black bull on behalf of the *Dar Makhzen*. In the evening meals are organized for the pilgrims in the homes of local members of the sect.

The following day around midday another parade starts out from the sanctuary and heads towards the outskirts of town, accompanied by *jedbā* (high-pitched exhilarating music). The leading element consists of a pantomime of dancing and performing animals, in which sect members, dressed in red and white striped tunics and trousers,

¹⁹⁰ E. Doutté *En Tribu*- Missions au Maroc” Paul Geuthner 1914 p. 267-

¹⁹¹ René Brunel *Essai sur la confrérie religieuse des Aissaouas au Maroc*- Collections Archives Editions Afrique Orient 1923- pp. 195-246.

¹⁹² In the early part of the present century all the related sects from North Africa would come to Meknés to honour their common master.

identify themselves by wearing the skins¹⁹³ of the animals appropriate to their grade. Some are drinking boiling water (*Sharqawa*), some are eating live charcoal (*Rahaliya*), some are handling poisonous snakes (*Hmadsha*), whilst others (*Issawa*) mimic fights with clubs and wound themselves with daggers, skewers and axes. Members of the public throw sacrifices of frissa (raw meat) to them, which they devour on the spot, the only exception being the “camel” members of the sect, who are vegetarian and eat only cactus, Barbary figs and cardoons. They consume vast quantities of honey, which they drink like water.¹⁹⁴ Whilst the others provide a multitude of distractions the “jackal” members of the *Issawa* mingle with the crowd and steal from them, after which they return the stolen items against a small ransom. Towards the end of the day the participants visit a nearby spring or pool and immerse themselves completely.

At night, whilst some members of the sect are resting, others visit private houses, where they perform their *hadra*, the dance of the seven spirits and colours, as in the *Gnawa* celebration mentioned earlier in this chapter. The main differences from the latter are in the costumes and the music. The former are limited to the *Issawa wendiya*, whilst the latter is high-pitched and played on *bandir* (penedere), drums and *ghaita* (a clarinet-like instrument). The dancing lasts all night interspersed with the same supplications to the spirits as in the *Gnawa*, except that the *Issawa* include their own master among the spirits addressed.

On the third day the members of the sect sell highly decorated candles that they have blessed. The public queue to buy these to take home as talismans, to be renewed every year.

¹⁹³ R. Brunel op. cit. p.132.

¹⁹⁴ The bee-keepers of the area store honey for this well in advance, this being their contribution to the festival.

Taghanja

This is a rainmaking ceremony¹⁹⁵ for use in periods of drought. In each household, the largest wooden ladle is taken from the kitchen and, on the curved side; eyes, nose and a mouth are painted. The ladle is then dressed in clothes and jewellery to be carried as a doll in the *Taoundja* (or *Taghandja*) procession, followed by chanting women and children. Also, in rural areas, a cow is included in the procession, decorated with ribbons. When people hear the chants of "Taoundja", they come out of their houses and sprinkle water on the crowd.¹⁹⁶ The procession continues to a natural water site, such as a lake, a river, a stream or a well, where the ladle is thrown in headfirst. At this moment, the doll is called "*taslit Anzar*" (Berb. "Bride of rain"). For their part the men walk barefoot to the shrine of the local saint or to the mosque. In towns, *salāt istiḡsa*³ (rain rogation) is organised whereby people pray for rain.¹⁹⁷ At home, meatless meals based on wheat or barley are served, such as *dashīsha*, *tagoola*, or *la^csida*. The doll symbol appears on other occasions such as ^c*Ashura*, for instance in Fés, *Baba Ashur* is a doll that is destroyed and buried. In springtime, between March and May, a doll is made with fresh wheat sheaves and young girls and women weeding the fields celebrate ^c*ors zra^c* ("The wedding of the field")¹⁹⁸, singing and chanting in the fields for several days. There is also a race for the doll, organised between horse riders from different villages, the losers offering food to the winning village. This doll¹⁹⁹ is then kept until ^c*Anṣra* when it is burnt with scented herbs.

¹⁹⁵ (i) Westermarck *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*- pp.254-282. (ii) C. Monchicourt "Essai de monographie géographique". *Thèse lettres*- Armand Colin, Paris 1913 : "les rogations pour la pluie (Tlob en no)" pp 65-81. (iii) H. Terrasse *Histoire du Maroc des origines à l'établissements du Protectorat français*- Edition Atlantides- Casablanca 1949. "Toutes les cérémonies qui cherchent à obtenir par la pluie sont sans doute le seul reste apparent de l'ancien paganisme berbères." pp18.

¹⁹⁶ H. Basset op. cit. noticed that 101 saint names not containing the letters 's' or 'sh', were written on a wooden plank and washed with water. Probably avoiding Ashur's name which should be a reference to the burial period. p. 100-101.

¹⁹⁷ (i) S. Biarnay op. cit. "les femmes répètent en chemin : Taghonja t'implore, asperge-là, o dieu!.. en suivant le mannequin" p. 141.(ii) E Laoust op. cit. (*Eléments d'Ethnographie*) remarks that *Tironja* is addressed as "mother of hope". p. 125.

¹⁹⁸ E. Laoust op. cit. (*Eléments d'Ethnographie*) p. 122.

¹⁹⁹ (i) Douthé op. cit pp. 582-596 (ii) Westermarck in *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*- p.223. Other visitors refer to this ceremony : (iii) Drummond Hay in *Western Barbary* -London, 1844- p. .9 (iv) Budget Meakin in *The Moors*- London 1902. p. 156 & p. 168: "children hang up a small bag with food in it for Hagooza the New Year."

Investigating different spellings of the name *Taghoundja* or *Ta'andja*, it is noteworthy that in *Les Archives Berbères*,²⁰⁰ colonial officials described the ceremony as “La *Ghandja*”. The logic of this terminology is that the writer is clearly aware that, in Berber, “Ta”²⁰¹ is the definite article and “*Ghandja*” is the noun. Westermarck has noticed that in Fés people call the doll *Tanjawiya* (the one from Tangier). The existence of two current forms for this name, *Taghoundja* and *Ta'andja*, appears due to the use, in some parts of the country, of the “gh” as an inserted consonant to separate a terminal and an initial vowel. Hence the real word to be investigated is “Andja”.

Seasonal Festivals

Yanair and Hagoosa

The existence of this informal festival was noted by both Westermarck and French officials.²⁰² It was held in the North of Morocco during the period corresponding to the sign of Capricorn *al jadi* (21st December to 19th January). Its Arabic name is *Hagoosa*, derived from the Berber word *n'soogas* (year) meaning the New Year (solar calendar). For Edmond Doutté in 1909 this period was seen as the beginning of the New Year and celebrated accordingly.²⁰³ Everything old is changed in the kitchen on this day.²⁰⁴ The festival seems to be similar to the celebrations of ^c*Ashura* including the doll called *Ghandja*²⁰⁵ for water rogation.

²⁰⁰ Archives Berbères-Publications du Comité d'Etudes Berbères de Rabat 1915-1916.

²⁰¹ “Ta” is the feminine article in Amazigh. Cf. E. Laoust, Mots et Choses berbères- p.204 & Doutté, Marrakesh p. 383.

²⁰² E. Laoust op. cit. (Eléments d'Ethnographie) “Les premiers labours donne lieu dans toutes les régions du Maroc, à une série de rites... à Fés, le cultivateur qui va ouvrir le champ emporte avec lui des grenades, des figues, des raisins et du pain. Les femmes ne doivent pas assister à cette cérémonie” p. 120.

²⁰³ (i)E. Doutté Magie et Religion dans l'Afrique du Nord- He noticed that there was a special diet with particular reference to vegetables (“palmier nain” before they disappeared from the Moroccan countryside) and cereals during the first days of this festival which lasts between three to seven days. A special emphasis was on the kitchen and the hearth where some elements should be renewed every year. p.545. (ii) Biarnay op. cit. Hagoosa celebrated in Fés with special dishes including *baghrir* pp. 84-89.

²⁰⁴ H. Basset op. cit. “On change dans chaque maison les pierres du foyer”. p. 102

²⁰⁵ Doutté noticed that sometimes this doll (*Baba ^cashur*) is drowned in water p.548. For him ^c*ashura* and the New Year seem to be the same “avec la différence que *Ennair* est au début un deuil.” Only vegetables and cereals are eaten, no meat, no bathing, no new clothes, no sex. p.550. What is

This festival was celebrated with a ceremonial meal²⁰⁶ that varied from one region to another and consisted mainly of cereals (see table on page 117).²⁰⁷ It was during this period that yeast is prepared to last until harvest time and forecasts²⁰⁸ were made about the quality and quantity of the coming year's harvest and whether the year would be financially profitable. Today however the people mark the passing of *hagoosa* by serving a *Kesksu* with seven vegetables.

In the Atlas Mountains *Yanāir*, the January festival is still observed²⁰⁹ and is celebrated within the precincts of the village mosque. Weather permitting, i.e. if the roads are not blocked by snow, the communal meal is held on the first of January. The *moqadem* (leader of the group) collects settlements²¹⁰ in the form of cereals or money from those persons, who made successful 'bids' for this festival back in June, for which payment was held over until January.

Women volunteers clean the grains and grind them for the ceremonial meal. A few goats and some vegetables are bought with the settlement money and a *Kesksu* is prepared and cooked. This meal is called *ta Seksot ta mezwart* i.e the first *Kesksu* of the New Year. The women select one of their number to perform the *isgar* offering to the spirits. She takes a salt-free sauce from the cooking pot and mixes it with the newly ground flour. She then in complete silence sprinkles this thickened sauce in different areas of the village, including the thresholds of some of the houses, reciting the formula " we are your guests, this offering is a symbolic sharing of what you gave us". After this ritual, salt and spices are added to the sauce and the communal meal is

interesting here is to see that two similar rituals were celebrated at different times of the year: one following the solar calendar (*Ennair*) and the other the lunar calendar (*Ashura*).

²⁰⁶ R. Le Tourneau op. cit. For this author the festival of *Hagoosa* is primarily gastronomic. p. 143.

²⁰⁷ H. Basset op. cit. 'Dans les fêtes orthodoxe ou agraire, il est d'usage de préparer des plats spéciaux, dont la nature est fixée rigoureusement par la tradition, et qui parfois une habitude superstitieuse prohibe pendant le reste de l'année. p. 95. & pp. 101-103.

²⁰⁸ Westermarck *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*- Vol ii, p162- Laoust "Mots et Choses Berbères" p.199 & Hesperis I, p 56.

²⁰⁹ H. Rachik, *Sacré et sacrifice dans le Haut Atlas* -- Imprimerie Afrique Orient, Casablanca 1990.

p.36-

²¹⁰ See below in October festival .

shared among the villagers, who have all gathered at the mosque for this ritual meal called *ma^crof n'timezguida*²¹¹.

In the evening a *tasha^calt*²¹² (bonfire) is organized and children and adults jump over it. For dinner each family cooks its meal using dried meat *ukerdellas* saved from the *Id al Adhā*. During this festival people must eat well, for the belief is that if they eat well on that night, they will do so for the remainder of the year.²¹³ A similar practice was observed by E. Laoust in Tingissin (in the South), where birds were fed porridge made with grilled barley.²¹⁴

Liyalli hayal

Throughout Morocco *Liyalli hayal* (Berb. *Iḥiyan*) signifies the nights from 25th February to 4th March, which are considered to be the coldest nights of the winter.²¹⁵ During these eight days the people's diet is based on pulses, *hergma* (calves feet and head), wholemeal *Kesksu ḥamrā*, barley *Kesksu belbūla*, celery²¹⁶ and parsnips. This diet is to increase resistance to colds and fever, which might be provoked by the bleak and rainy weather. The European visitors said that this period is depicted as an old ogress that haunts empty stomachs; therefore food should be plentiful to avoid being eaten by her. This applies especially to children, who have a great of fear of stories about her.²¹⁷

²¹¹ Note the similarity with the Spanish word mezquita for Mosque, Arabic *Jama^c*.

²¹² The fireworks specialist performs this task, which he has inherited from his lineage. B. Meakin op. cit. p. 171.

²¹³ (i) Lévi-Provençal, 'Pratiques Agricoles et Fêtes saisonnières' in *Les Archives Berbères*, iii Paris 1918 p. 102-(ii) Laoust op.cit. 199-Westermarck op. cit. p 168, remarked that children at night left small bags full of food for *Hagoosa* (*ogress*) to eat.

²¹⁴ E. Laoust (*Eléments d'Ethnographie*) Evil spirits are chased away with gun powder, "à l'époque ou murissent les moissons."p. 123.

²¹⁵ H. Basset op. cit. Two periods were regarded as ill-fated : ḥsoum (*Hayal*) and *smaim* (summer) p. 93.

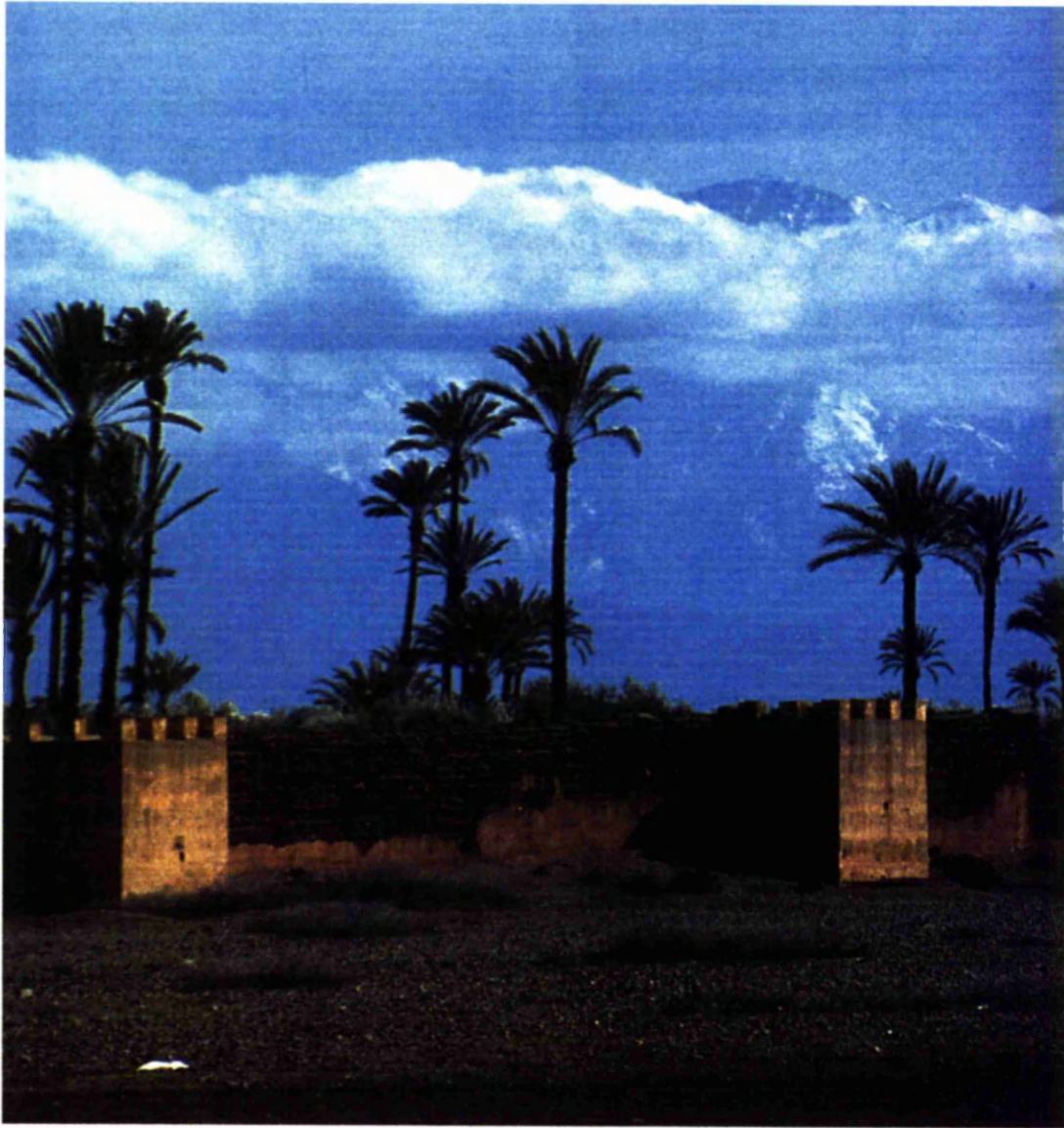
²¹⁶ Considered to have a warming effect.

²¹⁷ E. Laoust op. cit. (*Eléments d'Ethnographie*) p. 117-118.

Table of meals throughout Hagoosa

Hagoosa (Arabic) - Assugas (Berber) - (Agrarian New Year)

| Areas | Morning soup Or porridge | Boiled Cereals | Pancake* with or without yeast | Chicken | Kesksu (couscous) 7 vegetables | Yeast | Kitchen hearth |
|------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| North | <i>aḥrir</i> | <i>Shiokha</i> | | | | | |
| Jbala | | <i>Sherstem</i> | doughnuts* <i>sfenj</i> | chicken | 2nd day | made & kept for harvest | white-washed |
| Fés | <i>herbel</i> | | <i>rghaïf</i> , <i>beghrir</i> * with honey and butter | | 5th day plus <i>Rās hanūt</i> | | |
| Chaouia Plain | <i>dshisha</i> | | <i>bushiyar</i> * | | 2nd day | used & kept for threshing floor | hearth-stones changed |
| Doukkala Chiadma | <i>dshisha</i> | <i>Sherstem</i> | <i>rghaïf</i> * | One chicken Per head in The house <i>Arbaz/rfisa</i> | 1st day | used & kept for threshing floor | white-washed |
| Souss | <i>tagulla</i> With olive oil | <i>Ukrim</i> (1st day) | | <i>Arbaz/rfisa</i> | | kept for threshing floor | new stove |
| Tadla | <i>dashisha</i> | | <i>bushiyar</i> * | | 1st day | made, used & kept for threshing floor | new stove |



Atlas Mountains as seen from Marrakesh

March festival

Up to the arrival of Westermarck and the onset of French colonization the spring festival was widely celebrated. E. Castells²¹⁸ writes about the “carnaval de Mars” in Rabat and Salé. Westermarck, in parallel, records the festival of the *Solṭan tolba* in springtime, still a practice today when people picnic for *Malqā rabi*²¹⁹ (*nezāha*) in the fields of wild flowers and visit the tomb of the local saint. The important spring festival in the South is the Regraga *Mawsem* of the saint Sidi Hmad O’Musa that lasts for 40 days, during which groups of pilgrims and adepts in hundreds from different religious sects visit the tombs of the local Shiadma saints. The visitors are fed by the villagers who prepare meals for them for the celebrations. At times it happens that the locals offer *Kesksu* dishes of all kinds in large quantities in order to feed the pilgrims. In René de Segonzac²²⁰ and Doutté’s times this festival had more significance as it also coincided with the first caravan travels of the year to the Trans-Saharan and Timbuktu region²²¹. There were two festivals celebrated at Sidi Hmad O Musa: one in March and the other in September, which coincided with the opening and the closing of the agrarian year. For each *Mawsem* people slaughtered large numbers of animals as offerings to saints.

In the High Atlas the people observe the ritual of *targ imoola* when the walnut trees are in flower, this ritual is celebrated at the tomb of the local saint or at the mosque. After the sacrifice at the mosque of few goats, the women celebrate the first green grass for their cows. On the twenty first of March they organize a party in the fields, chanting a song whilst they are weeding the fields and dancing and drinking tea.²²² In

²¹⁸ Archives Berbères 1914-15-16 p. 343.

²¹⁹ Doutté op.cit. p 553.

²²⁰ (i)René de Segonzac, Au coeur de l’Atlas- Mission au Maroc – Larose Paris-1904-5. (ii) Doutté En tribu 1915 p. 360-62.

²²¹ Daniel J. Schroeter, Merchants of Essaouira- Urban society and imperialism in Southwestern Morocco, 1844-1886” p.98.

²²² E. Laoust op. cit. (Eléments d’Ethnographie) “Une cérémonie assez étrange, le sarclage est confié uniquement aux femmes. Elles s’y rendent en parfait état de propreté et dans leurs plus beaux habits.” p. 122.

Fés and all the north of Morocco, they celebrate *‘id al fool* (broad beans²²³ festival) whilst elsewhere people organize *ziyara* visits to local saints where special sweets *halwā* are sold for *nezāha*: a picnic in the orchards.

At the beginning of May the shearing of the sheep is celebrated by killing a sheep to make *Kesksu* for the *dezāza* (shearers) who, according to the size of the flock, may need several days for their work. The latter is accompanied by music produced by the sound of scissors “played” by their leader, whilst entertaining and relaxing them.²²⁴

‘Anṣra

Despite the fact that this festival does not figure in the Muslim calendar, it is nevertheless of importance, as witnessed by the records of European travellers visiting Morocco during the last three centuries²²⁵ and still seen until the 1970’s in towns. The *‘Anṣra* is celebrated in June; just after the wheat harvest and before the trees begin to bear fruit. This is a joyful festival, with water as its only theme. People sprinkle water on each other, whether at home or in the street²²⁶. This is an accepted practice, which offends no one and those who do not wish to get wet are not even safe in their own houses.²²⁷ Thus on this day it is accepted to throw water on strangers and no complaint against this practice is admitted, for it is *‘Anṣra*. In the towns in the

²²³ Broad beans are important in the Northern people’s diet. Eaten fresh in spring and dry in the winter. People in the Rif call it *bisara*, they cook it and preserve it for the winter month as it might otherwise develop weevils. They store it in jars and every morning they have it as a morning soup.

²²⁴ E. Doutté, *Magie et Religion*- la fête de la tonte des moutons p 553 note n°2.

²²⁵ These rituals have been recorded by (i) Laoust “On allume bien encore çà et là quelques feux fumigènes, qu’on alimente de plantes vertes et aromatiques” in *Hespéris*, I, p. 419 –(ii) H. Basset op. cit. “on fait de la fumée au moyen de brasiers ou se consume un mélange d’herbes odoriférantes. p. 103. (iii) Doutté op.cit. p. 565 and *Marrakech* pp.377-381. (iv) Westermarck op.cit. pp.182-206.

²²⁶ E. Laoust (*Eléments d’Ethnographie*) op. cit. “Cette fête donne lieu des feux de joie et à des aspersions d’eau”. pp. 119-120.

²²⁷ H. Basset op. cit. “On ne pouvait circuler dans les rues de Fâs qu’au risque d’être inondé. Fut-on pacha ou fonctionnaire du makhzen. On prépare du couscus avec du blé nouveau, on vide les ruches, on mange le premier miel, on tue un ou deux taureaux dont on distribue un quartier à chaque famille. Au-dessus des villages et des jardins monte en épaisses colonnes, la fumée purificatrice.” p. 104.

interior, the people gather round a *saqia* or a river and throw water²²⁸ at each other, whilst the children ride on the *Na^corā* (Noria style merry-go round), except that, instead of buckets for the water, there are boxes to hold the children comfortably during the circular movement. These *na^corās* are installed throughout the country during this key festival. In the coastal towns the people go to the seaside, where the day is passed bathing and turning on the *na^corā*, erected for the children. In the Saharan²²⁹ districts, where water is scarce and such extravagance is not permitted, water is replaced by sand.

A curious aspect of the rituals carried out at this time is the use of fumigation. Westermarck and French officials noticed that smouldering fires were made on the *°Anṣra* day (24th June) with different herbs. In the house and the threshing ground fumigation is with herbs such as: thyme, geranium, camomile and rue.²³⁰ In the orchards the following are burned to produce smoke rather than fire: oleander (*alīlī*), blackberry bush leaves, wild olive, artemisia, lemon leaves, rosemary, animals and animal related objects such as wild cats, black birds, cow hide and dung and river fish.

It appears to be a water, air and smoke festival as Edmond Doutté has postulated that the natives believe that they are imitating rotary movements. They seek to launch natural forces by means of a noria (water wheel), by jumping across the rocks of a river, by jumping across the *qattaras* at the house and by passing over and under bridges. The circular movement provoked by the noria gives a sensation of wild force and speed coupled with harmless, heady and joyous emotions.”²³¹

²²⁸ Mohammed Ibn Azzuz Akim, *Diccionario de Supersticiones y Mitos Marroquies*- Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas- Madrid 1958 - “Todas las aguas corrientes o de mar tienen virtudes sobrenaturales en día del *°Anṣra* (fiesta de agua que coincide con las hogueras de San Juan). El agua de mar o de río recogida en día de *°Anṣra* y guardada en botellas, sirve para mil aplicaciones mágicas” p.8.

²²⁹ Doutté *Magie et Religion*- p.568.

²³⁰ (i)E. Laoust in *Hesperis I*, 10, saw that people of Salé burnt a hut made of straw in the Bou Reqreq River (ii) Westermarck op. cit. p. 187.

²³¹ Doutté op.cit pp567-597.

The diet or menu during this season is quite intriguing. During this season²³², strange as it may seem, although many kinds of fruit and vegetables are available, it is grains and pulses that are cooked: grains of wheat, both hard and soft, chickpeas and lentils cooked in salted water (*shersham*). These are distributed to children and friends²³³. In the region of Rehamna, new wheat in various forms (*Kesksu*, pasta pancakes *trīd*) is cooked on the day of the [°]*Anṣra*. New grain is grilled and eaten as a ground powder. In the evening the [°]*Anṣra Kesksu* is prepared with new wheat and, above all, with fresh vegetables. Amongst the latter, important elements are *qurān* (unripe figs) and turnips with their stems and leaves.

Today the celebration of [°]*Anṣra* is still an important issue in remote rural areas in the Atlas (Marrakesh and Taroudant axis). The June festival starts with the cereal harvest. Yeast preserved from the *Hagoosa* in Yanāir is scattered on the threshing floor before the sheaves are brought for winnowing. Once the grains have been separated the animals which have been used for threshing are driven by the farmer for a further ten silent and slow rounds, which are called *ashar ni anrar* meaning the “tithe of the threshing floor”.²³⁴ Subsequently, when the grain is gathered for measuring, the farmer sets aside the first measure²³⁵ for donation to the celebration of the local saint, whilst the tenth measure is set aside for giving to the poor²³⁶. Once the grain has been

²³² (i) Lévi-Provençal op. cit. mentions the customs of eating honey in *Anṣra*. p 104 (ii) Westermarck op. cit. Vol. II p.194.(iii) H. Basset op. cit. : ‘ le 17 Mai de l’année julienne l’*Anṣrah*, on mange de l’orge grillée *Mekoui rasou* (burnt head) en raison du rite de la brulure. Il est d’usage de se bruler légèrement le cuir chevelu avec du laurier-rose *sulṭan ed deflah*. On a l’habitude de manger une sorte de couscous très cuit et arrosé de lait, connu sous le nom de *el-merdoud*.’ p. 96.

²³³ As a matter of interest this same recipe is prepared at the cutting of a baby’s first tooth, in order to encourage the appearance of strong and vigorous teeth.

²³⁴ H. Basset op. cit. ‘In certain areas this author has noticed that patch of about 10m² is left for women from the household to harvest sheaf by sheaf. pp. 97-98.

²³⁵ (i) H. Basset op. cit. the first measure is called *Abbasiyah*. In the name of a saint in Marrakesh “Sidi Bel Abbas es Sebti, véritable patron de l’agriculture au Maroc.” pp. 90-91. (ii) Biarnay op. cit. : Sidi Bel Abbés patron des agriculteurs p. 100.

²³⁶ E. Laoust op. cit. (*Eléments d’Ethnographie*) “La première mesure n’est pas compté elle est pour Sidi Bel Abbés, la dixième est pour les tolbas, aux chorfa. Dans les pays makhzen la dime, l’âchour est perçu à chaque dixième mesure. p. 130.

measured the farmer calls for salt saying “*artawin tissents anrar*”²³⁷. Salt is then placed over the grain to protect it from the spirits.²³⁸

June festival

In the remote areas in the mountain confines, certain rituals have not lost their authentic agrarian cult connection. For instance in villages in the High Atlas, after the harvest, the *moqadem* (leader of the group) collects the sacrificial measures of grain from the villagers i.e. the first measure of their grain. They celebrate the June ritual called *Yuniu n'tmegriw*. A couple is entrusted to conduct the ritual which consists of the husband building a stove for his wife in the middle of the fields, upon which she grills a part of the new grain, which is then crushed. The other women take this salt-less powder and visit all the *qanāts*, springs and *azerg* (water mills) where they recite the thanksgiving formula whilst grinding to powder the grilled grains in a hand mill, making sure that this is operated from left to right with the left hand²³⁹. The remainder of the grain is cooked by the couple to make a salt-free thick soup *tazlalat* some of which they scatter on rocks to feed the frogs²⁴⁰, reciting the thanksgiving formula: “this is just a symbolic sharing of what you have given us because this is your property and we are only your guests”. After this ritual, salt is added to the soup and the rest of the village share it between them.

Ait Mizzane's celebration (High Atlas Tizi n'Test road)

The men folk of other villages divide their grain *tamatert* (the first measure) between eight local saints. The womenfolk for their part of sacrifice give away the first butter churned of the year. The *moqadem* collects the grain, the butter and also the walnuts produced by local communal orchards. On a specific day, six days before the ceremony, the men of the village build an oven, in which the women will bake the ritual bread for the *isgar*. However, before the latter event, a couple is chosen according to an annual roster. This couple has the task of mixing flour with water

²³⁷ Rachik op. cit. p. 93 transl. “Bring me the salt for the threshing floor”.

²³⁸ E. Laoust, *Mots et choses Berbères*- He deduces that the locals believe that salt scares away bad spirits. p. 374. & in *Éléments d'Ethnographie Marocaine*- On mêle au grain du sel, du levain et quelquefois l'épaule droite de l'animal sacrifié à l'Aïd el Kebir”. p. 131.

²³⁹ This ritual opens the grinding season of the new cereals. C.F. Westermarck vol. II p 181.

(with no salt added), which is then sprinkled on the ritual oven. After this ceremony, the bread is baked and distributed with the walnuts; a large ladle full for each inhabitant of the village. Nine goats, male and female, are also sacrificed by the richer element of the herders. The skin and legs of the goats are auctioned; the money thus received being kept for the next celebration.

²⁴⁰ See Westermarck *op.cit.* vol.II p.343.

Lalla Mit ^cazza²⁴¹

In the nearby village, the *moqadem* is responsible for the collection of sacrifices for the celebration of the *ma^rrof* of the saint Lalla Mit^cazza, which should always coincide with the *mawlid*. Men and women join in together in the ritual in which nine goats are sacrificed. The food is cooked in utensils belonging to the kitchen of the saint *asmas n'tgooramt* (*hearth of the saint*) and none of these should be brought outside.

Elsewhere there are summer festivals²⁴², which do not coincide with the *Mawlid* but are still connected to the time after the harvest (i.e. agrarian) and are celebrated in various areas, such as Moulay Abdellah Ait Om'ghar in Doukkala.

The end of the year festival

This is *mawsem* of Sidi Shem Aroj²⁴³ (the Sultan of the Spirits) on the road to Jebel Tobqal mountain. This festival closes the agrarian cycle. It is always celebrated on the first Thursday²⁴⁴ after the 20th of August. Although this festival is called a *Mawsem*, it is celebrated regardless of the *Mawlid* and hence follows a solar calendar.²⁴⁵ A black cow is bought by local villages, using the money of the previous grain sacrifice (the first bushel from the harvest). The night before the celebration, women fumigate the cow with several fragrances and decorate her with ribbons and flowers. The following day, she is taken to the *igoornt* (slaughterhouse) in full procession, with the crowd

²⁴¹ Although this village is not far away from the above, it seems that when villages are closer to large cities their celebrations tend to coincide with the lunar calendar. See J. Berque "structures Sociales du Haut Atlas- Presses Universitaires de France- Paris 1955.

²⁴² When the caravan trips were still important, the Hashtooka and Wad Nun region used to celebrate their patron saint Qasabi and sidi Ighazi *mawsim* in summer too. D. Schroeter p. 98.

²⁴³ Also spelt as Sem Aroj, Semharooj, Shemaroj. For more information regarding the cult of this spirit see A. Chlyeh op. cit. p. 38 and J. & J. Tharaud op. cit. p. 120.

²⁴⁴ See H. Rachik, *Le sultan des autres – rituel et politique dans le haut Atlas-* pp. 115-120.

hurrying to touch and kiss her. After the slaughter, the meat portions are distributed only to the families of the villages. Visitors bring their own sacrifices to the Sultan of the Spirits. The heads of villages organize this festival lasting for several days, during which people from different regions of Morocco come to pay their respects. Subsequently, after the almond harvest at the end of August, the fields are declared to be dead.²⁴⁶ For farmers living in the plains *mout al 'ard*²⁴⁷ is declared after the harvest in June.

Ikhefn'soogas (Berb.) – Head of the year

In October a further ritual sacrifice is dedicated to the “sultan of the spirits” to mark the beginning of the agrarian year²⁴⁸. In each village, sacrifice is made to the saint before ploughing begins. In fact the farmer does not touch his plough until the sacrifice in honour of the local saint Sham Aroj has been accomplished.²⁴⁹ Each farmer celebrates with his family the *ta meghra n'wamood* (lit. *Wedding of seeds*). Grilled grains without salt are eaten in the fields by each member of the family, who also eat pomegranates and dried nuts. In the other coastal plains *khobz al mehrat* meaning bread for the plough is made with mixed grains and eaten before the start of the ploughing season.

The autumn harvest of olives and argan oil is celebrated with the making of *Amlo* and *sfenj*²⁵⁰ doughnuts fried in the new oil.

²⁴⁵ The *Mawseem* is always celebrated after *smaim* the canicular days.

²⁴⁶ E. Laoust, *Mots et Choses*, refers to the ritual observance of the death and revival of the fields. After the harvest the fields are proclaimed dead and only God can revive them. p. 377.

²⁴⁷ (i) H. Basset op. cit. “Au Maroc les rites de mort sont nombreux : au moment de la moisson les agriculteurs célèbrent la fête de *mout el ard*. p. 44. (ii) E. Laoust op. cit. (*Eléments d’Ethnographie*) p. 116.

²⁴⁸ (i) Trenga in *Archives Berbères 1914-15* p. 406. (ii) Biarnay op. cit. “En Automne la cérémonie du repas rituel appelé *Nzoul* (descente) de figues et raisins secs, grenades etc. ne se fait qu’une fois par an et ne se reproduit pas pour chaque champs. On pourrait en déduire qu’elle a pour but de présenter au sol, au dieu de la terre et des labours.” p. 101.

²⁴⁹ H. Rachik op. cit. p. 116.

²⁵⁰ (i) H. Basset op. cit. ‘On envoie de la nourriture à celui qui moule les olives, il est d’usage que le propriétaire retourne chacun de ces plats rempli d’huile.’ p. 97. (ii) Doughnuts are an important element in open air celebration. See Rachik op. cit. p. 120 : 6 butchers against 13 doughnut stalls.

VI-Private parties

Birth - Al 'Aqiqa²⁵¹

From the moment that a woman knows that she is pregnant, the attitude of the people about her changes, especially with regard to food. When she is in her "craving" period *lohām*, she may ask for anything that takes her fancy and she will be given it.²⁵² Some women exploit this to the extent of being too demanding, exploiting the teaching of the Quran, which obliges the husband and the immediate family to be attentive to a pregnant wife. In Morocco the belief is that, if the woman does not have whatever she is craving for, then not only would the entourage be seen as unbelievers, but also there might be a birth-mark on the child, which would scar it for life²⁵³. Neighbours are always concerned about their pregnant neighbour. For example, if they are going to have kebabs, "she" must be sent some of it since, if she has smelt or seen anything cooking, it is a duty to let her try some of it. Normally the craving period is for three months, but for some it goes beyond!

Birth (*nfas*)²⁵⁴ normally takes place at home, where all the necessary prepared foods have been stored for the event: *sufuf*, *sello* (*assello Berb.*) and *tqawet* all of which are derived from powdered almond and sesame. These she needs to take on a daily basis as long as she is breast-feeding, since they have galactagogue properties. However, for the first three days after the birth, the mother is fed a liquid diet, normally chicken broth or clear soup. If she gives birth to a girl, she gets a hen (*djaja*), whereas for a boy she receives a cock (*farooj*). Only "free-range" poultry is acceptable. Saffron, pepper and ginger give taste to the soup and counterbalance her post-natal shivers. In

²⁵¹ Also known as *khorsa*.

²⁵² E. Laoust op. cit. (*Eléments d'Ethnographie*). "La *nfissa* on ne lui refuse rien".p. 80

²⁵³ When the baby is born it is checked for birthmarks such as "strawberries" or "pieces of liver". This is a moment of trepidation for the mother, the belief being that the shapes represent things she had craved for but could not get during her pregnancy either because it was the wrong season or because there was another impediment.

²⁵⁴ The mid-wife, after cutting the umbilical cord, asks for a *taghounja* (*Berber*) or a *megharfa* (*Arabic*) (a wooden spoon) and gives the new-born a gentle tap with it. The belief is that he will never miss a meal. Hence the expression in Arabic, when somebody arrives whilst the family is eating, "*medrob bil megharfa*" ("hit with a spoon at birth !").

Fés *qadrā twimya*²⁵⁵ is made with chickpeas and almonds or *Tadefi* a type of soup with herbs. On the third day women friends and neighbours come to celebrate a small party called “*zroora*”. Presents in the form of money or cloth are given to her and her baby. For her guests she serves “*trīd*”, “*rfissa*”, “*rezza*” or “*Fidawsh*”, whichever is appropriate to her region. The dish is always prepared with chicken²⁵⁶.

In Fés it is customary to serve *trid*, a form of light pancake, which is prepared using a *tarada*, a concave earthenware pan heated over a charcoal stove. This pan is fitted with a small beak-like spout to allow excess oil to be channelled off without it touching the stove and causing smoke. The dough is flattened with both hands and spread on the *tarada*, once the latter is hot. The dough pancake is dehydrated by contact with the hot *tarada* and detaches itself by slipping down the concave surface, to be collected by the cook²⁵⁷. A large number of these pancakes is made, depending upon the number of guests and several women take part in the cooking. The sauce of the stewed chicken is flavoured with saffron and thickened with onion. The dish is served with the chicken²⁵⁸ covered with round layers of *trid*, on top of which is poured the sauce, followed by a sprinkling of cinnamon and sugar before serving. In Fés this dish is served on the third day after the birth, referred to as “*tiltiyam dial nfas*” (the third day from delivery).²⁵⁹ In other areas the *tiltiyam* is celebrated with different dishes.

The *rfissa*, another symbol of birth, is mostly made in the Chaouia (Shawiya)²⁶⁰ and the Tadla plains. The dough, again of simple composition, i.e. flour, water and salt, is divided into small balls, which are flattened by hand, sprinkled with oil and folded into four, flattened again and cooked on a *farāh*, a slightly convex earthenware pan.

²⁵⁵ The belief is to twin the baby with the chicken, in order to protect him from *Um Sabiyan*. See Douité, *Magie et Religion*- p115 & p. 227.

²⁵⁶ At times a *Mohsin* (a charitable soul) would send chicken to a poor woman who had just given birth.

²⁵⁷ There is also another form of cooking this pancake by using an amphora-like pot placed upside down : with its mouth in the fire and the concave bottom used for cooking the *trid*.

²⁵⁸ At times pigeons.

²⁵⁹ *Trīd* is also prepared for the birth of the Prophet (°*Id Mawlid*) and in the middle of Ramadan.

²⁶⁰ Chaouia (pron. Shawiya), from Arabic *shah* meaning sheep. A Shawi is a shepherd. The Chaouia, previously called Tamesna, is the plain where the herders used to take their sheep and thus remained the name of the Casablanca-Settat axis. E. Douité, *Merrakech*- 1905. p. 3

The pancakes are cooked on both sides and the pan is sprinkled with oil each time they are turned. When a pile of these *msemen* ("the oily pancakes") has been obtained, they are shredded into small pieces. A chicken stew is cooked with lentils, dried broad beans and fenugreek (optional). No saffron is added to the sauce, but *smen* is used. To serve the *rfissa*, the shredded pancakes are put in a *qas^ca* (a large clay dish), the meat is put in the middle and the pulses and sauce are poured on top.

Rezza/Reziza

By far the most elaborate of the *tiltiyam* dishes is the *rezza or reziza*²⁶¹. This dish is associated with the Gharb, Kénitra and Sidi Slimane. Again, it is a preparation requiring the efforts of several women. The dough is divided into small balls, each of which is rolled by hand to a rope-like shape, after which it is left for a few minutes. Subsequently, using oil and butter, it is converted to a thinner string and, after about four of these thinning sessions, the dough begins to resemble a ball of wool. Several of these are then flattened and cooked on a *farāh* or *maqla*, a clay or metallic girdle, upon which oil has been sprinkled. When a sufficient quantity of these pancakes has been cooked, they are steamed to break the rigidity caused by the gentle frying action. They are then shredded to a form that resembles pasta of a size between fettuccine and spaghetti. The accompanying stew is made with chicken and lentils flavoured with saffron. The dish is served with the *rezza* pasta as a base, with the meat in the middle over which the sauce is poured. For those, who could not attend, a portion is set aside to be sent to them, the *rezza* being kept separate from the sauce *blool*, to avoid becoming soggy.

Fidawsh

In the South of Morocco, well before the anticipated date of the delivery, hand-made vermicelli is prepared and dried in the sun in anticipation of the occasion. Over a

²⁶¹ Meaning turban. When it is served with honey and butter for breakfast or afternoon tea, it is called "rezat al qadi", the qadi's turban.

period of several days, friends and neighbours of the pregnant woman come to help shaping the *Fidawsh*²⁶². The dough is separated into small balls and each woman has a sheet of cotton material in which the hand-rolled worm like pasta is collected, before being put to dry in the sun. On the day of the birth celebration party the chicken and its sauce are cooked and the *Fidawsh* are steamed several times, (*seba^cāt al forat* = *steamed seven times*). It is served with the meat in the middle and sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar. At times the pieces of chicken are hidden in the pasta and the dish is then called *al madfoon* (the buried one). This dish is also prepared to mark the *‘Anṣra*, when it is made with the new wheat. I was told that, through this dish the people could tell the quality of the harvest. If the dough is flexible and malleable, then the wheat is good and has had enough water and has not suffered from drought.

The most important day after the birth is the seventh day, called in Arabic “*al ‘aqiqa*”, though in Morocco simply “*sboo^c* or *sāba^c* (*seventh day*).²⁶³ On this day a sheep is slaughtered in the name of the baby, the accompanying celebration being referred to as “*Smiyā*”.²⁶⁴ The scale of celebration differs according to the wealth of the family. It could be a big celebration with “*Ghiyaṭa*” (trumpets) played in the morning of the *smiyā* followed by huge party in the evening. But the norm is the slaughtering in the morning and a party for friends and family, with a group of *ṭolba* reading the Quran at home and praying for the child to be amongst the “*dūriya* or *tārika as saliha*” (the good and beneficial) progeny. A ladies party is held in the evening or on the following day, when the special mixture *sefuf/sello* is served to them. This preparation is made only on such occasions or during Ramadan. On the fortieth day, the baby has its hair cut (Berb. *Assgoorm*) by the father or grandfather and an afternoon tea party is organised to mark the “*arba^cin*”(forty)²⁶⁵.

²⁶² Arabic word meaning “shredded” hence “fideos” in Portuguese and Spanish. Sun dried pasta preserves its flavour and nutritional value better than the modern machine-made product.

²⁶³ H. Basset op. cit. : l’imposition du nom. p. 223.

²⁶⁴ This celebration is a duty, without which the child is not considered to be properly named.

²⁶⁵ Some children are taken on a visit to the local saint. In Marrakesh babies when they are 40 days old, are sent to the Gnawa shrine where they are blessed and a sauce from a saltless *ṭajin* is put in the

The mother concentrates upon eating well in order to be able to continue breast-feeding.²⁶⁶ She avoids eating certain types of food that could harm her milk; for instance she should avoid watermelon in summer, as this will give diarrhoea (*shem*) to the baby. Breast-feeding is seen as a form of birth control (contraception)²⁶⁷ and some mothers breast-feed until the child is two or three. The normal period is however one year. When the day of weaning comes it is called "*laftama*". A small loaf of bread is made for the child by a woman, known for her patience "*sabarā*". This bread is shared between the baby and its friends. In the afternoon, to mark the transition from liquids to solids, the mother prepares leavened bread²⁶⁸, which she serves with butter and honey, boiled eggs and dates. Perfumes and *nefqa* (dried fragrances mixed with rose-water) are distributed. A possible explanation is that this is to return the mother to feminine odours after a year of breast-feeding. The child is sent to a relative or a neighbour at night so that it may forget breast-feeding. The celebrations that follow the *ftama*, for both boys and girls, are teething parties, where "*shirsham*", all types of seeds, are boiled and distributed to children: wheat, broad beans, chick peas and lentils. The same preparation is made at the ^c*Ansra* Festival to try out the new crops.

If the child is a girl, the next party will be ear piercing "*tqib al wadneen*". A tea party is organized to which friends and relatives come to sing and dance and praise the courage of the little girl. Her family's financial situation determines the scale of the party. She could have a "mistress of ceremonies" *negaffāt*, who would dress her for this event, or simply the serving of mint tea and cakes would suffice to enhance the singing and dancing party. The next event in a girl's life is when she begins menstruating. At times this can happen when she is already living with her in-laws. The girl is dressed up in all colours so that whatever she wears would suit her. She puts on make-up and wears jewellery. However in the past, if this event occurred when the girl was still at home, the fact was hidden from the father, in order to allow

mouth of each of them. Normally the family sends offerings such as live chicken and sugar before the visit.

²⁶⁶ L. Chénier op. cit. noticed that women had a special fattening diet. p. 151.

²⁶⁷ A widely followed practice, hence the local women's saying "*ghir ftamt ooana nhiz*", meaning from the moment she weaned (the child) she became pregnant.

²⁶⁸ Called *batbūt* or *būshiyar*.

her to complete her studies. Otherwise she could be married within the year. For a boy, the next event after the *ftama* is circumcision "*lakhtanā*" or "*ṭaharā*", an event whose organisation concerns both the father and the whole family.

Circumcision: *lakhtanā*, *I°dār* or *ṭaharā*

I°dār, circumcision is an event of social as well as religious importance. From a religious point of view, a father has his children circumcised in his own lifetime, rather than leave it for others to do for him.²⁶⁹ Socially, it gives the father a chance to mark his position in society, since this is the first big celebration after his wedding and could well be the last before the children are old enough to marry. Therefore, although it is said that circumcision should be celebrated with discretion (*lekhtanā bi satra*), this is never respected and a party is always held, whether the family be rich or poor. Normally the party takes place in the summer after the harvest, when children are on school holidays and people are on annual holiday. It can also take place during the *mawsem* period. The first stage of preparation involves obtaining wheat, washing²⁷⁰ it and drying it on the roof for about two days. The grain is then cleaned by hand to remove all odd particles and impurities. Friends and neighbours come after lunch and help with this process. When the required quantity of wheat is ready, (about two hundredweight), it is sent to the local mill. The proportion of what is to be turned into semolina and what is to be ground as flour is decided. The semolina is destined for the making of *Kesksu* and is prepared and then dried on the roof every afternoon for subsequent storage in bags, (*khansha* or *kis*). The flour is earmarked for making bread for the reception and cakes and pancakes for breakfast and afternoon tea. Thus the basic preparation for any such party is wheat, followed by the storage of other commodities: honey, olive oil, butter, *smen* (specially treated butter), prunes, pickled lemons and olives. To this list must be added pulses for making breakfast *ḥarīra*: chickpeas, broad beans and lentils. Special treatment is reserved for the spices, which, as soon as they have been bought, are taken up onto the roof to be dried in the sun to remove all moisture that might ruin their taste. Then each is ground and placed in a

²⁶⁹ E. Laoust op. cit. pp.92-96.

²⁷⁰ To reduce the starch in the flour.

separate container: peppercorns (black and white), cumin²⁷¹, turmeric, ginger²⁷², mace and saffron. Green tea and sugar are purchased and also fragrances, which are required to give taste to the cakes and also for welcoming the guests by sprinkling them as they enter the house, using a *mresha* (sprinkler) containing orange-blossom water or rose-water. A room is dedicated to the storage of all the above items and a person is charged with their supervision, whose duty it is to inform the family of any shortages.

Before the day of the party, the mother selects *‘aradāt*, two women of mature age²⁷³, known for their rectitude and trust and gives them a list of families to whom to make invitations. They take with them bunches of mint and flowers with a *sabniyā*²⁷⁴, a heavily embroidered headscarf. Whenever the women enter a house, they recite rhymes, saying that they are bringing good news from Mrs X wife of X who is inviting you to attend a party she is holding for the “crossing of the boys”. The word circumcision is never used before the child has been circumcised, for fear that some evil may befall him before the event²⁷⁵. The family will confirm their acceptance or else explain how difficult it would be for them to attend. Sugar or money (*labyād*) is given to the “invitation women”, which they keep for their troubles. This invitation procedure goes on for several days, telling the families when the men’s days and ladies’ days are for parties and how the *lahdiya* “present” procession is being organised. Close friends and relatives would be invited to all the ceremonies and Festivities, whereas other friends and more distant relatives would be invited only to

²⁷¹ Cumin is the only spice that is washed to remove impurities.

²⁷² Only the dried form is available in Morocco.

²⁷³ Normally a mature woman would have more freedom to visit houses as her children are already grown, whilst for a younger woman to perform this task would be considered immodest and frivolous and would be objectionable to the households receiving her visits. The appropriate times for such visits are in the mornings or afternoons, when the menfolk are absent. For his business partners and contacts the husband would send his trusted man to convey the invitations on his behalf. There are professional *‘arada* (male and female) for each area and they all know the families living in the town. Fés has its own people called *Azerzai* (from Berber), who have their own master and are trusted with huge sums of money or expensive items to carry from one place to the other. They belong to one of the many religious sects, they have their own patron saint and their trust has never been questioned.

²⁷⁴ Scarves together with the father or grandfather’s turban are highly significant, since they identify the family. Also each *lahdiya* brings its own *‘alam* (flag) and they are attached to poles like flags and are used as family banners throughout the festivities. After the seventh day, they are detached and sent back to their owners with soap (*ṣabon*) and *henna*.

²⁷⁵ The fear is that the evil-spirit *Om sabiyan* “children’s mother”, jealous of their youth, will kill them. However, once they have “crossed” over to their new state, she can no longer harm them.

men's evenings and ladies' afternoon parties. The Festivities normally begin on a Thursday. A calf or a sheep, or simply chickens may be prepared for dinner, as the guests who have brought their *lahdiya*²⁷⁶ will be staying on for a meal. In Marrakesh, *lahdiya* is called *taragt*²⁷⁷. The presents are all grouped at a friend's house from where the procession will depart. A cart is hired and the following items are exhibited: bags of sugar loaves, (25 loaves weigh 50 kg), sacks of hard and soft wheat flour, boxes of bottled oil (12 litres in each), clothes for the child and four-metre lengths of cloth for the mother, plus a sheep or a calf. If the family is sufficiently well off, then more *lahdiya* or *taragt* will be given and they will end up having to sell them at the end of the celebrations. In Fés, the presents are given in a more discreet manner. The guests tend to give money to the child and four-metre lengths of cloth and jewellery to the mother.

Food for circumcision celebrations

At the Thursday ceremony, the guests are fed either *medfoon* pasta or *Kesksu* with *tafaya*. The latter is honeyed onions mixed with raisins and perfumed with orange-blossom water. Once the chicken or meat is cooked in the *Kesksu* sauce, chickpeas are added. The dish of *Kesksu* is served in pyramid form, with the meat at the top, over which is put the honeyed onions, raisins and chickpeas with a sprinkling of cinnamon. Friday, the second day, is when the *tolba* come in the evening to recite the Quran. Food for this ceremony is not very elaborate, the norm being *Kesksu* with *tefaya*, or else a choice between lamb and a chicken dish before it. For all religious parties, *Kesksu* is served either with meat or as a dessert, *seffā*. Sandalwood is burnt and rose water and orange-blossom water are sprinkled on the guests. The more elaborate dishes and cakes are for the next day's party. Sophisticated cakes are the norm for towns, whilst rural areas concentrate more on meat and its quality, plus bread of several types. In towns the women have more time to spare and help is easily found. Cakes are made of almonds, sesame, dates and flour mixed with all kinds of

²⁷⁶ The *lahdiya* procession (in the street) is accompanied by musicians, in Oued Zem they have *ibidat rma* following in dancing and singing. This group has a prestigious role in the community. Firstly their name indicates their war-like connection; *servants of the weapon* (*rmā*: spears/arrows) who in battle are there to exhort the warriors to be courageous. Secondly they are highly respected for being fair in their judgement whenever there is a dispute.

fragrances: zest of bitter orange, lemons, rose, cloves, geranium etc. These cakes are all stored in *mkāb*, special conical containers, before any ceremony starts.

Dishes for such ceremonies are more or less the same everywhere, the difference lies in the skill of the cook²⁷⁸. There are no salads to be served, but several dishes are prepared, for example: chicken with pickled lemon and green olives, then beef or lamb with honeyed plums, decorated with fried almonds and sesame seeds and finally *seffā* as a dessert. The latter is sweetened *Kesksu* decorated with rows of cinnamon and icing sugar. If the family is in the countryside²⁷⁹, *meshwī* is prepared, but only by the men, this being regarded as their speciality. Pits are dug in a courtyard, the sheep are mounted on the spits and slowly grilled, during which they are basted with a sauce made of *smen*, cumin and salt. The *meshwī* is served first, followed by one or two other dishes of different meats, but on no account are two beef or two lamb dishes served. When the meal is finished, mint tea is prepared to help digest the food. When the family has sufficient financial means, then *Bastella* would be on the menu always as a first course, since it contains almonds, which are considered to be an aperitif. It should then be followed by any meat dishes that have been prepared. At ceremonies such as this and also at weddings there is always more than one course. *Ka^cak* are made, especially for the consumption of children.²⁸⁰ In coastal towns such as Azemmour, Safi and Salé, fish dishes are included in the ceremonial menu. In Salé, a fish *Bastella* is prepared, in which fish replaces pigeon. It is spiced to be slightly hot to the taste and it is not sweet at all. In southern areas between Chiadma and Tiznit, large *tajīns* are prepared by men for the evening men's reception. A large area is selected, far from where the reception is held. Three stones form a base for each *tajīn*, under which charcoal is lit. Portions of meat, spices and oil are added on an equal basis. Once these have simmered, slices of pumpkin are added and cooked gently

²⁷⁷ A Berber word for present.

²⁷⁸ The training and skills of the cook are covered in chapter IV.

²⁷⁹ In town this dish is cooked in the public ovens.

²⁸⁰ In the North, when the mother comes back home with some *Ka^cak*, this is the evidence that she really went to a party, as these take a long time to prepare, mainly because the raising of the yeast is delayed by the sweetness they contain.

until the meat and pumpkin “melt” at the touch. Twenty of such *tajins*²⁸¹ can serve about two hundred persons. A *Kesksu* dish may at times be served as a second course.

²⁸¹ Each *tajin* serves ten persons, but there are also larger ones for fifteen persons.

Weddings - Zawāj

Of all the ceremonies celebrated in Morocco, weddings are the most appreciated, since the food is usually both lavish and varied and the social contacts are elaborate.²⁸² Marriages are normally arranged between families, rather than by the couple themselves. However, the latter may well have discreetly contrived to arrange their own destiny. First the prospective groom sends his family to ask for the hand of the girl, although this was not always the custom. In the past, when a family wished to find a wife for one of its sons, it would send for a *Khattaba* (*Berb. Amazan* from *azen* to send), a person expert in getting families together, who would know all the eligible girls, their families, their background and their education or their manual and artistic skills. She would first find out the day that the girl's family goes to the Hammam and would take the prospective mother-in-law to see the girl. If she met with the mother-in-law's approval, the *Khattaba* would be sent to see if the girl's family would like to meet the groom's family. The *Khatba* is then arranged. Normally this takes place in the evening.

Assuming that the outcome will be positive, the actual ceremonies of the wedding can be defined as taking place in three stages, the first of which is the *Khatba*, the "asking of the hand of the bride". The groom's family brings a bouquet of flowers with a 50-kilogram sack of sugar loaves. Once the dowry is settled and both families agree, the 'fatiha' is read in the men's *majlis* and the information is passed to the women to start their *zagharit*.²⁸³ The expression current on that evening is *zwāj lila tadbiro ʿam*, meaning 'a whole year of preparation is required to organize a one-night party'. After the *Khatba*, to which are invited only a small number of relatives and friends from both sides, a dinner meal is normally served, as follows:

²⁸² Since this is a ceremony of joining two families by a marriage, there is an atmosphere of each striving to show itself "at its best", to the extent that the families are competing to show who has deserved the other. J. & J. Tharaud op. cit. pp. 138-153.

²⁸³ The mother of the groom pays the *zaghrata*: normally a woman known for her good long *zagharit* (a long happy ululation) is brought along.

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Poor households | <i>Kesksu</i> with <i>tfaya</i> beef/chicken |
| Middle-class households | Two dishes (at least) Chicken <i>tajīn</i> Lamb <i>Kesksu</i> |
| Rich households | <i>Bastella</i> with pigeon, lamb or chicken <i>tajīn</i> , <i>Kesksu</i> with meat and vegetable or Honeyed cakes/fruit, <i>azenbo</i> ²⁸⁴ for dessert |

The bride's family now starts to think about their daughter's dowry and trousseau.²⁸⁵ In Morocco the dowry consists of an agreed sum of money, given to the bride by the groom's family, the amount being dependent upon the wealth of both families. This money is given to help her finance her purchases for her new home, or simply to buy jewellery.²⁸⁶ However, in extreme cases the bride brings expensive furniture and furnishings for her new house, ranging from complete sitting rooms and a bedroom to the provision of kitchen utensils crockery and glassware, plus crystal glasses and brocade for her guest rooms. The sofas are called either *el ḥor* or *ḥarami* i.e. pure or "bastard". In the former the sofas are filled with pure wool, whilst in the latter the bride's family would have practised a deception, by mixing the wool with cotton or *ḥalfa* (alfafa). All this reflects the economic status of the family of the bride.

The second stage of the overall ceremonies,²⁸⁷ which follows after a period varying from one to three months, is that of buying presents to the bride's house. This could be the biggest party, as the next party is the wedding itself, which is the groom's

²⁸⁴ Green barley, steamed and mixed with *amlo*. Served in the Souss area.

²⁸⁵ It takes time to "endow" the bride, since the hand-embroidered linen takes a long time to prepare. Hence the girl's mother begins making her trousseau from the age of 8 or 10, in order to avoid delays later. This includes several sets of bed sheets, each set with a different embroidery: table cloths and napkins for tea, coffee and food, sets of towels for the Hammam and curtains for the bedroom and guest room. Finally, in earlier days a dowry in rich families would include slaves (cooks) and property.

²⁸⁶ In some cases the father takes the money as the price for giving his daughter in marriage.

²⁸⁷ (i) H. Basset op. cit. see for weddings in the countryside. pp. 225. 238. (ii) E. Westermarck Marriage ceremonies in Morocco-Curzon Press London 1914. Betrothal pp. 15-63.

party. In this period of time the bride moves from the status of *makhṭoba* to *melka*²⁸⁸, the “ownership mark” of the groom, as termed in Fés and the North of Morocco or the *Tabyida*, as termed in the centre of the country. In the centre and South of Morocco the presents for the bride are brought with basic ingredients for the meal of the party: large bags of wheat flour and semolina, sugar loaves, several litres of oil and either a sheep or a calf. In Fés the importance of presents is concentrated on the jewellery that the groom’s family will offer to the bride. The ceremony is called *Rshim* (marking), to emphasise that the girl is marked by the ceremony, to avoid other families being interested in her. With the jewellery, the groom’s family brings along clothes for the bride, shoes, henna, dates (*mejhool*)²⁸⁹ and milk. Being the bride’s party *Lamlāk* is a special ceremony, where the bride is attended by a *Negafa*²⁹⁰ or Mistress of Ceremonies. As this is the first time that the bride is presented to her future in-laws²⁹¹, the *negafa* dresses her in several outfits, accompanied by the appropriate jewellery. Today the custom is for the bride to be witnessed by the groom in her outfits, but in the past he would not be able to see her before the wedding night. The groom himself is dressed simply, as the central figure of attraction is the bride.

According to a very ancient Berber tradition the *negafa*²⁹² pawns “*rehen*” the bride and asks her friends and relatives to “release” her. This they do by giving a small present of money to the *negafa* and kissing the bride. The *lamlāk* could also be a two fold event. Firstly there would be a women’s party during the day, with dinner being served before sunset, after which the ladies would go back to their homes. The reception hall would then be cleared for a men’s party, the latter beginning to arrive after the *salāt al ‘isha*. They might be entertained during dinner by one of the

²⁸⁸ Hence *Melek* fiancé and *Melka* fiancée.

²⁸⁹ *Tmar ma‘amar* (filled dates) *Mejhool* (large dates, stoned and filled with grilled almonds).

²⁹⁰ *Neqqafat* comes from an Amazigh word *aneggaf*, *andjaf*, found in dialect in Siwah, in Libyan dialect and in Souss, meaning wedding. (i) Laoust “Les Archives Berbères” p 47. (ii) H. Basset op. cit. p. 43.

²⁹¹ In rural areas, the mother of the bride pours about two or three kilos of hard wheat grains through the neck of the dress of the bride. This would seem to be a symbol of fertility.

²⁹² E. Laoust *Archives Berbères 1915-16* pp 48: This practice, in a less sumptuous manner was witnessed by the French officer Laoust before the colonisation of Morocco. Laoust was comparing the manners and customs of the Berber and the *Shleuh*, in particular the nomads. *Tannegit* (Berb.) in the Souss means “the wedding ceremonies”. Hence this custom has been retained by the population of Fés and its regions.

manifold varieties of music available, or possibly by *tolba* chanting *Quranic* verses.

The bride, of course, is not presented to men.

However, during the last twenty or so years, people have tended to organize one party, referred to as *mekhalta* mixed, in which men and women are both present. They may be seated separately on different sides of the hall or relatives or friends may be seated together in particular corners. Surprisingly, until the seventies, women did not attend parties where men were present. Thus, if there were to be musicians, the question of whether they were genuinely blind²⁹³ would be raised. Many women bribed their children in order to hide the fact that one of the musicians was sighted, (invariably a lute-player).²⁹⁴ The choice is thus a difficult one for the hostess, who obviously wants to give a memorable party for her daughter. She must also take great care in choosing the menu, for the greater the family's fortune, the better the meals must be. This also applies to the cakes, which should all contain nuts and almonds, as these are expensive items. Drinks are elaborately prepared and tea is served with great ceremony. It seems that only through long years of experience can the individual acquire the skill to make the exact measure for each teapot. Once the tea is poured in glasses and served, the tea-maker should be complimented " *ya' tek assaha* " or " *tabaraka Allah 'alik*" (praising and blessing the tea maker). The guests, whilst sipping the sweet tea, talk about their heads loosening, or being energised.

²⁹³ In order to learn the lute, it was necessary to attend a music school. Since women were not allowed to venture outside their homes, either before or after marriage, it was difficult to find a woman lute-player. Hence blind men were trained to play both lute and violin. They could then participate in orchestras, known as *jawq al 'amyin*, where all the remaining performers were sighted women. Some of these performers consumed alcohol, which was served in great secrecy. Clay mugs were used for drinking, so that the colour would not offend the eyes of the audience. An order would be placed at a Jewish shop, who would deliver the bottles of wine or spirits wrapped in paper. The alcohol "payment in kind" element would be fixed with the orchestra at the moment of hiring. If the orchestra was a prestigious one, then the condition would be accepted without dispute, otherwise they would have to bring their own alcohol, so that nobody would be blamed for buying it or being aware of it being under a Moslem family roof.

²⁹⁴ In large cities, like Fés, Meknes, Tetuan, Tangier, Marrakesh and Safi, where education was more advanced, there were renowned women's orchestras. Strangely enough Moslem men did not object to Jewish men as entertainers for women-only parties. This attitude spread to other professions, for example the normally Jewish trade of haberdasher. Hence the Jewish haberdasher and his "boy apprentice" would be allowed inside the house without the master being present, provided that there were children and other occupants present. As the job would take up a large portion of the day, a vegetarian sandwich that has not touched Moslem meat dishes would be given to him. However, if the family had Jewish neighbours, a meal could be borrowed from them for the haberdasher. Failing this, he could be given tea, bread and olives.

The final stage of this party is hardly in existence today, yet only twenty years ago it was widely practised. It is called *laghrama*,²⁹⁵ where a woman *al baraḥa*,²⁹⁶ i.e. puts a tray in front of the bride *la^croṣa mbārza* and shouts the names of the people, who give their presents to the bride. It may be money to help finance her trousseau, gold and silverware, sets of embroidered bedclothes, tablecloths or expensive qaftans. At the end of the *laghrama* the tray is given to the bride's mother. Party bags are distributed to the guests as they leave. They consist of pieces of gum arabic, sugar almond sweets, *feqqas* or *ka^cak*²⁹⁷, all wrapped in an embroidered handkerchief *derra*²⁹⁸. The women's party is over at this stage and only close friends and relatives stay behind, when all the guests have left, to help sort out the confusion remaining. Although help has been hired, the relatives at times are more concerned with the quality and timing of the service than in enjoying themselves. The hired or borrowed utensils and articles have to be sorted.²⁹⁹ Carpets, sofas and cushions borrowed from neighbours to furnish the party hall have all to be returned to their owners.

Special attention has to be given to the utensils in which the groom's family has brought presents. The trays on which the gifts were exhibited have to be returned with appropriate items on them. For instance, as it is customary for the groom to send milk with presents to his bride, whilst she must return the milk container with a solidified milk product. Thus in Fés, the mother of the bride would have prepared the presents and most importantly a sweet made of milk and nuts called *Jabān*. This type of sweet (nougat) is made with boiled sugar in milk, and egg white and nuts. Previously camphor was used as a fragrance, but is now banned because of its alleged carcinogenic properties. The symbolic meaning of this preparation is to signify to the groom that the sacred drink that represented his wish has been solidified by her. The expression for this is *Jabān al kul ibān* i.e. "*Jabān* in which all is clear", which also

²⁹⁵ E. Westermarck *Marriage Ceremonies* p. 155.

²⁹⁶ From the Berber *aberrah, iberrahin*. This practice was noted by French officers in remote Berber villages.

²⁹⁷ There is a saying *Arāis bila ka^cak*, wedding without *ka^cak*, which equates to the English "like Christmas without turkey."

²⁹⁸ Today this traditional bag is more sophisticated. It is made by printers and bears the names of the groom and bride, the traditional contents being replaced by modern ingredients such as chewing gum and chocolate etc.

²⁹⁹ J & J. Tharaud op. cit. p. 156.

means that the nuts can be noticed in the sweet despite the thickness of the milk. Further South in Morocco the groom's utensils are returned with sugar loaves and a dinner for him, if he has not attended the party. But whatever is the case, it would be impolite to return the utensils without anything in them. This custom is defined in terms of white and black. If there is sugar or something sweet in the utensils it is called *labyad* (whitening). If there is nothing in them, the utensils are called *kahlin* (blackened).³⁰⁰ The *lemlak* party, the main party for the bride, is now over and all attention is concentrated upon her trousseau. The groom's family would now be planning their party, the third stage of the overall ceremonies, which is the wedding party itself, bringing together their family and the brides' family.

Sometimes the bride defers the wedding, because her embroideries have been delayed, or perhaps on account of her studies, if she is still young. In the meantime, the groom's family will continue to send presents to her at each Festival. This is called *tafkur* (remembrance), and the level of its observance will depend upon the wealth of the groom's family, varying from scarves, nuts (walnuts and almonds) and dates to a sheep, cloth and jewellery. If the couple are from a rural area, the family of the bride are asked to meet at the local *sooq* (weekly market) where, from time to time, the bride receives her *taswiqa*, consisting of several kilograms of meat or chicken, fruit, vegetables and dried fruit. If this coincides with the *'Id al Adhā*, she receives a sheep with spices and dried herbs and flowers for her *nefqa*. This custom of remembrance continues until the bride joins her husband officially.

When the date of the wedding is announced, (this being usually in the summer), the bride puts henna on her body for several days to soften it. On the night prior to the

³⁰⁰ Moroccans abhor the colour black, in fact the word "black" is never mentioned in its pure form but euphemism instead : *akhal* (black of the eye) is the preferred word. Highly superstitious people avoid seeing anything black in the morning, especially a black cat. In the kitchen, the blackened pans or cooking utensils must be either cleaned at night or hidden so that the housewife will not see them first thing in the morning. If there are altercations between neighbours then the more daring would put a black pan in the face of the belligerent neighbour, when the latter opened her door or windows in the morning. I believe that this also explains why black cooks or servants working in the household and living with the family were always given names with meanings signifying beauty and prosperity. Thus female servants had names like *Om al kheer*, *Rabha*, *Yasmin*, *Mabrouka*, *Mes'ooda*, *'anbar* or *Jowhara*, i.e. "Bringer of prosperity, Winner, Jasmine (white), Lucky, Happy, Amber, Pearl", whilst male servants could be called *Mbark*, *Mes'ood* or *Rabeh*. Thus whatever name they came with to the house would be changed by the family. See J. & J. Tharaud op. cit. p. 37.

wedding night, the public hammam³⁰¹ is hired for the bride and her friends. The group takes sugar loaves and candles *lemsha^cil* or *shoomo^c* to the bath attendant *aṭayaba*. This is a sort of hen party where singing and dancing last for several hours as this is the last time that the bride would be in the company of her friends and neighbours³⁰². Once everybody has bathed and dressed, mint tea is served in the *jalsa* (reception room) and they entertain themselves, singing and dancing. After this bathing session, at home the bride has henna put on her hand and feet, which sanctifies the wedding.³⁰³ The following morning a two-part breakfast is served: *ḥarīra* soup at dawn, then at mid-morning, tea is served with *qrashel*.³⁰⁴ This type of bread is made in large quantities, to be used at breakfast during the party and for the bride to take with her. After this two-part breakfast, the *negafa* and women³⁰⁵ members of the bride's family take the *btāt* (the brides' trousseau) to furnish her new house. One or two women stay with the groom's family from this day until the seventh day after the wedding night. The purpose of this is to have someone handling liaison between the bride and her new family to facilitate communication and also to see that the bride is smoothly integrated into her new family.

On the evening of the wedding night the groom's family gives a party called *dakhla* or *lilt rwah*, which is normally a male party. Members of the bride's family are also included in the guest list. In the evening, when the guests arrive, tea and cakes are served, whilst they are entertained by a group of singers. Several types of cakes are

³⁰¹ The *hammām* is available for private parties after sunset, when all women from the public will have left. The hammam is cleaned and lit with candles and incense is burned. The bride's family pays for the hire of the hammām.

³⁰² It used to be said that women have only two outings in their lives : one when coming to her future in-laws and the other when going to the grave. Most large houses have hammams built within the house, which are comparable to modern steam-rooms.

³⁰³ All ceremonies, whether they are for children, women or even men have a henna party before the real ceremony takes place.

³⁰⁴ *Qrashel* or *ka^cak* is a type of bread that due to its ingredients (orange blossoms water, gum arabic, sugar and leavened dough) keeps for a long time without becoming stale. Seafarers and pilgrims take it with them in large quantities.

³⁰⁵ In most cases, the woman who performs this function is the *ma^calma*, the girl's teacher. This woman has known the bride since she was a little girl. The latter would have been sent to her either to learn a craft, such as weaving, embroidery, housekeeping, cooking, playing an instrument or learning the Quran and hadiths. She acts as a second mother to the bride, giving advice on everything so that, at times, she is closer to her than her own mother. In other families it could be the bride's aunt or her wet-nurse.

served with tea. If dinner is served, it should be a minimum of two dishes. However, if the family is well off, it could be:

Bastella with pigeon

Meshwī

Chicken or beef *tajīn* (with dried fruit or pickled lemon)

Sweet *Kesksu seffa*

Dessert either *rghifa* (honeyed cake) or *el ghala* (fruit)

Whilst this meal is served, light music is played to help relaxation. Contrary to Western practice, where food and drink are served as a continuous process throughout the party, in Morocco there is no alcohol served and the meals last only one to one and a half hours. Conversation at table is very restricted, as people should use their palates to enjoy food, rather than converse. Although water, juices and soft drinks are available, it is customary to drink after meals and not before.

The party could be in full swing when the groom or his father, accompanied by close friends, goes to fetch the bride. The latter awaits him, well groomed and well dressed, surrounded by her friends. The mother will have prepared a meal for the bride and her friends or if the family has sound finances, a small party could be held with an orchestra. Several dishes could thus be served before the groom's party arrives. There are even cases where the latter also comes to dinner at the bride's family house. The bride is then taken in full pomp to her new home, though her father and mother do not accompany her. In fact the bride's mother, once her daughter has gone, must start cooking the bride's meal, which is called *laftor* i.e. breakfast. It is indeed a meal³⁰⁶ consisting of several dishes: *bastella*, *mehensha*,³⁰⁷ chicken *muhammer*, pastries of several kinds, milk, bread and *ka^cak* are sent by the family to their daughter. The bride eats this meal with her husband and his close-relatives. It is customary for the groom's mother to have a ladies party on that day, to introduce her new daughter-in-law. The *negafa* remains with her charge to look after her wardrobe, selecting dresses

³⁰⁶ Although it is called breakfast, it is really a sustaining lunch which after a long and eventful night, compensates for a breakfast that has been missed.

and colours for her, whilst singing the praises of the young couple. The *negafa* is the only person who shares intimacy with both bride and groom, bathing them and attending to their particular needs at this critical moment. Indeed, it could well be that the couple has never met before, so that a skilful person is needed to break the ice. The bride's family also attends this ladies' party. They bring their gifts for *sbah*³⁰⁸ ranging from gold to money, which are put in front of the bride in appreciation of her good moral conduct.³⁰⁹ The party finishes in the evening, the bride remains in her bedroom resting for a few days, attended by one of her relatives or the *negafa*. On the seventh day, the bride prepares her first meal for the family, in order to prove her culinary abilities.³¹⁰ The husband slaughters a sheep in the early morning and the wife prepares a *Kesksu*. This custom differs from one area to another.

In coastal and riverside towns such as Safi, Salé and Fés, the bride prepares fish, in the form of a fish *tajin* of *shabel*, (shad). In the Gharb, Kénitra and Benslimane, the newly married girl makes a *rezza* dish and when the meal is ready, a small play is arranged, in which the bride runs away with her freshly-baked *rezza*, pursued by her father-in-law. The meaning conveyed is that her food is so good that he will not let her go. On that day the girl's mother, or somebody closer to her depending on families, might come to visit and will therefore be truly embarrassed if she has not taught her daughter how to cook well. This party is called *Lahzam*³¹¹ meaning "the belt"³¹². It terminates with the women drinking tea and putting on make up and trying all sorts of fragrances with the new bride. The young bride is now seen as an adult,

³⁰⁷ E. Westermarck *Marriage ceremonies*- pp.278-279.

³⁰⁸ *Sbah* is proof of virginity, which is characterised by a bloodstained long white night -shirt that is shown to the guests.

³⁰⁹ This practice is disappearing as more and more couples consummate their marriage before the wedding night. In some cases a girl who has consummated her marriage in this way, may resort to surgical "repairs", in order to be able to convince relatives that she was a virgin on her wedding night.

³¹⁰ Divorces have been known to occur because the woman did not know how to cook. Either the husband takes this as an excuse for taking a second wife or the marriage ends in divorce. Mothers are very concerned about the culinary competence of their daughters. If a girl does not excel in this art, a second discipline is chosen for her, such as weaving or embroidery. This is seen as a lucrative quality by the in-laws and a girl could be chosen for this quality alone.

³¹¹ H. Basset op. cit. "La mariée remet sa ceinture le septième jour." p. 237.

³¹² Most towns celebrate this party in similar manner, but in more traditional households although the bride is well-dressed during the first seven days, she does not wear a belt on her *qaftan*, (which is the fashion), when she moves around until the seventh day when she puts it on in a ritual way. Its significance is like a wedding ring and from this moment onwards she will never be seen without a belt by any stranger to the house. This would be seen as a sign of neglect and lack of discipline. Westermarck *Marriage Ceremonies* pp. 237-239.

taking part in all aspects of everyday life, from preparing food to making herself beautiful for her husband. In Marrakesh and also among the Southern towns and villages the groom is called *aslin* (Berb. groom) for seven days and it is customary to bow to him occasionally. His friends are called *Islan* and they entertain him for seven days at *dar islan* a hired or borrowed house, where the wedding party was held. Alternatively, at his new home, each one of his friends in turn brings a different entertainer for every night until the seventh day, when they all return to their respective homes.

Aristocratic or Court parties

The parties of the aristocracy, whether they be for weddings or circumcision, are quite different from those of the masses. They differ not only in food, but also in the type and quality of entertainment provided. As mentioned earlier, for the Moroccan at large, celebrations are special occasions for overindulging oneself in meat, the basic fare for all celebrations, which must always be plentiful. However, the aristocracy of the ancient imperial cities does not organize its parties with a view to producing the best food, but seeks to engage the best orchestra available in the country. This does not mean that good food is not made available. On the contrary there will be several small parties where dishes such as *bastella*, *muḥammer* and *tajīns* of all kinds may be served. However, the major party, to which several hundred people might be invited, is invariably a tea party. At such a function, in addition to a wide variety of cakes, all kinds of sweetmeats containing nuts, honey, sugar and dried fruits are served, accompanied by juices, ranging from almond juice with milk and orange blossom to pomegranate, lemon, mint and aniseed syrups. If such a function has been planned to last from seven in the evening until dawn, then servings of new sweets and new drinks are made every half-hour, with a distribution of bags of nougat and gum arabic at the end of the party.³¹³ This somewhat informal form of hospitality is dictated by the fact that the guests are in effect an audience listening to a continuous concert of what is termed “Andalusian Classical music” or *ala* music.

³¹³ Bearing in mind that all guests are seated. Unlike Western parties, it is embarrassing to have guests not seated at parties.

These classical orchestras are the most expensive in all the country, with those from Tangier, Salé, Rabat, Safi, Fés, Meknés and Oujda having their own particular features. During the course of a hard and intense training, student musicians learn all the notes of each work by heart and thus play without a score. The *Ma[°]alem* or *sheikh*, (conductor), in addition to his musical skills is also competent in poetry. Hence the host chooses with the *Ma[°]alem* the poems and the mode of the music, the choice being based on the hour of the day, the season³¹⁴ and the occasion being celebrated. Libretti are distributed to the guests to enable them to follow the rhythm and enjoy the poetry, whilst drinking their fragrant beverages and tasting the flavours of the sweetmeats. The *san[°]a* (opera) lasts for several hours³¹⁵ and it is indisputable that its ambience would be seriously perturbed if dinner were to be served.

The guests for their part know from the invitation they have received, what orchestra will be playing and what food they may expect. The people who shun such parties are the uneducated masses and those who, although technically educated, are nevertheless unrefined. They joke about such parties: “*kwi[°]is o k[°]iba wal khruj ma[°]a dri[°]ba*” meaning “a drink and *ka[°]ab* (cakes) and goodbye!”³¹⁶. They even criticise their more refined compatriots for being too mean to spend money on real food and a real (i.e. popular) orchestra so that people can dance and enjoy themselves. What escapes them completely is that the *sama[°]* is the most enjoyable feature of the party and that the price of such an orchestra with “cakes” is more that double that of their entertainment accompanied by “real food”. The orchestra, unlike the others, uses special classical instruments such as *rebab*³¹⁷ (a banana shaped violin, which the performer play holding it on his knees to allow him to sing and play simultaneously), the lute *°ud* and various types of drums, which vary according to the mode played. The richer aristocratic families patronise *musiqat al ala* singers and musicians, thereby helping to keep this art alive. They organize competitions amongst the performers and the patron who “finds” a new “cantor” (who was either a mosque muezzin or from a religious

³¹⁴ See H. G. Farmer in Collection of Oriental writers on Music :“Abu Zayd Abdel Rahman Ben Ali Al Fassi *Al Jum[°] fi °ilm al musiqi wal tubu[°]* . Glasgow- 1933 Vol. I.

³¹⁵ Occasionally, if the *Ma[°]alem* sees that the guests are enjoying a particular verse, one line could take the performer more that one hour of improvisation and composition.

³¹⁶ Another expression such as *ka[°]ak wa ka[°]ab wa tkerkeb ma[°]a bab* meaning, “moon and crescent shaped *ka[°]ak* and *ka[°]ab* and out you go!”

³¹⁷ It is also used in Berber folk music.

zāwiya) will surprise his friends by giving a private party to present his protégé like some valuable treasure. From that moment onwards the singer's future is assured.

Celebrations in Ighrem, a Berber village

In less fortunate areas, the style and level of entertainment and celebrations must perforce be more modest. The small village of Ighrem, perched at an altitude of 1,750 metres in the Anti-Atlas, is obliged to fend for itself for supplies, since the 100 kilometres journey to the nearest town, Taroudant, takes a minimum of 3 hours even in modern vehicles. The only road was built by the French in the 1930s. It is very narrow and is also highly dangerous due to poor maintenance. From an agricultural point of view the environment is hardly encouraging, since the village lies above the altitude limits for the olive, the argan and the walnut. The latter, although they are found in profusion at the foot of the mountains, are locally absent because of their inability to withstand frost and snow. In these conditions, man can only be self-reliant by the sweat of his brow. Consequently every strip of available land is carefully terraced for cultivation.

Herding is limited to goats, which are the only animals that can survive the harsh conditions. Cows must be kept at home and their fodder has to be gathered by hand, a task that falls to the women and young girls, who visit the fields to this end each afternoon. The arid conditions of the soil dictate that the staple food crop has to be barley, which is grown on the multiplicity of terrace plots already mentioned. Some of the crop is harvested early whilst still green and is called *Agoonijan* (sweet taste). It is boiled as a basic ingredient for soups or it may be toasted over a fire and subsequently ground in an *Izreg* (hand mill). Subsequently it can be mixed on a daily basis with *timija*³¹⁸ (*salvia officinalis* L.), to be eaten as a snack. This powder is called *zameṭa*³¹⁹ and is eaten accompanied by mint tea or *leben* (buttermilk), to soften its drying effect in the mouth. When butter is made at home, the buttermilk is drunk daily. After the

³¹⁸ *Timija* Its leaves are reputed to be diuretic, a menstrual aid, a bile remover, generally antiseptic, diaphoretic, antipyretic, stimulant, carminative and useful as a treatment for colds. Loutfy Boulos Medicinal Plants of North Africa-Reference Publications, Inc. USA 1983.p. 110

³¹⁹ The powder is called *bsis* (Berb.) if it is mixed with butter.

butter has been scooped out of the churn, the residue is used to make *toomit*, which are small balls of a mixture of butter and the grilled powder. This mixture is rich in calories and at times is used as a substitute for meals. The above preparation is for winter use only. In summer they stop using *timĵa* and replace it with *zakooni*³²⁰ (*Origanum Compactum* Benth). The explanation given for this was that, since fruits are plentiful in summer, they use this herb both in their drinks and in the *zameta* to reduce the laxative effect of overindulgence.

Meat is eaten only on a weekly basis on market days *sooq*. Despite all the careful husbandry of its land and its animals, it would be wrong to conclude that the village is self sufficient for its needs from its own resources. The young men travel to the local towns to seek work and return only during the Festivals. Thus their earnings often represent the only source of cash available to their families.³²¹ However the principle source of outside funds comes from emigrants and it is hardly surprising to note that most early immigrants to France came from this area. To the impact of emigration and its cash returns must be added a general improvement in living standards due to better education. Wedding and Festivals therefore benefit from a less regionalized form of cuisine. However, the locals related that little more than a decade ago, when the sole means of communication with the towns was the mule³²², only barley was available. Here the refinements come from the techniques used in its transformation. The grains of barley are ground to different sizes, coarse for *Kesksu*, semi-coarse for soups and fine for bread and pancakes.

Taghruft (Berb.) is bread cooked in a bee-hive shaped oven whose inside is inlaid with round smooth gravel, meticulously selected from the river beds, after they have been washed out by the melting snows. Another variety of bread is called *adakhsil* (Berb.), which is cooked using a technique equivalent to the urban *baĵn naraĵn*

³²⁰ Antiseptic, disinfectant, digestive and tonic, but above all an excellent remedy for diarrhoea.

³²¹ Although the villagers are self-sufficient for staple foods, they still need cash to buy tea, sugar and oil.

³²² Although this is the South of Morocco, camels can not use the mountain tracks as the soft pads of their hooves have no protection from sharp stones. Furthermore the winter climate is too cold and harsh for them.

cooking. Live charcoal³²³ is placed underneath and above the pan in which the dough has been placed. This technique allows the bread to keep all its moisture and to cook quickly. Bread for weddings is called *aghrom milal* (Berb.). It is a very soft bread; made very light to allow it to be soaked in clarified butter or olive oil. It can be used for breakfast or for afternoon tea. However for dinner the meal used to consist of a large *tazlaft* (dish) about 90 cm in diameter. This would be filled with *la'sida* porridge (of boiled crushed barley), for serving to the guests with scoops of olive oil or clarified butter placed in the centre of the *tazlaft* (Berb.). For drinks *mris* (Berb. buttermilk) is served at the end of the meal mixed with either *timija* or *zakooni* according to the season. The richer the host is, the more available are olive oil, butter and *mris*.

In winter bread is cooked with *timersat*, *aghrom timersat* (*Menta Suaveolens* Ehrh).³²⁴ The leaves, when mixed with the dough give calefacient properties to the bread. After cooking on both sides on an *anakhdim* (Berb. pan), it is served sprinkled with olive oil to be eaten accompanied by mint tea.

Bereavement

When a traumatic event such as death occurs, the strong linkage between food, mood and temperament in the Moroccan ethos becomes strikingly evident. To fully appreciate this point, it is necessary to look at the social implications of the event. The moment death occurs, the social machine moves into action as neighbours set aside space in their houses by preparing rooms for visiting mourners. However, if the house of the bereaved is large enough, they will bring sofas, cushions, blankets, tables and glasses to help cope with a situation, which the family, smitten by grief, can hardly handle competently. The family does not light fires in the house for a period of one or three days. It is therefore incumbent upon neighbours and relatives to send food to them. On the day of the funeral,³²⁵ honey³²⁶ and butter are served with bread.

³²³ Fuel. The area is suffering a major ecological threat for, as the population increases, the number of trees is decreasing. The lack of decent roads makes it impossible for the State to provide bottled gas for cooking and any family needing fuel is reduced to cutting branches from the nearest tree.

³²⁴ L. Boulos op. cit. p. 109.

³²⁵ Funerals normally take place on the day that the death occurs, between 9am and 3pm, if not the following day. It is not acceptable to bury after the *asr* (late afternoon).

³²⁶ Note the importance of honey in the diet : food value 3307 cal/kg.

This is eaten before the corpse is buried. Milk flavoured with orange-blossom water is also drunk and sandalwood³²⁷ is burnt to fumigate the corpse. When the corpse is taken for burial,³²⁸ loaves of bread and strings of figs are sent to the cemetery to be distributed to the poor. Usually, a *qerrāb* (water-seller with water in a goatskin), is present at funerals, to ensure that water is always available.

Meanwhile as news of the decease is heard, the local residents begin to prepare food, so that just before the mourners return from the cemetery,³²⁹ all neighbouring households will have sent a large dish of *Kesksu*³³⁰. Thus at mealtimes all types of *Kesksu* can be seen according to the choice of the lady of each house: with vegetables, with *tefaya*, even decorated with hard boiled eggs and fried almonds. This spectacle is also subject to women's curiosity as they try to identify the *fatla* (rolling of the *Kesksu*) of persons they know. In this manner the close relatives of the deceased are cared for and obliged to eat to sustain themselves. If no fire is lit in the hearth, as is the custom in rural areas, then bread, doughnuts and pancakes are brought by relatives for breakfast in the morning with black coffee³³¹ and tea in the afternoon, whilst *Kesksu* is brought for main meals. This practice is repeated daily for three days.

³²⁷ Sandalwood is noted for its uplifting and stress-relieving properties.

³²⁸ The corpse is shrouded in a white cloth,(a coffin is not required) and spices *hanat* such as saffron, myrrh, cloves....are placed in the tomb. It was noted that certain families have used traditional *hanat* (embalmers/undertakers). The latter puts a talisman around the neck of the deceased, containing a piece of paper, upon which are written symbolic figures with saffroned water. The paper is folded and held with a woollen string. It is called *su²al* (Book for questions), the belief is that the talisman would sustain the deceased when he is questioned in the 'other world'. Some people prepare their talisman before their death and even renew it every year until their death.(i) H. Basset op. cit. On attache souvent au cou du mort une amulette ou le taleb a rédigé la réponse à faire par le mort lors de la visite que lui fera l'ange de la mort". p. 247. (ii) For talisman see Doutté *Magie et religion* pp 143-232 This practice is frowned upon by Islamic scholars, who describe it as pagan. The shroud is an essential element of a proper funeral for a person. If the family cannot afford it, or if the deceased is not known to the community, i.e. a stranger, then a *berah* (town crier) is sent to the streets to call upon the people to buy *kfen gharib* (the shroud for a stranger).

³²⁹ The number of people is never known, since it depends upon the deceased's social importance, his connections and his place of work. However it is also a duty for any Muslim to follow the funeral procession if the number of mourners is small. Women do not normally go to the cemetery on the burial day.

³³⁰ To feed a minimum of ten. In the bereaved family, whether their background be rich or poor, the dish that predominates at all meals is *Kesksu*. It exerts a religious impact on the mourners present and everyone should eat from this *Kesksu* and especially from the one that is served at the "sacred dinner" for the deceased.

³³¹ It is only in such circumstances that black coffee is drunk. Normally only white coffee with spices is served in Morocco.

However, in modern times in large cities, the “sacred dinner” *n^ci* or *la^csha dial miyyit* in the name of the deceased is held on the night of his/her death. An animal is slaughtered, again depending upon the number of friends and relatives who are present. The family pay in full for its expenses as this is seen as *sadaqa* (expiatory) for the dead, hence the people, who came to offer their condolences, are invited to attend this dinner.³³²In a similar manner, the family pays for the *fuqaha*, although the latter may receive donations from the guests after they have finished reading the Quran. In all ceremonies and in particular at this dinner, *Kesksu* is always the norm and no other dish can properly replace it. It is seen as the dish for religious ceremonies, which each individual must eat. Those who were unable to attend “the sacred dinner”, for health or other reasons, have their part sent to them. It is the dinner of the defunct; therefore eating from it is seen as sharing the last meal with the soul of the deceased. Furthermore the women, who help prepare it, i.e. by rolling *Kesksu*, do so with great seriousness, cleanliness and avoidance of waste, as if the deceased is watching his last meal being prepared. No sweet dishes or refined food is used at this most solemn occasion. After this dinner, close relatives stay with the family for a number of days, though the norm is three days. On the third day, the women go to visit the tomb of the deceased. They take with them loaves of bread, strings of dried figs³³³ and rose water to sprinkle over the fresh earth of the tomb. This is called the *tafriq* ceremony.

The next ceremony of remembrance is forty days after the death. In a similar fashion as at the “sacred dinner”³³⁴, an animal is slaughtered or else meat is bought to make *Kesksu* and *fuqaha* are summoned to recite the Quran. If the deceased were a woman, the next religious ceremony would be a yearly one. However, if the deceased was a man, his widow will mourn him wearing white³³⁵ for three months and ten days, this being the officially recognised period for establishing if the woman was pregnant by

³³² For each and every person in this life, this meal is important. In fact there are cases when people leave a sum of money with a particular person to finance entirely this meal after their death.

³³³ H. Basset op. cit. “On fait, au cimetière une distribution de pain et de figues aux enfants du douar.” p. 245.

³³⁴ Ibid p. 244.

³³⁵ White is considered a colour that affects the eyes, especially in warm countries where sunlight is more intense than in Northern climes. Hence a woman dressed all in white had special days and hours for going out; never after sun set should she be seen outside her house and would only visit a restricted number of friends and relatives until the mourning period is over.

her late husband. After this period of one hundred days, a ceremony called *looh haq Allah*, literally “she fulfils her duty towards God”, a *Kesksu* is made for the occasion and the widow resumes her life as normal.

Jewish Festivals

The Jewish Talmud involves itself in the control of food and its cooking, hence the Moroccan Jewish population being fully practising, observe their diet with extreme minutiae. Great emphasis is put on the preparation of food for religious rituals as well as their private celebrations, making sure that non-Kosher food is avoided.

Dafina/Skhina (the warm dish for the Sabbath)

The Jewish population prefers to eat this dish because of its slow cooking technique. For generations it has been traditionally prepared for the Sabbath. There is not a Jewish family throughout Morocco that does not prepare it, although with certain regional variations, but it is always prepared in the same way. On early Friday morning the meat, usually with a piece of tongue or calf's leg, is bought from the kosher butcher. This meat is added to wheat (or rice in summer), dates, chickpeas, boiled eggs and spices. It is then sealed with dough and sent to the public oven where the employees of the *Farān* let it cook throughout the night in ashes³³⁶. On Saturday lunchtime it is delivered by the *tarāh* to the door, where it is served on the spot. This is how the Jewish population of North Africa has always managed to get a hot meal for Saturday, although all the effort was spent on Friday afternoon before sunset, as the house should be left tidy and ready for the Sabbath. This dish is peculiar to the Sephardic Jews of North Africa.

Rosh Ashanah - New Year

³³⁶ Bread for the Sabbath is cooked and delivered the same day, as it does not require to be warmed for Saturday. This bread is made with eggs and seeds of sesame and fennel.

The food of this festival is linked to the new harvest of late September and early October. At dinner, the first evening, the head of the family dips an apple in honey and distributes it to the members of his family, with the wish of having a year as sweet as honey. Then a *Kesksu* follows, made with seven vegetables (of any kind, as long as the count is correct) and served with the head of a sheep, (for good luck). This dish is very traditional for the first night. On the second night, new fruits are served, corresponding to what was harvested in autumn: pomegranates, dates, white grapes, citrus fruit, quinces, apples and also the new green olives. Even the cakes are made with new sesame and fennel seeds. Everything is blessed by the head of the family before consumption.

Yom Kippour

The Festival comes ten days after the above, on the 10th of Tishri during which people fast for two days. As it celebrates the Day of Atonement, the period is spent in fasting and praying. A few days earlier, chickens were already slaughtered by the Rabbi, saying a special prayer for each, (*Tishri* story). Hence he kills cocks for men and hens for women. Each individual has his own chicken, *djāja larās*, prepared with olives and served on the second day of the festival. The Kippour bread is made with a filling of grilled almonds and seedless raisins, in different forms, round or long. The fast is broken with cakes, served with coffee or mint tea and a *sab^cyon*, (*sabayon*). *Sab^cyon* is prepared with seven items, seven eggs, seven half eggshells of sugar and seven measures of white wine. Its name is derived from Arabic meaning 'seven eyes'. It is served, because it is reputed to revitalise tired and exhausted men, (obviously after a long fast). On the second day, after each one has finished eating his chicken the *beraniya* dessert made with aubergines is eaten.

Five days later starts the busiest period, when the Jews celebrate the *soqoth* festival or "the Feast of Tabernacles". It occurs in October and is plainly an agrarian³³⁷ festival since the word *soqoth* means the "fall of fruit." It is also reputedly linked with the Jewish Exodus. Huts are built on the roofs of houses or simply branches of palm and hanging fruit are used to decorate a veranda³³⁸. Apparently this custom is a reminder of the days when the Jews used to build their huts or erect tents next to their vineyards, to supervise the final ripening. On this occasion a *Kesksu* is prepared for the first day of *socoth* and the housewife keeps diversifying her dishes until the sixth day, when a broad-bean³³⁹ soup is prepared, called *tala-ghsha*, to close the seven days of festivals.

³³⁷ Viviane and Nina Moryoussef *La Cuisine Juive Marocaine*- Jean-Pierre Taillandier/Sochepresse Boulogne& Casablanca 1991- p.180.

³³⁸ Bundles of reeds and palm leaves flood the markets of several towns.

³³⁹ Fresh broad-beans are available in the market in Springtime, i.e. in March. The name of this soup is very indicative, since by autumn the beans have already been dried on the roofs and have acquired a hard skin. It is for this reason that the soup is called the "one with the skin", *talaghsha* (Berber).

Hanoukah

The Jews celebrate this festival for eight days in December. The story relates to the lost golden candelabra, *shenukah*. It is linked to the burning of oil to get light. So the Moroccan Jews prepare *sfenj*, (doughnuts) and other fried dishes for this occasion. Oil has always been plentiful and used extensively for several deep fried dishes. Doughnuts are made with yeast and fried in oil and eaten with honey or butter, *zubda*.

Pourim/March Festival

A *Kesksu*, *Bercookesh*, made with a thicker grain than the one used for normal *Kesksu* is served with milk and different types of sweetmeat. The diet for three days consists of the new springtime milky products and fresh broad beans. For some it is also the occasion to visit the Tombs of Jewish Saints (*Hilloola*) in different areas of Morocco. Gifts are exchanged and alms distributed to the poor.

Pessah

This festival, (celebrated on the 14th of Nissan), falls in April and is one of the most important in the Jewish religious calendar. For eight days Jewish families eat unleavened bread; therefore *reqaq mesus* (thin unsalted bread) is eaten. As all kind of grains are avoided³⁴⁰, a dried fruit mixture called *haroset* (the “broken”), is made with walnuts, dates, raisins, almonds, bananas, apples and rose petals, all mixed with wine and distributed to the members of the family. As *Pessah* occurs in spring, soup of fresh broad beans is made every night until the end of the festival. The last day of the festival is called *Mimona*. Only dairy products are used, gifts and flowers are exchanged between relatives. Their Muslim friends bring them yeast, fresh corn-sheaves, strings of figs and sugar. Since the Jewish dietary Laws of Kashrut do not allow the Jews to eat non-kosher meat, they can only receive uncooked gifts such as fresh beans, dried fruit etc.

³⁴⁰ Maguy Kakon *La Cuisine Juive Marocaine*- Editions Daniel Briand- Toulouse 1992.

Shavonoth

Just seven weeks after *Pessah* , another festival called *Shavonoth*, (the festival of the seven), starts and lasts only two days. It relates the giving of the Torah and is also regarded as an agrarian³⁴¹ festival. As it occurs in May or early June, people exchange wheat sheaves from the harvest of soft wheat. Hand-made vermicelli, *Intria*, (Angel's hair), is produced using the new flour to celebrate this festival.

³⁴¹ V. and N. Moryoussef op.cit. p. 183.

VII – History – Islamic Period

Historical Introduction to the Islamic Period

Throughout history, until the time of the Industrial Revolution, the only valid economic basis for the maintenance of a stable empire was successful and expanding agriculture, which in turn could generate the wealth and population growth necessary to finance and guarantee physically the protection of the realm. In contrast, disintegration and decay were invariably a consequence of internal feuds and power struggles, which encouraged incursions and eventual conquest by hungrier and more warlike neighbours. The eventual loss of *Al Andalus* was the result of a process that followed this pattern and it is ironic that the rise to power of the Arabs themselves had similar origins. In fact, the period immediately preceding the Hijra had been one of grave political instability. Consequent upon the collapse, some two centuries earlier, of the Roman Empire and its sphere of allied states, there now remained only a much smaller Byzantine Empire in its eastern provinces, weakened by continual wars with the Sassanids.³⁴² Elsewhere, barbarian invasions had destroyed or left abandoned all imperial public utilities, such as aqueducts, dams and canals. In other, non-Roman areas, predatory invaders, with their bases no longer vulnerable to Roman legions, exploited the situation by preying on any area where rich pickings might be found. Thus post-Hijra Arab expansion was often in areas that, though having good agricultural potential, were in fact in a state of deep neglect. Such neglect was often responsible for natural disasters, such as the collapse of the Ma³rib dam in the Yemen in 575 AD, leading to the silting of all its aqueducts and canals.³⁴³ Another example was the poor maintenance of the Nimrud dam in Mesopotamia that collapsed during flooding of the Tigris and Euphrates in 627 AD.

³⁴² A. M. Watson, *Agricultural Innovation in the Early Islamic World*- Cambridge University Press – Cambridge, New York, 1983.pp 114-115.

³⁴³ J. Pirenne – *La maitrise de l'eau en Arabie du Sud Antique* - The origins of the techniques used in the construction of 'qanats' (aqueducts) are to be found in the old kingdom of Urartu in N.W.Persia Constructed in 705-681 B.C. by Sennacherib.

Elsewhere, at the Western end of the old Roman Empire, the province of Iberia had been overrun by Visigoths³⁴⁴, under whose rule it had not prospered. Here, the agricultural economy, already enfeebled by the neglect and the decay of the Roman water supply system, was dealt a mortal blow in the late 7th century, during the reign of Erwig (680-686 AD), when famines and plagues halved the population.³⁴⁵ The cumulative effect of natural disasters, either brought on by or compounded by neglect, could only have a negative long-term ecological and economic effect. Hence, the invasion ordered by the governor of Ifriqiya, Musa Ibn Nusair, in 711 AD, was directed against a state debilitated by the decay of its agriculture, by struggles between nobles and by the halving of its population by plague. It is therefore not surprising that, in the very same year, he found himself gazing at Cordoba across the Wed Al Kebir (Guadalquivir). He is said to have noted the dilapidation of its bridge and that the Roman-built water system had fallen into disuse.³⁴⁶

Thus throughout the whole of the old Roman empire the Islamic armies were operating in what was effectively a power vacuum, so that, within a hundred years of the death of the Prophet Muhammad, the lands conquered by his followers stretched from the Pyrenees to India. The Arabs could, of course, have conducted themselves like many invaders before them, looting any valuables and wasting the contents of the local storehouses until the approach of famine sent them back from whence they had come. Indeed, the motivations of the early Arab invaders tended to be strictly predatory. However, two factors encouraged their leaders to pursue what turned out to be more enlightened policies:

- a) The contrast between the potential for cultivation of the land they had taken, compared with that which they had left, where man was obliged to use all his ingenuity and strength to wrest a living from the earth.

³⁴⁴ (i) M. Lombard, *The Golden Age of Islam* : The West was a void- an area in which all commercial and intellectual activity had ceased after the decline and fall of Rome and the subsequent barbarian invasions" p. 1. (ii) S.M.Imamuddin, *Some Aspects of the Socio-economic and Cultural History of Muslim Spain*- E.J. Brill, Leiden 1965. pp. 9-15.

³⁴⁵ (i) T. F. Glick *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle-Ages*- Princeton University Press New Jersey 1979. p 29. (ii) Henry Terrasse - *Ciudades hispano-musulmanes* .p 56.

³⁴⁶ T.F. Glick. *Irrigation and Society in Medieval Valencia*. p,195 (1971).

b) The political instability that had arisen in the Hijaz, subsequent upon the extermination of many of the Prophet's relatives and the consequent arrival of hosts of Hijazi and Yemani refugees in the conquered lands.³⁴⁷

It was clearly necessary therefore, not merely to hold conquered land in tribute, but also to establish a permanent state based on a sound economy, where the faithful could prosper in security. Although the Muslim world was quick to establish both land and maritime³⁴⁸ trade routes, the historic experience of the Phoenicians was a sufficient illustration of the fragility of states whose economic security depended mainly upon trading. In this context therefore, a sound economy was synonymous with a sound agricultural base in a politically stable environment. However, agriculture needed human effort and political stability demanded loyal citizens, or at least a local majority of loyal citizens. Thus, within a relatively short time after the beginning of the Arab conquest, the emphasis in incentives for the soldiery shifted from the promise of booty to the promise of land. Coupled with this change was the identity of an entirely new type of society: Islam, which had now established its supremacy in large sections of the known world. Fortunately, for the reasons already explained, the Islamic conquests were not followed by the usual halt in commercial activity provoked by the looting or burning of everything of value that had occurred in the past.³⁴⁹ The citizen, Muslim or not, had therefore confidence in the future stability of his environment, so that trade not only continued but began to expand.³⁵⁰

The large distances between the seat of government and the outposts of the empire meant that security of communications was of paramount importance.³⁵¹ The resultant priority given to the safety of travel was itself a stimulus to trade. The land routes of the Near and Middle East and the Mediterranean were increasingly exploited as were the caravan routes leading to the Silk Road in the east and to the Sub-Saharan gold-producing areas in Africa, whose produce was carried in "sand-ships" (i.e. camels). From the IXth century onwards, the growing use of the sea routes of the

³⁴⁷ A.A. Duri The Historical Formation of the Arab Nation- Croom Helm London 1987. p. 71.

³⁴⁸ G.F. Hourani Arab seafaring- Princeton University Press 1979. p. 5.

³⁴⁹ M. Lombard Les Textiles dans le Monde Musulman VII-XIIème siècle- Mouton Editeur- Paris New York 1978. p.12.

³⁵⁰ M. Lombard The Golden Age of Islam : "The older populations of the Semitic world were in a state of permanent revolt against the administration of Constantinople and Ctesiplon." p. 3.

³⁵¹ A.M. Watson op. cit pp. 80-84.

Indian Ocean assisted greatly the expansion of commerce with India, China, the East Indies and East Africa.³⁵² The consequent dominance and exclusivity in navigation gave great economic prosperity to the Islamic Empire. In addition to facilitating trading in luxury items such as spices, perfumes, soaps and precious stones, these multi-directional contacts led also to international transactions in manufactured goods: textiles, silks, wool, cotton, leather goods, glassware and metal goods. This expansion favoured the founding of several cities, including Baghdad, which soon became a hub of world trade. Consequently, fiscal systems were established in all the towns and cities, with the state controlling and regulating trade with taxes and customs dues. Speculation was inhibited by the vigilance of a *Muhtasib*, a civil servant, whose task was to prevent abuses forbidden by Quranic law.³⁵³

This in fact was the period, when the Muslims had the best fleet in the world, the most active ports and the most entrepreneurial merchants, thanks to which the world experienced increasing levels of trade and the introduction of new products, as yet unknown in the West.³⁵⁴ The increasing supply and demand of international trade in turn created conditions that favoured the development of formal monetary transactions.³⁵⁵ More convenient methods of payment were adopted to avoid the carrying of large sums of money, for example the *softadja* (Bill of Exchange) and the *sak* (cheque). Other devices were evolved specifically to avoid being outside the limits prescribed by the *Shari'a* (Quranic law), for example the *hiyal*, which was intended to circumvent the law forbidding the pledging of goods or property for monies lent. However, in many cases financial services were in the hands of non-Muslims, who were able to function outside the restraints of the *Shari'a*. This combination of increasing trade and more sophisticated financial services led to a level of capital growth never witnessed before, with Muslim merchants being prominent in trade from India to the Atlantic. The result was that, for the first time, the economic strengths of the Sassanid, Byzantine, Syrian and western Mediterranean

³⁵² E.C. Dufourcq *L'Ibérie chrétienne et le Maghreb XII-XVème siècles*- "Aux IXème et Xème siècle la supèmatie navale musulmane a été écrasante". III p. 162.

³⁵³ (i)R. Mantran *L'Expansion Musulmane-VIIè- XIème siècles* - Presses Universitaires de France- Paris 1969. p. 165. (ii) A.A. Duri op. cit. p 123.

³⁵⁴ R.Mantran op cit p. 297.

areas were united.³⁵⁶ All barriers had been removed and people and products circulated freely to the point where archaeologists today have difficulty tracing a particular object to a specific place.³⁵⁷

The outcome of this spectacular increase in wealth was that society began to invest its prosperity in things other than those designed to create more wealth. The authorities invested in large public works projects: mosques, madrasas, public baths, palaces, markets and hospitals, as well as artistic developments.³⁵⁸ Princes and merchants became patrons of intellectual and scientific development. *Waqf*³⁵⁹ (trusts) were created to provide better education and Islamic teaching throughout the Empire. This sponsorship engendered a creative enthusiasm and a flowering of works of scientific and scholarly research. The world became in effect greater as mathematicians, geographers, astronomers and philosophers all contributed to a gradual but definite extension to the horizons of man's existence. The dividend of all this expenditure on learning, whether it came from Persian, Arab, or Berber societies, was its immense contribution to the sum of the increase in mankind's scientific knowledge that occurred between the IXth and the XIVth centuries.³⁶⁰

Historical background – Maghreb and Al Andalus

Before embarking upon a study of the origins of the culinary heritage described in previous chapters, it is necessary to depict, albeit briefly, the historical backcloth, against which it evolved. The geographical location of the Maghreb and its attendant agricultural wealth has always made it vulnerable to covetous aggression by any

³⁵⁵ Abi Qassim Ibn Hawqal *Kitāb Surat al ard*-Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum- Edited by M.J. De Goeje Dar Sader Publishers Beirut. The author witnessed in the Maghreb the signing of a promissory note for the unbelievable sum of 42,000 dinars !- Vol. I p. 61.

³⁵⁶ Lombard *L'Islam dans sa Première Grandeur- VIIIè- XIème siècle*- CNRS- Champs Flammarion France 1971.- p. 11/12.

³⁵⁷ A.A. Duri op. cit pp. 71-74.

³⁵⁸ A. M. Watson "The society was receptive ..attitudes, social structure, institutions, infrastructure, scientific progress and economic development all played a part in the making of the medium of diffusion. Rarities became commonplace." p. 2.

³⁵⁹ Termed *Habūs* in western North Africa. Individuals frequently willed real estate, orchards and mills to these *habūs*.

nation aspiring to dominate the Mediterranean area. Its proud inhabitants, always willing to contest the rule of any invader, referred to themselves in pre-Islamic times as *Amazigh*—plural : *Imazighen* (“born free”).³⁶¹ However, for its own perverse reasons, history has connived at naming them Berbers³⁶². As to the naming of the area, it was eventually known as “ the one where the sun sets “ Al Maghreb, stretching from the boundaries of Egypt to the Atlantic³⁶³. The conquest of Iberia has already been mentioned in the preceding section, but the detail that needs to be added is that this conquest owed much of its success to the omnipresence of Berber troops. Despite this contribution, not one of them ever became a governor and the only responsibilities ceded to them were those of military commanders in less secure areas, such as Asturias and the Pyrenees. The resulting discontent amongst the Berbers and the fear that it generated amongst the Umayyad officials caused the Arabs to favour settling initially in Iberia in preference to North Africa. Consequently the far West of North Africa remained effectively under Berber control until the fall of the Umayyad Caliphate in 750 AD.

After the latter event and the near-extirpation of the Umayyads by the Abbasids, Abdul Rahman Ibn Mu^cawiyya (b.731 AD) a grandson of the last Caliph, escaped and took refuge amongst the Nefzawa tribe of his Berber mother.³⁶⁴ Subsequently, he established an Umayyad Dynasty in Spain (Al Andalus). Another, but no less important, refugee from the East was Idris Ibn Abdallah, a descendent of the Prophet (d. 788 AD). He settled in Walili (Volubilis) and founded the Idrisid dynasty, which lasted until the Xth century. Thus, towards the end of the VIIIth century, although Islamic power had become established both North and South of the Jabal Tariq straits, the local rulers were governing autonomously, outside the control of the Baghdad Caliphate. The effect of this was the creation of an independent Islamic zone with two distinct political and geographical components, Al Maghreb and Al Andalus. Both components lived under constant military threat, either from Christians in the North or

³⁶⁰ A.A. Duri op. cit. pp 93-94.

³⁶¹ J.M. Abun-Nasr, A history of the Maghrib in the Islamic period- Cambridge University Press 1987.

p.2

³⁶² M.Brett and E.Fentress The Berbers—Blackwell, Oxford. 1996. “ The Romans called all non-Latin or Greek speakers ‘barbari’; hence ‘Berber’. The Arabs also used the Latin name and referred to them as “Barbar”.p. 83.

³⁶³ A.Dhanum Taha The Muslim Conquest and Settlement of North Africa and Spain- Routledge London & New York 1989- p. 19.

³⁶⁴ A. Dhanum Taha op. cit. p. 234.

from Abbassids in the East. Thus each component depended logically upon the other for its security. If one component was at risk of invasion or became unstable through revolt or internal dissension, the other was obliged, in its own interests, to attempt to redress the situation.

A notable example of this conditional state of affairs occurred when, at its very apogee in the Xth century, the Umayyad dynasty in Cordoba found its interests being threatened by Shi'ite Fatimid expansion in the Maghreb. With their supply route for African gold,³⁶⁵ running through Sijilmasa and Fés to Nakour (modern Al Hoceima), under threat, they were forced to act to restore the situation. This they achieved by financing the enemies of the Fatimids: the Meghrawa, the Ifranids and the Idrissids.³⁶⁶ They also established outposts in Al Maghreb by occupying Malila (Melilla) in 927 and taking Sebta (Ceuta) in 931, from which places they were able to direct the efforts of their allies.³⁶⁷ Subsequently the Fatimid threat subsided as they concentrated upon their more lucrative possessions in Sicily and Egypt. The decline of the Umayyad Caliphate in Al Andalus in the XIth century and its eventual disintegration into petty kingdoms³⁶⁸ created a grave instability. This was rapidly exploited by Christian princes, who greatly reduced the area under Islamic control. The recently established ruler of the Maghreb, the Almoravid Yusuf Ibn Tashfin, was at first reluctant to answer calls for help, but eventually realised how the collapse of Al Andalus might affect his own security. Consequently in 1091 he crossed the Jabal Tariq straits with a large army.

Having restored the military situation and having deposed the petty monarchs in the process, Yusuf set about establishing a proper administration. Within the Almoravid realm two capitals were established, one in Marrakesh and the other in Seville. Andalusian scholars settled in Marrakesh, which became the centre of Andalusian culture. The new union between Al Andalus and North Africa had a strong influence upon art, music, literature, science and culinary matters. Hence from the XIIth century onwards, the adoption of an Ibero-Moorish culture was more evident than in the past,

³⁶⁵ M. Lombard op. cit. pp. 60-61.

³⁶⁶ (i) Abdellah Laroui The History of the Maghreb-Princeton University Press, New Jersey 1977. pp.105-223 (ii) Magali Morsy North Africa 1800-1900-Longman, London and New York 1984. p.16.

³⁶⁷ Jamil Abun Nasr A History of the Maghrib - Cambridge University Press 1971. p.63

³⁶⁸ Abdellah Laroui " op.cit p.147,

becoming influential in all walks of life and particularly in science, literature and architecture.³⁶⁹ The mosques of the cities of Qayrawan, Tlemcen and Seville are masterpieces representative of this period. Unfortunately internal feuds caused the Almoravid dynasty to be short-lived. In the chaos that followed, another set of petty kings established itself in Al Andalus, only to lose more territory to the Christians from the North. This situation continued until the appearance of a new spiritual leader from the South of Morocco, Ibn Tumert, who wrested power from the Almoravids in 1144.³⁷⁰ One of the new leader's first actions was to institute a reformist movement to reverse the religious stagnation that had reigned under the Almoravids. The new dynastic power, the Almohads, soon achieved cohesion within their domains. In 1163 this resulted in the whole of North Africa being not only under native rulers but also united for the first time³⁷¹ in its history. The Fatimids even at the height of their power in the Xth century never attained such a situation. Subsequently the Almohads turned their attention to Al Andalus and recovered all the lost territories. Cities like Seville, Cordoba, Fés, Marrakesh and Tlemcen were rejuvenated. New public buildings³⁷² sprang up, public gardens and fountains were laid out and irrigation works were added to the agricultural scene. In the major cities craft guilds were set up, which in some cases benefited from Andalusian know-how.

The routes used for the trade generated by this economic revival were principally centred upon Fés, leading eastwards through Tlemcen and northwards to Andalusia and Marrakesh, leading northwards to the Tadla (and eventually Fés), and southwards towards Sijilmassa, the gate to the African gold. European traders were now attracted to the shores of North Africa. The Almohad period was thus characterised by robust economic development, which in turn yielded the wealth necessary to finance the protection of an empire stretching from the foot of the Pyrenees to Tunisia. Whilst the spiritual movement that launched the Almohad revival was against all forms of moral laxity, it favoured intellectual pursuits. Consequently there was a widespread patronage of intellectual works. A fine example of such patronage is the Almohad library in Marrakesh, next to the Koutoubia, built by Abu Ya'qub Youssef. But the greatest impact of Almohad reform was the practical application of the researches of

³⁶⁹ Deverdun in Marrakech Chapter IV.

³⁷⁰ Abdellah Laroui, op. cit p.170.

³⁷¹ Ibid p.185.

mathematicians and scientists. From this period onwards, the superfluous elements of Ibero-Arabic art were replaced by ingenious geometric designs³⁷³ taken from treatises written by Andalusian scholars, which had lain dormant for years. Furthermore, it was in the environment created by Almohad patronage and encouragement that Ibn Tufail, Ibn Zohr and Ibn Rushd were able to compile their invaluable works on philosophy, astronomy, medicine and dietetics.

However the golden age of the Almohads did not last. The central government began to weaken, especially after the defeat at Las Navas de Tolosa³⁷⁴ in 1212. Subsequently, for a third time, Al Andalus fragmented into petty kingdoms that were generally weaker than before, whilst their Christian enemies were becoming stronger. In the Maghreb internal feuds led to the dislocation of the Almohad empire and the Merinids gradually conquered its domains in the Maghreb. Exploiting this situation Tunis declared itself independent³⁷⁵ in 1228 and Tlemcen was lost³⁷⁶ in 1236. Finally, after a long struggle Marrakesh itself surrendered³⁷⁷ to the Merinids in 1269. From this time onwards there was no long-term prospect of survival for Al Andalus, since it could no longer rely upon help from the Maghreb. In fact, the Merinid dynasty that had taken over in Morocco lacked the money, the resources and the motivation to intervene in any conflict beyond its frontiers. Consequently the petty kingdoms of *Al Andalus* were eliminated one by one. The only island of resistance was the kingdom of Granada,³⁷⁸ established in 1237 by Muhammad Yusuf Ibn Nasr, which managed to survive in isolation for a further two and a half centuries. A general feeling of insecurity seemed to pervade Al Andalus as more and more strongholds fell to Christian armies, causing an exodus of families seeking security in the cities of the Maghreb.

The above is but a short synopsis of the history of the areas North and South of the Mediterranean, in which the cuisine under study developed. In seeking to identify how and why this development occurred, the fact that Morocco, as an integral part

³⁷² Giralda Mosque in Seville, Koutoubia Mosque in Marrakesh.

³⁷³ Particularly in architecture and decoration.

³⁷⁴ Jamil Abun Nasr. *op.cit.*p.136.

³⁷⁵ Abdellah Laroui " *op.cit.*p.195.

³⁷⁶ Jamil Abun Nasr *op.cit.* p.136.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid* p.104.

³⁷⁸ L. P.Harvey Islamic Spain 1250-1500- University of Chicago Press 1990 p.22.

thereof, witnessed the establishment and later blossoming of Islamic culture and civilization in the area, is of primary significance. The intention is now to show how this civilization, despite the constant threats of invasion and internal dissension, made vast strides in agriculture, science and medicine, thereby providing a wide range of raw materials and the means of converting them for the curing of illness and the enriching of the table. First and foremost of the fields to be examined is that of agriculture.

The Islamic Agricultural Revolution

In the Middle East, under the early Caliphates, agriculture received great impetus and a veritable network of canals was launched. Old ones were re-opened and entirely new ones were built. For example, the lower region of the Tigris-Euphrates valley was the object of special attention on the part of the central government. Great transverse canals and a number of irrigation channels were constructed leading from the Tigris and Euphrates. Arab geographers speak of Caliphs "digging" or "opening" rivers. According to Hitti,³⁷⁹ in most cases it was "re-digging" and "re-opening" of canals that had existed since Babylonian days.³⁸⁰ The Sawād (Iraq) and Egypt, both of which relied upon natural irrigation, became the major contributors to the budget of the Caliphate.

At the western end of the Empire, the initial situation was less promising. It is hard to imagine how, in Iberia under the Visigoths, any form of agriculture could have existed there above mere subsistence level. In fact agriculture was itself divided by race. The Visigoth overlords were herders and protected their interests by their Forum

³⁷⁹ A. Dhanun Taha *The Muslim Conquest and Settlement of north Africa and Spain*- pp.116-p.143.

³⁸⁰ The Caliph Hisham in 743 AD. decreed the sharing of irrigation waters. Water and pasture were considered to belong to all Muslims in common. By law water could not be bought or sold. Books of laws were written which governed canals, water rights and channels of water. M. Lombard op. cit. p.31 and See the Iranian example in E. Beazley & M. Harverson, *Living with the Desert* -Aris & Phillips Ltd Wiltshire 1982. pp. 38-39.

Iudicum issued in the VIth and VIIth centuries.³⁸¹ Their subjects, mainly Romanised Ibero-Celts, pursued those forms of cultivation that their former masters had taught them: wheat, barley, grapes, olive oil and a few vegetables, the latter planted mainly alongside rivers. However, the only link between the two races and their agricultural systems seems to have been that of tribute or taxes. According to Reynolds,³⁸² in Roman times the aqueduct system was a combined dam/reservoir/canal system that was adapted to the production of waterpower. This was sufficient to build up a fair head of water and ensure regularity of flow in the smaller irregular streams. Aqueducts, designed for urban water supply, were thus usually close to cities, e.g. Cordoba. The Romans knew how to build waterwheels and their use was widespread in the Mediterranean area. However, under the Visigoths, these fell out of use, through lack of interest and through general ignorance.³⁸³

After the Islamic conquest, once the new rulers of Iberia had identified the rich potential of the province, the next stage for them was to consult their repertoire to see what they might cultivate by way of crops. The Arab botanical repertoire, even before the Hijra, was not inconsiderable. The Quran itself contains many references to cereals, fruit and vegetables. The holy book also exhorts believers to produce the image of paradise upon earth, "*Janat Ridwan*". Whilst the topography of Arabia was hardly a candidate for conversion into paradise, the early Arab conquerors, as they acquired lands in their missionary "Hijra", began to see the potential for such a conversion elsewhere. They came across plants and trees, which were hitherto unknown to them. Furthermore as their empire spread its merchants sailed to far off lands, bringing back exotic plants, seeds and spices. Some of these were unknown even in the more developed lands they had conquered. Some of the most important additions to the Arab botanical repertoire occurred during the Hijra towards Persia and the province of Sind in the VIIth and VIIIth centuries.³⁸⁴ The choice of trees and

³⁸¹ Jaime Vicens Vives, *An Economic History of Spain* - Princeton University Press 1969. p 83-92.

³⁸² Reynolds, *Stronger than a 100 men* -p. 125.

³⁸³ According to Watson, the canal system in Aleppo was in ruins and irrigation work in Spain was unknown. Musa Ibn Nussair reported that there was not a single canal in the country. Op. cit. p. 191 N^o 6.

³⁸⁴ Ibn Hawqal op. cit. p. 78 and A. Laroui op. cit 122-124. Many of those who took part in the conquest of these two lands acquired knowledge both of the existence and of the culture of new plants. Subsequently, some of them or their descendants, participated in the settlement of North Africa and Iberia. Here they related what they had seen growing in the gardens of Persia, Syria, India and China. p. 78.

crops to grow, therefore, was of almost embarrassing proportions. However, many of the more desirable crops such as sugar cane, bananas³⁸⁵ and cotton, needed the heavy rainfall of a tropical or sub-tropical climate or at least that of a monsoon season. The only way to establish such crops was by extensive artificial irrigation. Fortunately, both flood irrigation and artificial irrigation were better known to the Arabs than the crop rotation system of colder European lands, where it was felt necessary to leave the land fallow, i.e. to recover, for one year in three or four, depending upon the cycle in use. However, the cost and human effort involved in maintaining dykes and canals, in order to deal with the irregular nature of the flooding, were both of a high order and were thus of necessity a state responsibility.³⁸⁶ Unlike North Africa, where the rivers are small and inclined to be perennial, Iberia had permanent rivers. There was thus no need to build dams to store water, since irrigation canals could be fed throughout the year. The general level of rainfall favoured an easily accessible water table, so that wells could be used to supply water for irrigation. However, what was needed was some device to raise water, preferably by several metres, to allow it to be distributed by small irrigation canals. Such a device in fact existed in the form of the *Noria*, *Na ura*,³⁸⁷ the various forms of which, with their gearing systems and their general design, represent a subject that merits its own particular study. Suffice it to say that the use of the *noria* became the key to the development of a sophisticated irrigation system in Iberia.³⁸⁸

The spread of *norias* was phenomenal. In Fés Moulay Idris I, from 788 AD. bought up the water system as state property to ensure fair distribution. In the Valencia area

³⁸⁵ The Arabic word for this fruit is *musa* from Sanskrit *mocha*. In fact *banan* means finger in Arabic. See A. Achaya, *Indian Food- A Historical companion* - Oxford University Press, New Delhi 1994. p.208.

³⁸⁶ The Arabs had also learned how to move water from one place to another. "Qanats" aqueducts (Arabic word meaning lance or conduit; *kariz* in Persian), already existed in Persia, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Eastern Arabia and North Africa; although none of these had been used specifically for artificial irrigation. See (i) Watson op. cit. p. 139. (ii) E. Beazley & M. Harverson op. cit. p. 32 & p.83.

³⁸⁷ (i) M. Lombard, *The Golden Age of Islam* p. 31. (ii) Brunhes, J. *L'Irrigation dans la Péninsule ibérique et dans l'Afrique du Nord.* Paris, 1902 Also known as *saniya*. A large wheel driven by animal power, (or occasionally by human power), which carried a series of large earthenware pots (*dawláb*) tied to a double loop of rope, so that the pots were let down into the water source and then raised to the top of the wheel's action where their contents were discharged into a feeder gully.

³⁸⁸ (i) Ibn Al Razzaz Al Jazani *The Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices*- Transl. Donald R. Hill- Dordrechts Reidel 1974. (ii) P. Guichard, *L'Espagne et la Sicile Musulmanes aux XI^e et XII^e Siècles*- Presses Universitaires de Lyon 1991. p. 52

of Al Andalus and in the Gharb of Morocco some 8,000 norias were built for rice plantations. Water was lifted by norias³⁸⁹ to create artificial reservoirs using *qawadīs* and *saqiya*s. However, norias were not the only devices for obtaining water. In Sebta where there were no rivers nearby, huge water cisterns were built.³⁹⁰ All sources were exploited: rainwater, gorges, springs, rivers and underground lakes. Wells were dug, canals were constructed and tunnels were cut to carry water many miles, e.g. the Marrakesh *qanats*. A particular feature of Arab irrigation was the economic use of water supplies by rationing the flow by periods of time, *ʿadur* (becoming 'ador' in Spanish), or khayt (thread = Spanish 'hilo').³⁹¹ A *Sahib al saqiya*,³⁹² (the water manager), was employed by the government in every region where irrigation existed. He was responsible for the supervision of water distribution according to the law. He and his subordinates had at their disposal what were, for their day, sophisticated timing devices. For example, in an area where water was measured in quarters of a day, a sundial with its base appropriately divided was used. Where the divisions of an irrigation system were more complex, then a water "clepsydra" linked to the dial of an astrolabe served as a forerunner of the chronometer.³⁹³

In pre-Arab Spain the Roman agrimensores, who had originally marked out the 'cadaster' (which continued in use after the fall of imperial power), were confined to the use of cords or chains of a specific length to aid them in their calculations. For their part the Arabs were able to fix accurately a specific point on the earth's surface. This, coupled with their ability to measure angles, meant that they could survey land by triangulation. This must have greatly assisted them in their irrigation projects, where the drop at each level had to be calculated accurately to ensure correct flow,

³⁸⁹ T.F. Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages* --Princeton University Press, New Jersey 1979. Both human and animal power were used to drive the norias, some of which had wheels of more than thirty metres in diameter, i.e. capable of raising water thirty metres above the level of a river. pp. 226-227.

³⁹⁰ In Zurara G.E. *Chronique de Guinée* Fr. Tra. L. Bourdon et R. Ricard Dakar 1960.

³⁹¹ M. Lombard, *The Golden Age of Islam* p. 80. Arab division of water 1 'Khayt' (hilo) = 12 hours of irrigation, a 'tumin' (Sp. tomin) 1/8 = 1hr 30min

³⁹² This post was very important. Those who took power in Cordoba in 1010 were Civil Servants from the *Wikalat al saqiyat* (Inspectorate of Canal Irrigation). In Morocco a corporation experienced in the ways of water networks of the cities called *khafir qawadisi* (pl. *khubara*³) exists until today, its role is to assist in restoring the complex water system which in the case of Fés still allows the watering of the gardens. In Fes (since 1068) it has allowed the distribution of water to all households including the watering of their gardens and orchards.

³⁹³ T.F. Glick "Medieval Irrigation clocks" -pp. 425-427.

whilst avoiding waste.³⁹⁴ The impact of proper surveying techniques upon agriculture can not be overestimated for, as far as records go back, the Mediterranean area had been tied to a classic system of agriculture. The planting season coincided with the autumn rains, whilst harvesting was in the spring. During the summer months, the land lay fallow, awaiting the pre-autumn ploughing. In short, it was a one-crop system. The Andalusis, with irrigation water at their disposal, were now able to crop the land in summer. In the Maghreb, where water was less plentiful than in Al Andalus, the achievements were no less remarkable. It has been estimated that the Almoravid *Khattara* network, (600 *Khattara*), for Marrakesh in the reign of Yussef Ibn Tashfin (1107), required one million man-days to construct, involving twelve specialists and between 200 and 300 workers over a 30-year period. It has been calculated that the network designed to carry melted snow from the Atlas Mountains to Marrakesh delivered up to 650 litres of water per second to the city.³⁹⁵

In their exploitation of the land the new rulers of Iberia and North Africa did not waste their efforts on haphazard agricultural trials, but used the knowledge now at the disposal of the Islamic world.³⁹⁶ They consulted oral tradition, learned how to recognize soils and how to graft plants and trees to obtain maximum output. The exchanges between Islamic countries of the opinions and theories of the scholarly and erudite became more and more frequent, so that in all major towns the libraries overflowed with learned works. Hence the records and traditions of ancient peoples were not lost, but painstakingly documented. The Arabs, being a race of travellers, combed the known world for knowledge and information, journeying in the harshest of environments as far afield as the Steppes of Asia and the Pyrenees.³⁹⁷ Furthermore the discovery of paper³⁹⁸ stimulated the detailed recording of their journeys and observations, which could now be easily compiled whilst observations and

³⁹⁴ Even to the present day, the irrigation and the supply of water to fountains in the gardens of the Al Hamra in Grenada bear witness to the hydraulic skill of the Andalusis; for in the whole of the extensive gardens there is not one single pump.

³⁹⁵ Paul Pascon – *Irrigation dans le Haouz de Marrakesh* – 1983 p. 55.

³⁹⁶ They studied the concepts of Aristotle, the science of Galien, the 'materia medica' of Diocorides, to name but a few of the sources at their disposal. Ibn Wahshiyya translated the Nabatean Agricultural work, "The Theory of Climates" in the 9th century. See Ibn Wafid (d. 1085. A.D.), Abul Khayr (XIth century) Ibn Bassal, Ibn 'Awwam etc.

³⁹⁷ M. Lombard, *The Golden Age of Islam* pp. 57-59.

³⁹⁸ M. Lombard *Textiles* -Fés had more than 400 paper mills. p. 203.

experiences were still fresh in their memories. In Cordoba 170 women were employed in copying out the Quran in different sizes.³⁹⁹

This plethora of records and information built up to a level that prompted the compilation of encyclopaedic works. Thus during the IXth to the XIth centuries, to quote but a few, there appeared:

- *Kitāb nabat* (a treatise on plants) by Abu Hannifa Al - Dinawari (d.282/895AD)⁴⁰⁰
- *Al filaha nabaṭiyya* (Nabatean agriculture) by Ibn Wahshiyya (IXth century)
- *Kitāb al ṣaydana* (Pharmacopoeia) by Al Biruni (973-1048AD)
- *Firdaws al ḥikma* Ali B. Sahl Rabban al Tabari (d. 240/855)⁴⁰¹

From the X^h century onwards the natural sciences flourished in both the Middle East and the Maghreb, with botany, pharmacology and agricultural techniques developing in parallel under such scholars as:

- Ibn Baquesh (Abu Othman Saïd Ben Muhamed) (d.1052AD)
- Ibn Bassal (Abu Abdullah Muhamed Ibn Ibrahim) (d.1100AD)⁴⁰²

By the XII^h century in Al Andalus botany was converted from its role as a purely descriptive science and achieved the status of an academic science. This century was seen as the golden age of Islamic botany under such great scholars as:

- Abu'l Abbas an nabati (Ibn Rumiyya) d. 636/1239
- Ibn Baytar (1197-1248)⁴⁰³

³⁹⁹ Ibid p. 204.

⁴⁰⁰ Toufic Fahd, *Histoire des Sciences Arabes* - sous la Direction de Roshdi Rashed- Editions du Seuil Paris 1997. vol. II p. 74.

⁴⁰¹ Author of an encyclopedia *Firdaws al hikma* (Paradise of wisdom) that covers the subjects such as philosophy, medicine, hygiene, botany, astronomy/cosmology. Ibid. p. 77.

⁴⁰² Ibn Bassal: libro de Agricultura- Edited by J. M. Millas Vallicrosa and M. Aziman, Tetuan 1955.

⁴⁰³ Ibn Baytar lists more than 150 authors and 1,400 drugs of which 400 were unknown to the Greeks. Ibid p. 79.

- Al Ghafiqi (d.1166AD) author of “*Kitāb jami‘ al mufradat*” (materia medica) .
- Ibn Al ‘Awwam XIIth century author of “*Kitāb al filaha*” (treatise on agriculture).⁴⁰⁴

It is pointless to attempt to identify any of the above scholars with either North Africa or Al Andalus, since both areas were part of the same cultural and political entity. The scholars themselves conducted their experiments and taught in both areas. The above assertion is borne out by the fact that Ibn Baytar’s work was recorded in both Berber and Arabic.

Whilst the impressive selection of works of reference listed in the above paragraphs is in itself a testimony of a strictly technical nature of the achievements of Islamic agriculture, there is one ingredient of the success story that has not yet been examined. In the introduction to this part of the thesis, attention was drawn to the fact that, shortly after the beginning of the Arab conquest, the emphasis in real incentives for the armies shifted from the taking of loot to the award of land. In terms of the previous Visigoth regime of Iberia, this would have meant farms and estates for the conquerors, worked for them by the conquered in conditions of near slavery. In fact the regime that the Visigoths installed was one in which the king, the nobles and the church dignitaries cruelly exploited the rest of the population in a system where the only incentive was harsh punishment for failure to meet tax quotas either in money or in kind.⁴⁰⁵ It is related that the conditions of both middle and lower classes were so intolerable that they often fled to the forest to become brigands.⁴⁰⁶ In stark contrast to this state of affairs is the more enlightened attitude of the Islamic conquerors, who recognized that real incentives were needed if productivity were to reach levels that would significantly increase wealth and thereby enhance tax revenues.⁴⁰⁷ This was

⁴⁰⁴ *Kitāb al Filaha Libro de agricultura*, el doctor excelente Abu zacaria Iahia Aben Ahmed Ebn El Awam, Sevillano. Translated by Don Josef Antonio Banqueri –Imprenta Real, Madrid 1802.

⁴⁰⁵ S.M.Imamuddin, op. cit. Some Aspects of the Socio-Economic and Cultural History of Muslim Spain- 711-1492- p.10.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid p.11.

⁴⁰⁷ (i) Abu Yusuf (731-798 AD.) Taxation in Islam Abu Yusuf’s *Kitāb al Kharaj*- Ed. And Transl. A. Ben Shemesh. Leyden/London 1969. (ii) Al Dawudi, Abu Ishaq Ja far Ibn Nasr (d. 1011) -Le Règime foncier en Sicile au Moyen Age (ixè et xème siècles). Ed. and transl. by H.H. Abdul Wahhab and F. Dachraoui in ‘Etudes d’orientalisme dédiées à la mémoire de Lévi-Provençal’- 2 vols -Paris 1962.

particularly important in Iberia and Sicily,⁴⁰⁸ because of the low population density and the initial economic insecurity.

The first change of major importance, as recorded by Watson was that the early Islamic rulers acknowledged that “virtually all cultivated land was owned by individuals”, who had the right to “sell, mortgage or will it and could farm it or have it farmed⁴⁰⁹ as they liked.” The second incentive principle that was gradually adopted was that those, who physically worked the land, should receive a reasonable proportion of the fruits of their labour. Abd el Wahid al-Fihri and Ahmad al-Tulaytuli (both early XIth century) have left detailed records of contracts between landlords and cultivators. Al Fihri notes that the landlord’s share⁴¹⁰ in the produce varied from one sixth to one half.⁴¹¹ Those who are acquainted with French agricultural contracts of the first half of the present century will note immediately that some XIth century cultivators in Muslim Spain were better off than many French “metayers” of the XXth century.

Thus with all the enhancements and incentives already mentioned, the stage was now set for agricultural development on a scale hitherto unknown. The motivations that prompted phases of agricultural development were of two kinds:

- Political, namely; conscious decisions by the central authority to develop under-exploited lands.⁴¹²
- Market-driven, invariably involving the introduction of high value crops or animals to areas, where they were previously not encountered.

The first of these two classifications divides itself logically on the one hand into development involving the introduction of crops or livestock for subsistence purposes and on the other hand the exploitation of the economic security thus created by

⁴⁰⁸ Ibn Hawqal visited Sicily in 362-363/972-973 and a variety of products being planted there : saffron, cotton, hemp and garden produce. Al Idrisi saw the abundant silk production available. Toufic Fahd op. cit. p. 80.

⁴⁰⁹ A. M. Watson. op. cit p.113.

⁴¹⁰ Islamic law stipulates that the sharecropper is entitled to one fifth, (*Khomos*, hence *khamās/Khamāsa* in North.Africa for sharecropper).

⁴¹¹ S.M.Imamuddin. op. cit. p.72.

development for strictly financial ends, i.e. to create wealth. In the first of these two categories falls the introduction of a number of vegetables that greatly improved the quality of life in the Maghreb and Al Andalus.⁴¹³ Thus families of relatively modest means became acquainted with artichokes, spinach, aubergines, carrots and many types of herbs. Moreover, due to the combined advantages of irrigation and a mild climate, it was no longer necessary to dry vegetables for winter, since they were now available throughout the year. Whereas in the past citrus groves were limited to specific areas, they now became a normal feature of the landscape,⁴¹⁴ with a better and more diverse selection of fruits. Existing olive plantations were extended, whilst market gardens and *jnanāt* (orchards) became a common sight in the outskirts of cities⁴¹⁵. Needless to say, the resulting intense cropping made high demands on land fertility⁴¹⁶ but fortunately, the techniques of intensive irrigation-aided agriculture with compensating land fertility replacement had by now been learned.⁴¹⁷

In the field of development for economic ends, animal husbandry was of prime importance. The fine quality of the wool of the Maghreb soon became known throughout the Empire. Consequently wool production increased rapidly and the “merino” sheep of the Atlas was introduced to Al Andalus.⁴¹⁸ Selective breeding using animals from different parts of the Empire resulted in significant improvements in horse stocks and provided the Saharan caravans with the best load carrying camels.⁴¹⁹ At the same time, the increase in numbers dictated by the demand for wool and leather goods meant that, throughout the western part of the Empire, meat was

⁴¹² M.Lombard, *Les Textiles dans le Monde Musulman...la prolifération des centres techniques depuis l'Est vers l'Ouest du califat, de la partie la plus avancée vers la partie à peine éveillée.* p.12.

⁴¹³ El Bekri *Description de l'Afrique Septentrionale*- Trans. Mc Guckin de Slane -Librairie Paul Geuthner Paris 1913. pp.181-323.

⁴¹⁴ M. Lombard, *L'Islam dans sa première grandeur*- p.186.

⁴¹⁵ (i) *Ibid* p.185. (ii) A.M. Watson op. cit “Small undertakings around cities, which were almost everywhere given over to market gardens and orchards”- p. 114 and p. 197 n°12.

⁴¹⁶ As heavy cropping exhausted the soil of its fertility various type of fertilisers were used such as dung of cows, goats, horses, pigeons as well as bones, blood and vegetables. See (i) E. Beazley and M. Harverson op. cit. pp. 103-116.(ii) A.M. Watson op. cit. p. 125 and p. 203. (iii) *Ibn Al Awwam Libro de Agricultura* -Ed. J. A. Banqueri 2 vols, Madrid 1802. pp 4495-449. (iv) Abu al Khair *Kitāb al Filaha* Ms 4764 Bibliothèque Nationale Paris.

⁴¹⁷ The level of success can be measured by the comments of Al Hymiri, (d.1177), writing in the 12th century, who compared *Al Andalus* to Syria in its fertility, to Yemen for its even climate, to India for its aromatic plants, to China for its mineral riches and to Aden for its seashore economy. See T. Glick op. cit p. 55. Al Ansari writing about North Africa in 1400 AD. He noticed that there were 65 kinds of grapes, 36 kinds of pears, 28 kinds of figs, 16 kinds of apricot etc.- Watson op. cit p.1.

⁴¹⁸ Lombard, *Les Textiles dans le Monde Musulman* -pp. 22-23.

⁴¹⁹ Lombard, *L'Islam dans sa première grandeur*. p. 187/188.

plentiful in places where in the past it had been virtually a luxury. This was particularly true for Mediterranean populations, which in the past had subsisted on vegetables, cereals and olive oil.⁴²⁰ The converse of this situation was also true for the inhabitants of the Dra^ca in Morocco, who were accustomed to deriving their sustenance from the products of their flocks, but were now able to eat a more balanced diet that included vegetables.

The market driven introductions and developments were part of a gradual process, often prompted and facilitated by earlier improvements in agricultural conditions. Ibn Hawqal mentions that the value of indigo stocks held annually in Kabul was two million dinars.⁴²¹ Improvements in irrigation made it possible to cultivate this high value plant in the Mediterranean area and the Maghreb. Consequently, it became a major crop in the Dra^ca,⁴²² where other dye-making plants were also introduced. In a world that had previously known only flax and wool as textiles, silk and cotton production spread rapidly. In Al Andalus mulberry trees were planted for silkworm breeding.⁴²³ Cotton, originally from India, gradually penetrated westwards and became a major crop in irrigated areas of the Maghreb (Tadla)⁴²⁴ and Al Andalus.⁴²⁵ Within a relatively short period, mankind had a wider range of textiles for his clothing, available in a greater variety of colours. However, the greatest impact, not only upon the economies of both the Maghreb and Al Andalus, was the introduction of sugar cane. Sugar cane,⁴²⁶ of Indian origin, was known in the VIth century at the Sassanid court. With the advent of Islam it spread to Egypt and, from the VIIIth century onwards to Syria, Morocco (the Souss), Al Andalus and eventually to Sicily.⁴²⁷ In Egypt it was so plentiful that, in the Fatimid era, sugar figurines were hung on trees during festivals. Syria for its part became a supplier of sweets and

⁴²⁰ Ibid. p. 180.

⁴²¹ Ibn Hawqal in Lombard Les Textiles dans le Monde musulman- p. 141.

⁴²² See Budget Meakin The Land of the Moors- according to Al Idrissi (12th cent.) and Leo Africanus (16th cent.) indigo was grown extensively in the Dra a. (South of Morocco). pp. 42-47. This area up to the Tuat was also famous for the quality of its tobacco.

⁴²³ Al qazaz = the silkworm breeder. The best silk was produced in Al Andalus. Maqdisi. p.239.

Lombard Les Textiles dans le Monde Musulman- p.28.

⁴²⁴ For Al Idrissi cotton was produced in the Tadla to supply all the Maghreb. In Budget Meakin op. cit.p.47

⁴²⁵ Lombard Les Textiles op. cit pp. 201-2.

⁴²⁶ Sugar was known in pre-Islamic time but only to the rich. The Sassanid court imported it from India, therefore the Arabic vocabulary regarding different types of sugar and its refining derive from Persian. For example *phanita* : thickened juice *famid* in Arabic.(i) Watson op. cit. pp. 26-30. (ii) M. Lombard The Golden Age of Islam p. 25.

⁴²⁷ Lombard, L' Islam-p.185.

pastries, whilst its jams were considered to be the best available.⁴²⁸ It is noteworthy that the sugar-refining industry of the Haouz at Shishawa, Morocco remained active until the XVth century. It was hydraulically powered, the major source of waterpower being from the local river.

Thus, within barely a century of the Islamic conquest, the landscape in the area under the Empire's control had changed so radically that it is fair to describe the process of transformation as the Islamic Agricultural Revolution.⁴²⁹ The elements of the success of this revolution can be summarised as:

- a. The extension of the exploitable land area by irrigation.
- b. The rapid implementation of improved farming techniques, derived from the collection and collation of relevant information throughout the whole of the known world.
- c. Incentives based upon the two principles of the recognition of private ownership and the rewarding of cultivators with a harvest share commensurate with their efforts.
- d. The introduction and acclimatization of new crops and breeds and strains of livestock into areas, where they were previously unknown.

It is well beyond the scope of the present work to attempt to cover the history of Islamic science. However it is necessary to examine those aspects of scientific development in the Islamic period that had a bearing upon food and ultimately served the needs of society. The early Islamic centuries were both prosperous and dynamic. In this process science was the essential catalyst between supply and demand in all fields of activity. It was the basis of all innovation and improvement in supply, thereby improving the lifestyle of the population that in turn created more demand.

⁴²⁸ Ibid p.185.

⁴²⁹ Unfortunately, the "reconquista" reversed several features of this Agricultural Revolution. Several of the new crops disappeared and were only re-introduced many years later, for example: bananas, sugar cane, cotton, artichokes and aubergines. Furthermore, the land fell into the hands of nobles and the ecclesiastical authorities, who used most of it for the production of cereals. Watson op. cit. pp.184-185.

In fact the Islamic scientific contribution was initially greatest in agriculture and particularly in irrigation and water distribution.

Another feature of the growth of the Islamic Empire was the increase in urbanization. Again this was facilitated by scientific improvements in the fields of hygiene and sanitation. The formation of large urban centres in turn created a need for complementary agricultural development; particularly to supply a rapidly evolving local market for a dietary repertoire enriched by contact with newly acquired regions of the empire. Apart from having new and more valuable crops to grow, the farmer for his part benefited from the advances made in astronomy/astrology. The measurement of time and of the onset of the seasons and even the prediction of weather became more precise and reliable, as the farmer became informed of the solar movement through each zodiacal sign. He also profited from the compilation of calendars⁴³⁰ that told him when to plant each type of crop, when to graft trees, when and with what to fertilize his crops and when to harvest the fruits of his labours.⁴³¹ Whereas in the past he had lived in a world where he arose and lay down with the sun and relied upon changes in weather to tell him when the seasons might be due, he now live in a world where his decisions were much easier to make. It now became feasible to think in terms of growing each of his crops for a specific market at a specific time of the year. Furthermore, the same calendar that aided the farmer in his activities also carried recommendations about what to eat and what to avoid at each time of the year. This in turn facilitated the farmer's task of deciding what to plant in relation to future demand.

Islamic Physicians

The Islamic revolution in the field of agriculture had its parallel in the field of medicine, where the Arabs' interest was born both of a thirst for knowledge and an emerging food consciousness within Islamic society. The fundamental concepts of medicine that were prevalent in the area they controlled derived essentially from the

⁴³⁰ *Risala fi Awqat al-Sana*. Un calendario anónimo andalusí. Maria Ángeles Navarro. Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas. Granada 1990.

Ancient Greeks, whose civilization had been the first to begin seriously to question the origins of both the world and the human microcosm. In the latter field they were faced with a world that for centuries had always believed that diseases were a punishment inflicted by the Gods. Hence there was no rational thought about medicine and health until the Pythagoreans began to link bodily health with a balanced state of mind. The Greek physician Rufus⁴³² (1st century AD) explained in his writings that internal factors played an important role in the cause of illness due to their effect upon the humours of the body. His studies were mainly centred upon dietetics (the theory of hot, cold, moist and dry elements), and the causation of diseases. Galen⁴³³ (131-201 AD) for his part developed his own epistemological technique for the diagnosis of disease and its treatment. This technique was based on the six "non-naturals": air, food and drink, sleep and wakening, evacuation, rest and motion, mental affliction. From the VIIth century AD the Muslims physicians not only followed in the footsteps of the Galen school, but also gathered medical works from other civilisations: Syrian, Egyptian, Persian, Greek, Indian and Chinese. The treatises they wrote illustrate the practices and beliefs that existed in the pre-Islamic period, as they are composed of information that was not linked to the land of Arabia. This gathering of science-related books from other civilisations involved the translation of many of such work into Arabic. Thus, by the IXth century, most of the books on antique science⁴³⁴, written in a variety of languages, had been identified, translated and subsequently enriched by being made more precise and complete.⁴³⁵

The fundamental approach of the Islamic physicians⁴³⁶ towards medicine was based upon the concept of preserving health.⁴³⁷ For this reason their efforts were

⁴³¹ Ibn Bassal: *libro de Agricultura* op. cit. on preparing land before the planting season. p. 61. Information for the farmer and how to recognise the different types of water pp. 183-182.

⁴³² Amal M. Abdellah Abou Aly "The medical writings of Rufus of Ephesus" - Ph. D. Thesis- University College- University of London 1992. p.173

⁴³³ Amal op. cit. p. 16

⁴³⁴ Sinan Bnou Tabit Ibn Qora (331H./942 A.D.) *Atar al baqiya 'an al qurun al jaliya*- Trans. "the chronology of Ancient Nations- London 1879 C.E. Sachaus. (ii) Al Biruni Chronology of Ancient Nations. (iii) Seyyed Hossein Nasr An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines-p. 122.

⁴³⁵ Jacquart D. et Micheau F. La médecine Arabe et l'Occident Médiéval- Editions Maisonneuve et Larose. Paris 1990- p.54.

⁴³⁶ In Seyyed Hossein Nasr op. cit "the study of the human body by Ibn Sina is not that of dead matter to which life has been added. Modern medicine is based on the conception of the universe as a conglomeration of dead matter out of which, by some unexplainable process, life may become evolved in forms". p. 252. Also Ibn Sina on the World of Generation and Corruption. See p. 240-249.

concentrated upon the digestive organs, since these were believed to be the source of equilibrium of the body⁴³⁸. Therefore a correctly fed body would remain in a healthy equilibrium. In the above context the general concept of humours was developed and made more precise. In the Xth century Ishaq Ibn Imran started to extend the humour concept. Whereas Rufus had mentioned only one type of melancholy, at the level of the stomach, Ishaq found physiological as well as psychological effects upon humours. The treatments he developed were based upon using diet to achieve a correct equilibrium of the four humours, combined with music to enhance the psyche. However in order that diet-based medicine might be effective, a wider dietary spectrum was necessary. Fortunately the Islamic cultural expansion was not confined to the studies and researches of physicians. In parallel with physicians' accomplishments, agronomists, botanists and apothecaries carried out a wide range of development work. In particular many plants were taken from their normal geographical areas⁴³⁹ and, through careful acclimatization, introduced into areas with different conditions of temperature, humidity and soil. Spices, once the province only of the rich, were gradually democratised through the spreading of knowledge and Islamic teaching and became a widely available feature of the daily life of the people. Furthermore, the latter were now better informed about what should be eaten and what was better avoided. In effect there was what amounted to a "food revolution" as interest became established in table manners,⁴⁴⁰ the sequence in which dishes should be served and food hygiene. Food consciousness established itself in terms of humours, just as today it is expressed in terms of vitamins. Combinations of dishes and their components were identified with timings related to the hour of the day, the month of the year⁴⁴¹ and the season. In their approach to food, the Islamic physicians⁴⁴² classified it according to taste and temperature content, in order to

⁴³⁷ Abi Bakr Muhammad Ibn Zakaria ar Razi *Manafi' al aghdiya wa dafa' maradeha*- Edited by °Isam °Itani -Dar Ihya ° Al °Ulum, Beyrut 1985. Advice on types of bread pp.10-19. On meat and fish pp. 75-105. On method of cooking pp. 113-125.

⁴³⁸ Seyyed Hossein Nasr op. cit. – Al Biruni's concept on imbalance and diseases of the body. p. 158

⁴³⁹ Watson op. cit. p. 55.

⁴⁴⁰ (i) Abi Al Hossain Hilal Ibn al Muhsin As Sabi (359 H.) on Etiquette *Rusum dar al Khalifa*. Edited by Dar Raid al Arabi- Beyrouth, 1976- (ii) Ibn Imad Al Aqfahasi (d.1450 A.D.) *Adhab al Akl*- Published by Dar al Kitab Al °Alamiya, Beyrouth 1986.

⁴⁴¹ The solar calendar was kept for agriculture, so that it could correspond with the seasons although Prophet Mohammed, in order to eliminate pagan celebrations, used a lunar calendar for the Islamic year.

⁴⁴² (i) Abi Bakr Muhammad Ibn Zacariya Al Razi (Rhazes L.) op. cit. (trans.: goodness in food and avoidance of its harm)- pp. 301-309. (ii) Haven C. Krueger *Avicenna's poem on Medicine- Urjuzat fi*

match the body's requirement to maintain equilibrium. For instance fish, by their definition, is cold and moist and must thus be cooked with hot and dry spices such as pepper or ginger, which will balance these features.

The four humours, hot, cold, dry and moist, were believed to affect the digestion. Hence if the food intake was too heavily biased towards one or another of them, imbalance and illness might follow.⁴⁴³ On the one hand, a healthy diet was defined as one containing a good mixture of the tastes⁴⁴⁴ given below. On the other hand, the treatment for ill health was based upon restoring the correct balance between the humours.⁴⁴⁵ The tastes considered relevant by the physicians were:

Sour: Sour foods, (e.g. eaten with lemons and vinegar) were considered valid for the treatment of debility. However, excessive use might lead to muscular weakness and such ailments as ulcers and liver disorders⁴⁴⁶.

Sweet: Sweet foods were believed to increase bodily secretions, such as blood, milk and seminal fluid. However, they were to be avoided when the body was suffering from colds and rheumatism and thus were not considered advisable for use in winter. They were believed to be good for the digestion and for creating a joyful disposition⁴⁴⁷

tibb- Charles C. Thomas Publisher, Springfield Illinois- 1963. p 58. (ii) Seyyed Hossein Nasr op. cit. for the four humours and the elements and natures in Ibn Sina - pp. 252-260.

⁴⁴³ Al Razi (Rhazes) *Kitāb al murshid aw al fusul*- The guide of aphorisms, Edited by A.Z. Iskandar- Revue de l'Institut des manuscrits arabes. Cairo 1963. Al Razi suggests that illness should be cured with *al dād* opposite temperature. pp. 91-96.

⁴⁴⁴ (i) *Ibn Roshd wa tamwir* - Edited by Murad Wahbi and Muna Abu Sena - Dar Thaqafa al Jadida Cairo, 1997. pp. 61-67. (ii) Al Khattabi, M.A. *Attib wal attiba fi Al Andalus al Islamia* (trans.: Medicine and physicians in Al Andalus) on (a) Ibn Roshd treatise on humours and taste pp.321-370 (b) Abu Marwan Ibn Zohr ' his treatise on the difference between honey and sugar. Dar Al Gharb al Islami- Beyrouth 1988. p 312.

⁴⁴⁵ Vazquez de Benito, Maria de la Concepcion *Libro de la Introduccion al Arte de la Medicina o Isagoge* -Ar Razi 865-925 AD - (Razhes Lat.) I, p 77-80 : link between humours and activities of the soul or mind.

⁴⁴⁶ Ar Razi op. cit. p216- acid food provides good blood circulation.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibn Sina (Avicenna Lat.) 980 A.D. specified that the way to cure melancholy (black bile) was through "roh" spiritus. He asserted that spices are "cordial" (connecting through the cervical cord between heart and brain) whereas sweetness is not. Sweetness is limited to the body only, but if mixed with spices and fragrances works better. In S. Peterson *Acquired taste -the French origins of Modern cooking*- Cornell University Press Ithaca and London 1995. p. 17.

Salty: A salty taste was seen as softening with an ability to retain fluids and clear the body's ducts by attracting water and loosening toxins. Abuse however, could lead to ageing and skin problems. Eating salted nuts with aperitifs before meals in modern times is a relic of such beliefs. Salty food was also avoided in winter.

Bitter: A bitter taste was considered as stimulating the digestion because of its reputed ability to absorb phlegm. It was felt to be good for fevers and skin diseases. Examples of bitter tastes are chicory, turmeric, artichokes, and wormwood (*shība* in tea). The bitter taste was regarded as ideal for winter use, e.g. soup with root vegetables.

Astringent: The astringent taste was seen as a light one, with the qualities of being cold and dry. Astringent foods were used in the treatment of diarrhoea and heavy menstruation. However, an excess of astringent foods was reckoned to lead to over-drying of the system, constipation and stiff joints. Examples of astringent foods are sage and eggs.

Most of the Islamic physicians left records of their work⁴⁴⁸ in the form of recipes or medical preparations, designed on the one hand to preserve the health of the individual and on the other to cure him of any imbalance of the humours, which might have provoked an illness. Examples of such books were:

“*Taqwim as siha*”, a work by *Ibn Butlan* (XIth century)⁴⁴⁹, which illustrates how the four humours were seen by Islamic physicians.

⁴⁴⁸ (i) Al Razi *Kitāb al murshid aw al fusul* op. cit.: lemon and acid food have a cooling effect. pp. 31-34. (ii) Ibn Zohr (1077/470 H.) nature of the ‘eight tastes’ and their influence on the humours in : Mohammed Ibn Al Khatib by Al Khattabi op. cit. (1988) -p. 370-379.

⁴⁴⁹ (i) Hosam ElKhadem *Le Taqwim al Sihha (Taqwini Sanitatis) d’Ibn Butlan : un traité médical du XI siècle* - Lovanii Aedibus Peeters 1990. (ii) Ibn Al Khattib Al Sulaimani (d. 776H./1374 AD.) *Wusul Hafid Asiha fi al fusul*- (How to preserve health in different seasons)- In *Attib wal al attiba fi Al Andalus al Islamiya* By M. A. Al Khattabi –Dar Al Gharb Al Islami, Beyrout 1988. pp.223-232.

“*Taqwim al ʿabdan*”⁴⁵⁰, an XIth century Medical book on charts used by astronomers in formulating their astronomical tables; a subject that will be explained later in this text.

In the works of the Islamic physicians⁴⁵¹ a selective health-giving diet related to the seasons⁴⁵² was recommended as indicated below:

Summer, the hot season, has a relaxing effect upon the body, although the latter suffers from thirst. The diagnosis was therefore based on producing a contradictory effect on the hot humour. Thus the food recommend to be eaten was a cold and moist humour such as fish, fresh fruit and *bawārid* (cold dishes) and grilled meat *Kabāb* and *shwā*⁴⁵³. The recommended taste was vinegar and lemon, as they were known for their contracting effect, necessary in that season for the body’s tissues. It was also reckoned that the summer heat helped the body to discharge and evacuate toxins e.g. through diarrhoea.

Autumn was defined as the moist season, which was judged to be most harmful to the body, due to atrabillious humour. It was also deemed a bad season for old people, since they suffered more from phlegm. A seasonal increase in skin problems was attributed to blood no longer being at the surface but having retreated deeper within the body. Similarly bad blood circulation was blamed for causing swelling of the spleen. In the dietary context both sweet and salty dishes were to be avoided, since it was hardly the season to provoke thirst. On the contrary, astringent food was strongly advised. Hence soups were recommended to be made from root vegetables, such as turnips and parsnips. However green beans and aubergines were

⁴⁵⁰ J.C. Graziani *Ibn Jazlah’s 11th century tabulated medical compendium*” -Ph. D. Thesis- 1979.

⁴⁵¹ (i) Abu Marwan Abdel Malik Ibn Zohr (d.557/1162) “*Kitāb al Aghdiya*” Mss n° 1538 and 2430 Al *Khizana al Hassaniya- Rabat*. (ii) Expiracion Garcia Sanchez *Kital al aghdiya- Tratado de los alimentos*- Edicion- traduccion e introduccion. Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas- Institucion de Cooperacion con el Mundo Arabe. Madrid 1992. p 140. (iii) Ibn al Khattib *Kitāb al wusul li hifd al siha fil fusul*. Edited and translated by C. Vazquez de Benito – Salamanca 1984.

⁴⁵² Seyyed Hossein Nasr op. cit. –Detailed information by Al Biruni (b. 973) in relation to food and the terrestrial environment. pp. 107-174.

⁴⁵³ Abi Bakr Muhammad Ibn Zacariya Al Razi (Rhazes L.) op. cit. pp. 134-135.

excluded. Hot and dry ingredients with no acid taste such as wheat were favoured for soup.

Winter, being a cold season was seen as having a constricting effect, which regenerated the body's forces, provided its humour was correctly balanced. To counter its cold humour hot foods were recommended, such as hot meat ex. *harisa*⁴⁵⁴, thick sauces with onions, pulses, cabbage and leek, the latter for its acid taste. Consumption of dairy products was reduced and fish, being cold and moist, was never served in winter.

Spring was regarded by the Islamic physicians as the best season for man. The nature of its climate is dry and moist, which was considered to be an ideal humour combination for the body as the blood was reckoned to come up to the surface, causing the skin to be well irrigated. The ideal was therefore to eat sweet items⁴⁵⁵, as they were thought to enter the blood and energise it. The seasonal dietary recommendation was leaf vegetable, sweet sauces, ample dairy produce but no starchy or gelatinous foods.

This then was the interpretation by the Islamic physicians⁴⁵⁶ of the effect of the four elements, fire, earth, air and water, (typified by the conditions hot, cold, dry and moist), upon the body. Their philosophical interpretation of the elements in terms of the macrocosm was that all life on earth was intricately interwoven with the natural rhythms and laws of the universe. They believed that every individual is directly or indirectly affected by various cosmic forces that are beyond his control. Therefore, there was a fundamental need to be able to counter the malicious effect of the elements. In this context, "salvation" was achieved by creating harmony in one's life through good hygiene, fresh air, exercise and a good diet with a principal base: spices, in order to maintain equilibrium. Thus for the first time spices became the core of good cuisine.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid p.133.

⁴⁵⁵ Amal op. cit. p 328- Melancholy occurs in spring according to Ar Razi (Rhazes).

⁴⁵⁶ Ibn Sina *Urjuzat fi tibb* op. cit. p. 66.

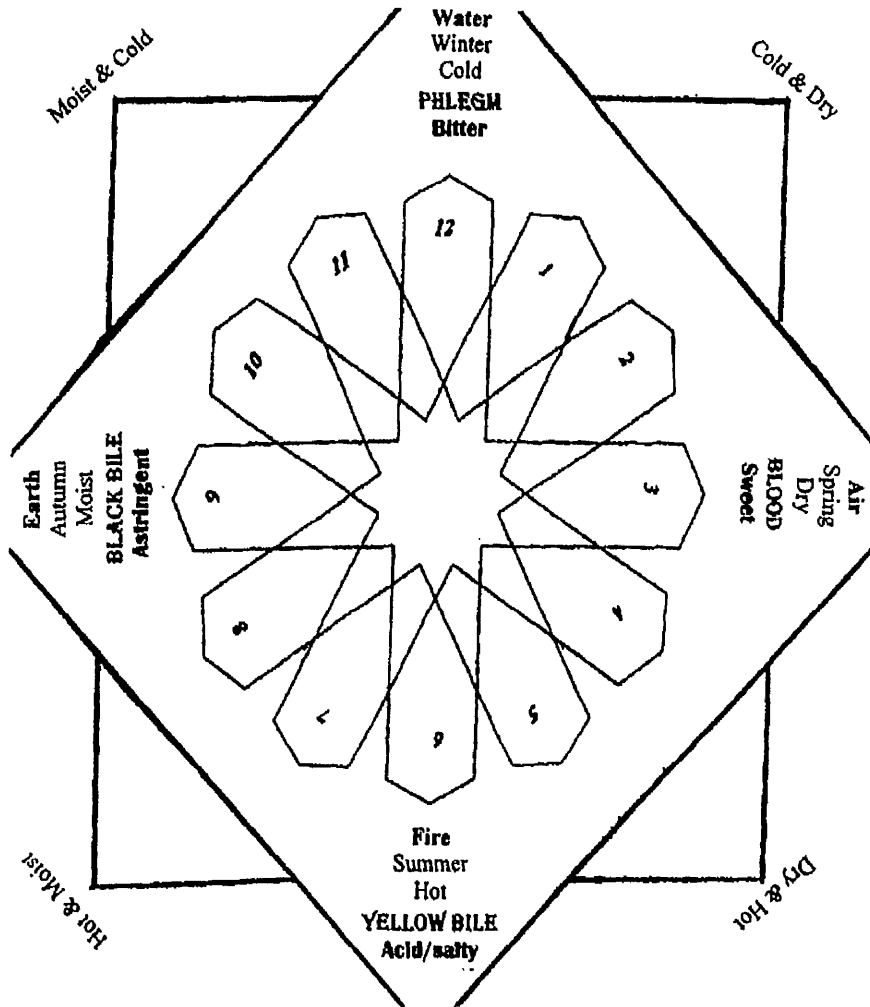
In this section it has been shown how the physicians, as opposed to the cooks, provided the inspiration for the development of the culinary art in the Islamic world. Consequently, most if not all of them left to posterity their treatises on the subject that included recipes, often in a medical context. In the following chapters some of the surviving culinary manuscripts⁴⁵⁷ from the Islamic period will be examined and analysed.

⁴⁵⁷ Where a manuscript is anonymous, it should not be automatically attributed to a physician. Books of recipes were also compiled by persons with no medical background.

**MOROCCAN DIETARY CALENDAR ACCORDING TO THE
TEACHING OF THE ISLAMIC PHYSICIANS**

Food should be hot and dry: pulses, fibres, pasta, kesksu with barley and wholemeal semolina, *la^c sida*, sauces with onion, gluteneous food (*hergma*), animals feet/head, *tanjiya*, *tajins* with turnips, parsnips, dried beans, chickpeas, less dairy products. Lamb, minced camel meat, calf but no beef. goat or fish. Spices *rās al hanūt*.

Food : no salty ingredients, end of moist vegetables such as aubergines, courgettes, green beans etc. Soups and *tajin* dishes with vegetables such as cabbages and cauliflower. *Kesksu* with barley, lamb but no pigeons. Spices such as *lemsakhen*.



Food : green leaves and sweet dishes: freshbroad beans, truffles, caramelized *tajins* and *kesksu* with *lafaya* and pigeons, honeyed meat (*mafasal*), marshmallows, cardoons, wild artichokes. Sweet dessert and dairy product. Aromatic mint tea.

All food with a cold and moist nature : *Bawarid* (salads) fresh, cooked and cooled vegetables with lemon and vinegar. Light grilled meat/*meshwi*, *tajins* with lemon, olives, fruit (pears, apples, prunes), less *kesksu* (may be *badaz* maize semolina). Plenty of fish, golden chicken, kebabs, rice pudding, *seffa* and fruit. Spices such as cumin, caraway, cinnamon.

VIII – Astronomy, Astrology and their influence

Astrology

The modern concept of astrology is somewhat different from the views of this science that were held prior to the Renaissance. People educated in the confident materialism of Western industrial society cannot easily grasp the importance of communicating with nature to detect the onset of changes in season. All the past interpretation of signs and traditional symbols has now been superseded by machines, which can detect and measure the parameters of change. But in the past, when man was devoid of such material aids, his ability to monitor, understand and hopefully predict change was of prime concern, since it was directly linked to his survival. From the Classical era until approximately the Xth century, the layman's notion of astrology was that of a cult of the heavenly bodies. The latter were visualised as deities with direct control of both life and events upon earth. For this reason, the deities were invoked through incantations and liturgies to persuade them to change their malefic influence. Attempts were made to control adverse forces by magic, whilst formulae for dealing with sickness and bad luck were sought after by rich and poor alike.

In the VIIIth century the Caliph Al Mansour, as part of a policy of general exchanges with foreign sources of knowledge, invited an Indian delegation to his court. Amongst the members of the delegation were astrologers, who not only introduced Indian astrology⁴⁵⁸ *Sindhind (Sidhhantas)* to the Baghdad court, but also assisted in gaining a better understanding of the decaying Greek astrological heritage. The ensuing interest in astral matters soon led to a need for works on astronomy in Arabic, so that from this time onwards there was a constant stream of translations undertaken of such works, several of which contained Indian references. Encouraged on the one hand by Quranic verses⁴⁵⁹ citing the Cosmos in relation to man and, on the other hand, by the knowledge derived from translations of pre-Islamic works, there was a significant

⁴⁵⁸ Indian astrology owed much to introductions by the Greeks of the original Oriental astrology. Subsequently, this became more developed than that of Middle Eastern countries. See R. Rashed *Histoire des Sciences arabes*- Editions du Seuil Paris 1997. Pp. 23-24.

⁴⁵⁹ S.H.Nasr *Islamic Art and Spirituality*- Golgonooza Press, Suffolk 1987. The Quranic revelations brought back to man the awareness of the Cosmos.p. 39.

increase of interest in the cosmological sciences as witnessed by the number of writers covering the subject⁴⁶⁰. Explanations and interpretations were required of all ancient writings and oral traditions as the acquisition of the new science led to the desire to develop it. Consequently everything was questioned and subjected to careful empirical scrutiny, including the rhythmic and constant changes in the Cosmos.

Astronomy was one of the sciences that the Muslims were determined to master and develop with a view to understanding the world in which they lived in a positive and rational manner. One of the early astronomer/astrologers Abu Ma'shar (Ja'far Muhammad Abu Ma'shar IXth century) said, "No true knowledge of science would be reached except by permanent consideration of the wonders of the movements of the planets".⁴⁶¹ This statement has a discernible and constant influence upon the scientific development that occurred during the early centuries of the Islamic period. All research of the *riyadiyyat* (quadrivium) was conducted in parallel. For their part the philosophers and religious teachers followed the same methodology to explain the visible and invisible world in transcendent terms and hence the destiny of man on earth. Representation of the celestial spheres by mythical allegorical means was common practice amongst the initiated. Great emphasis was placed upon the microcosmos at both spiritual and corporeal levels. Their contemplative assessment of the cosmos led them to develop Ptolemy's geocentric theory of the universe in both physical and spiritual terms to a level of sophistication not previously attained. Thus the terrestrial position of man was considered as being the fixed point to which all movements of the celestial bodies are related.

⁴⁶⁰ Al Farabi, Al Kindi, Ibn Sina to name but a few.

⁴⁶¹ C.Burnett, Magic and divination in the Middle Ages -Variorum. 1996, II p. 135.

The results of the Islamic philosophers' and astronomers' deliberations are given in the table below.

| Hierarchy of the Spheres | | | Symbolic hierarchy of the Vault of the Sky | | |
|--------------------------|----|-------------|--|-----------------|----------------|
| Saturn | 1. | az-Zuhal | 1. | Divine throne | al °Arsh |
| Jupiter | 2. | al Mushtari | 2. | Divine pedestal | al Kursi |
| Mars | 3. | al Mirikh | 3. | Zodiac | Falak al Buruj |
| SUN | 4. | Ash Shams | 4. | Fixed stars | Falak al Atlas |
| Venus | 5. | az Zuhra | 5. | Ether | al Athir |
| Mercury | 6. | al °Utarid | 6. | Air | al Hawa° |
| Moon | 7. | al Qamar | 7. | Water | al Ma° |
| Earth | 8. | al °Ard | 8. | Earth | al °Ard |

The above symbolic hierarchy does not represent all the fixed stars and the twelve zodiacal constellations, but is a “*maqadîr*” (virtual) determination of the celestial space. It is a symbolic relationship of planetary stations projected in the sky in a subtle order of mechanical conceptions. Hence the relationship between macrocosm and microcosm is given at both spiritual and physical levels. The supreme sky is identified with the incorruptible world whilst below the sky of the fixed stars everything is subject to generation and eventual corruption. Planets have their own exaltations (mansions) in spatial terms, which in turn influence everything upon earth: animals, minerals, gems and spices. Events were seen to correspond to changes (i.e. revolutions/conjunctions) of the heavenly bodies. Similarly, occurrences in the macrocosmos were regarded as affecting all creatures upon earth. However, since man has been granted wisdom above all others he can, by acquiring the necessary knowledge, limit the malefic influence of the planets and, to some extent, control nature.

The Arab philosopher Al Farabi (Xth century) wrote that “the planets are rational (*natiqat*) spiritual beings capable of intelligence and speech and (themselves) cause

everything in this world by order of the Prime Creator who controls all.”⁴⁶² The popularity of this doctrine amongst philosophers and astrologers alike is borne out by the Escorial manuscripts⁴⁶³ of Abu Ma‘shar. Thus Abu Ma‘shar wrote about “The importance of the upper planets on everything underneath, (i.e. Earth and the two main planets *al mushtari* (Jupiter) and *zihal* (Saturn).” Hence the effect upon the weather: “If Saturn is in transit in a water sign, this will bring cold, frost and strong storms ‘*awasif muhlika*” or “if it is in a fire sign, this will bring drought.” One of Abu Ma‘shar’s students, Abu Ali al Khayyat in 885 A.D./220 H. wrote a forecasting chart⁴⁶⁴ for the Corn Exchange in order to predict rain or drought, (and thus famine), according to the positions of Saturn and Jupiter⁴⁶⁵ in the water and fire signs. It specified “*qala yo‘rafu dhalika min al kawakib al ‘ulwiyin.*” (It could be found out from the upper planets); hence Saturn will increase prices whilst Jupiter’s influence would be a decrease in market prices.

The concepts introduced by the Islamic philosophers represent the passage from astronomy to metaphysical and integral cosmology. It is difficult for us today to visualize such a concept as in our essentially material world we are always seeking scientific causality. A different mentality is needed to grasp Islamic philosophy of the VIIIth to Xth centuries and it should not be interpreted as being merely an introduction to astrology. The philosophers’ conception of the heavens and the fixed stars is simply that of cosmic intermediaries between the immutable world and the Earth, with only one cause, the “*Wahdat al Wujud*”, - the Unity of Existence. In this context the sun is seen as the heart of the universe, which transmits light to all the stars. This concept is seen symbolically as the reflection of the “Intelligible light”, the sun being analogous to the divine Light “*Noor.*”

⁴⁶² (i) George Saliba op. citp. 55. (ii) in D.M. Dunlop *Al Farabi Fusul al madani*. For Al Farabi “the worlds are three : a spiritual, a heavenly and a material” p.58. “the most excellent is what exists to the highest degree, the basest what exists to the least degree, and the intermediate degree is a mean between them.” p. 59.

⁴⁶³ The main collection of Arabic books at the Escorial derives from Morocco belonged to the Saadi prince Moulay Zaidan (16th century) who was transferring his library by boat to Agadir, but was intercepted by Spanish pirates and taken to Spain. There followed a long dispute between the Moroccan and Spanish courts regarding the return of the collection. However, the argument became almost pointless when half of it was destroyed in a fire at the Escorial.(i) C.A. Julien, *Histoire de l’Afrique du Nord des Origines à 1830*, Editions Payot Paris 1994. p. 593. (ii) B. Meakin, *The Moorish Empire*, 1899. p. 132.

⁴⁶⁴ Escorial (MS9388 fol 20 p. 52).

Ibn Sina (Xth-XIth century) drew attention in his writings to *ishraq* “the radiation of divine Light, by which men are able to attain to contact with the hierarchy of Intelligibles⁴⁶⁶.” It was only after Ibn Sina that the “symbol of light became the key to the universe⁴⁶⁷,” for philosophers and theologians, mainly in the *Ishraq* school of interpreters of *Ibn Sina*. The divine light was thus seen by philosopher/astronomers as the supreme spiritual and intellectual force that influences all forms of activity. Amongst the mystics *Ibn ʿArabi* (XIth-XIIth century) saw the symbolism of light as being the “heart of the world⁴⁶⁸.” Thus it is easy to understand how philosophical and mystical concepts led to the importance attached to colour in all the arts⁴⁶⁹, including the culinary art, from this period onwards. Further comment on its influence upon the culinary art is in chapter IX.

Another aspect of Ibn Sina’s teaching is that that the human soul possesses a blank material intellect and that to gain actual intelligible thought, man must receive the active intellect and its emanations. They held a general view that there are several intelligences in the cosmos, of which human intelligence is the lowest.

| N° of Heavens | Name of heaven | N° of Generating Intellect |
|---------------|--|----------------------------|
| 9 | “heaven of heavens” <i>falak al Atlas</i> | 1 |
| 8 | Heaven of signs of Zodiac <i>falak al buruj</i> | 2 |
| 7 | Saturn | 3 |
| 6 | Jupiter | 4 |
| 5 | Mars | 5 |
| 4 | Sun | 6 |
| 3 | Venus | 7 |
| 2 | Mercury | 8 |
| 1 | Moon | 9 |

⁴⁶⁵ In *Kitāb an nukat* by Abu Maʿshar. Ms 909 folio 44 El Escorial, Spain.

⁴⁶⁶ A.Hourani. *A History of the Arab peoples*-Faber and Faber Ltd, republished 1991. p.176.

⁴⁶⁷ S.H.Nasr op. cit. p.243 and p.20 footnote 95.

⁴⁶⁸ T. Burckhardt *Mystical Astrology according to Ibn Arabi* -Beshara Publications. UK 1977. p.27.

⁴⁶⁹ Seyyed Hossein Nasr *Islamic Art and Spirituality*- Golgonooza Press Suffolk 1987. p.51.

However, above all these levels of intelligence there is God, The Maker *Mukhtari*^c, The Creator of Forms *Muṣawwir*, The Composer *Mu³allif*. This philosophy was clearly at variance with earlier concepts of planetary deities, which continued to be supported by astrologers. The time had therefore come for those astronomers, who adhered to the new philosophy, to distance themselves from astrologers. The first step in the separation of the science of astronomy *ilm al falak* and divination *at tanjim* was taken by the mathematicians, amongst whom was Al Biruni (1050)⁴⁷⁰, who also advised the religious body to accept *ijtihād* in this field. Astronomers, philosophers and physicians, such as Al Biruni⁴⁷¹ and Ibn Sina⁴⁷², joined in the argument and wrote their criticisms of the “charlatans”. They themselves were astronomers and were intent upon proving that astronomy, unlike astrology, is a pure science and that no astrologer could ever foretell the future. The main task of astronomers in the 10th century was on the one hand to prevent astronomy being banned by the Islamic theologians and on the other hand, to protect it from defamation by the astrologers, either directly or indirectly. Despite their efforts the reputation of astronomy was somewhat eroded by the Imam Abu Hamid Al Ghazzali⁴⁷³ (d.1111), who attacked both philosophers and astronomers. However, his attacks were rendered temporarily ineffective because of a Fatwa issued against him.

The eventual revival of astronomy was destined to come from the Western part of the Islamic Empire, where men of science would appear to have been freer than their Eastern counterparts to pursue their philosophical ideas without fear of persecution.

⁴⁷⁰ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines: As in Aristotle’s cosmology, so in that of Al Biruni, the moon marks the boundary between the world of change and the incorruptible heavens. Above it lie the unchanging heavenly spheres and below it the world of generation and corruption.” p. 139.

⁴⁷¹ Al Farabi (870-950) studied music scientifically and gave it a mathematical representation. This progress was followed by Ibn Sina (980-1037), Ibn Zayla (d.1048) and Al Urmawi (d. 1294).

⁴⁷² Seyyed Hossein Nasr op. cit : Ibn Sina’s description and defence of astrology including his strong attack on ‘occult sciences’. His attack on astrologers was not on cosmological grounds. pp. 238-9.

⁴⁷³ Initially, Al Ghazzali’s work was rendered ineffective, since the Almoravides had pronounced a *Fatwa* against him and had burnt his famous work *Ihya³ al ‘ulum ad din* (revivification of the Religious Sciences). Thus his work was not read in the Maghreb until the arrival of the Almohades in the XIIth century. The latter encouraged Islamic mysticism : the spiritual love of God expressed in metaphysical doctrines, poetry and visual arts. (They also burnt Ibn Yunus’s books on Applied Sciences. However, as was shown later, people had secretly carried on for centuries the rituals from this period that were known only to the trusted.).C.f A. Khaneboubi Les premiers Sultans Mérinides: 1269-1331 Histoire politique et sociale- Editions L’Harmattan, Paris 1987-p.186.

Hence Islamic Western⁴⁷⁴ astronomy was able to evolve under a new concept, whereby it belonged to the mathematical sciences, whereas astrology was considered to be part of the physical sciences, which included agriculture, medicine⁴⁷⁵ and alchemy⁴⁷⁶. The change of concept that accompanied the development of Islamic astronomy helped to overcome man's feelings of insecurity and caused him to feel that he had better control of his destiny. Thus astrology became regulated by astronomic⁴⁷⁷ observation: the order and consistency of the heavens were exploited to foresee how and in what way events would occur, how they might be used and how they might be avoided. In the field of astronomy the principal reformers were :

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Ibn Baja (d. 1139) | Ibn Tofail (d. 1185) |
| Ibn Roshd (Averroes 1126-1198) | Al Bitruji (Lat. Alpetragius 1200) |
| Jabir Ibn Aflah (Lat. Geber 1200) | Ibn Banna (1256) |

One of the more striking results of this new perception of astronomy was that the Mosque, once the deadly enemy of astronomy, followed Al Bitruji's advice and, for the first time, employed an official astronomer within its very precincts. His role was to produce timetables for the *salāt* (prayers), to orientate the Qibla⁴⁷⁸ and establish the correct dating for lunar months and festivals. The faithful depended very much upon such accuracy, as it would have been cumbersome to carry *ephemerides* to be able to

⁴⁷⁴ Abu Abbas Ibn Muhammad Ibn Othman Al Azdi (b. 1256 in Marrakesh) nicknamed "Ibn Banna" had several teachers from amongst the most famous of his time. For mathematics he had Al Qadi Asharif Al Marrakushi (d.1283), for astronomy Abu Abdallah As Sijilmasi and, additionally, someone referred to as Al Mirrikh (Mars), for astrology and medicine. The latter was taught by Ibn Mun'im Al Abdari (d. 1228), who left books on *Fiqh al Hisab* (the Science of Calculation), from which it is evident that the famous "triangle arithmétique", attributed to Blaise Pascal in 1648, was already known to him as were other mathematical theorems found in XVI th and XVII th century works in Europe. M. Abdallah *La Tradition du savoir* in M. Mezzine op. cit. pp. 64-75.

⁴⁷⁵ Ali Ibn Ridwan the famous 11th century physician, is reputed to have said that "Astrology is the Science of prognostication. From it men can know future things before they come about. Similarly, farmers and miners have their own skill, which they understand by the rising and ascent of the stars and their setting, and by the movement of the winds; and they know what ought to happen to the trees, crops and metals and what will happen to ships on the sea, and what the weather will be like." See C. Burnett op.cit. I. pp. 14-15.

⁴⁷⁶ George Saliba, *A History of Arabic Astronomy. Planetary Theories during the Golden Age of Islam*- New York University Press New York- London 1994. p. 66.

⁴⁷⁷ The climax of this activity of observational astronomy was initially popular amongst the North African such as Yahya Ibn Abi Shukr Al Maghribi (d. 1283), Mohammad Ibn Raqqam (d. 1315).

⁴⁷⁸ Gaston Deverdun *Marrakech des origines à 1912*. The building of the second Koutoubia to correct its *qibla* (i.e. facing Mecca) by the Almohad Abdelmou'min in 1158- p.181. The Badi palace in Marrakesh is reported to have a cupola with 12 columns each representing star signs as well as the

establish the time for prayers. This reality of this accuracy can be witnessed today in the city of Fés,⁴⁷⁹ whenever the Muezzin calls for prayers. The call is first heard from the minaret situated furthest to the East, whilst the last call comes from the westernmost minaret as the Muezzin there observes that the sun has set. Hence the Muezzins follow the speed of the earth's rotation from one area to another, giving the impression of one long echo, rather than several individual calls. The mosque was thus "educated" to the idea that time in the universe, that is to say "cosmic time" is elastic, increasing and receding according to the position of the observer. It should be understood that astronomers had both astrological and astronomical motives in their research. They studied the sky not just for itself but also to read the destiny of mankind. Hence they were doubly motivated to use their mathematical knowledge to discover the laws that governed the movement of celestial bodies.

It would appear that the mosque came to understand the work of the astronomers, which was accepted for the peace of mind it brought, whilst acknowledging the supremacy of God. Philosophers enhanced the notion of the supreme God: the omnipresence of God was understood as reflected in the omnipresence of stars. The course of generation and decay was attributed to influence from the celestial bodies, their motions, their relations to each other and the way they influence the heavenly elements: fire, air, water and earth. In short, this was sacred astrology, in which the understanding and development of astronomy helped the astrologers/astronomers to practice astrological meteorology for preventive purposes. Using charts and tables⁴⁸⁰,

position of the rooms were positioned according to astrological charts. See pp. 110-111 and quoting Mouette- pp. 392 & 395.

⁴⁷⁹ Time keeping by the mosque was in fact a point of dispute between the two University Madaris (sing. madrasa) of Fés : Al Qarawiyyin and Bu 'Inaniyya. The Madrasa Al Qarawiyyin had a hydraulic clock with 24 intervals and drums which marked hours of equal length. On the other hand the hydraulic clock of the Bu 'Inaniyya Madrasa was regulated to follow the movements of the sun in the 12 zodiacal signs, using sunrise and sunset as a marker. Thus, in summertime, under the Cancer or Leo signs, each daylight hour was longer than in wintertime. This difference was achieved by diverting the pipe feeding water to the "bucket", thereby slowing down its intake of water. Thus Fés had two ways of keeping time : one with equal hours and one with variable hours.

To put an end to this discrepancy, the Sultan Abu Inan Al Marini established a system in 1348, whereby the believers could actually see the time for prayer. This system involved displaying a white flag on the minaret to announce daytime prayers, whilst a light was lit to announce the evening prayer. This system persists to this day, showing to all that the position of the sun in the sky is the only way to tell the time. A. El Hajjami Au fil du temps pp. 124-133 and M. Hamdouni Alami Contes et légendes pp. 134-141 in M. Mezzine, Fés Médiévale.

⁴⁸⁰ (i) "Kitāb al Anwa" Translated by Gerard de Cremona as "Liber de Anoe" (ii) Risala fi awqat al Sana by Maria Angeles Navarro in Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas Granada 1990. (iii) Uns al Faqir by Ibn Al Qunfudh (d.1406) who relates that a meeting was held annually in the

ominous events were predicted, such as drought, floods, wars, epidemics etc. Consequently, the astrological conception of causation influenced all the arts⁴⁸¹ and sciences, especially medicine and its related disciplines, agriculture, botany and alchemy. This was due to exchanges between astronomers and other scientists through *miqat* literature that was abundant, dominating the astronomical progress of the period. In the view of the physicians, the laws of the Universe were clear for, whilst the heavens are perfect, the sub-lunary is not and all that lives in it is imperfect, including human bodies.

Islamic Musical Theory

According to the musical theory of the Ancient Greeks, the pitch notation could be represented by seven unequal circles separated by intervals of varying size. These intervals were in turn representative of the apparent speeds of the celestial bodies. Thus the Sun, Mercury and Venus fell into one group with similar speeds, whilst the Moon, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn belonged to another group, each with a different speed. This form of musical theory persisted throughout the whole period of the Roman Empire, albeit in a somewhat stagnant form.⁴⁸² Subsequently the Islamic musical theorists were able to exploit the mathematical developments attained by their culture in the IXth century so that new mensural values could now be attributed to the ancient theory. They achieved a new form of musical harmony based upon studies of mathematics, astronomy and astrology. The basis of this harmony was derived from geometric theorems and algebraic expressions. Thus music became a scientific subject, whilst the advent of new musical ideas triggered the invention/development of more specific musical instruments⁴⁸³. Detailed musical works were written by Al

Doukkala region, where all scientists and Sufis gathered for contests of "miracles.", Cf M. Mezzine op. cit. p.69-

⁴⁸¹ Mainly architecture and music, for the latter not only the study of music was obligatory for every educated man but also the musician was supposed to be widely cultured.

⁴⁸² H.G.Farmer. Historical Facts for the Arabian Musical Influence - New Temple Press London 1930. p. 39.

⁴⁸³ Baron Rodolphe d'Erlanger La Musique arabe - Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner Paris 1959, "La musique est une science mathématique qui a pour objet l'étude des notes musicales" p. 265 Vol IV.

Kindi, (d.874), Al Sarakhsi (d.899), the Beni Musa (IXth cent.), Thabit Ibn Qura (d.901), Al Farabi⁴⁸⁴(d.950), Ibn Sina (d.1037), and the Ikhwan al Safā (Xth cent.)⁴⁸⁵.

Within their study of music the Arabs placed great emphasis on their belief that the celestial bodies affected everything upon earth and that the motion of the planets evoked an array of emotional implications. They identified the basic harmony in the motions of the heavens and applied this to the treatment of different imbalances in the body on the assumption that therapeutic music based on harmony in the Cosmos would restore harmony in man. The Islamic musical theorists assumed that there are connections between musical modes and the signs of the Zodiac, the four elements and the temperament⁴⁸⁶. Harmony in the macrocosmic world in its mathematical, astrological and astronomical aspects was thus the basis for musical composition⁴⁸⁷. The significance of the planets in the above context is listed below⁴⁸⁸. This is expressed in terms of *awazat* (modes, sing. *awaz*), attributed to the seven planets.⁴⁸⁹

| Mode name | Attribution | Element |
|-----------|-------------|---------|
| Gawasht | Saturn | Earth |
| Nawruz | Jupiter | Fire |
| Salmak | Mars | Fire |
| Shah-naz | Sun | Fire |
| Hisar | Venus | Water |
| Gardaniya | Mercury | Mixed |
| Mayah | Moon | Air |

⁴⁸⁴ Farmer Henry George Al Farabi's Arabic-Latin writings on Music - The Civic Press, Glasgow 1934. and *Ihsa Al 'Ulum* (Classification of the Sciences) in Ibn Khalliqan (1211-1282 AD.) Biographical Dictionary III p. 308. Al Farabi added a fifth string to the lute.

⁴⁸⁵ H.G.Farmer op.cit. pp 64-65. A. Shiloah L'Epitre sur la musique des Ikhwan al Safa³ Revue des Etudes Islamiques, 1965. pp. 125-162, 1967 pp. 159-193.

⁴⁸⁶ H.G.Farmer, The Influence of Music from Arabian Sources. Harold Reeves. London 1926. p. 520.

⁴⁸⁷ It was considered that the animosity that eats into the heart could be dissipated by sensations caused by musical notes. This was compared with the dead earth being brought back to life, by provoking the beneficial action of springtime, which resuscitates all that was lifeless. Baron R. D'Erlanger op. cit. p.259 Vol IV.

⁴⁸⁸ Baron R. d'Erlanger op. cit. Citing Al Farabi p.455. Vol IV.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid. p.437.

Within the same context, the melodies⁴⁹⁰ attributed to the four elements are:

| Melody | Element |
|-------------|---------|
| Yak-Gah | Water |
| Du-Gah | Air |
| Shah-Gah | Earth |
| Tshahar-Gah | Fire |

The significance of musical modes and their effect, as described by Al Farabi, is given below. These *Nawbah* (also modes) should be played from bass to treble so that “the soul will rise from the depths of melancholy to extremes of joy”⁴⁹¹.

| Name | Attribution | Element | Temperament |
|------------------|-------------|---------|------------------|
| <i>Iraqi</i> | Taurus | Earth | Pleasures |
| <i>Ushaq</i> | Pisces | Water | Hilarity |
| <i>Rast</i> | Aries | Fire | Tenacity |
| <i>Isfahan</i> | Gemini | Air | Generosity |
| <i>Zirafkand</i> | Cancer | Water | Sadness |
| <i>Buzuq</i> | Leo | Fire | Fear |
| <i>Zangulab</i> | Virgo | Earth | Sleep |
| <i>Rahawi</i> | Libra | Air | Tears |
| <i>Husayni</i> | Scorpio | Water | Peace |
| <i>Hijazi</i> | Sagittarius | Fire | Humble affection |
| <i>Abu Salik</i> | Capricorn | Earth | Strength |
| <i>Nawa</i> | Aquarius | Air | Courage |

⁴⁹⁰ Baron R. d'Erlanger op. cit. p.458 “Le sentiment de la mesure rythmique est généralement plus fin que celui de la mesure poétique.”

⁴⁹¹ Ibid *Al Farabi* p.455. vol IV.

Gradually groups of modes were developed, each with a particular purpose. Some examples are given below.

The Effect of the Modes⁴⁹²

| Purpose | Names of Modes |
|--|---|
| To "affect the rational soul of man, Inspiring in him strength, courage, Relaxation and joy in a perfect Manner" | <i>Zirafkand, Hijazi, Gawasht, Sah-gah, Hizar Humayun, Mubarqa, Bastah, Nizar, Saba, Rakb, Nayab, Salmak, Nihuft, Bayati, Ghazal, Awj, Huzi</i> |
| To "dilate the soul a little, but Producing a certain sadness and Languor in the modes: weak gaiety." | <i>‘Ushaq, Nawa, Abu-Salik, Mahur, Niwahand.</i> |
| To "affect the soul only slightly, Giving it delicate pleasure." | <i>The Maqawat: Rasd, Iraqi, Isfahan, Nawruz, Gardaniya, Panj-gah, Zawli.</i> |

Al Ladhiqi (XVIth century)⁴⁹³ in his “*Risalat al Fathiyah*” said that, “If these wise men sought to establish rules for this art, it was in order to accustom sensible minds to the world of sanctity; not with the sole object of providing entertainment or pleasant stimulation. However, a fine composition, with a fine harmony of the notes, relaxes the soul. It is therefore sought after by the company of the Elevated Souls, desirous of drawing themselves closer to the celestial world and thus to the all-powerful Master.”⁴⁹⁴ This principle was used for imparting knowledge to the *Khāṣa* (educated class), which was the only element considered capable of understanding the universe,

⁴⁹² Baron. R. D’Erlanger op.cit. Vol IV p. 437.

⁴⁹³ Muhammad Ibn Abdel Ḥamid al Ladhiqi quotes Al Farabi’s therapeutic music pp. 453-455. Ibid Vol IV.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid p. 273.

in which the heavens had been created by divine reason and were intended for the enjoyment of intelligent and rational souls.⁴⁹⁵

In practical terms the works of the Islamic philosophers have left their mark on the Moroccan life style in the form of music, the importance of whose role is evident from the works of Ibn Roshd (Averroes L.), Ibn Zohr (Avenzoar L.) and Ibn Bajja (Avempace L.).⁴⁹⁶ These learned men had received a diversified education that included the study of the Quran, grammar, medicine, astronomy, mathematics and the composition of poetry. Thus some philosophers were also physicians and, in this context, a synopsis of their thoughts has already been recorded in Chapter VIII. Hence not only did they recommend music for therapeutic purposes, but they also composed verses⁴⁹⁷ and music to this end. Consequently all the above philosopher/physicians have greatly influenced the music forms that were connected with different aspects of healing. It was explained in Ch.VIII that the Islamic physicians placed great importance upon the role of spices in fortifying the body against ailments arising in the sub-lunar world. This treatment was recommended to be combined with the use of fragrances and music to assist the soul to the highest spheres of enjoyment.

Ibn Sina⁴⁹⁸ (Avicenna) postulated that the liver needs sweetness to increase the blood flow but in curing melancholy (black bile) the *roh* "spiritus" must be awakened in order to stimulate the heart to be joyful. Spices, being fragrant, are cardio-stimulant whereas sweetness⁴⁹⁹ is not, since its effect is limited to the body. The theory is that the spirit is nourished by odours. Thus spices were used for this purpose and not, as was thought in Medieval Europe, as a means of masking the bad taste of rotting food. Nevertheless, when both sweetness and spices are used together they produce an

⁴⁹⁵ Appeal to the two faculties of hearing and intellect.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibn Bajjah Abu Bakr Muhammad Ibn As Sayagh At Tujibi *Al Andalus* As Saraqusti (d.533/1139 in Fés- Avempace L.) his work on music outmatched Al Farabi's *Kitāb al Musiqi al Kabir*. He wrote several songs and poems being also a physician, mathematician and astronomer he left a treatise on botany. Imamuddin op. cit. p. 180.

⁴⁹⁷ The poetic metre was based on the same principle as the music. James T. Monroe *Hispano-Arabic Poetry*. University of California Press- Berkeley- Los Angeles- London 1974.

⁴⁹⁸ 'Ibn Sina's Treatise on Medicine' op. cit. p. 548 and Peterson op. cit. p. 30 on Ibn Sina.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibn Zohr comments on sweetness effect on humour in Muhammad Al Khattabi, *Atteb wa Al Attiba Fi Al Andalus Al Islamia* -Dar Al Gharb Al Islami Beyrouth, 1988. Vol. I p. 291 and p. 312.. Ibn Zohr was employed as physician at Ya^cqub Al Mansour's court in Marrakesh.

effect that is far more beneficial than when they are used singly. Ibn Sina⁵⁰⁰ wrote many books on a variety of subjects, including fragrances and music, as did Ibn Zohr (1198/595 H), who was a physician/astronomer in addition to being a poet and musician (he composed several Muwashahat).⁵⁰¹ The actual relationship between music and its therapeutic effect is conveyed in a work called “*Shajarat at tubu^c*”⁵⁰² “the Tree of temperament”, illustrating a symbolic modal system with different scales for specific states of mind, some of which are reputed to stimulate pituitary secretions.

The music therapist Safiudin Abdel Munim Ibn Fakhir Al Urmawi⁵⁰³ (H. 777/ 1375 A.D.) in his *kitāb al adwār* classifies his ethos according to Al Farabi as:

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Muḥazzīnah | saddening |
| Murahḥīmah | compassionate |
| Mu ^c izzah | affectionate |
| Musliyyah | entertaining |
| Muḥabbībah | loving |
| Mubaghīdad | hateful |

There seems to be little doubt that the parties described in Chapter VI that are held in the palaces of the Moroccan aristocracy are evocative of the dietary concepts and the therapeutic poetic and musical works of the Islamic philosophers/physicians. Thus conservative families, who have kept alive the principle of light sweetmeats and cordial drinks until today, have saved this precious custom as well as its store of

⁵⁰⁰ Ibn Sina (980 A.D.), he devoted one book entirely to Islam’s favourite flower, the rose. He invented the refrigerating coil, a break through in the art of distillation, with which it was possible to produce aromatic waters and pure essential oils. See Haven C. Krueger, “*Urjuzat fi tibb*” (Avicenna’s poem on medicine) : musk fortifies limbs, adds palpitation of the heart and is an antidote for poisons.” p. 96

⁵⁰¹ (i) James T. Monroe, *Hispano-Arabic Poetry* - University of California Press Berkely, London 1974 p. 28 (ii) M.A. Khattabi, *Attib wal Attiba fi al Andalus al Islamiya* (Tr. Physicians and medicine in Al Andalus) vol. I p. 277.(iii) M. Al Tanji *Al tara’iq wal alhan al musiqiya fi Ifriqiya wal Andalus* : Al Bahth- Quarterly Journal of the American University of Beyrouth 21-24 p. 93 –116, 1968 and chapters 10 & 11 on Al Tifashi Ahmed, *Mu^cat al asma^c fi ilm al sama^c* .

⁵⁰² Alexis Chottin *Tableau de la Musique du Maghreb* - Librairie Orientaliste Paul Genthner Paris (1933) 1982. And *La Musique Classique du Maghreb* Mahmud Guettat- La Bibliothèque Arabe Sindbad -Paris 1980.

music from oblivion by unbroken aural transmission.⁵⁰⁴ Unfortunately, the majority of these guardians of musical heritage remain anonymous,⁵⁰⁵ but some of them are known for their contribution and continuation of this art:

- Abderrahman Ben Moussa Ben Al Arabi Al Fassi (XVIIth century) “ *Kitābu-l jummu^c fi ^cilmi al musiqa wa tubu^c* “ (Treatise on music and temperament) (Ms Berlin Staatsbibliothek (Lbg. 516)).
- Abu Zaid Ben Abdel Qader Al Fassi (XVIIth century) was a physician-surgeon and left a treatise on musicotherapy.⁵⁰⁶
- Lisanu Din Al Khattib (Abu Abdallah Mohammad Ibn Abdallah Ibn Said Sulaymani- (XIVth cent.)) “ *Fi taba³i^c wa tubu^c wal ³usul³*. (Treatise on temperaments and modes).
- Mohammed Al Bulsami (d. 1690), Muhammad Al Hayk (1757) and his followers, who collected song texts and built up a basic repertory.

It is evident that each party is intended to achieve a psychosomatic equilibrium between the physical, emotional and mental states of the guests, since it tends to affect their senses as follows:

- a. Olfaction, through the fragrance produced by the burning of incense, which has a beneficial effect on the spirit.
- b. Taste, through the sweetmeats and spices (aroma) that bring the body into a state of equilibrium and harmony.

⁵⁰³ He insists that the lyrics should also correspond to the music in reflecting the state of mind. Baron d'Erlanger op. cit Vol. III p 542.

⁵⁰⁴ Baron D'Erlanger “En Afrique du Nord.. la population.. conserve pieusement le souvenir d'une musique hispano-arabe, appréciée et aimée par tous avec une passion qui ressemble parfois à la vénération” op. cit vol. V- p 334.

⁵⁰⁵ North African Anonymous manuscript *Ma^crifatu naghamāti at thaman*. See Baron D'Erlanger op. cit. vol. V p 403.

- c. Vision, through the pleasant environment of a palace or garden⁵⁰⁷ or perhaps by creating a dream evoked by the lyric verses, either or both of which can cause uplifting of the spirit.
- d. Hearing, through the stimulus of music working on the brain.

In the latter context the therapeutic object of the music is to improve the psychological condition and emotional state of the listener and hence his physiological condition. In particular the liver, which purifies blood and delivers it to the body, is affected by man's emotional condition.⁵⁰⁸ Through carefully conceived music the functions of this organ and the related organs, such as the kidneys, spleen and stomach, may be adjusted. In any event, a digestive system unencumbered by a heavy meal would assist blood circulation and enable the listener to let out his anxieties and to relax. It is thus understandable that, in an environment such as that of the type of party in question, meals were not advised by the Muslim physicians, because digestion is a lengthy process requiring physical effort, which would preclude the guest from fully experiencing the spiritual quality of the event. Hence, as was noted in Chapter VI, nothing is served other than cakes, mint tea and soft drinks based on flowers and spices during a session of musical appreciation that lasts until dawn. The fact that the cost of the orchestra alone could pay the price of several banquets is testimony to the fact that this practice derives neither from indigence nor from parsimony, but from the philosophy described above. Needless to say, as in the past, it is only the *Khāṣa* that follow this custom.

Planetary (Mlook) interpretations

⁵⁰⁶ J. Bellakhdar, *La Pharmacopée marocaine traditionnelle*- Editions Fennec- Casablanca, 1997. p. 70.

⁵⁰⁷ The gardens are usually planted with fragrant shrubs and plants, such as honeysuckle and jasmine. These are planted to the windward of where the guests will be seated so that the latter will receive their fragrance. See (i) Haven C.Krueger *Urjuzat fi tibb*: Every aromatic plant and every flower possess a warm temperature with the exception of five of them : myrtle, willow, water-lily, rose and violet which spread a cool aroma- pp. 21-23. (ii) Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim Ar- Randi (15th century) in *Kitāb al Aghdiya* (Treatise on Diet) in M. A. Al Khattabi, *Pharmacopée et régimes alimentaires dans oeuvres des auteurs hispano- musulmans* - Dar al Gharb al Islami - Beyrouth 1990. pp. 206-207.

⁵⁰⁸ Al Razi *Kitāb al murshid aw al fusul* op. cit. p. 32.

In the previous section it has been shown how, in their quest to perfect the musical arts, the Islamic scholars from the VIIIth century effectively restored much of the neglected music of the Orient. The extent to which they studied and adapted all forms of indigenous music was far greater than the scope of Greek scholars⁵⁰⁹ of earlier centuries. Whether by intent or not, the latter have failed to pass on all the various musical forms that could have been available to them. This is borne out by a comment of Al Kindi that Byzantine and ancient Arab musical principles were quite different⁵¹⁰. We also know from classical authors that Pythagoras and Plato based their music upon Egyptian principles of harmony of the spheres. It was related that the Egyptians used musical incantations to reach their gods⁵¹¹, in order to rectify the perverseness of Nature. The Sabaeans also knew the tradition of the harmony of the celestial spheres. They worshipped the seven planets and even built temples dedicated to each one of them⁵¹². Thus in the ancient civilizations there must have been a special knowledge, which connected music to religion and was based upon astrological science⁵¹³. The Babylonians for their part had a Theory of Numbers, in which the belief of harmony of the spheres and the doctrine of the ethos first saw light. Furthermore H.Farmer's assertion⁵¹⁴ that the Greeks obtained their knowledge of the theory of music from ancient Egypt is now fully justified by recent research in this field⁵¹⁵.

Whilst the invaluable role of the Greek scholars in handing down to posterity their knowledge of science and the arts is well documented, it is by no means certain that they fully understood all the musical information they transmitted⁵¹⁶. In the latter connection the Greek contribution seems to lie more in the rationalization of music.

⁵⁰⁹ Edward Lippman, Musical Thoughts in Ancient Greece- Columbia University Press New York – London 1964. "Plato describes the cure of Bacchic frenzy as an allopathic process, in which music produces a quietness of the soul not by aggravating and the discharging of an evil affection".

⁵¹⁰ Farmer op. cit.p.57 on Berlin MS 5530 fol 30.

⁵¹¹ Farmer pp. 119-129. : referring to Proklos (d.485 A.D.) commenting on Euklid's book, Iamblichos, Philo Judaeus VI 32,32, Plato Timaeus 22-23, Plato Laws 657 a.

⁵¹² (i) D. Pingree, The Thousands of Abu Ma'shar- The Warburg Institute, University of London 1968. p. 10. Abu Ma 'shar condemns the worshipping of *al ashya' almurataba* the old religious practices of Harran. p. 58. (ii) Georges C. Anawati Histoire des Sciences Arabes vol. II p. 116. (iii) C.Burnett op. cit. I p.7 and III p.87.

⁵¹³ Farmer op.cit. p.118.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid p. 124.

⁵¹⁵ (i) H.Hickmann, Musicologie Pharaonique- Librairie Hertz, Kehl (Rhin) 1956. (ii) L.Manniche Music and Musicians in Ancient Egypt- British Museum Press, London, 1991

⁵¹⁶ Baron op. cit.Vol II p.259 on Aristotle: " .. considère comme une erreur d'assimiler l'âme à l'échelle musicale..."

The scientific definition of the measurement of sounds in antiquity is attributed to Pythagoras, whilst the introduction of more orderly scales is ascribed to Aristotle⁵¹⁷. In contrast, the contribution of Islamic scholars and philosophers may be summarised as:

- a. A greatly widened scope of material examined and recorded.
- b. A rationalization of musical theory in terms of mathematical and geometrical concepts, (as described in the previous section).

In such a well-ordered and scientific environment one might expect the ancient religio-magical music lore based on planetary gods to have been eliminated. However many pre-Islamic customs were too far ingrained in the people's culture to be removed.⁵¹⁸ This is evident in the magico-astrological Andalusian/Maghrebi literature⁵¹⁹ of the XIth and XIIth centuries. As explained earlier astronomy and astrology were separated into licit and illicit forms. The former, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, became recognized by the mosque and its influence extended to agriculture, meteorology and the culinary, musical and plastic arts. The illicit form, in effect the primitive pagan astrology of the past,⁵²⁰ was also perpetuated, but in secret private parties, because it was considered reprehensible. From an examination of the above literature, it is evident that the magical practices of the makers of talismans bear distinct similarities to today's celebrations of *Sha'bana* in Morocco and it becomes evident that the "spirits" honoured therein are in fact planets. As noted above an examination of the development of the Astronomy/Astrology of previous civilizations right up to the Islamic period reveals the practice of planet worshipping,

⁵¹⁷ E. Lippman op. cit. "Pythagoras acquired both his mystical and mathematical wisdom from Babylonian and Egyptian sources during an extended period of foreign travel and there can be little doubt that the foundations of both his religious code and his scientific theory must be sought in these Mediterranean civilizations." p. 6.

⁵¹⁸ Georges C. Anawati op. cit. This is evident in the work of Jaafar al Sadiq d. 148/765 and Dhu al Nun al Misri d. 246/861. p.122.

⁵¹⁹ Pre-Islamic astrology is more illustrative in the work attributed to the Andalusian alchemist Maslama Ibn Ahmad al Majriti (d. 1007) in *Ghayat al Hakim* whose treatise on astronomy was translated into Latin in 1256 under the name of "Picatrix". (i) F. Sezgin *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, Leyden E.J. Brill IV, 1971 pp. 294-298 (ii) Georges C. Nawati *Histoire des Sciences Arabes* in vol. II, p. 131. (iii) E. Savage-Smith and M. B. Smith, *Islamic Geomancy and a Thirteenth Century Divinatory Device*- Undena Publications- Malibu California 1980. 2-10.

⁵²⁰ The trend was the interpretation of secret hermetic literature based on translation from Egyptian, Greek, Persian and Sabeian sources. Treatises were written on alchemy, on the significance of colours and on planets and their influence upon nature.

which is today shrouded in such mystery and secrecy. At this point, an analysis of the *Sha'bana Mlook* party would appear appropriate.

The Sha'bana Mlook party

This is a ceremony whose performance is confined to private houses (i.e. private parties), on a yearly basis and is linked to craftsmen⁵²¹ and tradesmen (*‘āma*). They see this celebration as a means of countering or annulling the effect of any bad omen connected with either their health or their trade. It is found in towns such as Fés, Meknés, Marrakesh, Essaouira, Salé and Tetouan etc. Although frowned upon, it has never been suppressed by any religious authority to this day. Thus it has survived with its food and music content, to be repeated year after year. (as described in Chapter V)

The colour schemes that are specific to this ceremony can also be found in the works of Al Bitruji (Alpetragius – XIIth Century), which were also inherited by Renaissance Europe⁵²² (see picture). The colours themselves derive from the luminosity that emanates from the planets. According to the Islamic astronomers and in particular Al Bitruji, “both the fixed stars and the Milky Way are composed of the same substance, differing only in luminosity⁵²³. The light of the planets differs from that of the fixed stars and each planet is assigned a certain quality.”⁵²⁴

| | | |
|-------|---------|---------------|
| Dark | Saturn | <i>Dhalam</i> |
| White | Jupiter | <i>Biyad</i> |

⁵²¹ T. Burckhardt, :L’astrologie, telle qu’elle fut répandue au Moyen Age dans les civilisations chrétienne et islamique et qu’elle subsiste encore en certain pays arabes, doit sa forme à l’hermétisme alexandrin; elle n’est donc ni islamique ni chrétienne dans son essence, et elle ne saurait d’ailleurs trouver une place dans la perspective religieuse des traditions monothéistes, étant donné que cette perspective insiste sur la responsabilité de l’individu devant son Créateur et qu’elle évite de ce fait tout ce qui pourrait voiler cette relation par la considération de causes intermédiaires. L’astrologie perpétue certains aspects d’un symbolisme très primordiale .. à une mentalité encore primitive..in Clé Spirituelle de l’astrologie musulmane d’après Mohyiddin Ibn Arabi- Les Editions Traditionnelles,. Paris- 1950.

⁵²² B. Quaritch Ltd A collection of Manuscripts and Early Printed Books-Arab Science and Medicine catalogue 1186- pp 22-23.

⁵²³ Al Bitruji challenged the Aristotelian concept that asserted that stars and planets are all made of the same simple element: ether. The view of the Islamic astronomers was that, if this were true, then why do the stars shine in a manner different from the planets? George Saliba op. cit. p. 24-

⁵²⁴ B. R. Goldstein, Al Bitruji : On the Principles of Astronomy -Yale University Press New Haven & London 1971- p.74. Vol.1-

| | | |
|----------------|---------|----------------|
| Red | Mars | <i>Khamri</i> |
| Burning/yellow | Venus | <i>Ittiqad</i> |
| Waxen | Mercury | <i>Sham'i</i> |

The actual *Sha'bana* ceremony as practised in Morocco indicates the symbolic interpretation of the planets in the music, the food and the colour of the costumes. There is an intimate alliance between the incantations and the music. Furthermore the tempo of the music follows the pattern of the distance between the planets i.e. intervals. Thus Saturn⁵²⁵ the black planet has the heaviest and the slowest music. For Mars the intonations are more emotive: the music is swifter, (since the distance interval for Mars is much less than that of Saturn⁵²⁶), the participants are dressed in red and the organizer injures himself symbolically, since the planet Mars is identified with danger, wars, injuries and accidents. The adherents of this spirit and its colours and food are amongst the Guilds of those crafts that use sharp utensils, such as butchers and tanners, who seek protection by participating in these yearly rituals.

The procession of all the spirits and the incantations and the colours used reveal that the nearest planets are last. Thus there is green for Mercury and yellow for Venus. To the latter are ascribed the symbols of love and home life, which explains why this spirit is worshipped by women, who make offerings of fragrances and cosmetics. On the other hand the outer planets, Saturn, Jupiter and Mars tend to be more suited to the realm of men, since they symbolize: difficulties and hardships for Saturn, travel and money matters for Jupiter and health and wars for Mars. The details in the rituals are very eloquent for example, because bass voices were needed for the Saturn music, black musicians, who have naturally deep voices, were taught to sing the appropriated incantations⁵²⁷. In this context the names used for the spirits/planets being celebrated are intriguing too, but it is preferable to leave for later any comments on their possible derivations. At this stage it is sufficient only to list them:

⁵²⁵ C. Burnett VII p. 9. refers to *Kitāb al Istamatis* (12th century AD), where the spirit of Saturn was in the form of a black man.

⁵²⁶ As explained in Chapter IX.

⁵²⁷ Some of the African words they use in the incantations are still retained in the lyrics, which today have no significance, except for a few words signifying geographical areas, probably from where the black men were brought.

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| Mimon | black Saturn |
| Hamo | red Mars |
| Mira | yellow Venus |
| Melika/Merika | green Mercury |

The “*Lila*” (night) ritual witnessed in Fés (see chapter V) prompted a search for an explanation of the lyrics, since these are a primary source of information. It is noteworthy that the incantations contain a reference to Qadi ʿIyyād (d.1144 in Marrakesh), namely: “in the name of Qadi ʿIyyād we beseech you (the spirit) to be clement and have mercy”. This qadi was sentenced to death by the recently established Almohad dynasty⁵²⁸ for refusing to accept what he called the Imam Al Ghazzali’s “heretical” doctrine, i.e. the singers were calling on the spirits in the name of a person they would recognize as being a martyr for his beliefs. The above change of dynasty was without doubt a threat to this cult and to all other occult practices. However, the importance of the link to the Imam Al Ghazzali is that it indicates that the cult existed at the time of the accession to power of the Almohades. Hence it is necessary to look back to an even earlier period to trace the origins of the ritual. The so-called “spirits” mentioned in chapter V of this thesis are suggestive of planets as depicted in earlier times.

⁵²⁸ Ibn Toumert studied religion in the Orient, when he came to power he banished the Maliki rite and imposed the doctrine of Mahdism which was opposed by all the Empire *Al Andalus* and North Africa. (i) A. Khaneboubi, *Les Premiers Sultans Mérinides 1269-1331*- L’Harmattan Paris 1987.p. 31. Also see the role the town of Sebta, birth place of Qadi ʿIyyad, has played against the fall of the Almohades in 1274.AD. pp. 56-57. (ii) N.J.G. Kaptein, *Muhammad’s Birthday Festival* - E. J. Brill, Leyden 1995 p. 101.

IX – Recipes and Innovations

Manuscripts sources

In the previous chapter it was explained that the creation of wealth was one of the legacies of the Islamic Agricultural Revolution resulting in the development of trade and travel with consequent increases in human contact and exchanges of ideas. For their part the Islamic Physicians exploited the availability of previously unknown herbs and spices to establish for themselves a dominant position in the known world of medicine. In the latter connection their insistence upon an appropriate diet as a means of preserving health and curing disease led them to take a deep interest in cuisine to the extent of writing recipes in a prescriptive context. Furthermore, the emergence of a new economic class in the wake of the surge of wealth that occurred in the empire meant that competition in Epicurean tastes became a driving force in the creation of recipes. However, change invariably comes from above and it was in court circles that the first signs of new developments in the culinary art appeared.

The VIIIth century is the period when the Abbasid Caliphs of Baghdad saw their empire expanding both in size and importance as more territories were conquered or fell under its influence.⁵²⁹ In these circumstances it was considered vital to enhance the image of the ruler's court. Thus new etiquette, new fashions in appearance, new styles in architecture and, last but by no means least, new developments in the culinary art, became the order of the day. Recipes were collected, tried out and experimented with,⁵³⁰ whilst poets wrote verses praising dishes and the table services used for their presentation and consumption.⁵³¹ The new cuisine was not, however,

⁵²⁹ Ibn Fadlan, *Voyage chez les Bulgares de la Volga* (309/921) - Transl. Marius Canard La Bibliothèque Arabe Sindbad Paris 1988.

⁵³⁰ Shihab Eddine Abi Fath Al Abshihi (b. 790H). *Al Mostatraf fi kuli fan mostathraf* - He relates that Harun Ar Rashid (786 A.D.) and his wife bet on which dessert is best *fahudaj* (honeyed pastry) or (a diamond-shaped almond sweet) *losanjiya*. The first qadi, who was asked, said he could not judge without seeing the accused. Once he had tried them, he observed that the judgement was difficult as each accused brought his own evidence. The second qadi was also asked the same question. His answer to the Amir was that the "belligerents" have made peace. p. 189.

⁵³¹ Poet Ibn Romi 9th century A.D .Described in *qasida* every dish he knew of including containers, one of which was of glass, a material still in its early development. Unfortunately Ibn Romi was eventually killed by a jealous "wazir", using the food that he cherished so much.

confined to palaces. It soon reached the *umma*,⁵³² where it was at least witnessed, if not consumed, by the poor as specialists began to open shops catering for the demand for the new dishes. Ingredients were imported from abroad, with Persia and Syria supplying fruit and rare commodities.⁵³³ In short, the subjects of the Caliphs found themselves working hard and using all their ingenuity to satisfy their ruler's greed for rare and luxurious items. Soon horticulturists were working hard on cultivating locally the vegetables and fruits⁵³⁴ that were still not available in a fresh form. Amongst the new introductions the crop that transformed mankind's tastes and habits was sugar cane. Sugar, from being a limited ingredient in the Hindu pharmacopoeia,⁵³⁵ was soon planted in Persia, Palestine, North Africa, Spain and Sicily.

Returning to the development of cuisine, the Abbasid court, as a matter of policy, was keen to show that it was different from its Umayyad predecessor in both style and government. This difference was especially marked in forms of dressing and eating, with a tendency to imitate and adopt the lifestyle of the Sassanid court. Unfortunately no original records of the recipes used appear to have survived, despite the fact that the introduction of paper in the VIIIth century had, by the IXth century, facilitated the compiling of collections of poems and physicians' diets and recipes. Thus the first real source of recipes used in the Baghdadi court consists of two works, both entitled "*Kitāb al Tabikh*", the first by Ibn Sayyar al-Warraq" (XIIIth century)⁵³⁶ and the second by Mohammad Al Baghdadi (XIIIth century).⁵³⁷ Both these authors describe in detail dishes, that were popular at the Abbasid court and it is evident from an examination of both works that dishes from Persia were favoured. It is also clear that in the Abbasid period rice began to be included in dishes, despite the fact that the Arabs had never known it as a staple food, as witnessed by the fact that the Prophet Muhammad, in his desire to ban taxes *riba* on staple foods, excluded wheat but never

⁵³² David Waines, *The Caliph's Kitchen* – Riad El Rayyes Books, London 1989, p. 10.

⁵³³ G. Demombynes op. cit. transl. that Ibn Hajaj (Umayyads period) based in Iraq was sent cherries from Syria by postal pigeons (two cherries attached to each pigeon) p. 252.

⁵³⁴ Cf Watson op. cit. p. 24-25.

⁵³⁵ The Greek Megasthenes (300BC) visiting India, referred to "honey without bees" Achaya op.cit p.29.

⁵³⁶ Ibn Sayyar Al Warraq *Kitāb al Tabikh* - Edited by Kaj Ohrnberg and Sahban Mroueh- Helsinki 1987.

⁵³⁷ Mohammad Ibn al Hasan Ibn Mohammad al Baghdadi *Kitāb al Tabikh* by - Printed by Matba'at Um Arab' in Mosul. 1934.

mentioned rice.⁵³⁸ Consequently the Arabs, previously accustomed to their beloved *tharid* (*trīd* dish) based on shredded bread, with a meat sauce poured over it, could not adjust easily to eating rice.⁵³⁹

The second source on cookery books is the lesser-known manuscript from the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin called *Kanz al fawa'id fi tanwi' al mawa'id*. This undated and anonymous work, which continues to intrigue researchers, has survived in several copies⁵⁴⁰. The latter differ slightly from each other, although the differences may perhaps be attributable to copyists attempting to correct apparent errors or even inserting some of their own.

There are several features of the *Kanz* that might indicate a North African origin:

- a. The inclusion of meat and fish dishes⁵⁴¹ made with pure honey or sugar, a feature absent from other early books, such as the Middle Eastern Al Baghdadi. However the unmistakable North African dish is the *maroziya*⁵⁴², meat from 'Id *Al Adhā*, cooked and preserved in honey.

- b. The use of wafer pastry in sweet *sambusek*. Here the author recommends *kenafa* wafers of thin pastry *warqa* or *wa raqaq*⁵⁴³ for wrapping the mixture of crushed nuts and meat in different shapes, circular or cylindrical, to be cooked in the oven or fried. *Warqa* is a term specific to the Moroccan cuisine of today as is *kenafa*. Thus in the author's mind,

⁵³⁸ According to Shihab Addin M. Al Abshihi (790/850H.) : rice was considered to be food for the rich only. *Al Mostaraf* pp.189-190.

⁵³⁹ Rice, being less glutinous, needs a thickener adding to the sauce to help it retain the spices and flavours in the dish. Rice is highly permeable, whereas wheat bread easily absorbs liquid..

⁵⁴⁰ In addition to Dublin and Cambridge there are more copies of this manuscript in the Library of the University of Cambridge, in Cairo in the Dar al Kutub al Wataniya n°18 sina'a and in Calcutta in the Oriental Public Library at Bankipore Vol. IV Arabic Medical Works.- Manuela Marin and David Wainnes have edited this manuscript. Published by Bibliotheca Islamica. Band 40- Beirut, Lebanon 1993.

⁵⁴¹ *Kanz* n°76 p.38 chicken *tajīn*, n°230 p.90 sweet fish.

⁵⁴² *Kanz* n°65 p.35. The Greeks and Romans knew Morocco as Maurosioi from which derives the word Moor in English and Maure in French meaning dark. See "The Golden Age of the Moor" p. 111. Hence the origin of this ritual dish. Details of this dish are given in a later chapter.

⁵⁴³ *Kanz* p.49 a term still used in Morocco for wafers.

warqa is the pastry that is used for making the *kenafa* dessert, as is still the case today in Morocco. By contrast the Middle Eastern *kenafa* is made with layers of cheese covered with layers of semolina.

- c. The principal recipient for all the stewing and frying process described appears to be the *ṭajīn*, which is peculiar to North Africa. This name and its origins are explained in a later chapter.
- d. The author describes cooking a chicken with chickpeas in a glass recipient⁵⁴⁴ “in the manner used in Morocco and *Al Andalus*”. Furthermore the dish is described as being cooked over a *naḥīkh*, a form of mobile stove widely used in North Africa.
- e. The inclusion of various cakes of obvious North African origin: *ka^cak*⁵⁴⁵, a leavened bread made with *al bāb* used in crumb form instead of rice. Also the *zelabiya* and *mushabaka*, specialities from North Africa made with honey. Leavened thick bread which even to this day is referred to in Iran as “*nane barbari*” (Barbar bread). Such bread is only used by people accustomed to *ṭajīn* dishes.
- f. References to such condiments as *aṭraj*, *ʿuṭrunj* Soussī (citrus fruit from the Souss: Morocco), Moroccan caraway and Moroccan thyme.⁵⁴⁶
- g. There are references to soups⁵⁴⁷ thickened like *ḥarīra* and also green *ḥarīra* with mint, or with rue giving it a bitter taste. *Harīra* soup is intended to be green, with a slightly pungent to bitter taste. Another item of strictly North African origin, whose origins are discussed in chapter XII.

⁵⁴⁴ Kanz n°149 p 61. Described as a winter dish.

⁵⁴⁵ Kanz n° 2-5 p 11 and *kors* n°6.

⁵⁴⁶ Kanz p 255.

h. Amongst the fuels for cooking are *hatab* (olive branches) and *dafla* (Nerium oleander L.) a shrub found wild from Morocco to Libya only.⁵⁴⁸

i. Amongst the vocabulary are to be found the following terms :

1- *kusha*⁵⁴⁹: meaning oven in North Africa. A term still used for oven in Algeria and Tunisia. In Morocco it applies to lime kilns.

2- *Darira, durur, dara³ir*: meaning a bundle of spices and fragrances.

3- A fish paste, *garum*⁵⁵⁰ which is used after one month's maceration in spices. A North African recipe from Roman times, used in Tunisia and Northern Morocco.⁵⁵¹

j. The general vocabulary, the grammatical errors and above all, the consonantal substitutions, in particular the confusion between 'S' and 'Sh' all suggest a non-Arab compiler⁵⁵². The suggestion is that the pronunciation is highly evocative of North African Arabic as spoken by persons, whose mother tongue is Berber.

M. Marin and D. Waines suggest that this work is Egyptian in origin⁵⁵³. However, this seems unlikely to be the case⁵⁵⁴. In a historical context it can be deduced that the *Kanz*

⁵⁴⁷ Kanz p. 422 and p 432.

⁵⁴⁸ Boulos, Loutfi Medicinal Plants of North Africa - Reference Publication Inc. Michigan USA 1983, p. 25.

⁵⁴⁹ Kanz dictionary. Oven p. 30.

⁵⁵⁰ Kanz n°255 p. 99.

⁵⁵¹ D. Cherry Frontier and Society in Roman North Africa – Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998. p. 66.

⁵⁵² C.F. M. Marin and D. Waines op. Cit p. 12.

⁵⁵³ Marin and Waines op. cit. p.7.

⁵⁵⁴ Amongst the reasons they give for this suggestion are the names of two fishes "*labis*" and "*huri*" that occur in the recipes. They point out that these fishes are found in Egypt and cite "Coptic" derivations for their names. However "*huri*" is a well known fish caught in the river at Fés, Morocco and "*labis*" is even mentioned by Al Bakri (d.1068 AD), as being found in abundance in the same river. Description de l'Afrique Septentrionale p. 229.

pre-dates the Turkish⁵⁵⁵ take-over of power in Baghdad (13th century), since some recipes of little importance are referred to as Turkish and *baladi* peasant. If one compares the work with the “*Khiwan*” of Ibn Razin⁵⁵⁶ or the Almohads’⁵⁵⁷ cookery books from *Al Andalus* and the Maghreb, the latter have clearly come from a different period. In particular they describe different treatments of meat: *muhammer* golden, *mucarmal* etc.. Furthermore their frequent use of eggs reflects the new philosophical trend of the XIIth and XIIIth centuries and its influence upon food⁵⁵⁸. The yellow and green colouring with saffron, fresh mint, coriander and eggs symbolising the cosmic knowledge of the time is notably absent from *Kanz*. Thus the *sambousek* recipe although described in several varieties, from sweet to salted, does not include a version with eggs. It seems most likely that eggs were added from the XIIth century onwards, but not before.⁵⁵⁹ The presence of Eastern Abbasid recipes and Western (i.e. Berber and North Africa) recipes in the same book is obvious and intriguing, suggesting an environment based upon an authority with roots in both areas. A possible candidate is the Fatimid Dynasty, which entered North Africa in the Xth century, where it used Berber tribes to conquer territories. On its Western frontier it fought the Idrissids and menaced the Umayyads whilst to the East it conquered Egypt, which at the time was under a nominal Abbasid suzerainty (ruled by the Turk Muhammad Ikhshid (d. 946 AD)). If the book was indeed compiled during the Fatimid era, then the period that seems to be the most likely was when the Berbers were military governors for the Fatimids in Ifriqiya and Sicily.⁵⁶⁰ This would at least explain the significant quantity of Berber recipes that the work contains. For the reasons given earlier, based on the absence of eggs, the work is unlikely to be dated much later than the end of the XIth century. It is also clearly foreign to the culinary concepts and tastes, which influenced Baghdad after the Mongol take-over in 1256. From this time until the present day, rice has predominated in Middle Eastern cuisine

⁵⁵⁵ A.Hourani op. cit. p.88.

⁵⁵⁶ Muhammad B.A. Bencheqroun *Fadilat al khiwan fi tayybat et ta^cam wal^o alwan* by Ibn Razin at Tugibi 13th century Manuscript–Dar al Gharb al Islami. Beyrouth - 1984.

⁵⁵⁷ Huici Miranda *Kitāb al tabikh fi al Maghrib wal Andalus* Traducción española de un manuscrito anónimo del siglo XIII sobre la cocina hispano-magribi. Madrid 1966.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibn Sina (Avicenna) *Urjuzat fi tibb* “Illness is connected with stars of ill omen (Mars and Saturn) whilst the Sun and Jupiter are good omen. p.48.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibn Zohr (1092-1161) mentions several dishes in his *Kitāb al aghdiya* before they were written in the manuscripts we are studying. Therefore there were good communications between physicians, cooks and culinary compilers.

⁵⁶⁰ A.Hourani.op.cit. Or perhaps the Fatimids’ ex-vassals the Zirids? p.104.

whereas rice has little place in the *Kanz*. Furthermore, Turkish cuisine, which abhorred sweet tastes in a meat dish⁵⁶¹, would by now be predominant and many of the *Kanz* recipes would have been anathema.

The third set of manuscripts of works on culinary arts is the Maghreb and *Al Andalus* cookbooks consisting of the *Fadilat al khiwan fi taibat at ta'am wal alwan* by Ibn Razin at Tujubi (XIIth century) and *Kitāb at tabikh fi al Maghreb wal Andalus* (Anonymous XIIIth century).⁵⁶² The most prominent feature of this later cuisine is the insistence that a specific colour in food is important in every dish presented at the table. Of all colours it is the golden one that predominates with its sun life-giving associations, followed by green, which is the result of the sun's effect on plants. Saffron is present in all dishes and it is the basic colour for any sauce and even for desserts. At times curcuma is also called saffron. However, the *Muhtasib* in the markets⁵⁶³, with their hawk-like surveillance of ingredients, would discourage any substitution. Needless to say this colour was much favoured by the physicians. Looking at the recipe for *tefaya*⁵⁶⁴, there is a white and a green variant. The white and hence weaker colour is recommended for convalescents for use with white meat, such as chicken. On the other hand the stronger green colour containing coriander and mint is for strengthening the body and is also used with red meat. The recipe "full sun" *shams*⁵⁶⁵ is an example of this concept:

| | |
|-----------|--------------|
| Meat ball | golden brown |
| Eggs | yellow |
| Mint | green |

Another recipe in the same vein is *Isfiriya* the "yellow one"⁵⁶⁶, a speciality of Marrakesh.

⁵⁶¹ Ibn Batuta visiting the Turkish homeland of Uzbekistan made an unfortunate "gaffe" by giving a present to their Amir of sweetmeats for Ramadan. In *Rihlat Ibn Batuta* - Edited by Talal Harb-1987. p 339.

⁵⁶² Huici Miranda op. cit.

⁵⁶³ It is customary in Morocco that, whenever a merchant is caught cheating, children make up songs about the event and chant them in the streets.

⁵⁶⁴ recipe 85 Anon.

⁵⁶⁵ recipe 61 Anon.

⁵⁶⁶ recipe n° 1. See F. Hal *Les Saveurs et les Gestes* -Editions Stock. Paris 1995. p.219.

The emphasis upon yellow or gold⁵⁶⁷ and green is also in line with the concept of the energy supplied from the cosmos to the earth. The parallel is the nutritive energy being transmitted to the imperfect human body in the same way that the golden yellow sun supplies energy to plants, without which they cannot become green i.e. healthy. This concept⁵⁶⁸ was perpetuated in cooking where the pre-occupation with the golden colour was predominant. The various ways in which this was achieved and became fashionable are given below:

- a. Meat cooked until golden *muḥammar*
- b. Meat basted with honey *mu^casal*⁵⁶⁹
- c. Using starch in the baste mixture. Starch browns more quickly than flour *munshi*.
- d. Lacquering with a mixture based on gum mastic
- e. Au gratin, *mujabana*, using grated hard cheese.⁵⁷⁰
- f. The complete golden oven-cooked meat achieved by basting the sheep several times and returning it to the oven for a darker effect *al meshwī al kamil*.⁵⁷¹
- g. To golden a dish from above a *tajīn* containing burning charcoal is placed on top of the pan *baīn narayn*⁵⁷² (“between two-fires”).
- h. A recipe⁵⁷³ with a yellow-green sauce, with meat cooked golden before presentation.

The golden food was seen as the perfect food, made to look like gold, the most perfect metal. Hence *dhahabi*⁵⁷⁴ the golden meat. Dishes were thus producing a visible and

⁵⁶⁷ Achaya op.cit p. 94- Gold destroys wind (vatha) and enhances vigour and vitality. Utensils made of gold were reputed to destroy the effect of poison.

⁵⁶⁸ H. A. Davidson *Al Farabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect*- Oxford University Press New York- Oxford – 1992. “Philosophers compared active intellect to light, as light makes potential colours actual. The analogy of light here is that rays radiate and enter individual men. The sun *Shams*, source of light is seen from antiquity as the cause of science and truth. p. 19, Al Farabi’s analogy between light and sun.p. 50.

⁵⁶⁹ recipe 127 Anon.

⁵⁷⁰ recipe 178 Ibn Razin.

⁵⁷¹ recipe 31 Anon.

⁵⁷² recipe 170 Anon.

⁵⁷³ recipe 167 Anon.

aesthetic effect. Sight is also one of the treatments against melancholy: the importance of the psyche *al infī^calat an nafsiya* (from Rufus⁵⁷⁵).

This preoccupation with colour is indicative of the philosophical concepts of the day, as described in the chapter on Cosmology. The new awareness of the celestial bodies and their significance could be observed in all forms of creative artistic work. The rare seven-cupola *bastella* illustrated in Plate XI is an example peculiar to Morocco of this knowledge of the celestial bodies: each of the seven cupolas of the *bastella* contains a filling of a different colour, corresponding to the planets represented⁵⁷⁶. The pursuit of the same trend caused scholars to be asked to evolve cosmos-related mathematical designs.⁵⁷⁷

Innovations during the Islamic period

However, the newcomer to Islamic food was fragrance. Here we have the gustatory appeal linked to the aesthetic to achieve 'divine food'. It was understood that each level of energy interacts with its neighbour. The process starts with the pure spirit, which then creates the mental level and finally passes to the body. It was suggested by the philosophers Ibn Sina, Ibn Roshd, Ibn Zohr etc..⁵⁷⁸ that the causal level (spirit *roh*), precedes the physical. Therefore the influence of the former should be very

⁵⁷⁴ recipe 325 Anon.

⁵⁷⁵ Cf Amal M. Abou Aly op. cit p 156 . Rufus, following Hippocrates, was aware of the role that mental affliction plays in two basic disorders :

a- amenorrhea.

b- Psychosomatic disorders i.e. melancholy.

Furthermore it is important until today in Morocco, that a young girl should always be given a share of what food she sees, otherwise it would affect her hymen. The same applies for pregnant women. A small child, if he sleeps without dining should be left some food until the following day, or else his hand is smeared with a little piece of meat so that he smells it whilst sleeping.

Cf *Tadbir a habala wal atfal* - by Al Baladi (Ms Royal College of Physicians n.8, edited by Muhammad Hajj Gasim - Baghdad 1980 -Silsilat kitab at Turat p 96.

⁵⁷⁶ See also Plate p.329, the *Gnawa* tray.

⁵⁷⁷ Add. 9598 British Library. Umar Ibn Abd al Rahman Ibn Abu'l Casim Ibn Muhammad Ibn Zakariya al Kuraishi al Tunisi (851 A.H.). *A^c mal al Buruj wa takhtit*". (astronomica arithmetica).

⁵⁷⁸ (i) Abderrazaq Ibn Hamdoush Al Jazairi *Kashf ar romoz fi sharh al^c iqar wal a^c shab* -Dar Al qotb al Ilmiyah -Beyrouth 1996 ; refers to lemon as *mufareh* i.e joyful. P.14. (ii) Ibn Roshd op. cit in his medical and philosophical works he was challenging Aristotle's views on whether it was the heart or the brain that is the major organ in man.

strong. Hence rose water, orange blossom water and sandalwood⁵⁷⁹ were used to enhance the spirit of the eater. Lemon, recently acclimatized by the Muslims, was grown everywhere. It was used in salads, main dishes,⁵⁸⁰ sweets and preserves. Its use was highly recommended by the physicians.

Sugar

But by far the most revolutionary ingredient to reach the Andalusian table was sugar. This coincided with an important event in the medical world in that pharmacy was elevated to being a science independent of medicine and was decreed that the two functions were now incompatible. Consequently a specific pharmaceutical literature was developed. Furthermore, the Arabs introduced sugar (previously unknown) into both pharmacy and cuisine. The various techniques for cooking sugar were already recorded in the Treatise *At Tasrif* by the celebrated Andalusian physician Abu Qasim Al Zahrawi (Abulcasis d.1009 AD).⁵⁸¹ Honey was subjected to similar treatment. Cultivated in a correct environment, sugar was described according to its quality. Sugar from the Souss,⁵⁸² for instance, was reputed throughout the Occident and the Orient. When used in cooking, sugar did more than merely sweeten. Mixed with water its appearance at different temperatures indicates to the cook what he can make with it. The physicians were well aware of the requirements to refine sugar and also the physical form it takes at the temperatures given below. It is evident from both major sources under study that sugar was cheap and plentiful, thus the field for innovation was wide open. Sugar was ground to specific granular sizes. *Samid as sokar* being caster sugar and *daqiq as sokar* (flour of sugar) being icing sugar. From these were made a variety of syrups, sorbets, preserves, cordials, candied fruit, perfumed sweets and jams *ma^cajin* and *marabāt*.⁵⁸³

⁵⁷⁹ D. M. Stuart, Encyclopedia of Herbs and Herbalism-Egerton International UK 1994. Properties of Sandalwood pp. 95 & 98.

⁵⁸⁰ The Moroccans are very fond of lemons. A tajin with pickled lemon, which dates from this period, is a national dish present on all occasions.

⁵⁸¹ Carole Lambert, Du Manuscrit à la Table- Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, Québec 1992. pp. 251-252.

⁵⁸² (i) Al Idrisi describes Morocco as *bilad assukar* (the sugar country) and he speaks of the sugar of Souss as the best in the world. In The Land of the Moors- Budget Meakin p. 47. (ii) same reference is in Al Bakri op. cit. p. 306.

⁵⁸³ Ibn Sina's Canon of Medicine op.cit. Vol III pp. 2349-2435. Ibn Sina has produced more than 90 *maa jeen* preserves and digestifs.

| Modern temperature | Appearance and creation in the Islamic period |
|---|--|
| <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> | |
| 116-118°C | A soft ball (drop). This is the first stage of saturation. Used for meringue, ⁵⁸⁴ with icing sugar <i>‘ajeen sokar</i> and with rose water. |
| 125°C | A hard ball (drop). The syrup forms a hard but pliable ball, giving a chewy texture. For making marzipan <i>mulabas</i> with icing sugar or <i>‘aqda</i> with almond paste, glazed fruit, <i>al fawakih al masqola</i> or <i>looz masqol</i> sugared almond. |
| 134°C | Syrup cools to brittle solid, but with a soft pliable texture, which will stick to the teeth. Praliné, decorative shapes. |
| 145°C | Syrup cools to a very brittle and hard solid. Beyond this point sugar will rapidly caramelize. Caramel with grilled nuts, moulded into shapes <i>al carmaliya</i> |

Nougats *nwā*, were made either with honey or sugar, depending on the colour required. For the colouring beetroot gives red, fennel or walnut skin yields green and lemon or saffron produce yellow. This *halwa* was available for any occasion and the theme decoration varied from town to town and from one country to another. It was usually sold in shops close to the Madrasa/Mosque for visitors to buy. Finally this was the key ingredient which, when combined with eggs, milk and cream could be turned into a refreshing dessert, suitably adorned with nuts, the whole mixture being cooled

⁵⁸⁴ Recipes 215, 216 & 223 Anon.. Ibn Razin 380.

with ice⁵⁸⁵. The latter commodity was readily available since from early Islamic times the technique of preserving ice from the Syrian Mountains for delivery in Cairo⁵⁸⁶ was widely known⁵⁸⁷. The same principle was applied to ice from the Sierra Nevada in *Al Andalus*.

The prohibition of alcohol in the Islamic world led to the introduction of a plethora of colourful and attractive drinks, many of which had therapeutic properties. The general availability of ingredients meant that the “secret beverages” of the palaces now became available to the populace as a whole. Examples of products from which drinks were made are:

- Flowers: violets, roses, jasmine, orange blossom and camomile.
- Spices: cinnamon, aniseed, cloves, ginger and cardamom.
- Vegetables: carrots, pumpkin, angelica and rhubarb.

⁵⁸⁵ Complex “Ice cream” type desserts were clearly part of the repertoire, a conclusion reinforced by *Ibn Abdun* in his *hisba* writings, warns the *Muhtasib* to be vigilant to ensure that “cream” *qashda* is not falsified (Qashtaini dairyman, maqshada creamery). *Ibn Abdun, Séville musulmane au début du 12^{ème} siècle*. Lévi- Provençale. See Le Tourneau op. cit. p. 96.

⁵⁸⁶ Xavier de Planhol, *L'eau de neige- le tiède et le frais- Histoire et géographie des boissons fraîches*. Apparently ice was known to the Muslims from 681 A.D. when the Carmanthian Abu Said in a letter to the Al Mu tadid caliph in Baghdad mocking the latter's troops used to ice and other devices against the heat. See p. 321. Also Ibn Hawqal relates that in 10th century there was already an Islamic *waqf* (trust for charities) providing snow for the summer in Samarqand where 2000 free points of distribution were available to passers-by. Regarding snow collection and cold drinks. For this see Al Maqdisi trans. A. Miquel, *La Géographie humaine du Monde Musulman jusqu'au milieu du XI^{ème} siècle*.- 4 vols. Paris - La Haye. 1967-1988 - Gaudefroy-Demombynes in *La Syrie à l'époque des Mamelouks d'après les auteurs Arabes* -Libraire P. Geuthner- Paris, 1923. pp.255-257.

In Morocco ice cream making would be a treat reserved for the rich as it required a special *metfiya* (cellar) to stock for the summer month for their special occasions. Nevertheless there are two impediments to ice cold beverages, on the one hand the Western Physicians condemned cold drinks Ar Razi (Rhazes L.) op. cit.p. 51-62 unless for medical reasons. On the other hand water either from wells or springs is always cold in summer since it comes from hidden underground natural reservoirs or from the melting snows of the High and Anti- Atlas. The suggestion that Marco Polo brought back the recipe for ice cream from China is difficult to justify, since the Chinese do not appear to use milk in their cuisine. However they did make water-ices. Ice-cream was already developed during the Islamic period and spread throughout the Islamic world, even as far as Moghul India, (ice cream called *Kulfi*), (i) A.Achaya *Indian Food* op. cit. p. 116. (ii) E.Beazley, M.Haverson, *Living with the Desert*- Aris & Phillips Ltd, Wilts UK- pp.49-56.(iii) See pictures of ice-houses in Uzbekistan 11th and 12th century, kindly donated by Dr.Hermann. School of Archaeology, London University 1999.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibn Sina *Urjuzat fi tibb* “ice in beverage is harmful to the nerves. p. 56.

Wheat

Another element in the Hispano-Maghrebi cookbooks is cereals, with particular emphasis on wheat. Hard wheat was introduced into Andalusia in the 10th century⁵⁸⁸. Before this date its cultivation was confined to North Africa. As a result of the work of a number of Andalusian botanists and agronomists,⁵⁸⁹ several species of hard wheat were acclimatized. *Triticum durum* (hard wheat) was chosen, mainly out of necessity, because soft wheat is not as malleable as hard wheat. The latter is high in gluten, a tough elastic protein.⁵⁹⁰ It was the availability of this hard wheat that helped to enrich the Andalusian cookbook. Several stages of sieving allowed the cook to choose the desired grades of flour. The milling⁵⁹¹ stages were:

- a. Coarse, giving *samīd* semolina to make *kesksu*. This is subdivided into coarse or fine *kesksu*.
- b. Fine, known as *khales* or *fors*, for making fine bread and cakes.
- c. Starch *n'shā* to thicken soups or creams.

Despite the introduction of hard wheat to *Al Andalus*, its main supplier remained Morocco,⁵⁹² mainly from the Doukkala plain, from whence the ease of maritime communication with Andalusia made its transport quicker and safer than by land. The

⁵⁸⁸ Watson A.M. Agricultural Innovation in the Early Islamic World 700-1100- p. 22. Also see J.D. Latham, From Muslim Spain to Barbary -pp.64-122.

⁵⁸⁹ Swearingen, W. D, In Search of the Granary of Rome - The University of Texas at Austin, 1984. pp 64-178. The author has described how the French colons forced soft wheat on the indigenous population as a substitute for hard wheat. This policy was very successful in Algeria and Tunisia where today the bulk of the population eats white bread instead of hard wheat as is still the case in Morocco.

⁵⁹⁰ Gluten is formed when the proteins glutenin and gliadin, which are present in flour, are mixed with water. Breads rich in gluten have a higher protein content and a lower starch content than other breads. The most important nutrient value of hard wheat bread lies in its 9% to 14% of gluten. For J. Renfrew, weak flours are found in areas with high rainfall, cool and cloudy weather during the ripening periods. The flours also tend to produce hard loaves and brittle biscuits whereas flours from drier and sunnier areas produce strong and porous loaves. In Palaeoethnobotany : The Prehistoric food and plants of the Near East and Europe- Methuen & Co Ltd. London 1973. p. 67.

⁵⁹¹ See J.D.Latham op. cit. : Al Saqati on grain and flour milling p.77.

⁵⁹² Lévi-Provençal L'Espagne musulmane au Xème siècle – Larose Paris 1932. p. 162.

latter route was reputedly made dangerous by wild beasts, whose presence was still evident during the early French Protectorate.⁵⁹³

Cake making

Although doughnuts date from an earlier period and were described by Galen as the “wet bread”⁵⁹⁴, sophisticated cake making, even in Imperial Rome, was virtually unknown. However through the two Hispano-Maghrebi cookbooks, we are able to identify the very start of refined pastry making. The most impressive technique was that which equates to the modern “tube-cake tin” (the French “baba” mould). The cooking of the centre of a cake was a distinct problem for the early cooks for, by the time the centre had cooked, the edges could be burnt. Hence either a cane or *jarid* (the stem of a palm branch) was put in the centre. After cooking the stem is removed and butter and honey are used to fill the centre of the cake. The earthenware container holding the cake is then gently broken to free the swollen mass, which is subsequently decorated with nuts before serving.⁵⁹⁵

The flexible nature of hard wheat allowed the Moorish Empire to excel in its bread and cake making, which surpassed that of the Oriental cooks. Bread varied from a simple accompaniment to dishes to a refined dessert tart. Some of the cakes deriving from this period are listed below:

*Markaba*⁵⁹⁶ (known today as wedding cake). The boat *markab* or “the mounted one”. According to the Anonymous cookbook this cake is a speciality of the North African town Kutama, made of date paste between layers of cake.

⁵⁹³ Budget Meakin op. cit. p.49.

⁵⁹⁴ Apicius Trad. J. André L’Alimentation et la cuisine à Rome- Librairie C. Klincksieck Paris 1961..

⁵⁹⁵ recipe 229 Anon.

⁵⁹⁶ recipe 205 Anon.

*Lemfenid*⁵⁹⁷ process, by which a doughnut is covered with dried milk sugar. This is also called *Saboniya* (the soap look) and was known to Ibn Batuta in 1325.⁵⁹⁸

Kenafa, a royal treat, existed in two types, an Eastern and Western version. In the Orient they used semolina crumbs and added cheese and rose syrup. However the people of North Africa used *warqa*, (as suggested by the author of the *Kanz*) and, disliking cheese, replaced it with *smen* (*preserved butter*), grilled almonds, rose water and honey.

The *ka^cak* is the original word for today's cake. In Ibn Razin's recipe⁵⁹⁹ in the fourth chapter on bread and cake, he gives ways of making *ka^cak*, the usual one being like today's hard doughnut, filled with either almonds, honey or dates. Ibn Razin explains that it is a leavened dough turned into long strips and attached together to form a circle. It is then decorated with its special copper *manqash* (utensil for decoration) and cooked in the oven. It is subsequently sprinkled with rose water and stored in sterile jars⁶⁰⁰. Ibn Batuta mentions how he survived by eating this type of bread, when he was unable to obtain "halal" food. This type of *ka^cak* is usually made for pilgrims and seafarers⁶⁰¹. Clearly this cake was highly popular, since its preparation is described in both of the Hispano-Maghribi cookbooks and also in the *Kanz*.

Zelabiya, Qata³if and Filaliya

Zelabiya is well known in the Islamic world. Its name is presumed to derive from the Persian "*Julab*", signifying "rose water with liquid sugar". In Morocco it is prepared using a batter of fermented wheat, which is piped through a funnel into hot oil. The cook controls the flow of batter in order to achieve a flower like design. After frying,

⁵⁹⁷ recipe 88 Anon - from "phanita", Sanskrit for liquid sugar, passed to Arabic via Persian.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibn Batuta op. Cit p. 425.

⁵⁹⁹ Anon 198 Ibn Razin 57. In Huici Miranda's edition – The anonymous author states that in Marrakesh they are called *ma^cassem* – "childrens' wrists".

⁶⁰⁰ Jars fumigated with sandalwood whose properties are fixative, retaining the aroma in the container and also antiseptic.

the *zelabiya* is soaked in hot honey. The Middle Eastern version is made by soaking the *zelabiya*⁶⁰² in liquid sugar. There is also an Indian version of this sweetmeat, known as “*jilebi*”. According to Achaya⁶⁰³ the Muslims introduced this pastry into India. The earliest mention of it that he has been able to identify is in 1450 AD Jain literature, where it features amongst dishes for a temple feast. However, the Indian version is made with pulses, the golden brown colour being achieved by the addition of saffron.

References to *zelabiya* and other honeyed sweetmeats are to be found in the works of the early Islamic physicians that pre-date the *Andalusi* culinary manuscripts. For *qata'if*⁶⁰⁴ in Al Biruni's (976-1048 AD) *Materia Medica*⁶⁰⁵ he quotes Al Farabi's *Diwan al Adab* in which the latter commented on pasta like dishes cooked with meat by the Turks, known as *rishta*. In addition Al Biruni describes other dishes and also sweetmeats made with pasta, with which he states the Syrians and Persians in particular are familiar. The latter call the pasta sweetmeats *Shah afrosh* (king of sweetmeats). Also mentioned by Al Biruni are *zelabiya*, *qata'if* and *fatair*⁶⁰⁶, all of which are made with honey. Further references to these dishes can be found in the works of the Andalusí poet Abu Amir Ibn Shuhaid Al Ashja'i (922-1035 AD). For *zelabiya* this author writes, “Was it woven from my intestines or made from the membrane of my heart?”⁶⁰⁷ The Andalusí historian Al Bakri (1028-1094 AD), records

⁶⁰¹ Ibn Batuta op. cit. p. 282.

⁶⁰² The name probably originated in Persia in the Sassanid royal court as a consequence of the development of the sugar industry. This might explain why it is spelt with a ‘z’ rather than ‘j’ to avoid it clashing with the North African (including Egypt) dress ‘*jelabiya*’. In Morocco, with *shabakiya*, it belongs to the group of cakes for the month of Ramadan and is known as *mekharqa* (the lacy one i.e. *zelabiya*). The actual word *zelabiya* is used only in the North (Tangier and Tetuan) and the East (Oujda). Unlike *shabakiya*, it is not made in domestic kitchens but is produced exclusively by male cooks for sale in the streets.

⁶⁰³ Achaya. op. cit. p.155.

⁶⁰⁴ *Qata'if* is an intricate kind of sweetmeat. The base is liquid batter, which is poured into a cone-shaped container, whose bottom is pierced with several holes. The cook deftly with one hand pours multiple threads on a hot circular brass table and collects the cooked threads with the other hand. The operation has to be conducted with great speed as the pasta should just harden without actually cooking. Once the cook has obtained enough bundles of threadlike pastry it is filled with nuts and twisted into a long rope. When a sufficient number of these ropes has been made, they are cooked in oil/butter, dipped in honey or liquid sugar and cut into small pieces.

⁶⁰⁵ Al Biruni's Book on *Pharmacy and Materia Medica*- Translated by Hakim Mohammed Said. Hamdard National Foundation -Pakistan, Karachi 1973.- p. 33.

⁶⁰⁶ *Fatair* is a pastry made of unleavened dough, which is filled with nuts, fried in hot oil and dipped in honey.

⁶⁰⁷ James T. Monroe *Risalat at tawabi' wa zawabi'* (Translated as The Treatise of Familiar Spirits and Demons) - University of California Press, Berkely, Los Angeles and London 1971 p. 75.

seeing them made by cooks in the South of Morocco. He was highly impressed by the food he found in Morocco⁶⁰⁸ and describes *qata'if* in particular.

Another foreign import is a pastry called *filaliya* (i.e. the pastry from Tafilalt). The latter city was well known in the early 9th century as a centre on the gold route, where several Ommayyad merchants were established. Al Bakri and Ibn Hawqal (10th century) refer to the beauty of the area and its rich households with their orchards and gardens.⁶⁰⁹ The preparation of this pastry seems similar to the *faludaj* so greatly appreciated by Harun al Rashid. It is known only to certain families from the Moroccan Imperial cities where it is rarely seen, being served only on special occasion.⁶¹⁰

Pasta

Just like *kesksu*, this could not exist without hard wheat. This is the only ingredient that allows the dough to take any shape or form. The physicians recommended pasta for women, especially for those who wanted to be fat. This is repeated by the writers of the cookbooks.⁶¹¹ It is noteworthy that the culinary works already mentioned refers

⁶⁰⁸ El Bekri, *Description de l'Afrique Septentrionale par*. Traduite par Mac Guckin de Slane. Librairie Paul Geuthner Alger 1913. " Au Maghreb, on y trouve des nègresses, cuisinières, très habiles, dont chacune se vend cent pièces d'or ou plus, elles apprennent des mets très appétissants tels que les *jouziyats et qata'if*". pp. 300-301.

⁶⁰⁹ (i) Ibn Hawqal *Opus Geographicum- Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum* E.J. Brill 1939 (Printed in Arabic *Surat al ard* by Dar Sader, Publishers- Beyrouth.) pp 82-84. (ii) Al Idrissi /Edrisi *Description de L'Afrique et de l'Espagne-* Dozy & M.J. de Goeje E.J. Brill Leiden 1968. In Sijilmassa he saw palaces and gardens all along the Oued Ziz and compares the area to the Nile valley in the summer. pp. 68-69.

⁶¹⁰ It is also called *raghifa* meaning "pancake" as it is made from a dough pounded in butter, honey and spices and is cooked slowly for 24 hours. Ibn Razin recipe of *Faludaj* or *al faluj* made with honey in M. Mezzine *Fés Médiévale-* Editions Autrement Paris 1992. p. 164.

⁶¹¹ Anon 193- 194.

to a likely predecessor of lasagne⁶¹², layers of dough, eggs and minced meat, called the “hidden filling”. Furthermore, one of the recipes⁶¹³ names various kinds of pasta:

The “broken” or “shredded” one, *fidawsh* similar to spaghetti.

The barley shaped *sha^criya*, similar to vermicelli.

In chickpea form, *mhamṣa*, in different sizes for breakfast with milk or with meat.

Thin spaghetti called, *qata³if*⁶¹⁴ (rope like), which is also used for making sweets and is the most fattening, according to the recipe.⁶¹⁵

Hence in the 12th and 13th century Maghreb and Al Andalus we see that refinement in cooking had advanced well ahead of that of their Oriental cousins, thanks to the cereals and pastures of North West Africa. The cuisine of the physicians could not have found a better environment. Meat, the basis of any meal in Morocco, was widely available, due to a longstanding tradition of animal husbandry. The two Hispano-Maghrebi cookbooks illustrate well the origins of the recipes. The *tharīd*, normally of Hijazi origin, was, due to the cereal varieties available, produced in several different forms, each with its own technique. The rice dishes were few in number since, as already mentioned rice was a new commodity for North West Africa. The *tajīns* are North African, in modern times purely Moroccan, since this dish, (meat, sauce with specified vegetables, eaten with bread), has been modified in Algeria⁶¹⁶ and is virtually extinct in Tunisia, where it is only a “baked omelette”. *Kesksu* dishes were improved with new ingredients, such as sugar and newly introduced vegetables.

Sequence of Dishes

⁶¹² Anon 74. It might be that the name ‘lasagne’ was derived from the Arabic *lisān* (tongue).

⁶¹³ Anon 184.

⁶¹⁴ This type of cake was seen in Marrakesh by Abi Obaid Al Bakri (1028-1094). Op.cit p.301.

⁶¹⁵ *Atriya* (angels hair) also named by Ibn Batuta, who recounted that he was fed a pasta called *rashta* in Uzbekistan, similar to our *atriya*. op. Cit p. 339.

⁶¹⁶ A clay pan for cooking bread.

The sequence of dishes was an issue of concern from the Greek period onwards. Plutarch revealed his antipathy towards spices in food⁶¹⁷ and expressed his opposition to the practice of serving salads at any point in the meal.⁶¹⁸ In the Deipnosophists, the author seems to be asking the same question, viz. “Should salad come before or after meat dishes?” However, it is in Islamic medical works that is to be found the explanation of the sequence of dishes that we follow today.⁶¹⁹ As a case in point Ibn Zohr (1092-1161), who lived in the Almohad period, alternating between Al Andalus and Marrakesh, would appear to explain food order in a biological context. In his *Maratib al Aghdiya*⁶²⁰ he explains that the bottom part of the stomach is stronger and better equipped to churn food than the upper part. Consequently, he recommends that the *Ghalid*, i.e. the heavy foodstuffs, such as pasta, *tharid* (trid) and all kinds of dough, cheese, meat *qadid* and fish, should be eaten first. All types of salted dishes are also advised to be placed at the beginning of the meal. For their part vegetables are considered to be neither heavy nor light foods, but have a specific mollifying effect, helping the first course towards the exit of the stomach. Hence they are ideal for accompanying the first course. Desserts are defined as of two kinds: on the one hand there are the cooked dishes or those mixed with eggs, creams and sesame seeds, whilst on the other hand there are fruits. If both are to be served, the cooked dishes must be served before the fruit, since the latter are considered to be the lightest of all foods, destined for the top of the stomach, where the muscles to churn them are weakest. It is thus clear that the logic of food order is a matter of composition rather than being one of taste. The sweet character of desserts is undoubtedly ideal for closing the meal,⁶²¹ but it also assists the digestion by activating the blood in the body.

⁶¹⁷ L. Peterson op. cit “as if embalming a corpse for burial” p.6.

⁶¹⁸ Pliny Natural History 7:5 Bk XXIV Ch I and L.Peterson (p.184).

⁶¹⁹ Al Razi *Kitāb al murshid aw al fusul* op. cit. paragraph 116. Al Razi’s advice on food order in p. 45.

⁶²⁰ Abu Marwan Abdel Malik Ibn Zohr (d. 1162/557 H) *Kitāb al Aghdiya (i)* Mss n°1538 and 2430 Al Khizana al Hassaniya- Rabat. (ii) *Kitāb al Aghdiya*- Tratado de los Alimentos- Edicion traduccion e introduccion por Expiracion Garcia Sanchez- Consejo Superior de Investigaciones cientificas- Instituto de Cooperacion con el Mundo Arabe- Madrid 1992. pp 140.

⁶²¹ Ibn Zohr Abu Marwan, *Kitāb al taisir fil Mudawat wal tadbir*- Dar Al fikr- Damascus 1983. p. 438.

X - Rituals and their relationships

Amongst the various food-related festivals described in Chapter V, there are three that stand apart due to the fact that, although they are historically attested in the Islamic period, their origins do not lie within orthodox Islam. In fact, as will become evident during their examination later in this chapter, their Islamic credentials are at best somewhat sketchy, since they were all connected with political manipulation of some kind. The remaining ritual that has no Islamic pretensions whatsoever, but is nevertheless valid within the same period, is the tea ritual described in Chapter IV. Here the concept of the taking of tea in a stable and calm environment to stimulate and clear the mind is seen to be not dissimilar to the early Buddhist use of this beverage. Although no definite association has been found during the present research, the aptness of such a ritual as an aid to Sufi meditation cannot be automatically excluded.

Zawiyas and Solṭan Tolba

From the 9th century onwards mysticism began to pervade the Islamic world and soon became widespread. A prominent role in this process was played by the educated classes, who in each region fostered mystical beliefs, traditions and rituals, which soon became widely accepted by the Muslim community as a whole. This resulted in a movement, in which each local group was under the direction of a master, usually a Sufi *shaykh*, who had himself attained an authoritative blessedness *baraka*, which itself would eventually extend to his followers via a chain of succession known as *silsila*. Each regional *shaykh* would normally establish a *zawiya*,⁶²² which, in addition to its role as a centre for meditation and the diffusion of Islamic teaching, would also be used for religious celebrations. Some of the *shaykh* became recognized as revered

⁶²² (i) A. Laroui, *The History of the Maghreb*- pp. 248-260. A building or group of buildings containing a school, a mosque, an inn for travellers, housing, an animal refuge and, at times a hospital. Islamic culture spread by means of *zawiya*. In the Sous area there were more than 200 schools.(ii) Tujibi in "Barnamaj 8, Education under the Almohades was free and compulsory. In "Lettres Officielles almohades": 131,133,137. In M. Chérif op. cit. p. 197. (iii) L. Golvin 'La Médrasa, nouvel outil du pouvoir' in M. Mezzine op. cit.: "Léon l'Africain avait recensé en son temps (XVIème siècle) 200 écoles coraniques." pp.100-108.

masters and eventually as saints, due to the spiritual authority derived from their divine meditation and the numerous miracles attributed to their intervention.

The XIIth century witnessed the emergence of a new wave of Sufi mysticism under the influence of Abdel Qader al Jilani (1077-1166 A.D.-Baghdad),⁶²³ which swept across the Islamic world. From that period onwards the *zāwīya* based spiritual orders took the names of their founders. Amongst the more notable brotherhood founders were:

Abu Median Shu'ayb (1126 A.D.) Seville- Fés-Bougie

Abul Hassan al Shadili Mulay Abd Salam Ibn Mashish (d. 1228 A.D.)

Abul Hassan Ibn Harzihim (Sidi Harazem)- Fés 12th cent.

During the Al Moravid dynasty, the *zāwīyas* increased in numbers and importance all over the Maghreb, mainly because of their role in the Arabisation⁶²⁴ of the population through teaching and the recital of litanies.

In the XIIIth and XIVth centuries, with the support of the state, the cultural level of the *madrasas* was at its highest. The Merinids, on coming to power, invested heavily in building *madrasas* and promoting culture, with the object of gaining the support of the Sufi movement as a support for their legitimacy as rulers. However the economic downturn at the end of the XIVth century put an end to Merinid financial support for the *madrasas*, whilst their problems were further compounded by a fall in population and the loss of more territory in *Al Andalus*. Consequently there was a general decline in culture and its sponsorship.

During the XVth and XVIth centuries civil war caused a general weakening of the central power, a situation quickly exploited by the Iberians, who occupied several of the coastal towns. The reaction within the population was typified by a surge of popular Sufism, centred upon the *zāwīyas*, which now became autonomous centres of

⁶²³ A. Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*- Faber & Faber London reprinted 1991-pp.152-159.

⁶²⁴ (i)A. Laroui op. cit. p 245. (ii) A. Tazi *Al Diblomassiya Al Maghribya* refers to Sultan ŷolba being celebrated in the times of the Al Moravids and Al Mohadads. In Vol. II p149.

resistance, both to the central power and to the invaders. At this point the *Jazouliya* order, led by Muhammad Abu Abdallah Al Jazouli (d.870/1465) a Berber from *Al Andalus*, succeeded in unifying the country, which had been in the grip of civil war for some time. Exploiting his standing as a spiritual leader he despatched his *murid*⁶²⁵ (followers) all over the country in a movement that caused the other *zāwiyas* to adopt a militant posture. As motivators in the struggle against the invaders, the *zawiyas* now acquired an Islamic credibility that converted them into a major cohesive force in the country, since they were now able to combine popular religious zeal with the sanctity of their leaders. Thus it was at the head of this movement that *Al Jazouli* was able to liberate several towns. The support that his movement now enjoyed amongst the mass of the population enabled it to precipitate the downfall of the ruling *Wattassid* dynasty, which in any case had been collaborating with the invader. Subsequently it was with its support that the *Saadi* dynasty was able to come to power. It is interesting to note that the *zāwiya*-based brotherhoods mentioned in Chapter V, which have survived until the present day, all date from this period⁶²⁶:

Sharqawa founded by M'hamed Sharqi (d.1529)

Issawa founded by Muhammad al Hadi Ben Issa⁶²⁷ (d.1527)

Rahaliya founded by Rahal Al Bodali (d.1543)

In the 17th century the decline of the *Saadi* dynasty left a power vacuum, which resulted in the *Dila zāwiya*⁶²⁸ becoming the dominant power in the land. The Alawites of the Sahara, who were in conflict with the *Dila*, realised that they could

⁶²⁵ Amongst his many followers the most important were Sidi Ahmed al Harizi (d.1508) who passed the teaching to Sidi Abdel Aziz At Tebba^c (d.936/1529). See (i)K. Naamouni op. cit. p.25 (ii) R. Brunel op. cit. "Ben Issa naquit au moment ou les pratiques mystico- hystériques venues de l'Orient..."p.17.

⁶²⁶ *Sidi Abdallah Al Koush*, originally a palace slave, became notorious for his resistance to heat and his exceptional culinary skills. On one occasion, he fed the *zawiya* by cooking two bulls in one vessel single-handed and mixed the huge amount of *kesksu* to be served with a shovel. He was the founder of the cooks' brotherhood and after his death was revered as their patron saint. Deverdun in Marrakesh p.428 and K. Naamouni op. cit. p. 29.

⁶²⁷ (i)T. Burckhardt, Fez City of Islam-The Islamic Texts Society Cambridge 1992.pp 128-150. (ii) Michaux-Bellaire Les Confréries Religieuses au Maroc en 1923. Archives Berbères 1923- Conférences p. 139. (iii) D. Eickelman op. cit. pp.34-35.

⁶²⁸ J. Drouin, Un Cycle Oral Haglographique dans le Moyen Atlas marocain- Publications de la Sorbonne- Imprimerie Nationale -Paris 1975. pp. 29-36.

never achieve power without the support of the *zāwiyas* and their *ṭolba* (students).⁶²⁹ Their support was gained in a somewhat original manner. In 1669 AD both the British and the French embassies⁶³⁰ reported a strong rumour that the Alawite leader Moulay Rashid had killed *Mishal* a Jewish Prince, who was alleged to be enslaving⁶³¹ Muslims in the Taza area. According to Mujuetan's historical research⁶³², this story was a pure invention. Nevertheless, it greatly enhanced the religious image of the Alawites as saviours of Islam and left the *ṭolba* their *zawiyas* and the population as a whole with a moral debt,⁶³³ which could only be discharged by supporting the political ambitions of Moulay Rashid. However, once the debt had been redeemed and an Alawite Sultan was on the throne, the situation became quite different. The Alawites, conscious of the fact that the *zāwiyas* had overthrown one dynasty (*Wattassid*) and contributed to the decay of another (*Saadi*), embarked upon a policy of suppression of the *zāwiyas*⁶³⁴.

As mentioned above, amongst the brotherhoods which formed in the wake of the al Jazouliya's militant missionary activity in the 17th century were the *Issawa*, *Rahaliya* and *Sherqawa* whose rites and practices have survived even to the present day. What is by no means clear however is at what point in history these rites may have

⁶²⁹ (i)A. Cour, *La Dynastie marocaine des Bani Wattas (1420-1554)* in 8, Alger 1920 'The sheikh of ṭolba Sidi Rahal' p147 (ii) R. Brunel op. cit. p. 61.

⁶³⁰ (i) Louis de Chenier, *Recherches Historiques sur les Maures*- 3 Vol. Paris 1787. (ii) Mouette, G. *Histoire des Conquests de Moulay Archy, connu sous le nom de roy de Tafilet et Mouley Ismael ou Semein, son frère et son successeur à présent régnant, tous deux rois de Fez, de Maroc, de Tafilet, de Sus etc.* (iii)Cernival : *Chronique de Santa Cruz du Cap de Gué (Agadir)*- Paris 1934- Sources inédites lère Série Angleterre t. III Paris 1935 (iv) La légende du Juif Ibn Meshal et la fête des tolbas à Fés in *Hespèris* Vol. V 1925 p. 137- (v) G. Vajda, *Un recueil de Textes historiques Judéo-Marocains* in *Hespèris* vols 35 and 36 1948 p. 311- & 1949 p. 139- (vi) "Une Chronique juive de Fés : les Yahas Fés de Ribbi Abner Hassarfaty- by Y.D. Semach. In *Hespèris* vol. 19, 1934 p.79- (vii) P. Marty *Les Zawiyas marocaines et le Makhzen- Revue des études Islamiques IV, 1929-* Paris. Les Sultans Alaouites contre les confrères religieuses'- pp 57-60.

⁶³¹ B. Meakin "The Moorish Empire"-Swan Sonnenschein & Co Ltd -New York 1899. p. 138.

⁶³² For A.B.Mujuetan, 'Al Rashid used false propaganda to attract the support of the ṭolba in order to win public support to legitimise his claim.' In "The Rise of the Alawite Dynasty" *Ph.D. Thesis* March 1971. SOAS London. p 157.

⁶³³ A. Tazi op. cit Vol. II, p. 144. The Solṭan ṭolba festival started to have the burlesque presentation of a student "king for a day" only from Moulay Rachid's time. This was in recognition of their having helped him to rid the country of the Jewish Misha'l. Hence, from the 17th century onward, the students had the right to have fun on their spring holidays. Qarawiyyin University J3 pp. 718-721.

⁶³⁴ (i) K. Naamouni 'Sidi Ahmed Ben Nacer fled to Tamegrout *zawiya* in the South to escape persecution after the destruction of the Dila *Zawiya*' p.42. (ii) Deverdun in *Marrakesh* : 'The Alawite target was to crush the *zawiya* order' p. 271.

originated. The fact that viewed in isolation the rites are anathema to orthodox Islam would negate any suggestion that they were part of an ordained repertoire of practices at the time of the *zāwiyas* formation in the 9th century. However, the formation of the new brotherhoods in a wave of religious militancy, backed by popular Sufism, was clearly an ideal vehicle for absorbing local rites and practices kept secret for centuries for fear of persecution by the followers of Islam. At this point it is pertinent to stress the differences between the *Issawa* on the one hand and the *Rahaliya* and *Sherqawa* sects on the other hand. During their festivals the *Issawa* make no use of fire, nor do they walk in ovens or drink boiling water. However, they are able to suffer flesh wounds and heavy blows with apparent indifference. Their image seems to be that of a well-disciplined warrior-type brotherhood, as opposed to a sect of miracle workers. Their origins could thus well be different from that of the two other brotherhoods. Such differences were recognized by R. Brunel,⁶³⁵ who mentions the enmity between the *Issawa* and *Rahaliya* sects. Whilst both claim descentance from *Abdel Qader al Jilani* of Baghdad, the *Issawi* sect is best known for taming snakes and making talismans against snakes and scorpions. The *Rahali* for their part see themselves as more powerful, since they have been vested with the miracle of fire, which they continue to perform and also, because the *Issawa*'s founder received his *baraka* from their founder *Rahal al Bodali*.

Origins of the Tea ritual

It is evident that those who could afford the luxury of tea drinking in Morocco indulged in this pleasure, as witnessed by Paul-Eugène Bache.⁶³⁶ He recounts in his "Souvenir d'un voyage à Mogador" 1859 that each household in Morocco had a niche in a corner, where the master of the house sits. In this niche was locked a box of tea

⁶³⁵ R. Brunel, *Essai sur la Confrérie Religieuse des Aissaouas au Maroc* - p.185 Ed. Afrique Orient Casablanca 1926. pp. 169-178.

⁶³⁶ Paul Eugène Bache "Souvenirs d'un voyage à Mogador". *Revue Maritime et coloniale* (January-February 1861- 8-7-8). Also the tea making ceremony fascinated the British Consul in the same town : A. Charles Payton, *Moss from a Rolling Stone, or Moorish Wonderings and rambling- reminiscences* London- 1879.

with sugar. William Lemprière, a British doctor in Gibraltar recorded the evidence of the existence of a ritual, after a visit to the Sultan's palace in Fés in 1789.⁶³⁷ He remarked that there was no set time for teatime. It was a great honour to offer tea to the visitor and he describes how tea was served on a small "table" (i.e. a tray). It was served with mint without milk or cream. He states that he was offered tea with cakes made of "dried jam" (preserves). Apparently it took two hours to drink this tea and he remarks, "The Moors make a lot of fuss for a small amount of liquid". He noted that only the rich could offer tea, because it was a rare commodity on the Barbary Coast.

The famous French writer Pierre Loti⁶³⁸ describes in 1889 how the British had diffused tea-drinking in Morocco, so that it was omnipresent. The rituals impressed him more than by the beverage produced by them. According to his description the guests are sprinkled with rose water and incense is burnt. The former being dispensed from silver flasks with long thin necks, whilst the latter took the form of an expensive wood imported from India, whose burning gave off highly fragrant smoke. He noted in particular the beauty of both the tea set and the silver samovar. None of this however, explains where the tea ceremony came from. If one looks elsewhere for evidence of Lemprière's "fuss" about tea, there is only one country, far away in Asia, which has a real ritual, namely, Japan. The latter had not suffered from the same dynastic and political upheavals experienced by China and had thus been able to retain several features of earlier Chinese civilization, one of which was ceremonial tea drinking.

The stages in which tea developed in China are distinct markers in its "expansion". Tea itself was originally only an item in the Chinese pharmacopoeia, developed by the Taoists (282-343 AD), who were more concerned with lengthening life expectancy, whilst sublimating the body. In the world of spiritual exchange, Buddhism came to China in the IInd century, but only began to flourish under the Six Dynasties (386-589 AD). Long hours of meditation required a great deal of endeavour and stamina, a situation for which only tea could be appropriate. In the "The Law of Buddha in the

⁶³⁷ William Lempriere, *Voyage dans l'empire de Maroc et au Royaume de Fez* . Edited by Sylvie Messinger - Collection Le pas de Mercure 1990 Paris. p 177.

⁶³⁸ P. Loti, *Au Maroc*- Calmann Lévy, Editeur Paris 1890. "Thé et samovar, gateaux secs, 'sabots de gazelle. Du thé partout..." p. 69.

Path of Tea” the Buddhist reflected the serving of tea in the formation of Zen.⁶³⁹ In the tea ceremony, the Spirit of Zen⁶⁴⁰ is personified by the master serving his disciples in a meditative ceremony. The use of tea spread rapidly throughout the country, since the mercantile class was very attached to Zen philosophy. For the merchants, silks were the prime element of trade, but there is no doubt that tea also had its place. The tea ceremony, which allows the host and his guest to regain the source of harmony and serenity by the “Path of Tea” was so important that from the 8th century the use of tea spread throughout China. One of the tea-masters was the poet Lu-Yu⁶⁴¹ who created a special tea set based on the Chinese view of the Universe. “Il decouvert dans le ‘service du Thé’ "le même ordre et la même harmonie qui régnait dans toutes les choses”.⁶⁴² In terms of Chinese philosophy this means the five Elements: water, wood, fire, earth and metal.⁶⁴³ Lu Yu instituted in his treatise on tea Tai Ching⁶⁴⁴ that the disciple should drink no more than three cups per gathering.⁶⁴⁵ This period was described by P. Butel⁶⁴⁶ as the “First school of tea” whose philosophy was based on borrowings from Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism.⁶⁴⁷

After the example of the tea ritual used by Buddhist monks of the Tang period, the new Sung dynasty of the XIIth century, endowed tea drinking with new dimensions. Refinements, such as the tea set, began to appear, featuring ceramic⁶⁴⁸ cups and golden spoons. The Sung poets attached great importance to the correct preparation of tea, emphasising that good tea must not be wasted by incorrect preparation. In this period the expression “Ch’a Lu” appeared, meaning the “Imperial Art of Tea”. A Zen

⁶³⁹ Witold Rodzinski, A History of China -Pergamon Press Oxford 1979- “Zen (or Ch’an in Chinese)”. A Sanskrit word meaning meditation, and inward enlightenment through meditation. p.104.

⁶⁴⁰ The principles of Zen philosophy that represent its idealisation are : harmony in the surroundings, respect, purity and serenity. Harmony between the host and the guest established by fragrances, incense, food (the serving of cakes and sweet items) and the utensils used for the ceremony. (i) Kaisen Iguchi pp.40-53. (ii) P. Butel op. cit. pp .21-22.

⁶⁴¹ (i) The Classic of Tea by Lu Yu – translated by Carpenter, F. R. -Little, Brown and Company Boston- Toronto 1974. p. 11.(ii) Okakura Kakuzo, The Book of Tea- Charles E. Tuttle and company Rutland, Tokyo 1956- “ the first apostle of tea.” p. 22.

⁶⁴² P. Butel p. 21.

⁶⁴³ These Elements are interactive and shape every aspect of daily life.

⁶⁴⁴ Tai from which the word tea derives means peace. A. Wild op. cit p. 9.

⁶⁴⁵ F.R. Carpenter Lu Yu - p. 8.

⁶⁴⁶ (i) P Butel op. cit. p. 33. He classifies the development of tea in three different stages which he calls “Schools of Tea” according to their period of development. (ii) Okakura Kakuzo op. cit. “Like art, Tea has its periods and its schools”. p. 20.

⁶⁴⁷ (i) Okakura Kakuzo op. cit. pp. 35-52. (ii) P. Butel op. cit. p.20.

ritual inspired the Buddhist monks of the Sung era to take tea as a formal sacrament. Hence tea making became a form of personal achievement, leading to such concepts as “the tea that, with its direct appeal, floods the soul”. Tea had therefore to be savoured and drunk in small sips⁶⁴⁹ which is typified by the “Jade Foam” concept of the Sung poets, i.e. the admiration and appreciation of the foam produced on green powdered and whipped tea.⁶⁵⁰ This period was that of the “Second School of Tea”.⁶⁵¹ Tea consumption continued even after Peking fell to Genghiz Khan in 1215, since the Mongols already knew tea, for which they used to barter horses. Under the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the kettle replaced the tea-bottle, which dated from the T’ang era (VIIth century).

The ceremony of tea drinking went into decline with the arrival of the Quing (Manchu) Dynasty (1644-1912) which replaced tea with rice-wine for ceremonial purposes. Tea continued to be consumed in monasteries in simple forms, but many plantations were abandoned because of the heavy taxes they attracted. On the spiritual plane, Confucianism gained ground against Buddhism, whose decline accompanied that of tea. Europe, until the end of the Ming Dynasty, knew nothing of tea and thus inherited what was really the “Third Tea School”⁶⁵²; i.e. ceramic teapot and cups but no tea ceremony. It is perhaps ironic that although Buddhism came to China from India, it was not until the XXth century that tea was drunk in all towns and villages of India. However, India served as a staging post in the silk trade between China and the Mediterranean, just as the Silk Road was the land route connecting the valley of the Yellow River with the West via Central Asia and Syria.⁶⁵³ It seems impossible that the Arab traders would have failed to appreciate the commercial value of this

⁶⁴⁸ Ibn Batuta op. cit.(b.1305 who visited China around 1340, shows his admiration for Chinese ceramics and describes how they were made. He also specifies that the latter are in such demand that they were sent for from as far away as Morocco.p.629.

⁶⁴⁹ J.Gernet, *La vie quotidienne en Chine à la veille de l’invasion Mongole*.- Hachette Paris 1962

⁶⁵⁰ Okakura Kakuzo op. cit pp. 26-27.

⁶⁵¹ To which Japan belongs. See Okakura Kakuzo op. cit. p. 30.

⁶⁵² Tea was brought to the English Court by Catherine de Braganza of Portugal when she married Charles II of England in 1615. See the East India Company *Book Of Tea* by Antony Wild Harper Collins Publishers London 1994 p.11. Nonetheless the first Christian missionaries to China and the Portuguese in Japan knew about this drink from 1598. Matteo Ricci noticed the difference in tea drinking between Chinese and Japanese : “Les japonais mêlent des feuilles en poudre dans une coupe pleine d’eau bouillante ... mais les chinois jettent ces feuilles dans l’eau bouillante qu’ils boivent toute chaude et laissent les feuilles.” P. Butel op. cit. p.45.

⁶⁵³ (i) Okakura Kakuzo op. cit. The author relates comments made by an Arab traveller in 879 AD. on revenues made in Canton on salt and tea. pp. 11-12. (ii) Carpenter in *Lu Yu* p. 156, refers to Reinaud in *Relations des Voyages fait par les Arabes et les Persans dans l’Inde et à la Chine*. I, 1845 p. 40.

fascinating drink bearing in mind that they had seen large sums of money being made by the Chinese tea traders. W. Rodinsky says in this context “ The development of foreign trade also led to China having more contacts with Persia and the rising Arab world. It was the Arabs and the Persians who took the lead in this expansion of trade, employing mostly the Southern sea routes and thus the Arab merchant colony in Canton became rich and powerful”.⁶⁵⁴It seems therefore that the Muslim world would have started to drink tea, either from early trading contacts with China or when Mongol troops invaded Baghdad in 1248. What is unknown is whether it was green or black tea they used. The Turks in Asia were accustomed to tea “cakes” i.e. fermented tea leaves moulded in a crushed form so that, whenever tea was required in the cold mountains, water was boiled and teacake was broken into it for infusion. If the Middle-Eastern Turks preferred coffee at a later date, this could only be from the 14th century when coffee started to be commercially available in the Yemen and in Arabia. But whatever their preference, tea or coffee, there is no sign of a ceremony for either beverage in the Middle East comparable with that of Morocco.

The tea ceremony in Morocco seems to be of long standing since it bears all the marks of the oriental concept of the preferred character and disposition of the tea-maker.⁶⁵⁵ The fact that the norm in Morocco is for the guest to drink three glasses of tea⁶⁵⁶evokes a similar concept quoted in Lu Yu’s treatise mentioned above. The other major feature defined in Lu Yu’s treatise is a special tea-set based upon the five elements, as recognised by the Chinese, namely: water, wood, fire, earth and metal; “to harmonize the five elements in the body and banish the hundred illnesses”.⁶⁵⁷ Placing the Moroccan tea set described in Chapter IV against this template, we have:

The **water** (*teshlīla* goblet) for the water element.

⁶⁵⁴ W. Rodinsky op. cit.-The Islamic/Buddhist connection is also evidenced by the fact that many Buddhists converted to Islam in North Khirghizia in 751, p 128 & “Arab travellers spoke of the great profits made in the sale of tea in the city of Canton in 879.” P. Butel op. cit. calls Canton “la porte du thé de la Chine.

⁶⁵⁵ Kaisen Iguchi op. cit. “Tea men of old instruct dispel worldly thoughts and become detached”. p. 60.

⁶⁵⁶ It insults the host not to do so.

⁶⁵⁷ Carpenter op. cit. p. 77.

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|--|---|
| The Tea container for wood | since tea often included woody stems. ⁶⁵⁸ |
| The mint container for fire | Green/yellow for solar energy. ⁶⁵⁹ |
| The Sugar ⁶⁶⁰ container for earth | The sugar used in China would have been deep brown and unrefined (cane sugar) i. e. earth colour. |
| The metal spoon (gold or silver) | for the metal element. |

Lu Yu's concept of his "brazier" made of brass or silver (samovar) is described as based on *K'an*, *Sun* and *Li* trigrams: water, wind and fire producing ashes after boiling water for tea.⁶⁶¹ In fact the *babor* (Moroccan samovar) is conceived in similar manner with the draught hole (wind), the cylinder where water boils and the fire chamber with an opening for taking ashes (fire). All the above elements belong to Lu Yu's "First School" of Tea. In addition, the Moroccans, as noted in Chapter IV, take great care to produce a "Jade foam" effect. The tea set is very important in the Moroccan culture, as are fragrances⁶⁶² in the tea, such as orange-blossom⁶⁶³ and the burning of incense.⁶⁶⁴ The implication of all this is that the Moroccan tea culture contains elements of the Chinese "First School".

⁶⁵⁸ (i) Carpenter pp. 158-159. (ii) P. Butel op. cit. 26.

⁶⁵⁹ The concept of green/yellow for solar energy is explained in chapter IX.

⁶⁶⁰ Salt was also used instead of sugar.

⁶⁶¹ Carpenter op. cit. pp. 78-80.

⁶⁶² Idem. Tea was fragranced with orange peel, roses, jasmin etc. pp. 167-168. For the Islamic physicians there are three species of mint: mountain *domran*, plains *fliyo*, aquatic *balya*. Amongst the herbs used in conjunction with mint, balsam *habaq al fil*, *habaq qarunfuli* (wallflower), *mardadoush* (marjoram) and *habaq atronji* (Berb. *Tizizwit* + citronella). All these are recommended for their hot and dry nature, for driving away sadness and for fortifying the heart. Additionally Ibn Baytar recommends using 'ciste and hypocyste' (fr. Barbe de bouc), also called *lihyat at tis*, for inflammatory fevers and against vomiting.

⁶⁶³ This practice led to Bergamot tea, so named after Bergamo in Italy (town famous for its flower distillation in the 18 & 19th centuries). The Muslims introduced citrus fruits in the South (Sicily) and in particular the nippled lemon (*Citrus aurantium*) now known as Bergamot. Bergamot tea became known as 'Earl Grey' in England, named after the Earl Grey, who although he never went to China, due to his being a public figure his name helped in promoting this scented drink noticed by Sir George Staunton after his visit to China in 1793. A. Wild op. cit. p.43.

⁶⁶⁴ Kaisen Iguchi op. cit. for flowers and incense burning. p. 53.

For A. Tazi⁶⁶⁵ tea drinking habits came with Andalusí refugees during the early Saadí period (964-981H/1551-1573) of Abdellah Al Ghalib. Special attention was paid to the tea set, which included coloured crystal glasses. The tea ritual had the approval of physicians⁶⁶⁶ who glorified its effect on health. It was also praised by poets. Furthermore, the European traveller Thomas Legendre, noticed that in 1075H/1665, the Moroccans drank both tea and coffee.

Ironically, the survival over the centuries of this tea culture is possibly due to the fact that the essential ingredient was rare and expensive.⁶⁶⁷ Hence, its use was confined to palaces⁶⁶⁸ and the households of the rich, where the ritual prospered no doubt in an atmosphere of intimacy and secrecy. The latter element being dictated by an Islamic environment, where all forms of stimulant were frowned upon. It is interesting to note that, in the XVII-XVIIIth century, the Algerian physician Abderrazaq⁶⁶⁹ (b. late XVIIth century) noted that in Fés, people were drinking this thing called tea, which was not seen in his country. However the “secret” was known⁶⁷⁰ to the British, whose observers were showing an increasing interest in the Moroccan market as witnessed by correspondence from Gibraltar to the Foreign Office in the early XIXth century.⁶⁷¹ The opportunity for the promotion of new products came in the middle of the century with the rise in importance of the port of Mogador, (modern Essaouira). This port had mushroomed in growth and importance and, having eclipsed Agadir, was now the

⁶⁶⁵ A. Tazi Histoire Diplomatique du Maroc- Matba 'at Fedala. Mohammadia. 1986. pp. 318-321. Vol. II.

⁶⁶⁶ J. Bellakhdar op. cit. “ Another Moroccan physician Abdel Wahab Ed Daraq (XVIIIth century) wrote a treatise on mint and its effect on health. p. 345.

⁶⁶⁷ Green tea is unfermented tea, the young leaves are gently heated up for few minutes to help them curl, hence their gunpowder-like look. Black tea on the other hand is fermented i.e. the leaves oxidise when in hot and humid conditions. This is achieved by keeping the leaves in special tea ovens for 2 or 3 hours at 27°C. The leaves by absorbing oxygen become brown. The best tea is “Ti kuan ying,” light tea, growing on the cliffs of the mountains, reached only by trained monkeys. Japanese tea ‘Pilo Chun’, although green is different and lighter than the Gunpowder used for Moroccan tea.

⁶⁶⁸ L. Valensi, Fellahs Tunisiens-relates that in 1761 during a shipwreck near the coast of Tunisia the chroniqueur reported that small metallic boxes were collected containing dried leaves which were recognised by the local merchants as being tea. p. 237.

⁶⁶⁹ Abderrazaq Muhammad Ibn Hamadush, Révélation des énigmes dans l'exposition des drogues et des plantes- Al Bustan Dar al kutub al Ilmiya- Beyrou 1996. p. 249- Abderrazaq lived around 1717 when it was suggested he went on pilgrimage.

⁶⁷⁰ L. Chénier op. cit. already was supplying the royal palace with tea and sugar in 1772. pp. 225, 290, 291.

⁶⁷¹ Public Record Office, Foreign Office 52,27.40 Morocco & Colonial Office 91.42 Gibraltar- Letters dated respectively 14 February 1801 and 21 June 1826. The Diplomats in Gibraltar were aware of the caravans supplying the Southern countries beyond Cap Nun, which was their meeting point towards Sub-Saharan countries. General O'Hara, writing to the Duke of Portland, in 27 page-letter recommends

principal port of entry into Morocco of European goods. Caravans came from all over Morocco to buy much sought after foreign goods and all European countries with commercial designs on the Moroccan market had opened consulates there. Needless to say many rich Moroccan merchants were also established there.

According to D. Schroeter, tea was drunk throughout Morocco from 1830⁶⁷² onwards. Obviously the ceremony accompanying the tea drinking was a positive factor in making it sought-after by the bulk of the population, although Arab physicians had already established the drinking of mint infusions. Even the Saharan regions were able to sample this new commodity, since the Trans-Saharan caravan trade was still flourishing, thus facilitating the delivery of European goods from Essaouira to Senegal.⁶⁷³ It can therefore be concluded that the drinking of tea today in the Sahara is a direct result of the position of Essaouira as the maritime gate both of Morocco and of all routes leading therefrom to the South during the XIXth century. In fact it was the prosperity of this town that caused it to be selected, alongside Oujda and Tangier, for bombardment by the French in 1844 during their attempts to blackmail the Sultan into surrendering the Amir Abdel Qader.⁶⁷⁴ However, the ploy that led to the attraction and eventual popularity of green tea was that, every afternoon a *shrib attā* (drinking of tea) was organized. A square in the merchant district was chosen and equipped with silver trays from Manchester, British glasses and copies of cheaper Russian samovars called *babor*, all brought by British Steamships.⁶⁷⁵ The new tea was served to the shoppers with sweets,⁶⁷⁶ doughnuts, *msemen* and *beghrir*, against a background of classical Andalusian music or that of Marrakshi groups. The whole scene was dazzling and fascinating for local visitors to this new effervescent Moroccan “window to the West”. Furthermore, since most of the shops belonged to the Makhzen i.e. to

“Inducing them (i.e. the Moroccans) gradually to become consumers of British manufactured goods and colonial produce, such as are more generally felt to the articles of domestic comfort and utility.”

⁶⁷² Ali Bey El Abbassi Travels of Ali Bey in Morocco, Tripoli, Cyprus, Egypt, Arabia, Syria and Turkey- 1803-1807. Garnet Publishing Ltd Reading 1993-2 volumes. Visiting Morocco in 1803 said that coffee was drunk before by society at large but now tea is replacing it. p. 21.

⁶⁷³ D. Schroeter op. cit. -This trade was much resented by the French, who could not understand why the Moroccans travelled by camel all the way across the desert to Senegal, instead of using their steamships. p. 98.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid p.117.

⁶⁷⁵ A. Wild op. cit : In contrast the caravans in the past took not less than 3 years using the Gobi desert route. “East Indiamen” ships, the “Clippers” used to take six months from China to Europe in the 18th century whilst, in the 19th century the steamships reached the European ports in 90 days. p. 27

⁶⁷⁶ Kaisen Iguchi op. cit. Guests are served dry and ‘wet’ cakes during the tea ceremony p. 46.

the Sultan himself, the tea ceremony could not be other than a Royal way of drinking tea unravelled after several centuries of secret drinking. Thus was created the *attaī Souirī* (the Essaouira tea), for which rich and poor were soon craving, so that “tea from Essaouira” meant a festive day for all. It was not long before the whole country became addicted to green gunpowder tea in what must be recorded as a highly successful British marketing exercise.⁶⁷⁷

The Moroccan Tea glass and the origin of its design

Glass was known from the third millennium BC, when glass production flourished in Egypt and Mesopotamia until around 1200 BC. Subsequently Syria and Mesopotamia emerged as glass making centres and the technique spread throughout the Mediterranean region. The Phoenician technique, for both translucent and opaque glass was based on casting processes i.e. melting glass into moulds. The revolutionary discovery of glass blowing was made in the third quarter of the first century BC, along the Phoenician coast in the Middle East. This manufacturing method spread eventually from Syria to Italy and other parts of the Roman Empire, the products being restricted to rich households.

In the Islamic world, Muslim artisans continued the Sassanian tradition of carved glass. The emphasis was put on colourless glass with Arabic calligraphy and geometric patterns. This tradition was carried to North Africa and Spain and eventually influenced Venetian⁶⁷⁸ glass making. Similarly, the discovery in Egypt of lustre, rich metallic effects in browns, yellows and reds both on pottery and glass, also reached Venice by the same route. But the particularity of the Moroccan tea glass

⁶⁷⁷ Gunpowder tea only came to the country in large quantities when the British began to sell their surplus green tea there. This was strictly a trading venture, the British having no supplies of their own growing, since the development of black tea plantations in India only commenced after 1870 and it was long after this date before exports became significant from that country.

today, is that it stayed faithful to what was “early”. The Fatimid⁶⁷⁹ design shows that the North African tea glass design is very conservative and linked to old tradition.

The tea glasses which are sought after are the ones with a “pontil” mark which is made by a layer of glass called “gather”, which is fused to the glass to give it a thick base to protect the fingers when the glass contains a hot beverage. This glass design is unique to North Africa for drinking tea today, and it is more sophisticated in Morocco, where there are glasses for every day use and also special crystal glasses made for the Moroccan Market since the 1820’s when Britain dominated the European and colonial markets. This domination was achieved by offering more brilliant and less brittle and durable lead glass.⁶⁸⁰ These crystal glasses were destined for the royal court and rich households, whereas the commoners contented themselves with clay pots and for refinement used *kisān khider* (green glass), obtained from an ancient technique which involved producing glass from ashes of marine plants and sand.⁶⁸¹ The decoration of the Moroccan glass whether in filigree or another pattern, has always a break in the middle to allow the foam produced by the pouring of tea to be visible to the drinker (guest).

The Mawlid in history

In the tenth century the Fatimids, who were Shiites, conquered Sunni Egypt. Once they were well established it was important for them to be accepted by their Sunni subjects as true representatives of Islam. At the same time it was desirable to have some means of keeping the population reassured and content, so that the Shi^cite yoke would rest lightly upon their shoulders and, at the same time, consolidate Fatimid authority by drawing attention to their Islamic authenticity. The means chosen to achieve these two ends was to continue to celebrate festivals that were familiar to the

⁶⁷⁸ The Venetians from their commercial contact with Andalusian glassmakers, advanced their technique after the fall of Muslim Spain. From the XV th century onwards, Venetian glass was known worldwide for its quality.

⁶⁷⁹ Victorian and Albert Museum Islamic glass section.

⁶⁸⁰ Known as Anglo-Irish Neo-classical. In Arabic *Al balār*

⁶⁸¹ The Venetians improved their technique by using wood ashes as soda ash was no longer available. This was called Waldglass (forest glass) a technique which has survived until modern times.

population, with the occasional introduction on some aspect of the Shi'ite view on Islam. Contemporary sources⁶⁸² have enabled us to build up a picture of how and when festivals were celebrated. For instance, the procession to celebrate "the opening of the irrigation channels", which dated from ancient Egypt, was observed in a virtually unchanged form, except that it was re-named as "the opening of the Khalij".⁶⁸³ The Light⁶⁸⁴ Festival became "*Layali al wuqud*", during which the population displayed lighted candles for four nights. Other festivals were also held on the first and fifteenth of Rejab and Sha'ban.

However, it was the introduction of the celebration of "*Mawālid*" (birthdays), that typified the politico-religious strategy of the Fatimids. Specific celebrations were instituted for the birth of the Prophet Mohammad, of his daughter Fatima, of his son-in-law Ali and of the latter's two sons, Hossain and Hassan. Finally, the birthday of the incumbent ruling imam of the Fatimid dynasty was included in the calendar of festivals. The Fatimids took pains to ensure that the population enjoyed and appreciated these festivals by providing money for celebrations and distributing gifts of sweetmeats, honey, nuts, candles and perfumes⁶⁸⁵.

Several Arab historians⁶⁸⁶ refer to the festivals having been adopted by the Fatimids rather than having been originated by them. Hence the Mawlid had no clearly defined point of origin, since it had progressed smoothly and imperceptibly from being a pagan⁶⁸⁷ festival to becoming recognized as a Muslim celebration. In a similar way *°Ashura*, regardless of its real origins, was used to commemorate the death of Hossain. Apparently this concept of *°Ashura* was acceptable to the Muslim scholars of the day, no doubt because the obligatory fasting and the distribution of

⁶⁸² (i) S. Moreh *Live Theatre and Dramatic literature in the Medieval Arab World*- Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 1992. pp. 10-11. Al Qazwini *Kosmographic*. Ed. F. Wustenfeld (Gottingen 1848. VolII p. 82. (ii) N.G.J. Kaptein op. cit. : Ibn Zulaq (306-386H/919-996AD.), Al Musabbihi (366/977-420/1029) *Akhbar Misr* -Ed. A.F. Sayyid and T. Bianquis. Cairo 1978 vol. XLI, pp.79., Ibn Tuwayr (525/1130-617/1220). p. 22.

⁶⁸³ Ibid. pp.22 and 26.

⁶⁸⁴ S. Moreh, op. cit. p. 10.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 19.

⁶⁸⁶ Al Maqrizi (766/1364 -845/1442) *Mawa'iz al I' tibar fi khitat Misr wal amsar*.-2 volumes Tabac^c Jadida bil ufsat -Beyrout. S.a. in Beyrut S.A. 1989- pp 430-432 where he quotes previous historians.

⁶⁸⁷ Edict prohibiting pagan festivals by Emperor Anastasius in 502 AD. then by Justinian I (527-65). See S. Moreh op. cit. 10.

alms by themselves sanctified it.⁶⁸⁸ J.Kaptein draws attention to the speed⁶⁸⁹ with which the Mawlid celebration spread geographically. However, it would appear that it was not the celebration itself that spread so rapidly, but the practice of using it to change the purpose and date of festivals that had existed earlier and that it was not judicious to suppress. This is borne out by the fact that, despite the abolition of all Fatimid festivals, including the Mawlids, by Saladin (Salah al Din 1169-93) when he defeated and overthrew that dynasty, the population persisted in their celebration.

The fall of the Fatimids was by no means the end of Mawlid celebrations. In the Islamic West, in both North Africa and Al Andalus, Muslim scholars⁶⁹⁰ were complaining about the population continuing to celebrate pagan festivals. Identified in this category were Yannair (Winter solstice), Nairuz or Nawraz (Spring Equinox) and the Mihrajan al *‘Ansra* (Summer solstice).⁶⁹¹ The Qadi Abul Abbas al ‘Azafi (d. 633/1236) in the works that he left to posterity gives ample details of how these festivals were celebrated. For *‘Ansra* he noted that the celebrations involved a great deal of smoke by burning aromatic herbs. Much attention was paid to ablutions and the sprinkling of water. Amongst the customs described was the practice of leaving clothes outside at night to collect dew and the placing of cabbages under beds. However, the element that enraged the good Qadi was the luxurious level of food consumption linked with these festivals, when large sums of money was spent on delicacies and sweetmeats, particularly on large quantities of honey, itself a relatively expensive commodity. The latter was used lavishly in the making of the following⁶⁹² luxury sweetmeats:

⁶⁸⁸ M.M. Badawi *Early Arabic Drama*—Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1988. In this context the author refers to the Persian play in *‘Ashura* called *ta‘ziya* (condolences) incorporating elements of Tammuz and Adonis. pp. 9-10.

⁶⁸⁹ N.J.G. Kaptein op. cit. p. 42.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibn Waddah (d.289/900) and Ibn Bashkuwal (d. 578/1183). See (i) Al Yazidi *Ms London 919* pp. 16-28.(ii) N.J.G. Kaptein op. cit. p.82. (iii) Al Maqrizi *Al Mawa‘iz wal I‘tibar fi dhkr al khitat wal athar*. Bulaq 1270-1854- Vol I pp. 468 and 493. (iv) Al Mas‘udi *Muruj al dhahab*. Paris 1861-77 Vol III p. 413.

⁶⁹¹ a). F.de la Granja « Fiestas Cristianas en al Andalus» *Al Andalus XXXIV* - 1969- pp 1-53.

b). Abu Qassim al ‘Azafi Ms London fol.164.6. N.J.G. Kaptein op. cit. p.78.

⁶⁹² Similarly in Fatimid Egypt nicely decorated *simat* (table) with candy models of animal statues and palaces were paraded in the streets of Cairo. S. Moreh op. cit. p.32.

- *Ka'ak* filled with honey. These were sold for 70 dinars⁶⁹³ a piece in the market.
- A special *ʿAnṣra* sweetmeat *nasbah*, reminiscent of today's Christmas fruit cake. It contained dates, raisins, figs, almonds, chestnuts, hazelnuts, pine kernels, acorns, oranges, lemons, limes and sugar cane.⁶⁹⁴
- A multi-tiered cake of luxurious proportions, called *madaʿin*, made in the form of a city, complete with its ramparts.

Sebta was a cosmopolitan port city, involved in widespread trade with Mediterranean cities.⁶⁹⁵ It was in this environment of multinational commercial exchange that the Qadi accused the Christians of “contaminating” the Muslims with their feast day celebrations, to the extent that the people were even asking the Christians for their Prophet's birthday date and those of their saints, for example Yahya (John). In his view all ills stemmed from contact with these people. It would appear that the Qadi's subjects, anxious to retain their old pagan festivals, had turned to disguising them as Christian feast days, so that by appearing to belong to the “*Ahl al kitāb*” (people of the book),⁶⁹⁶ these festivals would escape banning and they themselves would not be persecuted.

Al ʿAzafi decided that, in the circumstances, the best policy was to give the people what they wanted, namely, a joyful and colourful festival with appropriate Islamic connections. He therefore instituted the Mawlid festival in his city of Sebta, where he held banquets, distributed money to the poor and organised concerts of chanting in the madrasas. In anticipation of possible criticism by Muslim scholars he declared that, if he was thus committing the sin of *bidʿa* (innovation), it was at least the *bidʿa Hasana* (a good deed). It might be assumed from the above that here was a case of a devout but sensitive and compassionate Qadi, deeply concerned about the well-being of his flock and anxious to lead them away from pagan practices. However, this assessment

⁶⁹³ Ibid fol. 2.

⁶⁹⁴ M. Chérif op. cit .p.165.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid pp 137-148 : Italian cities: Pisa, Genoa, Sicily. French cities: Nimes, Montpellier, Marseille. Catalan cities etc.

⁶⁹⁶ R. Montagne The Berbers- (1931) transl. by D. Seddon- Frank Cass:London 1973. I, p. 9.

seems less plausible when viewed against an analysis of the socio-political environment reigning in the country at that time.

Sebta had a well-established tradition of being ruled by a Qadi⁶⁹⁷, which dated back to the time of the Umayyads. The Qadi Al 'Azafi, like some of his predecessors, was not lacking in ambition. A scion of a noble family, he was extremely wealthy and enjoyed great popularity with the *‘amma* (masses). He had political ambitions, but he was also inhibited in these by the problems, that confronted him:

- The Christian threat from Spain.⁶⁹⁸
- The rise of the "eccentric" spiritual Sufism⁶⁹⁹, which tended to distract the attention of the population from the real threat that each campaign season brought closer to their shores.
- It would seem that the Qadi was above all motivated by a need to prepare the people to respond to the Spanish menace.

The Sufi movement that he labelled as unorthodox and which pre-occupied him so much, was epitomised by the presence of the Sufi Abu Marwan Yuhansi⁷⁰⁰ (d.1268 AD.), who had great influence of the masses. The latter specialized in organising gatherings, at which the Mawlid was celebrated with music and litanies and with the distribution of *ka‘ak* and honey.

It is evident from an examination of the Qadi's response to this movement that his motivations were political rather than religious:

⁶⁹⁷ M. Chérif op. cit.: In the 10th century the incumbent was Ibn Zawba‘. Another Qadi ruler of note was the Qadi ‘Iyad, a close friend of the Almoravids, who lost his life under the Almohades. p. 31

⁶⁹⁸ An increase in aggressiveness towards the Muslims on the part of the Christian masses, who were deeply influenced by the crusading propaganda of their Church C.E. Dufourcq, L' Ibérie chrétienne et le Maghreb XIIè-Xvème siècles -Variorum Gower Publishers Group Aldershot- UK 1990. La Question de Ceuta au XIIIème siècle pp. 67-127 :‘ La Papauté avait lancé des missionnaires au milieu des Musulmans en vue de les convertir. Elle s’efforçait de faire renaître une Chrétienté indigène en terre marocaine. I p. 77.

⁶⁹⁹ M. Chérif op. cit. « A moderate form of Sufism, whose spiritual doctrine was sufficiently in conformity with the principles of orthodox Islam to be acceptable and which contributed to the mainstream spiritual activity of the city. p. 172.

- The banning of all books by Andalusī mystics, especially those relating to unorthodox Sufism, which he now condemned as heresy.
- The institution of a Madrasa based on Sunni Maliki doctrine, which was to be responsible for the supervision of religious studies in the city.
- The creation of a "state guided" Sufism under his son's father-in-law Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim al Tanjari.
- Support for an illiterate form of Sufism from the Atlas about whose founder, Moulay Bou^ʿaza, Al 'Azafi had written a laudatory work⁷⁰¹.

The effect of these measures was that it became easier to mobilise the will of the masses to fight their real enemy, the Christians⁷⁰².

The introduction of the Mawlid in Sebta (Ceuta) was by no means an original idea of Abul Abbas al 'Azafi. As has been mentioned earlier the festival had existed previously and the Qadi was no stranger to this fact⁷⁰³. His own book on the Mawlid was still unfinished when he died and was eventually completed by his son Abu Qasim Al 'Azafi under the title "*Ad-durr al Munazzam fi al Mawlid al Mu^ʿazzam*". During his lifetime Abul Abbas Al 'Azafi pursued the cause of institutionalizing the Prophet's birthday and in 1238 AD. submitted to the Almohad Caliph Al Mostader a proposal that it be celebrated instead of *Mihrajan al ^ʿAnṣra*. However, it was not until the Merinids came to power that the proposal was taken seriously. Abu Ya'qub Yusuf decreed the Mawlid to be an official Festival throughout Morocco, with the state financing the festivities.⁷⁰⁴

⁷⁰⁰ Ohances M. Chérif op. cit. pp. 171-174.

⁷⁰¹ *Da'amat al Yaqim* on Abu Ya'za (1176).

⁷⁰² M. Chérif op. cit. p.172.

⁷⁰³ Not only did he know that the Fatimids used to celebrate it, but also one of his compatriots from Sebta, Abul Khattab Ben Dahiyya (d.633/1235-6) won the legendary sum of 1000 dinars for a book on the Mawlid that he wrote for the ruler of Irbil (N.Iraq) *Kitāb al Tunnuir fi Mawlid al Bashir al Naddir*. See N.J.G. Kaptein op. cit. p. 50.

Al Azafi's legacy of the Mawlid provided the Merinid dynasty with a framework for its religious policy since, unlike the preceding Almoravid and Almohad dynasties, it had no religious agenda of its own. Subsequently, in order to enhance the religious image of the Merinids, the Mawlid festival was adopted officially and large sums of money were spent on its celebration. Royal banquets were organised at which all kinds of sweetmeats, made principally from honey and nuts, were served. Lanterns in a variety of colours were presented to mosques and Quranic schools. Perfumes and candles were distributed to the fuqaha. In the Royal palace dignitaries and scholars were invited to take part in *Sama*^c and *dikr* and also to participate in poetry contests of panegyrics about the Prophet. However, the most extravagant element of the celebrations *Laylat al Mawlid*, was a presentation of the clock "Manjāna" to the ruler. This clock had a door, from which a doll emerged at a pre-set time and presented a poem to the Sultan⁷⁰⁵. These celebrations continued throughout the period of Merinid rule and were copied in the courts of Tlemcen and Tunis.

Whilst the Mawlid is widely celebrated in modern Morocco, those held in the city of Salé are the most striking and, at the same time, reminiscent of the Merinid period. Chanting, *sama*^c and *dikr* are still the focal point of the celebrations, coupled with the reading of Ibn Abbad's well-known panegyric. *Ta*^c*am* is offered, usually in the form of *kesksu* served in the zawiyas. Lanterns made of colourful wax are displayed in procession, before being distributed to the marabouts of local saints, amongst whom are numbered the famous mystic Ibn Ashur (d.764/1362), the fervent proponent of the Mawlid. His pupil Ibn Abbad (d.792/1390) has left to posterity the famous panegyric that is read to this day for the Mawlid. His support for the celebration of this festival was always conditional upon unlawful practices being excluded.⁷⁰⁶

⁷⁰⁴ M. Chérif op. cit. p. 169.

⁷⁰⁵ Abu 'Inan Faris (749/759- 1348/1358) (i) N.J.G. Kaptein PP 107-108 & p 143 Ibn al Faklam was awarded 1000 gold dinars for making a clock " *Manjāna* ". (ii) A. Tazi op. cit Vol. II p. 320.

⁷⁰⁶ No musical instrument *alat al lahw* are played in *sama*^c and *dikr* (chanting) for this festival.

Bujlud : The mask festival

An embarrassed reference to the *Bujlud* festival was made by Al Bakri (b. 1028) who mentions briefly the shameful cult of the Ram practised in the Atlas⁷⁰⁷, whilst Leon Africanus (Hasan Al Wazan XVIth cent.) professed himself intrigued by this festival, as celebrated in Morocco.⁷⁰⁸ However, under Fatimid rule the festival, or more precisely one of its satirical context, found its way into the realm of politics. The Fatimids⁷⁰⁹ turned the festival to their own purpose by exploiting its satirical content. Nevertheless, because the blatant indecency⁷¹⁰ displayed would offend the susceptibilities of true believers and being themselves sensitive to the likely criticisms of Islamic scholars, they retained only the caricatural element and replaced the human characters with dolls and puppets.⁷¹¹ In this manner, the Fatimids were able to amuse⁷¹² the faithful with puppet shows, which ridiculed their eastern cousins, the Abbassids. The latter clearly felt the edge of this political weapon as was borne out by the fact that after the fall of the Fatimid power in Egypt in 1171, the “heretic” dolls found in their cupboards were exposed to public view. These dolls were referred to as “*babat*” (sing, *baba*,⁷¹³ presumably from *baba sheikh*). Despite this condemnation, the shows survived the passage of time and were still being held in the Royal Court in Morocco until just before the French occupation.⁷¹⁴

⁷⁰⁷ G. Camps *Les Berbères: Mémoires et Identités* – Editions Errance Paris 1995. p.150. (ii) Al Bakri (*Al Bekri*) op. cit. p.305.

⁷⁰⁸ Leon Africanus op. cit. p. 123.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibn Daniel al Mursali (646 –771 A.H.) wrote down several sketches. The shows developed in Tunisia during the Aghalib period and subsequently travelled to Egypt. The best period for “*babat*” as popular art was during the XI, XII and XIII centuries. See Kahle, Paul, *Three Shadow Plays by Mohammad Ibn Daniyal*. E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Trust Cambridge 1992.

⁷¹⁰ M.M. Badawi *Early Arabic Drama* –Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1988. The author refers to the erotic and pornographic literature of the 9th century. p. 19.

⁷¹¹ Ibid- “despite the absence of human actors, since the action is presented by means of leather puppets projected on a screen.” p. 5-6.

⁷¹² Puppet and shadow theatre were flourishing in Fatimid Egypt and the evidence is also in the works of the scientist Ibn Al Haytham (b. 965 AD.) who discusses the mechanics of the plays in his magnum opus on optics *Kitāb al Manazir*. (i) M.M. Badawi op. cit. p. 13. (ii) S. Moreh op. cit. p. 123

⁷¹³ S. Moreh op. cit. appears to be intrigued by the word *baba* and remarks that this word was used by North African authors of the 11th and 14th centuries such as the poet Ibn al Hajjaj (d. 391/1001) in his work *Zarifun min babat al zurafa* (elegant, of the category of the elegant people) and the critical Muslim scholar Ibn al Hajj (d. 737/1336) of this staged *bida’ā* by North African and Egyptian Muslims which they call *babat al qadi* (scene of the Judge). pp. 10 and 136.

⁷¹⁴ Westermarck op. cit. in 1900 could still see what the called a “toy house” made with cardboard and lit with candles, in which wooden puppets performed satirical shows at the Sultan’s court in Fés. Vol. II p. 81. Also reported by F. Castells, French Official, called *bsat* in *Archives Berbères 1915-1916*- p. 339.

XI - The Pre-Islamic Period

Cults and Myths as pointers

This research has already shown that Moroccan cuisine is an art that is unique in its own form and content, bearing no similarities to any cuisine known to the modern world. This uniqueness is mainly due to a kind of religious secrecy that has surrounded skills that have been handed down through successive generations ever since ancient times. The task of unravelling the chronology of the ancient cuisine of Morocco has led out of that country in the quest to discover where the dishes may have originated and how they reached there. The need for such a quest has, in effect, been imposed by the high level of sophistication of the dishes themselves, which have no equal in the immediate area. Chapter IX has shown the effects of the Islamic sciences of the medieval period upon dishes, ingredients and preparation. Chapter X has indicated evidence pointing to the possible origins of some of the food-related rituals extant in the Islamic period. However neither has furnished a complete answer to the question of origins and it is clear that another approach is required. It has been established in earlier chapters of this work that a large proportion of the dishes that make up the cuisine of Morocco are specific to cult rituals or have ritual links. The converse seems also to be true, whereby there is no ritual that does not have its own specific dishes. These associations of food with rituals clearly have their origins in the past, from which they have survived until the present day. As survivals from the past they constitute a body of historical evidence for past practices of an indeterminate age and origin. To explain this evidence, the research methodology adopted for this final part of the current work is essentially comparative. Thus, in the absence of evidence of origins other than the rituals themselves, the surviving rituals of Morocco, with their cult stories and myths, will be compared with historically

attested rituals and beliefs in other times and places. In this context, as we move back in history prior to the Islamic period, the first candidate for examination is Rome.

Roman influence in North Africa followed the destruction of Carthage in 146 BC and the gradual extension of Roman control of North Africa took about two centuries. As the Romans acquired new territories⁷¹⁵ they were constantly coming into contact with new religions. The practices involved in some foreign cults imported into Rome caused violent reactions, whilst others were welcomed or at least accepted. Roman religion itself borrowed anthropomorphic practices from the Greeks.⁷¹⁶ Some of the latter's gods were assimilated and acquired new attributes, for example Demeter as Ceres, Adonis as Jupiter.⁷¹⁷ During the expansion of the Empire the Romans continued to adopt the gods of conquered nations on a basis of need rather than creed.⁷¹⁸ The acceptance of Isis began with the political integration of the eastern Mediterranean, but it was only in the mid first century AD that Isis was officially included in the 'sacra publica', hence acquiring the status of an imperial deity. The cult was already known to intellectuals as well as merchants, soldiers and the populace. Under the Roman Empire this cult spread to the Latin West (Italy, Africa, Spain and Gaul).⁷¹⁹ According to Beard, North and Price "the Romans never seemed to have had a methodical policy either of imposing their own religion on the people they conquered or of accumulating defeated gods in their own capital city".⁷²⁰ All over the Empire Roman gods followed in the wake of Roman citizens, but they were also worshipped by those who were allowed to establish themselves within the boundaries of the Roman State.⁷²¹ Some of the Roman Gods were identified with local gods as in the case of Saturn/Baal Ammon.⁷²² Two important foreign cults were widespread: the cult of Isis and the Mithras cult. These were spread by various social groups as noted above, but Mithras in particular was identified with units of the

⁷¹⁵ M. Brett and E. Fentress op. cit. "Complete control of North Africa was achieved by the middle of the 1st century AD." p. 41.

⁷¹⁶ R. Turcan, *Les Cultes orientaux dans le monde romain*- Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1989. pp. 77-83.

⁷¹⁷ (i) A. Wardman, *Religion and statecraft among the Romans*-Granada publishing Ltd, London 1982. p. 3. (ii) Sarolta A. Takacs, *Isis and Sarapis in the Roman World*- E. J. Brill Leiden 1995. p. 27.

⁷¹⁸ This was effected by granting the gods an 'interpretatio Romana'.

⁷¹⁹ M. Beard, J. North and S. Price, *Religions of Rome*- Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998. Vol II p. 297.

⁷²⁰ (i) Ibid p. 239. (ii) A. Wardman op. cit. p. 108.

⁷²¹ D. Cherry *Frontier and Society in Roman North Africa*- Clarendon Press, Oxford 1998. pp. 53-74.

⁷²² M. Brett & E. Fentress op. cit. Religious duality amongst the urban Berbers retaining the old gods on a more intimate level. p. 49.

Roman army.⁷²³ Obviously the two cults were already established in their own right in the Mediterranean world prior to Roman expansion but became widely known throughout the Empire from around 100 AD.⁷²⁴ The cults of Isis and Mithras were amply described by authors from the late republic to the IVth century AD⁷²⁵ and a study of the literature of the period reveals aspects similar to cults in pre-Roman Morocco, as will be indicated below.

The cult of Mithras

According to Vermaseren⁷²⁶ “the Mithras cult followed wherever the Romans planted their standards”. Its presence in Africa and Mauretania was thus an automatic consequence of Roman occupation, as witnessed by the discovery of Mithraic temples in Setif (Tunisia) and Spain.⁷²⁷ It is interesting to note how many parallels exist between the practices of the *Issawa* described in Chapter V alone and those described by ancient writers covering the same geographical area.⁷²⁸ The similarities between the *Issawa* brotherhood and the cult of Mithras are too striking to be passed over without comment. Both groups have a hierarchy that includes wild animals amongst its grades, with the members wearing the relevant animal skins. The repertoire of both includes dances with weapons and also the performing of dances with astrological connections. The proximity of a water source is an obligatory

⁷²³ R. Turcan op. cit. “Mithra honoré d’abord par les ennemis de Rome, allait devenir une idole des légionnaires romains.” p. 193.

⁷²⁴ M. Beard, J. North and S. Price op. cit. The social standards of its members were imperial ex-slaves, soldiers, customs officials. p. 305.

⁷²⁵ M. Rachtel, Rome et les Berbères- Latomus Revue d’Etudes Latines- Bruxelles 1970. The Roman occupation was reduced in Morocco under Diocletianus (245-313AD.) : “Dioclétien abandonna la partie continentale de la Tingitane avec Volubilis vers 284-285 AD., ramena la frontière méridionale au fleuve Loukkos et rattacha la Tingitane maritime au diocèse des Espagnes afin d’assurer la protection du détroit.” p. 258.

⁷²⁶ Vermaseren Mithras, The secret god -Chatto & Windus London 1963. p. 30.

⁷²⁷ (i)P. Paris, “Cultes du Mithraïsme en Espagne”. Revue Archéologique II 1914- pp. 1-31 (ii) M.L. Freyburger, G.Freyburger & J.C.Tautil, Sectes Religieuses en Grèce et à Rome - Ed. Les Belles Lettres Paris 1986. p. 291..(iii) J.A.Ilevbare, Carthage Rome and the Berbers. A Study of social Evolution in ancient North Africa- Ibadan University Press. Nigeria. 1980. “Mithraism was the most powerful of all oriental religions from the second century AD. up to St. Augustin’s time” p.145. “It was difficult for the Mithraist to break from the cult.” p.151. Therefore, he insists that there must have been groups of worshippers of Mithras in North Africa long before documentary evidence tells us about them, as the cult was spread by soldiers and merchants in various parts of the empire, linking commercial cities such as Volubilis. p.146.

⁷²⁸ H. Basset op. cit. Doit-on songer, à propos des vestiges de culte solaire dans les grottes de Berbérie, à une influence directe ou indirecte, qu’auraient pu exercer le mithraïsme et ses sanctuaires souterrains ?- Si M.L. Chatelain a retrouvé récemment à Volubilis des traces du culte de Mithra, rien jusqu’ici ne nous prouve que ce culte ait pénétré dans la population indigène. p. 49.

requirement for both groups. The 'Issawa not only require a pool for immersion at their annual celebration, but also pray to their Master to allow them to drink from his pool.⁷²⁹ Whilst Mithras was depicted in some contexts as a cattle thief, the "jackal" members of the 'Issawa practice petty thieving amongst the crowd during their annual celebrations. The idea of a sacred meal is common to both groups, as is the slaughtering of bulls. Whilst the 'Issawa indulge in the drinking of blood and the *frissa* (eating of the raw meat of sacrificed animals),⁷³⁰ the followers of Mithras were recorded as drinking the blood of the sacrifice.⁷³¹ It is noteworthy that the Mithras cult members regarded the eagle as the "spirit of light" and that the leader or Master of the *Issawa* is referred to as *Taīr Lejbal* (Eagle of the Mountain). Finally honey is used in large quantities by the 'Issawa during their celebrations, whilst the worshippers of Mithras consumed it as a sign of "incorruptibility". All the above details are set out with their relevant references in a comparative table on pages 252-253. It is thus tempting to conclude that the rites and practices of the 'Issawa date back to pre-Islamic times, surviving in secret until the military necessities of the XVIth century allowed their devotees to assume the guise of an authentic religious sect within Islam. It is noteworthy that there is a sect in Baghdad today with similar practices to those of Mithraism. The latter city was of course well impregnated with ancient cults, including both Mithraism⁷³² and Zoroastrianism.⁷³³

⁷²⁹ Brunel op.cit. p.131.

⁷³⁰ Ibid p.142.

⁷³¹ M. Beard, J. North and S. Price op. cit. vol. II. Porphyry's attack on the carnivorous diet of the Mithras sect. p. 311.

⁷³² D.Ulansey, The Cosmic Mysteries of Mithras- OUP -1991 He opposes a Persian origin for the cult but does not go further back than the Graeco-Roman period.

⁷³³ The importance of Zoroastrians in Baghdad is illustrated by the following incident that occurred in Marseilles in 1313 A.D.- An Oriental Jew was suspected of poisoning the oven of the local Seigneur, in which once a week the entire community baked its bread. The suspect's Rabbi defended him in court by explaining that he was simply applying Babylonian Talmudic law, which obliged him to participate in the baking of his bread. It appears that, because Zoroastrians were so numerous in Babylon, the Rabbis there had insisted that all Jews should have ovens separate from them and that each Jew should participate *vitizmo* (himself) in making kosher bread. Obviously this law was "native" to the area from which the Jew came but did not apply to areas where Zoroastrianism was not prevalent. In Manger et boire au Moyen âge -Actes du Colloque de Nice du 15-17 Octobre 1982. CNRS Nice 1984. p. 68.

| Aspect | Mithras cult | Issawa brotherhood |
|-----------|---|--|
| Dress | Robe representing sun-rays, red on white ¹ "Cult related to sun and light" ² . "Cult of fire" ³ . | Woolen tunic and trousers, white with red stripes, plus a red cap. |
| Hierarchy | Seven degrees of initiation including Lion, Soldier, Perses, Raven, Bear, Ox and Hyena ⁴ . Paper masks and animal skins used to represent animals ⁵ . | Eagle (<i>Tair Lejbal</i>) The Master ⁶ , Lions, Panthers, Jackals, Camels, hyenas, cats, all depicted by skins worn over clothing. |
| Dance | Ritual dance with clubs (<i>gabdos</i>) ⁷ . Dance relating to astrology ⁸ . Fire worshipping ⁹ . | <i>Jedba / Hadra</i> dance with clubs, daggers and swords. ¹⁰ Dance honouring seven spirits identified with colours. Associated with divination ¹¹ |
| Water | Cave used by cult always close to a stream or river ¹² . | Water, pool or spring always nearby ¹³ . |
| Thieves | Mithras depicted as a cattle thief ⁴ . | The Jackals thief amongst the audience, whose belongings are returned to them against a ransom ¹⁵ . |

1 M.J.Vermaseren "Mithras, The Secret God", p.100 Id. p.320.

2 M.L. Freyburger, G.Freyburger & J.C.Tautil "Sectes Religieuses en Grèce et à Rome" Ed. Les Belles Lettres Paris 1986.

3 Id. p.320.

4 Freyburger op.cit. p.311 also Vermaseren op.cit. p 138 quoting Porphyry 3rd cent AD: De Absentia IV, 16

5 F.Cumont "Mysteries of Mithra." Dover Publications NewYork 1956.

6 K.Naamouni.op.cit.p.25.

7 Freyburger op.cit. p.320.

8 Vermaseren op.cit pp 153-162 and p 305 (refers to Philon "De Migrat Abraham", 178) F.Cumont op.cit. p.10.

9 Freyburger op.cit. p.320 and Cumont op.cit pp. 99 & 114.

10 R.Brunel "Essai sur la Confrérie Religieuse des Aissaouas au Maroc" p.185 Ed. Afrique Orient Casablanca 1926.

11 R.Brunel op.cit.pp 185-189.

12 Cumont op.cit p.114 and Freyburger op.cit. p.307.(quoting Porphyry De Antro, 17 and Tertullian De Baptismo V. D).

13 Brunel op.cit.p.137.

14 Vermaseren op.cit. p.181 (quoting Porphyry: De Antro Nympharum, 18).

15 Brunel op.cit. pp. 215-224.

| Aspect | Mithras cult | 'Issawa brotherhood |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Food | Sacred meal ¹⁶ . Bull slaughtered for Mithras banquet, the adherents sharing the meal together. "Dinner with Helios" – "Boire le sang créateur d'éternité. Breuvage magique." ¹⁷ , | Ceremonial meal (<i>Tā'am Lemma</i>) of the 'Issawa served by the community. A bull sacrificed in the name of the saint. Raw meat from animals sacrificed by individuals eaten at the "frissa" ¹⁸ . |
| Snakes and Scorpions | Evil spirit, symbol of cold and death ¹⁹ . Contrast between the snake "spirit of darkness" and the eagle "spirit of light" ²⁰ . | Immunity to venomous snakes ²¹ and scorpions. |
| Honey | Consumption of Honey by adherents ²² : "signe d'incorruptibilité" | Large consumption of honey by the members of the sect ²³ . |

Localities where Mithras cult was practised:

Mesopotamia, Egypt, Africa and Mauretania.

¹⁶ Vermaseren op.cit p.100.

¹⁷ Freyburger op.cit. p.220. (quoting Herodotus Hist. VII, 114)

¹⁸ Brunel op.cit. pp. 199-215.

¹⁹ Freyburger op.cit. pp. 69 & 159. Cumont op.cit. pp.130 & 137.

²⁰ Vermaseren op.cit. p.111.

²¹ Brunel op.cit. pp. 168-178. Also Douité "Magie et Religion" p. 237.

²² Freyburger op.cit. p.310 (quoting Tertullian., Adv.Marcionem,I, 13.

²³ Brunel op.cit. p.132.

The Roman cult of Isis

However convincing the Mithras/Issawa relationship may appear from the above analysis, the same type of cult/brotherhood connection does not appear to be evident for the cult of Isis. The latter flourished in North Africa in the pre-Roman period and during the first four centuries AD. This is witnessed by its adherents and also by its detractors. The former included Juba II,⁷³⁴ who brought a crocodile from the interior of Africa as a present for the local temple of Isis. Another source was the North African satirical writer Lucius Apuleius in whose play the "Golden Ass"⁷³⁵ the principal character Lucius is converted to the worship of Isis. Amongst the detractors of the cult was the Christian writer St Augustine, who seems to have had problems with his congregation drifting back into pagan practices.⁷³⁶

Returning to the work of Apuleius, "the Golden Ass", this was typical of a genre of satire in vogue during antiquity in North Africa and Egypt, where the object of ridicule was identified with the Ass⁷³⁷. However the value of the work lies not so much in its satirical content but in its description of a particular socio-cultural environment and its accompanying pagan beliefs and practices in this case those of the cult of Isis⁷³⁸. The fact that soon after the time of Apuleius⁷³⁹ the "Iseums" were closed and destroyed in all parts of the Empire from Syria⁷⁴⁰ to North Africa increases the value of the work as an object of socio-anthropological study. Isism was

⁷³⁴ (i) R.E. Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World* - p. 60. From Pliny, Nat. Hist. 5, 10, 51 : Fra 167. (ii) For J. Desanges, *Afrique du Nord* "le roi Ptolomé, fils de Juba II fut exécuté en 39-40 pour diverses raisons ..en autres.. la concurrence dans la hiérarchie isiaque". in "Pline l'Ancien Histoire Naturelle (livre v, 1-46) - Société d'Édition les Belles Lettres. Paris 1980. p. 80.

⁷³⁵ (i) Carl C. Schlam *The metamorphoses of Apuleius* - G. Duckworth & Co 1992. (ii) Shumante, Nancy, *Crisis and conversion in Apuleius' Metamorphoses* - The University of Michigan Press 1996. (iii) Marianetti, Marie C. *-Religion and Politics in Aristophanes Cloud*" Olms-Weidmann Zurich, New York 1992.

⁷³⁶ J.A. Ilevbare op.cit. : St Augustine found Isiac priests in the streets of Carthage, mainly in commercial areas. pp.142-143.

⁷³⁷ Griffiths, J.G. *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride* - University of Wales Press 1970. ' Authentic traditions concerning the hippopotamus, the crocodile and the ass.' pp. 59 & 70.

⁷³⁸ See R.E Witt op. cit. p. 19.

⁷³⁹ For Griffiths op. cit., only 50 years separate Plutarch from Apuleius but he found the latter to be more oriental in his details than Plutarch. p. 50.

⁷⁴⁰ (i) M. Leglay, J.L. Voisin, Y. Le Bohec, *Histoire Romaine*- Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1991: Libanius "Discours pour les Temples" (381 A.D.) p 512. (ii) M. Beard, J. North and S. Price op. cit vol II p. 360.

essentially an Oriental⁷⁴¹ cult that derived its financial support from oriental merchants, who tended to spread the cult wherever they settled. In places where it became established the merchants provided the priests with funds to maintain the temple (Iseum) and ensure that the statue of the goddess was properly decorated. The priests were also responsible for organizing the annual procession during the festival of Isis, in which the goddess was carried on a palanquin, followed by temple-servants carrying lanterns and offerings, accompanied by musicians.

Using the above description of the Isis cult as a template and placing it over the general picture of celebrations in present day Morocco, the common features which become evident are by no means indicative of a complete and homogenous relationship. Nevertheless, the following elements appear to have an aura of validity:

- a) The extensive funding by the merchant class of Isiac rites and celebrations has its parallel in the funding of the *Solṭan Tolba* festival by the same socio-economic group. Could it be that the persecution of Isism caused its devotees to disguise their main festival as a harmless pageant, which later became a student's festival with no religious connotations?

- b) The celebration of the Mawlid as described earlier in Salé in the form of a "festival of lanterns" *'id shumu'*, in which the lanterns and the cloth to decorate the saint's tomb are carried in procession, is highly reminiscent of the Isiac "lady of light"⁷⁴² celebrations where the goddess is carried in procession.⁷⁴³

The information set out in this and the previous section tends to suggest that the records of the Roman era do have much to relate that might shed light upon the

⁷⁴¹ A. Jodin, *Volubilis Regia Jubae*- Contribution à l'étude des civilisations du Maroc Antique Pré-Claudien – Paris 1987.p. 231: refers to Polybius (200-120 B.C.), XXXIV,13- saying that whilst investigating for the Romans, the Greek historian visited Volubilis.. I couldn't find any reference to such a claim but such mention was for Alexandria and not Volubilis.

⁷⁴² R.E. Witt op. cit. Festival of the Lamps, lamps of Isis p. 122. See map p 56 showing temples of Isis in Northern Morocco.

origins of some Moroccan food rituals. After Rome, the next obvious candidate for transmission of cults is Greece. However the Greeks, though enterprising in their eastbound colonizations, were less successful in their westbound projects, probably because of Phoenician hostility. The latter are, a priori, the most likely choice from the ancient period, since there are Phoenician and Roman archaeological traces in North Africa. The Phoenicians were effectively dispensers of civilization in classical antiquity, commencing with the IXth century BC until the fall of Carthage in the IInd century BC at the end of the third Punic war. According to Lancel⁷⁴⁴, by this time more than 300 cities existed in North Africa ranging as far as Lixus⁷⁴⁵ (Larache) on the Atlantic coast. Thus not only did Carthage serve to link the Classical period with antiquity but it also gave North Africa its place in world history, whilst strong Liby-Phoenician influences were left even after its disappearance.⁷⁴⁶ A notable characteristic of the Phoenician religion and its attendant mythology was a lack of consistency. Based on a pantheon in the early 2nd millennium, the religion appears by the 1st millennium to have fragmented, so that each city had only its own specific pair of local gods.⁷⁴⁷ The principal feature of Phoenician theology was the immolation of the god by cremation in a form of "resurrection by fire".⁷⁴⁸ This, coupled with a later tendency towards human sacrifice, particularly in the "enclaves of the west",⁷⁴⁹ tends to disqualify Phoenician rites from any common element with those of Morocco. It is also revealed that local cults of the period, i.e. the indigenous cults of the Berbers were not completely eradicated by Phoenician deities such as Baal and Astarte, who were assimilated with local gods, giving Baal/Ammon and Astarte/Neit.⁷⁵⁰ But an interesting feature was the discovery by archeologists of Phoenician connections with Ancient Egyptian cults.⁷⁵¹ This is not surprising since the Phoenicians already had links with the latter civilization when they were concentrated in their Eastern location

⁷⁴³ A.Tazi. op.cit. "Ibn Khallikan and Ibn Khaldun lament the neglect of the lantern festival in Egypt."

⁷⁴⁴ S. Lancel *Carthage*- Fayard Paris 1992. p. 279.

⁷⁴⁵ Cintas, P. *Contribution à l'étude de l'expansion Carthaginoise au Maroc*- Publication de l'Institut des Hautes-Etudes Marocaines. Tome LVI Paris 1955. "Lixus était désignée par les auteurs anciens comme une vieille cité de fondation phénicienne et comme capitale des Puniqes de l'Ouest. p. 60.

⁷⁴⁶ S. Lancel op. cit. p. 282.

⁷⁴⁷ Aubet, M.E., *The Phoenicians and the West*- Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1993. pp 124-126.

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid p.128.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid p.126.

⁷⁵⁰ (i) J. Vercoutter, *Les objets Egyptiens et Egyptisants du Mobilier funéraire Carthaginois*- Librairie Orientale P. Geuthner Paris 1945.p. 361. (ii) P. Cintas op. cit. Egyptian artefacts from 21st and 22nd dynasties and a sphinx were found at Lixus.pp. 63-64.

⁷⁵¹ (i)Vercoutter op. cit. pp. 312-337. (ii) Lancel op. cit. p. 454.

at the other end of the Mediterranean. Another significant finding is that Phoenician gods were only found in those areas that were under their control.⁷⁵² Although their religion was less manifest amongst the North African population its cultural and economic conditions were highly influential.⁷⁵³ Moreover, Phoenician contact with other ethnic groups was invariably through their trading along sea routes, a feature that would tend to diminish the possibility of their influence penetrating far inland.⁷⁵⁴ Thus whilst Moscati asserts that the Phoenicians had a great influence upon the cultural lives of peoples living around their enclaves, he also points out that in today's Tunisia and Algeria and also their colonies in Morocco, the Phoenician beliefs were confined to the religion of the colonies.⁷⁵⁵ After the Phoenician and Roman civilizations, the next option within the area of geographical feasibility has to be Ancient Egypt, whose westward access is not barred by any significant obstacle other than distance.

In this context it is interesting to note that the Ancient Egyptians used the term "Libyan" to refer to all peoples living West of the Nile delta as far as the Atlantic.⁷⁵⁶ Furthermore there is evidence that there were many contacts, often hostile, between the Pharaohs and the Libyan tribes. Many of the latter eventually settled in Egypt, some as peaceful immigrants, others as defeated warriors, impressed into service in the Egyptian army.⁷⁵⁷ Descendants of Libyan immigrants later attained high office in the priesthood and the army, eventually becoming Pharaohs over a period that lasted for two centuries, (XXIInd and XXIIIrd Libyan dynasties).⁷⁵⁸ Consequently the migration of people and ideas between North Africa and Egypt must be accepted as feasible. Furthermore this option is advantageous since Ancient Egypt, with its well-recorded history and religious texts, has over the years been used as a major dating

⁷⁵² P. Cintas op. cit. Whilst there is a complete lack of any Punic artefact further South than Mogadaor (Essaouira), tombs of "punicised" peasants have been found. p. 70.

⁷⁵³ M. Brett & E. Fentress "The Berbers"-Blackwell Publishers Oxford 1996. pp. 24-25.

⁷⁵⁴ J.A.Ilevbare "Carthage Rome and the Berbers. A Study of social Evolution in ancient North Africa". Ibadan University Press. Nigeria. 1980. "The Phoenicians settled in colonies along the coasts stretching from the Altars of Philaeni to the river Sala, beyond the Straits of Gibraltar." p. 124.

⁷⁵⁵ (i) S. Moscati, *The Phoenicians* -Gruppo Editoriale Fabbri. Milano 1988. p. 114. (ii) J.A.Ilevbare op.cit. The urban Africans (merchants) may have taken an active part in the worship of Phoenician deities.p.125.

⁷⁵⁶ D.O'Connor, *Libya and Egypt c.1300-750 BC*- Edited Anthony Leahy. SOAS, CNME and The Society for Libyan Studies.1986. "In classical antiquity the term 'Libyan' was applied to a variety of peoples extending across northern Africa from the Atlantic to the Nile Delta".p. 30.

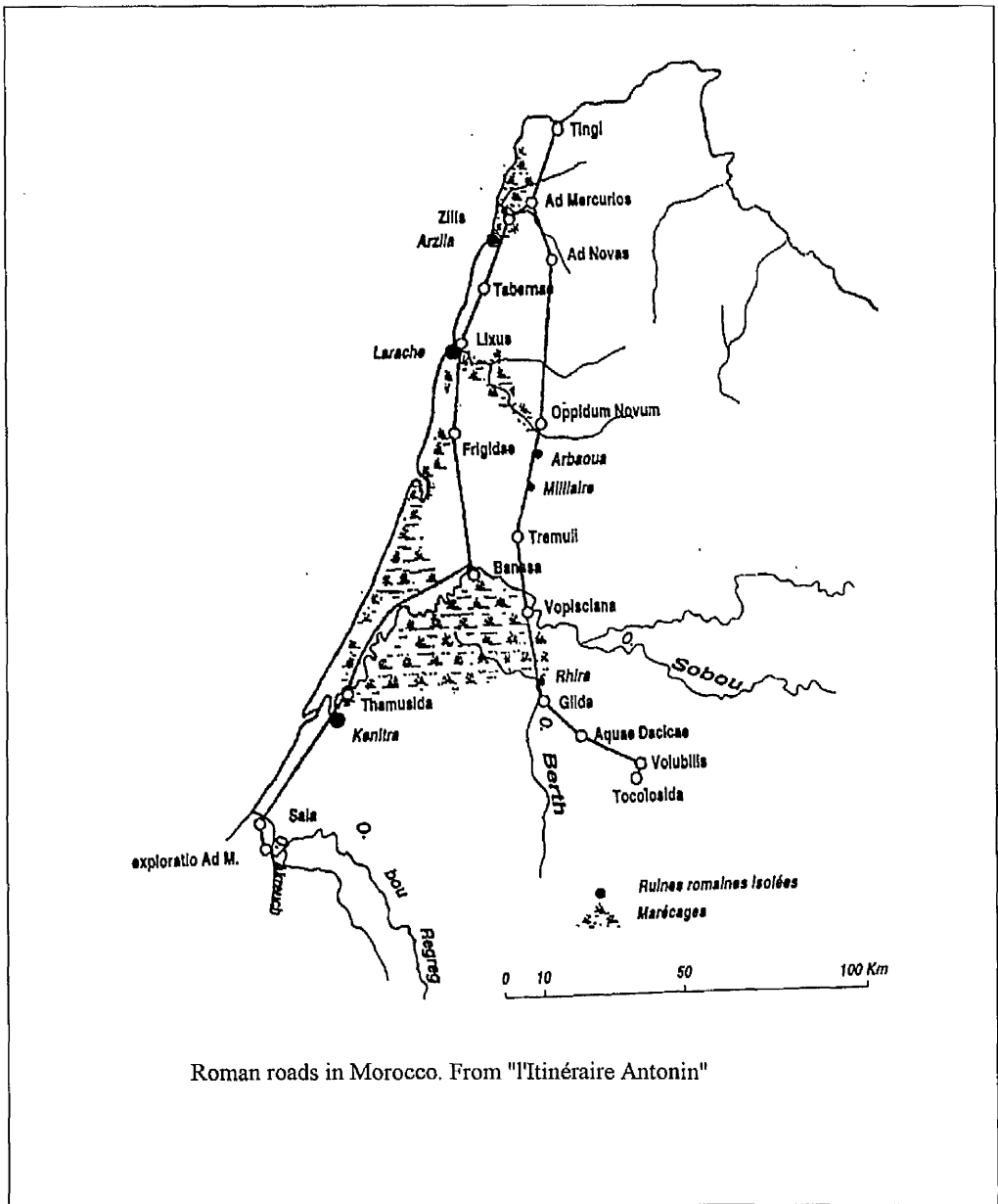
⁷⁵⁷ Nicolas Grimal., *Histoire de l'Egypte Ancienne*.- Ed.Fayard 1988. p. 334.

tool for neighbouring ancient civilizations. Without this dating tool, it would be pointless to attempt to trace Moroccan history beyond the first recorded Phoenician commercial exchanges of around 1000 BC.⁷⁵⁹ In fact, Ancient Egyptian records provide detailed information concerning a period that extends back several millennia to around 3100 BC, the time of the first dynasties and also the date for the emergence of hieroglyphic writing.⁷⁶⁰ A study of these records will assist in identifying original myth stories and it is possible that an indication of their origins may emerge.

⁷⁵⁸ P.A.Clayton, *Chronique de Pharaons*. -Casterman 1995 (French transl. from Hodder & Stoughton). p. 182-187.

⁷⁵⁹ S.Moscati op.cit. pp 180-184.

⁷⁶⁰ P.A.Clayton. op.cit. p.16.



Roman roads in Morocco. From "l'itinéraire Antonin"

From M.Euzennat "Les voies romaines du Maroc dans l'itinéraire Antonin" 1962
 Tome II p.596 Pl. CXXX.

The Agrarian Myth of Egypt

The source of fundamental belief in the Ancient Egyptian religion and for many centuries, the central figure of religious observance, was Osiris and his cult. This cult was based on the concepts of resurrection after death and an absolute control over the bodies and souls of men.⁷⁶¹ By following the story of this particular myth step by step, we may perhaps establish not only whether there are organic links that connect the two societies, but also identify and amplify from where and how such beliefs came.

Our enquiry will examine how the Osirian myth affected the lives of the people and how its interpretation in the night sky governed the operation of an essentially agricultural economy. The story of Osiris may be resumed in a few lines. He was apparently a happily married king, whose brother Set resolved to kill him and reign in his stead. Set executed his project by putting him in a box formed from a tree-trunk and throwing it in the river. His wife Isis mourned him and searched for the body, which she found with the help of some children and subsequently embalmed, burning the box in which he had perished. With the help of the gods Isis managed to make herself pregnant from him. Set learned of this, stole the embalmed body, cut it up and scattered the pieces. Subsequently Isis located the pieces and gave them a proper burial. After the birth of their son Horus, Osiris went to his eternal kingdom, the underworld, where he remained to judge the dead, thus becoming the king of everlasting life. Hence only those, who have lived righteous lives, deserve to join him in eternal life and happiness. However, the fundamental impact of the Osiris myth, which preserved it for millennia, lies in the astute manner that its inventors depicted it in the night sky. Maspero⁷⁶² comments that “c’est donc un axiome de l’école de l’égyptologie, que les étoiles ont joué un rôle secondaire dans la formation de la religion égyptienne. Les dieux sont ‘des dieux stellaires’ ”.

⁷⁶¹ (i) C.A. Wallis Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian resurrection* -Vol. I -1911 The Media Society Ltd. Reprinted Dover Publications 1975 p .VII. (ii) Adolf Erman, *The Ancient Egyptians*- Harper & Row Publishers. New York 1966. pp. 140-145.

⁷⁶² Maspero, G. *Etude de Mythologie et d’Archéologie Egyptiennes* – Bibliothèque Egyptologique Ernest Leroux Editeur. Paris 1893.

At this point it would seem appropriate to explain how the Ancient Egyptians regarded the heavenly bodies and the night sky and to what purpose they dedicated their observations. From early in the history of man, astrologers and/or astronomers had been following the movements of the heavenly bodies. They noticed that, whilst all the stars appeared outwardly similar, certain of them formed groups that could be likened to imaginary figures.⁷⁶³ They had also noted that the movements of the sun and the moon related to fixed periods, from which they derived the concept of months. Although astronomy was not as advanced as it is today, they knew the seven main planets and the visible stars. In particular, the movements of the sun were defined in relation to stars and constellations that appeared regularly each year. Viewed from the earth, the sun appeared to pass approximately one month in each of a series of constellations. These constellations related to changes of season and were referred to as “sun-houses”. Hence it was possible to record precisely the passing of the seasons and eventually, to predict their arrival. Since the society of Ancient Egypt was highly organized, the measurement of time with some practical degree of accuracy was of importance. As early as 3000 BC, the abilities in linear measurement were indisputable, as witnessed by the precise construction of the pyramids. For measuring the hours of the day sundials or clepsydras were employed. At night, tables of constellations were available, so that the hour could be determined by the appearance of certain stars over the horizon. However, it was realised that these tables had to be modified every ten days, from which was derived the concept of a ten-day unit called a decan.⁷⁶⁴ Thus the year consisted of thirty-six of such decans, the five extra days being attributed to the birthdays of Osiris and his brothers and sisters. These decans formed the basic division of the zodiacal months and were identified with protecting gods. It may well be that this was a key factor in the spreading of the cult of Isis and Osiris. Perhaps the people were mobilised and converted to a sedentary existence to harness their energy in order to work the earthly fields, i.e. agriculture, thus securing for them a place in the world of Osiris.

⁷⁶³ N. Grimal, *Histoire de l’Égypte Ancienne* – Fayard, Paris 1988. p.68.

⁷⁶⁴ (i) S. Aufrère, *L’Univers minéral dans la pensée égyptienne*- Institut français d’archéologie orientale du Caire- Le Caire 1991. “.....étoiles ou groupes d’étoiles comptant pour chacun trois dizaines de degrés qui recouvrent chaque signe du zodiac” p.181– (ii) A.Mercatante, *Who’s who in Egyptian Mythology*-The Scarecrow Press, Inc. Lanham & London 1995. p.35. (iii) S. Sauneron *Dictionnaire de la Civilisation Égyptienne* – Fernand Hazan Paris 1992. p.30.

In explanation of the above concept, we can analyse the movements of the night sky and the relationship it maintains with the movements of the sun, specifically:

- a. The position of the stars and their appearance over the horizon, immediately before sunrise.
- b. The position of the Sun and its ecliptic path in today's twelve zodiacal signs.

By following the sky imagery outlined above, we can follow the sequence of the story of Osiris and its terrestrial significance. Not only does the myth deal with the origins of Osiris and Isis, but it also does more than state the coincidence of mythical events with zodiacal occurrences. The story indicates that man is not devoid of assistance from heaven. In fact a heavenly clock tells him when his endeavours are most needed in the fields and when he will reap the fruits of his labour. However, all this work was only likely to be performed if man had a strong psychological incentive, such as a cult story of a couple, who were deprived of the joy of living in the same manner as other human beings on earth. Not only did the story fit these requirements but, in addition, a profound astronomical language with its own symbols was invented. In order to illustrate the movements of the "star-clock" used by the Ancient Egyptians, a series of maps has been attached at pages 264 to 267. These maps have been prepared using Casablanca, Morocco as a reference point for the computer-generated simulations of the night sky. This choice is not a random one, but is based on the fact that the prime religious sites of Ancient Egypt lie in a similar latitude to that of Casablanca.

In our reference year of 3500 BC⁷⁶⁵, the cosmic drama begins on the 21st March, when the heavens show the Sun entering the constellation of Aries, represented by the horned ram, (page 264). Immediately below this constellation and below the horizon stands the constellation of Orion, dubbed Orion/Osiris in Ancient Egypt. This is represented as Osiris carrying the three stars of Orion on his belt; his birth sign as God of Fertility is the Ram-headed god *Khnum*.⁷⁶⁶ This period is seen as the birth of the god Osiris, for he is represented as the grain sprouting in the land. He was in the ground fertilising it and it is he, who brings the water that irrigates the dead earth. Thus the first shoots symbolise that he is returning in his terrestrial rebirth. But

⁷⁶⁵ The significance of the choice of year will be explained later in this chapter.

⁷⁶⁶ W. Budge, *Osiris*- Vol. II p.15.

although Osiris is the Ram-god, by virtue of his rebirth under the constellation Aries, his presence below the ground is heralded by the Water-sign (today's Aquarius) in the heavens, as the water he has brought to help germinate the grain. This is the beginning of the year for any agrarian civilization. The new crops in the fields are showing their shoots and the revival of life is thus promised. So Osiris will not leave the earth until his watering duties have been fully performed. The guarantee and hope of this are in the sky image. The herds of cattle are being rejuvenated too and this is also the time for the ewes to be lambing, to replace the older generations.⁷⁶⁷ The computer simulation (page 265) shows that Orion/Osiris leaves the earth, that is to say rises above the horizon, at the same time as, on the 12th May, the Water-sign (today's Aquarius) leaves the heavens. By the 21st May, Orion leaves the field (horizon) to appear brightly on the 31st May. According to Ancient Egyptian calculations, seventy days after his birth on 21st March, he moves from the earth to the cosmic realms. It is noteworthy that, in the North African sky, whenever the Water-sign leaves the heavens, Orion/Osiris appears on the horizon in a display of perfect cosmic time keeping, this being the local grain harvest season. Osiris is thus the link between earth and sky, both of which are his kingdoms, a logical concept, since his mother is the Sky-goddess *Nut* and his father is the Earth-god *Geb*. However, the really important event is the appearance of Sirius in the sky, just before sunrise on 13th July. From mid July until 21st August Orion/Osiris is united with Sirius/Isis in the heavens; the only time in the whole year when the Milky Way is bright. Orion/Osiris disappears from the heavens on 28th August (page 266) and the constellation in which Sirius/Isis figures is last seen on 21st September (page 267). We are now at the Autumn Equinox, when both legendary constellations have left the heavens. Returning to the myth, Isis is now seeking her dead husband in order to reconstitute him in the ground to be reborn again. This interpretation of the movements of zodiacal constellations illustrates how they connect with the agrarian calendar.

In the latitude chosen for the star-clock illustration whether it be in Morocco or Egypt, the fingerprint of the Osiris myth is identified as the rising, on the 21st March, of the Sun within the constellation of the Horned Ram or Aries, identified in North Africa with the God Khnum. The dates of the myth-related sidereal events depicted above were in fact valid for the reference year 3500 BC. However, the continual precession

⁷⁶⁷ The useful reproductive life of the ram is only four years, after which he is only fit for slaughter.

of the earth over the millennia has caused them to be far from correct today. Nevertheless, what is of particular significance is that the historical period of validity of these event-dates and consequently, of their theological plausibility, can be defined as being from 4000 BC to 1000 BC, that is to say, the period of about three millennia during which the Sun rose on 21st March each year approximately within the constellation of the Ram, Aries (= Khnum). The second date is not in fact a cut-off point for the cult, since it was by then already well established, but the first date is highly significant since it is the earliest possible date at which the sky-related agrarian calendar cult could have been valid. The above analysis of the Osiris myth, with the agrarian calendar it generated, may seem at first glance more detailed than might appear necessary for a comparative study. However, as will be seen in later parts of this chapter, this detailed approach has become necessary, because of the common features it can reveal, when placed alongside the non-Islamic and hence pre-Islamic cult-rites that have survived in Morocco.

The choice of cult-rites of festivals as a tool for the analysis and identification of myths is due to two factors:

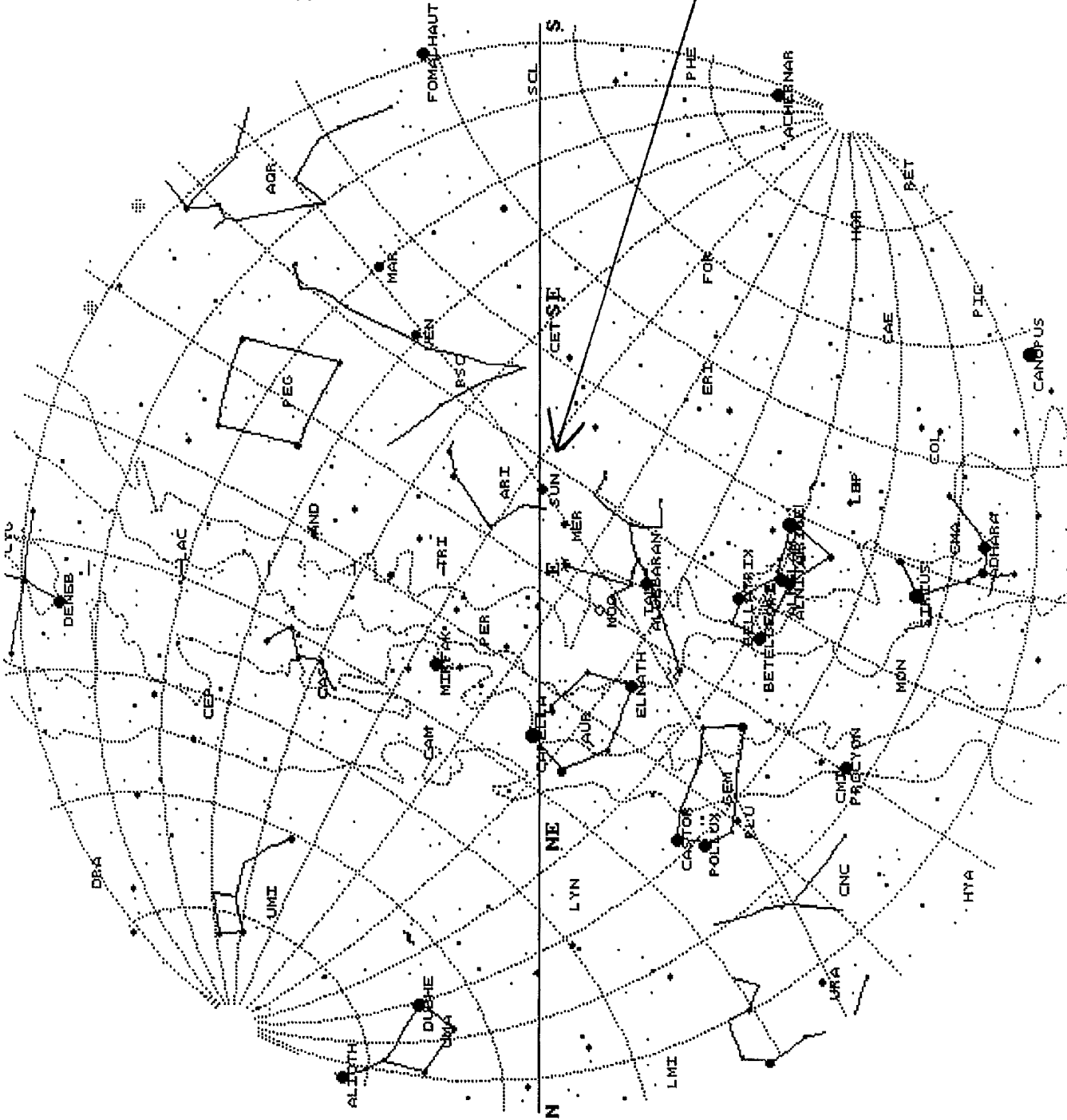
- a. The lack of indigenous written records showing what cults and myths prevailed in Morocco in ancient times.
- b. The fact that festivals invariably involve specially prepared food, often with cult associations, (never forgetting that food is the theme of this study).

It is therefore proposed to analyse the cult rites or festivals of Morocco that are clearly pre-Islamic in character and derivation. However, because of the tendency throughout history for newly arrived religions to adopt, modify and thus suppress previous cult festivals, some of the festivals listed appear on the surface to be Islamic. However the essential test is that, if a festival can be shown to have been celebrated according to a date fixed by a solar calendar, then its true origin can not be Islamic, since the Islamic lunar calendar causes its festivals to change their dates every year in relation to the Gregorian calendar. As each festival or rite is examined it has been placed alongside the Ancient Egyptian mythology to determine whether any correlation exists. In this

process special attention has been paid to social material on human behaviour collected in Morocco. In particular the structure of non-verbal material has been analysed in order to facilitate its comparison with the highly sophisticated Egyptian records. However, on occasions when the correlation seems obvious, the Moroccan ritual practice and the myth have been included in the same context.

21 Mar 3500 BC

The Sun in Aries



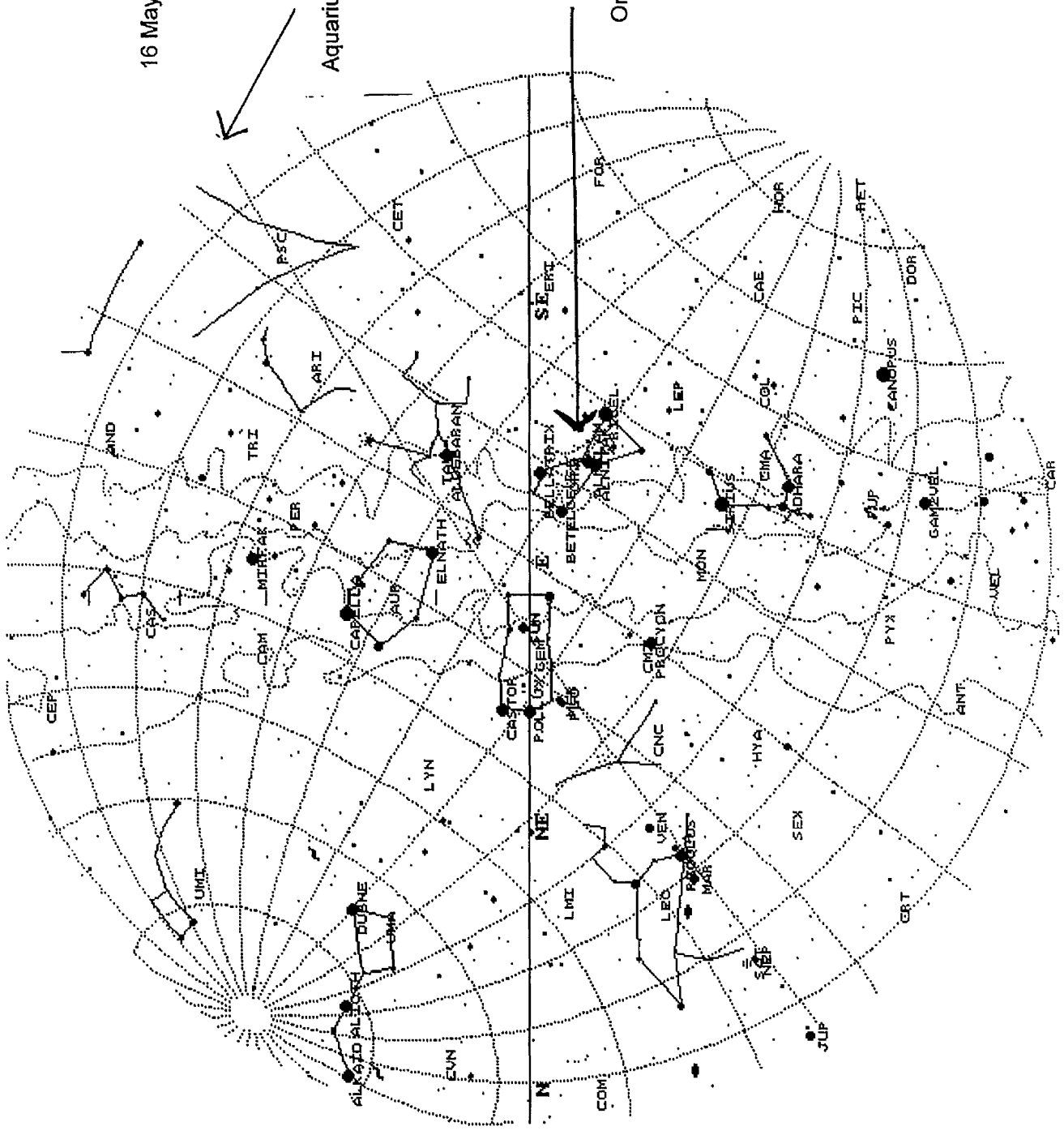
Casablanca
33°39'N
7°35'W

16 May 3500 BC

Aquarius (Water) has gone

Orion/Osiris beginning
to appear

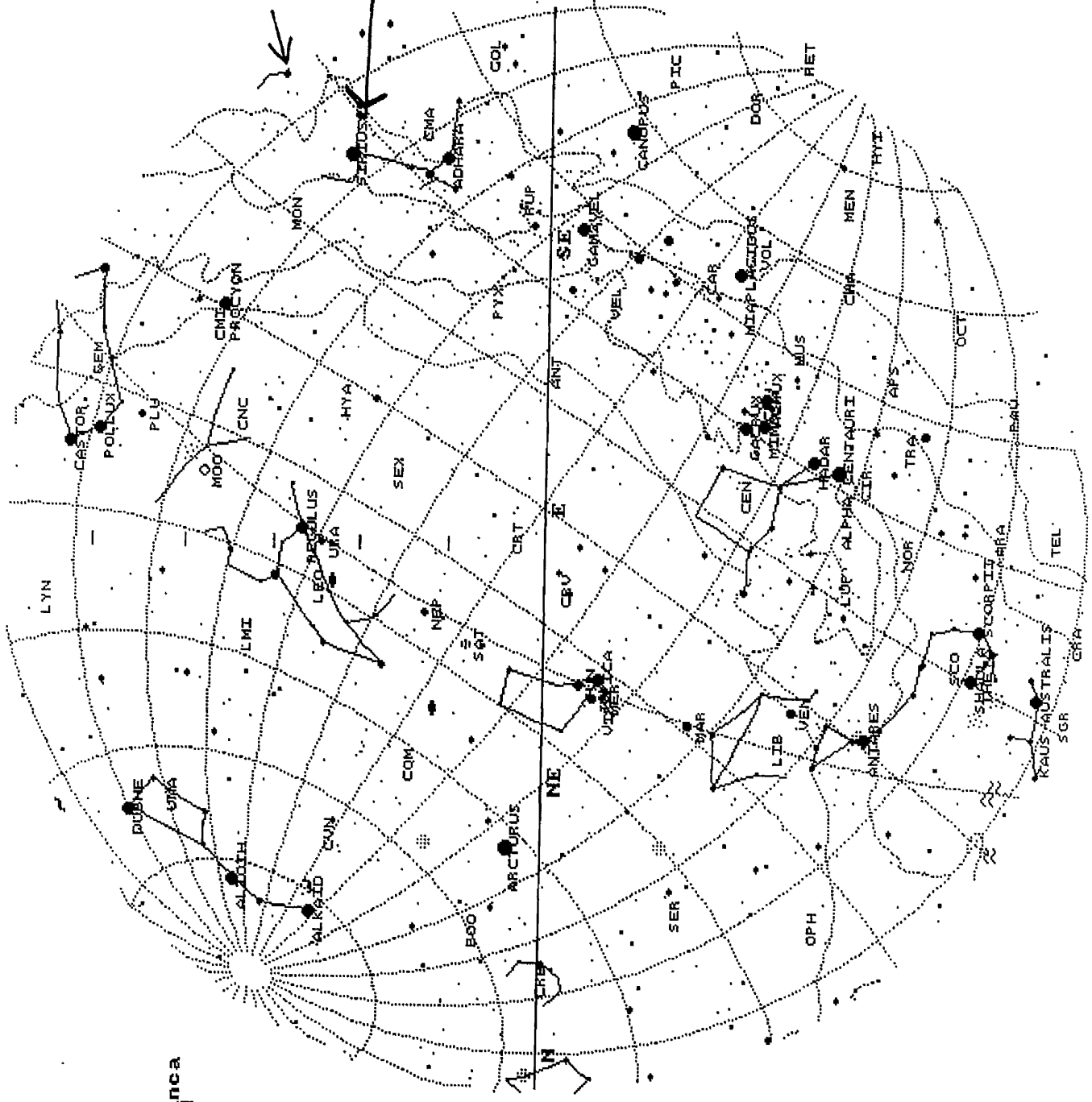
Casablanca
33° 39' N
7° 35' W



27 Aug 3500 BC

Last star of Orion/Osiris about to disappear

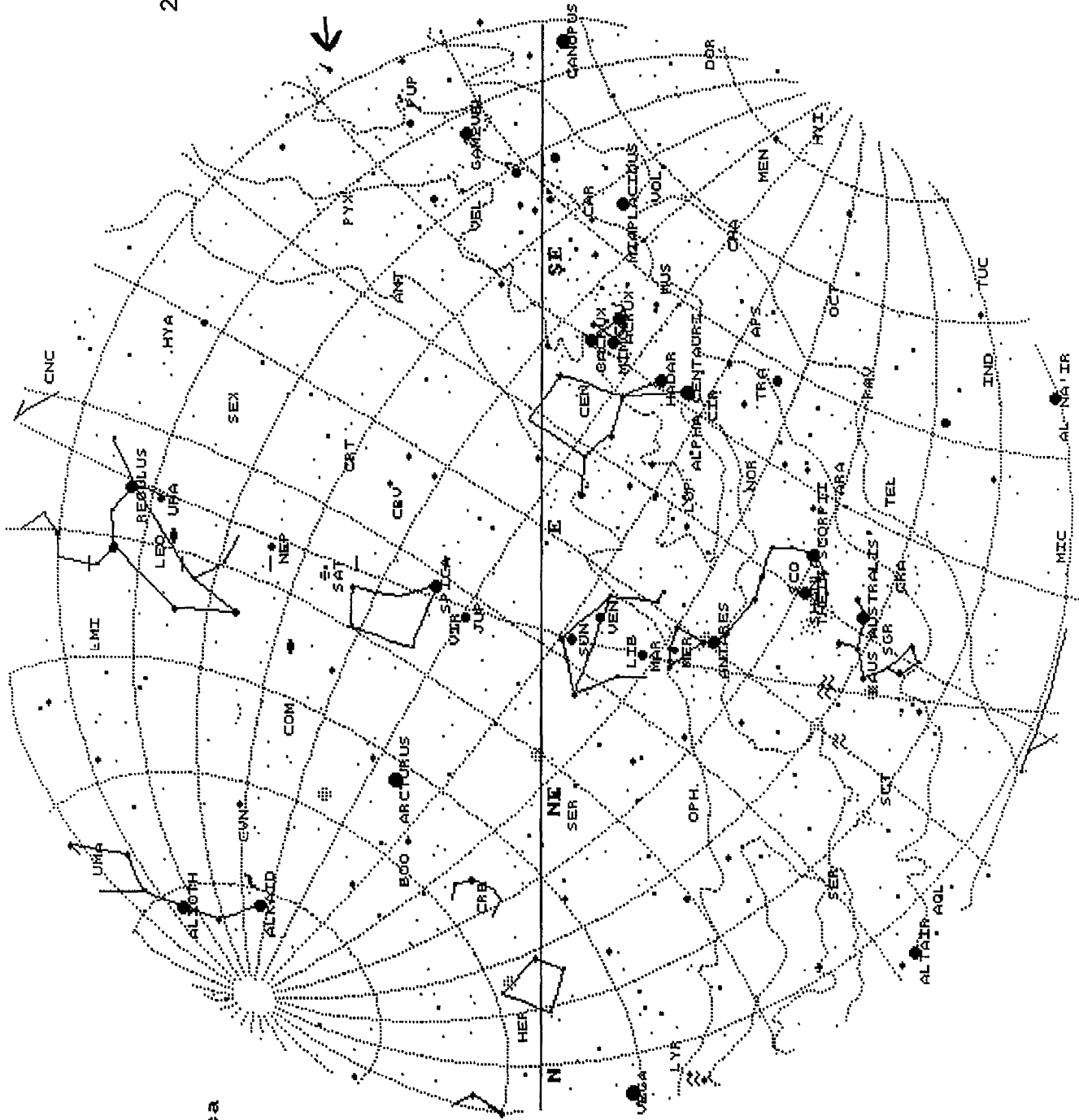
Sirius/Isis still visible



Casablanca
33°39' N
7°35' W

21 Sep 3500 BC

Last star of Sirius/Isis
Constellation about
to disappear



Casablanca
33°39'N
7°35'W

Ancient origins, comparability and transmission of rituals

The ritualization of the Ram in Morocco

The discovery⁷⁶⁸ of the Ram rock-paintings in North Africa has shown that this cult pre-dated the arrival of the Phoenicians in the area. The cult of the Ram god and the Ogdoad (eight primitive gods creating the sun), was also dominant in pre-dynastic Egypt. Herodotus records that in 500 BC the Libyans still sacrificed to the Sun and the Moon.⁷⁶⁹ Bates⁷⁷⁰ identifies this cult in relation to the Egyptian gods as late as the XVIIIth Dynasty, whilst Basset notes that, for the Libyans, Amon was the god of the flock. This cult survived in North Africa, whereas in Egypt it would appear that it was eclipsed by other cults introduced by successive dynasties. G. Camps⁷⁷¹ believes that this god was indigenous to North Africa, whereas Legley considers that it was brought from Thebes through the Sahara and adopted by the Berbers.⁷⁷² Subsequently, when Roman power was established in North Africa, this god was identified with Saturn,⁷⁷³ (Saturn = satus (sowing), satorum= seeded land). Legley records that temples to this agrarian god were to be found all over Roman occupied North Africa, particularly in what are today Tunisia and Algeria, but less frequently in the Volubilis area.⁷⁷⁴ He suggests that there may have been a form of resistance to the invader, in terms of the name used for the god. Thus the occupier would use Saturn, whilst the indigenous population would use Amon. Whatever name might have been used, the god was seen as a protector⁷⁷⁵ of the harvest, of livestock and husbandry, the bringer

⁷⁶⁸ P. Mackendrick, The North African Stones Speak. Groom Helm London 1980.

⁷⁶⁹ Herodotus III, 188.

⁷⁷⁰ (i) Bates O., The Eastern Libyans- Cass. London 1970. (ii) N. Grimal op. cit. “.dieu Bélér, Amon et son père”. p. 57.

⁷⁷¹ G. Camps Les Berbères- p. 149.

⁷⁷² M. Legley, Saturne l'Africain Vol. III p.429.

⁷⁷³ M. Legley, Histoire Romaine- p.365.

⁷⁷⁴ M. Legley Saturne l'Africain :In Volubilis -Saturne dieu protecteur des moissons et des troupeaux, bienfaiteur des familles et guérisseur. Vol. II p. 336.

⁷⁷⁵ This would explain the celebration in the *Gnawa/Issawa* transic dance, where the participants get down on all fours and devour *zameta* like animals and also eat mint, symbolic of grass. Hence the dancer represents the humans, the fauna and the flora. In G. Rachet op. cit. “Amon is part of the nine

of warmth and general doer of good. The relevant festival was celebrated between 13th and 21st December,⁷⁷⁶ corresponding to the local sowing season. Food symbols have been found in temples dedicated to Amon/Saturn, ranging from rock-carvings to sophisticated stelae.⁷⁷⁷

Whilst the authors quoted above have confirmed the antiquity of ram worship in North Africa and Ancient Egypt, they tend to have examined the subject more in terms of origins and transmission of the cult. The suggestion that, under the cloak of one of Islam's most important festivals the Moroccans are albeit unwittingly, perpetuating ancient pagan practices does not seem to have been investigated. It seems unlikely that an agrarian people, who appear to have been deeply rooted in the same area since ancient times, should continue such practices unless they had a meaning, even if their religious significance has been forgotten. In short, it must be accepted that nothing is done in a ritual context that does not have a meaning; the problem being to discover the identity of that meaning. In this connection it would seem pertinent to examine how the importance given to the ram in Morocco, before, during and after the *°Id al Adhā*, differentiates that country from all other Islamic countries. In the first place, the price paid for the animal is often disproportionate to the means of the family.⁷⁷⁸ However, the element that sets Morocco apart is the ritual importance given to the animal itself and the use made of every part thereof. Whilst the latter is described in detail in Chapter V, it is worthwhile summarising the details here in a strictly ritual context:

- The night before the *°Id al Adhā*, some people apply *khol* to the right eye of the ram and make a mark with henna between his eyes.
- The first meat eaten from the ram is a shoulder, so that the scapula can be used to foretell the prospects for the next year's farming.⁷⁷⁹

gods that created the world. His name means the hidden one, the God for justice, for the poor, the orphans and widows as well as the prisoners." pp 32-33.

⁷⁷⁶ Vermaseren op.cit. Saturn had the most prominent place in the order of the seven planets celebrated. Planets were portrayed in the sequence of the days of the week : Saturday = Saturn. pp. 155-157.

⁷⁷⁷ M.Legley, *Saturne l'Africain* Tome III p. 336.

⁷⁷⁸ People will often pay the equivalent of several months' rent for a ram. Needless to say the ram must have good horns and the bigger they are, the more the animal will be appreciated.

⁷⁷⁹ J.A.Ilevbare, op. cit. :The Libyan Ammon was a god of prophecy. p. 118.

- The skin may be used for the *Bil Mawn* festival, after which the wool could be kept for making a prayer rug or a blanket reserved for solemn occasions.⁷⁸⁰
- The internal organs (lungs, stomach, intestines and a part of the liver) are prepared, spiced and sun-dried⁷⁸¹ to be kept for *°Ashura*.
- A part of the meat is cut into strips, preserved and sun-dried as *qadīd*,⁷⁸² to be used on such occasions as *Sha°bana* (women only party), or to be cooked in honey (*mūrozīya*) and kept for several weeks.
- Women apply a mixture of aromatic plants and rose water to their hair, when the ram is being slaughtered.
- On the second day of the *°Id al Adhā* , the head of the animal is eaten and all the bones are collected for the *būharūs*⁷⁸³.
- A shinbone may be kept for making an *°Ashura* doll.
- Combs, being for personal use, are preferably made from the horns of the sanctified ram.

In continuing to apply the comparative technique explained earlier in this chapter, the myths of Ancient Egypt will now be examined to attempt to identify reasons for some of the ritual treatment of the sacrificed ram that are listed at the beginning of this section. The most direct route would seem to be to examine myths with a *Khnum* (Ram god) connection. However, it must always be borne in mind that we are looking at myths that were first recorded five millennia ago. Therefore we must anticipate some twists and turns in the path of investigation, as we attempt to unravel the adjustments made to beliefs and identities by successive generations of the Ancient Egyptian priesthood.

The first practice to be addressed is the application of *khol* to the right eye of the ram and the making of a red henna mark between his eyes. This would appear to be in line

⁷⁸⁰ For example, the covering of a dying person.

⁷⁸¹ *Mūrozīya, lemjabna*. For details see Ch.V under *°Id al Adhā*.

⁷⁸² *Qadid* . For details see Ch.V under *°Id al Adhā*,

⁷⁸³ Described in Ch.V. under *°Id al Adhā*.

the sun and the other the moon.⁷⁸⁴ Thus the eye darkened with *Khol* represents the moon, whilst the clear eye is linked to the sun. The red henna mark is evidently symbolic of the solar disk that is commonly seen in Ancient Egyptian pictorial representations of the Ram God.⁷⁸⁵

The significance of the shoulder bone in Ancient Egyptian terms is specifically Osirian. The myth relates how the body of Osiris was cut up and the pieces scattered throughout the nomes of Egypt. Subsequently, each area established a shrine containing what was claimed to be a part of the body. G.Rachet describes the confusion that existed over whether the right or the left shoulder was sacred.⁷⁸⁶

The skin of the animal being kept for the *Bil Mawn* festival is a clear indication of its high sacramental value. However, this will be examined in a section specifically devoted to the origins of that festival.

The preparation, spicing and sun-drying of the internal organs, (lungs, stomach, intestines and liver) is in simple culinary terms to ensure that they are properly preserved and do not rot or become inedible, since they are for sacramental use. In an Ancient Egyptian context this is parallel to part of the embalming process of the burial sequence. The items for preservation being those that are stored separately in the tomb in canopic jars. In Ancient Egypt the object of this process was to ensure that the body remained valid for the after life.

The same parallel applies to that part of the sacrificial meat that is preserved and sun-dried as *qadid* to be used on such occasions as *Sha^ebana* and *Ashura*. Again this is a symbolic embalming of the sacred meat for use at a later date.

The treatment of the head of the animal, in that all the bones are collected for *buharoos* is also significant. In Ancient Egyptian mythology the context of bones leads us to *Ptah-Sokar*, a compound god associated with *Osiris* in a funerary role.

⁷⁸⁴ (i) J.G.Griffiths, *The Conflict of Horus and Seth*- Liverpool University Press 1960. p.109. (ii) N.Grimal, *Histoire de l'Égypte ancienne* -p.55.

⁷⁸⁵ N.Grimal op.cit. p..57.

⁷⁸⁶ G.Rachet, *Dictionnaire de la civilisation Égyptienne*. Larousse.Paris 1992.p.185.

Amongst the attributes of this god is listed “maker of bones”. He is also connected with aromatic substances to provide unguents and perfumes; so important in the Ancient Egyptian resurrection ritual. Again we have a parallel in the special herbs *Nefqa* that the women apply to their hair at the sacrifice of the animal.

Bujlud/Bil Mawn

It seems that this festival greatly puzzled French writers. The view of those French colonial officials, who encountered this festival, was generally similar to that of Douffé who considered *Bujlud* to be reminiscent of Roman Saturnalia.⁷⁸⁷ Amongst the European writers⁷⁸⁸, only Westermarck perceived the irrefutable link between *Id al Adha* and the *Bil Mawn/Bujlud* festival. Despite this, his description is limited to the festival’s significance to the people and the details of its preparation. In the opinion of Rachik⁷⁸⁹ and Hammoudi the descriptions of the colonial period are like “a stroller, who encounters a band of jugglers and follows them down a lane, only to leave them once they turn a corner”.⁷⁹⁰ Consequently, although Westermarck’s descriptions had the virtue of being rational, those of the majority of French colonial officials appeared to be more interested in a separation between Islamic culture and Berber customs, with a tendency to consider the latter as degenerate and pagan. Auguste Moulinéras⁷⁹¹ sees in the *Bujlud* festival an obligation for France to colonize Morocco in a campaign to reform its corrupt society as depicted in the mummery, in which he identifies the vices of both the State and the population. Ironically, this festival was already known

⁷⁸⁷ This view was accepted by the French colonial administration, which considered this as a proof that the Berbers had been “Romanised” and had remained faithful to that culture. Consequently they saw in this an apparent similarity to Europeans which they felt they could exploit to counter the influence of Islam. This led them to involve themselves in such projects as the Evangelisation of the Berbers and the creation of Franco-Berber schools, where the only languages used were French and Berber to the exclusion of Arabic. The final step being the promulgation of the “Dahir Berbère” of 16 May 1930, that excluded them from being subject to the Shari’a. (i) A. Laroui in *The History of the Maghreb*- p. 342- (ii) C. R. Ageron “Politiques Coloniales au Maghreb” Presse Universitaire France Paris 1972.

⁷⁸⁸ Referred to chapter V, also see J.L. Alberich *Los cultos solares en Marruecos*- Madrid 1954 - pp. 106-107.

⁷⁸⁹ H. Rachik, *Sacré et Sacrifice dans le Haut Atlas Marocain*.-Afrique/Orient- Casablanca 1990.

⁷⁹⁰ A. Hammoudi, *The Victim and Its Masks*- p. 2.

⁷⁹¹ A. Moulinéras, *Le Maroc Inconnu : Etudes Géographiques et Sociologiques*- Challamel 1899 , Volume I & II –Paris p. 608 & *Une tribu Zénète Anti-Musulmane au Maroc* –Paris 1905: le carnaval des saturnales musulmanes, qui avalissent dans leurs scènes grossières les Chrétiens et les Juifs. - p. 102. also A.Hammoudi p.19.

to the French colonial administration in Tunisia and Algeria. In fact they banned it in 1843, due to the *Bujlud* satire being directed at the French colonization of Algeria⁷⁹². In a similar manner to E.Laoust, A. Bel compares the *Bujlud/Bil Mawn* festival to *Soltan Tolba*.⁷⁹³ Bel's comparison is clearly flawed since the *Bujlud* festival is materially linked to the sacrifice of the sheep, whereas the *Sultan Tolba*⁷⁹⁴ festival, derives its funds from the contributions of local merchants, who elect a student sultan for a day's entertainment.

Ian Hodder and Leach,⁷⁹⁵ see the rituals as "technical information in a context where the ancients could not communicate their message in a written form". They suggest that the rituals are sprinkled with abstract information that can lead to the original message they were intended to convey." Quoting Hodder, J. Cauvin maintains that "dans les sociétés humaines, les objets utilitaires ont un sens qui outrepassent leur seule valeur technologique et que la culture matérielle dans son ensemble constitue un système signifiant..."⁷⁹⁶ In the same manner our ritual of *Bil Mawn* is riddled with abstract symbols that need to be deciphered and understood. Post-colonial Moroccan ethnographers and anthropologists have in fact attempted this task. These scholars have made several intricate studies on the spot where the ritual was still performed in its genuine environment and furthermore in their own language. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the resultant analyses were highly scientific, they would seem to be unable to throw any light upon why the rituals are there and what might be their origin. For instance, A. Hammoudi refutes the French attribution of *Bil Mawn*'s origin to the Roman 'Saturnalia'. However, he offers no explanation of why the two cannot be connected nor does he indicate what is the difference between them. Furthermore, where French administrators ascribe terms such as "démoniaque" to the rituals, the

⁷⁹² A. Hammoudi op. cit. p. 172.

⁷⁹³ Islam en Berbérie, *Revue de l'Histoire des religions*- 1917 : 53-124 Paris. Pierre de Cernival " La Légende du Juif Ibn Mash'âl et la fête du Soltan Tolba à Fés- *Héserides* 5- 1925 -p.137-218. Also cf E. Doutté , *Marrakesh* : La khotba burlesque de la fête des Tolba à Marrakesh au Maroc- in recueil de Mémoires et de textes 14ème Congrès des Orientalistes – Algiers Jourdan 1905.

⁷⁹⁴ Sultan tolba, as described in Chapter V and earlier in this chapter, has a different setting. The real Sultan goes out to where the festival is taking place, whereas in *Bujlud*, as described by Doutté himself (*Marrakech* p.507) and by Westermarck (op. cit. Volume I p.81,83, 156 and Vol. II p.80.), the actors are invited to perform in the *meshwar* (reception hall of the palace), to amuse the sultan and his court for the *Bujlud* festival.

⁷⁹⁵ E. Leach, *La ritualisation chez l'homme et chez l'animal*- Gallimard Paris 1971 p.241-248.

⁷⁹⁶ Jacques Cauvin, *Naissance des divinités naissance de l'agriculture- La révolution des symboles au Néolithique* -.CNRS Editions Paris 1997 p.168.

Moroccan scholars refer to “djinn-djenoun”. Even the late Paul Pascon describes the rituals as “auto-cannibalisme, sacré consommation du groupe par le groupe”.⁷⁹⁷ The pseudo-historical reports compiled by French officials are in effect mere snapshots of what they saw; rudimentary intelligence material. They are of course devoid of any scientific objectivity, since the latter was not a feature of their brief. Consequently, in order to bring these sterile documents to life, they must be analysed with today’s scientific methodology, hopefully to shed new light on the rituals described therein. This analysis should be directed towards interpreting the actions of the performers, their words, the significance of their accoutrements and the materials used. In short, everything that the actors do from the preparation of their play until the end of the celebration, needs to be clarified and deciphered. It is also of prime importance to fix the place and time of the festival/celebration and to note what events precede and follow it. Once all this information has been established and analysed, the ritual can be anchored to its original season if, by any chance, its position in the year has been altered.

The French reports all agree that the *Bil Mawn* festival was celebrated all over Morocco, not only in ‘Arabised’ areas, but also in the most remote areas. Furthermore in the latter environment it had its own terminology in the local Berber dialect with no borrowing of vocabulary from Arabic, a situation which is highly suggestive of the festival having existed in North Africa before the arrival of Islam. In order to arrive at a proper assessment of the *Bil Mawn* festival, it is necessary to establish what was its original seasonal position in the year. On the one hand we have the distinctly non-Islamic *Sha bana* festival, which has unquestionably lost its primordial seasonal and cult connections and now migrates through the seasons in company with the Islamic calendar month *Sha^hban* for no discernible reason. On the other hand *Bil Mawn* also migrates through the year behind the Islamic *‘Id al Adhā*, to which it is materially linked by the skins, horns, spine and feet derived from that festival. The pagan ram-cult association of the *Bil Mawn* referred to by Al Bakri can thus also be interpreted as

⁷⁹⁷ (i) Paul Pascon, “The *Ma^e rouf* of Tamejlocht or the rite of the bound victim”, in *Islamic dilemmas : reforms, rationalists and industrialisation*. Mouton Publishers- Berlin, New York, Amsterdam 1985 p.139-140. (ii) I. Hodder, *Symbolic and Structural Archaeology*, Cambridge University Press 1982- *The Meaning of Things : Material Culture and Symbolic Expression*- London Unwin and Hyman 1989.

contaminating the *Id al Adhā* itself with similar pagan connections, the suggestion being that this festival took the place of and effectively eclipsed a ram-cult festival. Spring is the time of lambing when the old ram is killed at the end of his productive life of four years. In fact the North African Ram-god⁷⁹⁸ cult can be traced back to Neolithic times. Gabriel Camps⁷⁹⁹ displays cave drawings of rams with horns bearing spherical objects decorated with feathers, which he found in the Atlas mountains. He adds that these drawings pre-date the Egyptian Amon-Ré.⁸⁰⁰

The introduction of a new lunar calendar by the Prophet Muhammad had the immediate effect of “dislodging” such pagan festivals from their seasonal connections, thereby tending to deprive them of their environment and consequently of their fundamental purpose. As to what the purpose of the *Bil Mawn* was, we are fortunate in having some degree of direct evidence in the requests made to *Bil Mawn* by the population, of which perhaps the most significant is “lord, give us rain”. Clearly this can hardly be a post harvest request, for rain is required only when the crops are sprouting and growing. The most tempting conclusion therefore is that this is a springtime event. Consequently, whatever the Moroccan anthropologists⁸⁰¹ and ethnographers may propose, *Bujlud/Bil Mawn* is essentially an agrarian festival, whose nature is reinforced by the symbolism of the foods offered to *Bil Mawn*.

The French colonial writers may appear to have a valid point when they compare *Bil Mawn* with Saturnalia. However, their conclusion was most likely to have been born of a desire to find a suitable and readily acceptable explanation, as opposed to making a thorough research of the subject. Saturnalia/Bacchanalia were in fact banned⁸⁰² by

⁷⁹⁸ G. Maspero “Etudes de Mythologie et d’Archéologie Egyptienne” – Ernest Leroux Editeurs Paris 1893. p. 34. « Osiris est le Bélier entre ciel et terre. » “Khnemu/ khnum : The Solar god bringer of food and provisions. “ Le soleil se transforme en Bélier quand il passe dans l’autre monde. Ram solar energy and bull earth energy”. p.144.

⁷⁹⁹ (i) Gabriel Camps *Les Berbères : mémoires et identité* pp. 145-151. (ii) A.Muzzolini “Masques et Thériomorphes dans l’art rupestre du Sahara Central, 1991 *Archéo-Nil*, n.1, p17-42.

⁸⁰⁰ (i) O. Bates, *The Eastern Libyans* - Cassell London 1970 - indicates that the rock paintings in North Africa and the Western Sahara are far removed from the influence of Egypt. p. 196. (ii) J.A.Ilevbare op.cit. quoting Herodotus “.the Libyan Ammon was different from the Egyptian” p.118.

⁸⁰¹ A.Hammoudi “The Victim and its Masks” *Colonial Anthropology*: pp. 15-32.

⁸⁰² Roman society was too limited to sustain the philosophy behind the ritual of the myths and as a result human sacrifice took place.

the Roman Senate in 186 BC⁸⁰³ after a number of grave social and political disturbances had been provoked by the celebration of festivals imported from the Orient. The source of most cult imports into the Roman republic in the IInd century BC was Greece, whose interest in Bacchanalian-type rites dates back to the VIth century BC. Aristotle claimed that Greek tragedy was developed from plays presented at festivals in honour of the Greek god Dionysus, (referred to as Bacchus from the Vth century BC), which were held in spring. These consisted of a satirical play and a bawdy parody of the myths associated with the gods. The actors were all men, who wore large masks and daubed their faces with white lead and red cinnabar. Dances were performed accompanied by music. According to Greek tradition Dionysus died each winter and was reborn in spring. The cult basis of the Bacchanalia was thus Greek or pre-Greek and its journey to Rome ended in prohibition by the Senate. It was thus hardly a candidate for a Roman export to North Africa. The similarity of the Dionysus myth to that of Osiris suggests that the Greek version was hardly original. However what is clear is that wherever the *Bil Mawn* celebration may have come from, it could not have originated in Roman Saturnalia or Bacchanalia.

The pre-Greek origins of the Dionysian fertility cult are not difficult to identify. The Greek historian Herodotus,⁸⁰⁴ writing in the Vth century BC, states that this cult came from Egypt and associates Dionysus with the Egyptian god Osiris⁸⁰⁵. The analogy between the Greek play and the *Bil Mawn* masquerade as described by the French authors, who visited Morocco, is clearly impressive. Nevertheless there is a slight difference in that the principal association of Dionysus is with the vine and the excessive consumption of its fermented juice, whereas Osiris is strictly an agrarian god. However *Bil Mawn*'s resemblance to Osiris is much more striking. It would appear that the spiritual nature of the Osiris cult was modified in Greece and became a secular entertainment devoid of its religious attributes. This conclusion is borne out by further references to Osiris and his natural son and guardian Anubis in the works of IInd century AD writers, in particular Apuleius, Tertulian and Juvenal.⁸⁰⁶ These references cover Isiac type celebrations in either fictional or factual contexts, all of

⁸⁰³ M.L. Freyburger-Galland, G. Freyburger, J.C. Tautill Sectes Religieuses en Grèce et à Rome p.171-206. Also see TITE-LIVE XXXIX,18, 7 & Marcel Le Glay, J.L.Voisin, Yann Le Bohec Histoire Romaine p.123, p.152.

⁸⁰⁴ Herodotus II p.171.

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid p. 144.

which include the personification of Anubis with a dog's head mask. The most striking description of the latter is in Apuleius's *Metamorphosis* XI, II in which Anubis is "...the god of terrifying appearance, who acts as messenger to the upper world from the nether world, half-black with a golden face, dog-like bust...." This description shows strong similarities to *Bil Mawn*, but the entertainment motive seems to have eclipsed the religious element of the Osiris⁸⁰⁷ myth in Apuleius's work, whereas the Moroccan masquerade provides to this day a spectacle highly evocative of that myth. The spirit of the vegetation rises in his burial form i.e. tar faced and amongst ashes. He appears with the silent embalmer of the dead Anubis,⁸⁰⁸ with his jackal's ears. Both belong to the world of the dead and there is thus no vocal communication between them and the public they have come to haunt. They are rejected, but alms for their souls are given to them *sebt Bil Mawn*. This rejection is appropriate because Osiris is expected to resurrect in the fields and should not be reborn in the appearance of death. The eggs given to *Bil Mawn* symbolize the grain in the fields, which has not yet matured. The satirical masquerade with its phallic exhibition demonstrates that the timing of the appearance of his wandering soul is wrong. He is too old now, for it is rain that is needed to help the new generation (Horus) of seeds to germinate and grow to maturity. If Osiris is accepted now in this form, this will mean disaster and starvation for mankind. He must therefore be mocked and chased back to where he belongs as everything associated with his presence in the masquerade is wrong and disorderly: ploughing the threshing floor, allowing women to be abused and the passing by the qadi of a ridiculous sentence. He must return through his rightful son (Horus) and not through the illegitimate son Anubis⁸⁰⁹ (death) he had with Nephtys. The purpose of the play is thus to urge him to come back to put order in their world as they are lost without him.

⁸⁰⁶ J.C.Grenier op. cit. pp 70-73.

⁸⁰⁷ A. Moret *Mystères égyptiens*- Imprimerie française et orientale E. Bertrand.Chalon-sur-Saone, 1911. "La bête sacrifiée, sa peau, dépouillée est prête à servir aux mimes...pp. 63-64.

⁸⁰⁸ Anubis's task is to look after the dead and watch over their embalming.

⁸⁰⁹ H. Frankfort *Kingship and the Gods* p.198. Anubis god of the necropolis is depicted as a jackal who guides the dead into the cemeteries.

The significance of the °Anṣra

Another agrarian festival of non-Islamic origin celebrated in Morocco is the °Anṣra,⁸¹⁰ which was widely observed until recent years. The timing of this festival appears to derive from the mid-summer heliacal rising of the Dog Star Sirius.⁸¹¹ In Ancient Egypt this event heralded the all-important annual flooding of the Nile, essential to the germination and growth of crops. As such, it was the beginning of their New Year and was marked with elaborate ceremonies. Whilst the °Anṣra in Morocco is not so precise in its timing, nor as significant an event as the flooding of the Nile, it is nevertheless a well identified Water Festival, whose concurrence with the Nile flood seems highly significant.⁸¹² However, whereas the Egyptian event is not concordant with the star-clock timetable of the Osiris myth, the Moroccan °Anṣra would appear to have a definite place therein. Since the earliest times Osiris was identified with the growing crop and represented the Spirit of Vegetation.⁸¹³ Once the grain has matured the Spirit of Vegetation is no longer needed in the earth and must now leave it to rejoin his celestial world,⁸¹⁴ so that he may return the following year. The sprinkling of water is to direct him towards the sky, through evaporation and the winds made by noria movement and those of merry-go-rounds.⁸¹⁵ In effect, the three important elements of the °Anṣra festival are water, wind and fumigation. The purpose of the last-named, as reported in secondary literature, is to produce smoke but not fire. This is an important feature in the association with the Myth, since Isis is the goddess of magic and healing. Thus the herbs and other items⁸¹⁶ that are burned are to remind

⁸¹⁰ °Anṣra see Chapter. V.

⁸¹¹ This star was associated in Ancient Egypt with Isis, the sister-wife of Osiris/Orion. W. Budge *Osiris* Vol. I p. 93.

⁸¹² Maqrizi *Khitāt* –Cairo 1870. Naṣrūz was celebrated in Egypt in September. p. 267.

⁸¹³ W.Budge *Osiris* Vol I p.19.

⁸¹⁴ It could be suggested that, this is the reason why the meal made with the new grain is called *mekwi rāsu* i.e. burnt head, since the constellation of Orion is interpreted as being head-first before complete appearance of the constellation with three main stars supposed to be on the belt of Osiris.

⁸¹⁵ As described in Chapter. V. Under “°Anṣra”.

⁸¹⁶ Ch. V under “°Anṣra” mentions cowhide and blackbirds amongst the materials burnt for fumigation. Cf.(i) W.Budge vol. II p.55 “She is like a vulture to protect Osiris”. Vulture, cowhide and blackbirds are all symbols of Isis.(ii) R.E. Witt *Isis in the Ancient World*- The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London. 1997. p. 31.

Osiris of his sister-wife Isis, meeting him in the sky where, as depicted in the star-clock, they meet in the constellation of Orion (Osiris) and Sirius (Isis).

The origins of the Qadīda party

The women-only party is so markedly different from the other two parties of similar name held at the same time that one could be forgiven for assuming that it has its own distinct origins. It is possible that its survival can only be due to it having remained shrouded in secrecy within the discreet world of women. Furthermore it has been perpetuated because of the timeless need for women to be fertile and become mothers. This in turn is linked with a belief in the potential of a secret mix of spices, known only to a handful of expert blenders, to achieve the necessary effect when used in a specially prepared *kesksu*. Therefore attempts have been made to identify possible origins of the name of this ceremony and its related concept, i.e. that of a party of women indulging in a group ritual designed to help them conceive. The significance of the number 101, relating to the collection of meat, is intriguing. As a first step, Arabic links and origins of the names of months in the pre-Islamic solar calendar have been examined, with special reference to well identified seasonal markers. As already noted in this work, the month Ramadan⁸¹⁷ signifies the “great heat”, when the original lands of the *Hijazi* Arabs were at their most arid. The month before this hot month is *Sha^cban*⁸¹⁸, when the tribes would split into small family units and take their flocks to secure sources of water, so that they would be able to withstand the heat of Ramadan. Today, since the calendar is lunar, the months have moved away from their seasonal markers but the word *sha^cab* still signifies scattering or dispersal. In short the practice originally linked with the month in question has been given its name. However, apart from providing an explanation for the origin of the word *Sha^cbana*, this does not help in assessing the significance of 101.

In the latter connection, assuming that 100 is equally valid, a glance back through history leads to the Greek deity Hecate, (“she who works her will”), goddess of magic

R.E. Witt op. cit. p.133 “Isis gives life to all things dwelling in the air, amid the sea and on the ground, flora and fauna.” She was a wiser magician than any other god... p.14.

⁸¹⁷ Arabic dictionary *Al munjid*- Dar al Mashriq Beyrouth 1986- p.208.

⁸¹⁸ Ibid p. 390.

and spells, with her 100 eyes. The latter feature is perhaps linked to the homonymous notion of 100, evoked by the Greek word for 100, “ekato”. However, from wherever the Greeks may have derived their 100-eye legend, their presence in Egypt must have made them aware that this was also a feature attributed to the goddess Isis⁸¹⁹, herself the personification of all magic and witchcraft. This led automatically to an investigation of the Ancient Egyptian syllables “*Sha*” and “*ab*”. In Ancient Egyptian “*shaa*” means 100⁸²⁰ and is also a homonym for “dog”, whilst “*ab*” means “month”⁸²¹. Here all the associations come together, the rising of the Dog Star Sirius,⁸²² identified with Isis, marking the arrival of the fertility-bringing floodwaters of the Nile. So much for the Egyptian context but, when we abandon the valley of the Nile for the more temperate regions of North Africa, the significance of a “100” month beginning a period of 101 days counted from the time of the winter solstice, seems also to be an ideal time for celebrating fertility. After the death and mourning of Osiris (Ashura), Isis is working hard at her magic for the rebirth of Osiris/Horus. Consequently, it is an appropriate time for women in North Africa to hold a conception-orientated ritual, made sacred in the distant past. The spring Equinox⁸²³ celebrated by the *Ta Fesca* festival i.e. the time when the wheat shoots have appeared above ground, becomes unmistakable. The birth of the god Osiris coincided with the formation of the wheat shoots at the spring equinox, whilst the maturing of the grain corresponded with the summer solstice marking the *°Anṣra*. In the mythology the god Osiris leaves the fields to join Isis in the sky. This is typified by the appearance of the Dog Star Sirius, synonymous with the goddess Isis, which rises on this occasion to mark the time for the harvest festivities in North Africa when the two gods thus represented in the sky eventually meet.⁸²⁴ This explanation has an interesting confirmatory parallel in rites that were at one time current in the ancient city of Byblos with distinct seasons. Brigitte Soyez writes about “unions rituelles”,

⁸¹⁹ R.E. Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World*- op. cit.. Amongst the attribute to Isis in the Ancient world : Isis patroness of medicine- guardian of the female sex. She aids women to bring forth children- She knew magic, she succours women in labour and is the saviour of woman and child. pp. 122, 148, 277.

⁸²⁰ E.A. Wallis Budge, *A Hieroglyphic Vocabulary to the Book of the Dead*- Dover Publications Inc. New York 1991. p. 392.

⁸²¹ R.Faulkner op.cit. p. 2.

⁸²² See Patrick Moore, *Guide to Stars and Planets*- Reed International Ltd London.1995. “Dog –star or Canis Major (Lat.)” p. 142.

⁸²³ Ibid. This event was marked by the vernal equinox identified by Aries (Hamal Ar.) the Ram in mythology. p. 128.

⁸²⁴ R. Le Tourneau op. cit. reports that marriage ceremonies in Morocco take place at that time. pp. 65-66.

celebrating the hierogamy of Aphrodite and Adonis that “scandalisaient si fort les auteurs chrétiens”,⁸²⁵ and for which the signal for the start of the celebrations was the heliacal rising of the star Sirius. She also draws attention to the 1000-year old connection between Byblos and the “empire du Nil”.⁸²⁶

In Ancient Egypt, if the myth of Osiris was really about water and Isis was in fact synonymous with the earth, then the heliacal rising of Sirius indeed represented the fecundating of the earth by flooding of the Nile. By contrast, in a Moroccan context, the same heliacal rising coincides with the joyful celebration of the harvest and seems more in line with the star-clock. Osiris/Orion first appears in the sky at the *‘Anṣra* period, after the harvesting and measuring of the grain. The water festival takes place at this time and, a few weeks later, the bright star Sirius/Isis appears in the sky. This is when all the joyful celebrations take place: the bull festival, offerings in the names of local saints and wedding parties.

In the Islamic period the *Mawlid* celebration, which was introduced by the Fatimid dynasty in Egypt,⁸²⁷ seems to be concordant with the ancient myth that they wished to obliterate and replace with the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. It is noteworthy that even the celebrations at the end of the Sothic year have been retained, with the birthdays of the Epagomenal gods⁸²⁸ being replaced by those of the members of the Prophet’s family: Ali, Fatima, Hassan, Hossein, the fifth place being reserved for the reigning Shi’ite Caliph.⁸²⁹ Hence the sweetmeats⁸³⁰ and candles festivals have not changed much, except in people’s beliefs.

⁸²⁵ B.Soyez, *Byblos et la Fête des adonies*- E.J.Brill, Leiden 1977. pp. 63-64.

⁸²⁶ Ibid pp.65-66.

⁸²⁷ As explained in Chapter X.

⁸²⁸ (i) J. G. Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris*- Verlag Bruno Hessling, Berlin 1966. “The extra days were inserted between the last month of the old year and the first of the new (the New Year begins with the Inundation). These were indubitably birthdays of the Gods. pp 68-71.(ii) S. Sauneron, *Dictionnaire de la Civilisation Egyptienne*- F. Hazan Paris 1992. “The goddess Nut was cursed by her father to remain sterile. However she played a game against Thot, the God of Time, winning five days from him. Consequently she gave birth to Osiris, Isis, Nephthys, Seth and Horus; one child on each of the days she had won. The Ancient Egyptian year was calculated as 36 decans equalling 360 days, plus the 5 days won by Nut giving a total of 365 days.

⁸²⁹ N.J.G. Kaptein op. cit. *Layali al wuqud* (The nights of the lanterns). p. 27.

⁸³⁰ As was pointed out in the description of the *Mawlid* celebration during the Islamic period, large quantities of honey were used in Morocco to make sweetmeats. It is known that in Fatimid Egypt several types of sweets were made, but with sugar. However, because of the constipating properties of the latter, people were being offered laxative electuaries. (i) Ibid p. 33. (ii) S. Moreh op. cit decoration of the Fatimid’s *simat* (banquet table) p. 32.

In present day Morocco, during the *Mawlid*, women in the home are consuming pumpkin preserve made with honey throughout the entire week for every meal of the day. This is reminiscent of Ancient Egypt, where the people were making cakes with honey to celebrate the flooding of the Nile, which also coincided with the festival of Isis, “Fête de la bonne rencontre, débordement d’allègresse, danses, musique et jouissances de toute sorte.”⁸³¹ H.Chouliara remarks that large amounts of honey were consumed during this festival for making cakes. The celebrations took place in *smaïm* (19th July) to celebrate the symbols of earth and water, i.e. Osiris and Isis.⁸³² Isis temples were full of such cakes⁸³³ and also of dresses⁸³⁴ for the statue of the goddess.

Regarding the pseudo-*Sha'bana* party that takes place in the month of *Sha'ban*, it has been shown earlier that this party is in fact a star-worshipping party linked to pagan practices.⁸³⁵ The superstition and secrecy of the adherents has ensured that this festival with its hidden practices has survived until today. The names of the spirit planets are identical to those of the seer's (*Showāfa*) party and also to those for the private family party called *derdiba (nzool)* in Marrakesh and *Gnawa* or *sha'bana* elsewhere. Because of the introduction of the Islamic lunar calendar, the pagan festival have been separated from their solar seasonal markers. Thus, whether Ramadan falls in winter or summer, the *Sha'bana* party is still held. However, the incantations, the food symbols and the ceremony's relationship to the planets and stars identify it unmistakably as a winter festival.

⁸³¹ Aufrère op.cit. p.293.

⁸³² H.Chouliara. Rafoš, *L'Abeille et le miel en Egypte d'après les papyrus grecs* – Epistimonike Epetenida Filosofiles Scholes – Ionnina. Greece 1989. “Gateaux au miel en forme de couronne destinés aux fêtes d'Isis et d'Osiris.” p.141. Honey was seen as having magical powers to provoke love.

⁸³³ Ibid. “Gateaux en forme d'animaux en train de voler ou marcher.”pp.140-141.

⁸³⁴ Ibid.p.157.

⁸³⁵ It is significant that the names of the planets celebrated in this planet-worship are different from those relating to the Islamic period, as listed in Chapter IX. Hence the planet-worship in the *Sha'bana* party can not be derived from the Islamic period and must come from a different source.

Myths as a research tool

The above deductions relating to the origins of *°Ashura*, *°Ansra* and *Sha°bana* form the material to support a theory that the non-Islamic festivals⁸³⁶ of Morocco are derived from a myth of great antiquity, whose only known recorded version has been handed down to posterity as the Osiris myth of the Ancient Egyptians. This myth has stayed alive in Morocco mainly because its related sacred rituals and practices are intimately connected with the age-old need for agricultural communities to survive by maintaining fertility in the fields, in the herds and in the home. This deduction has been difficult to confirm since, unlike Egypt and Mesopotamia, Morocco has no legacy of vast temples, ornate tombs and pyramids, upon whose walls and galleries the evidence could have been recorded. Apart from the obvious economic reasons, this absence arises also from a lack of autocratic power and despotism,⁸³⁷ which has allowed an ancient agrarian cult to survive relatively undisturbed in its native environment. Nevertheless the observations covered in Chapter V have witnessed the continuation of a long-term cult that, due to common patterns with Ancient Egypt, can be traced back through cultural sequences to its ancient origins. In all the rituals, details are the core of the matter and they are more eloquent if they are combined with other meaningful elements to convey a full message. Moreover, the latter can not be successfully decoded except through the analytical observations of someone, who has lived within the intimate cultural context of Moroccan society.⁸³⁸

⁸³⁶ See St Augustine's opposition to *Ansra* practices in Sermo CXCVI, In Migne- Patrologiae Cursus, XXXVIII- XXXIX (Parisii, 1845), col. 1021. Westermarck in Rituals op. cit. p. 204. He also reported that the popular belief is also that in the period of *smaim* (12 July and 20th August) the water goes away. p. 206. In this context there is also an intriguing similarity of Egyptian and Moroccan names relating to seasons: *Shemu* (Summer) *Perd* (winter) in Egypt and respectively *Smaim* and *Berd* in the Moroccan language.

⁸³⁷ I.Hodder Reading the Past- Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, 1986. p. 90.

⁸³⁸ A privilege that, due to the legacy of half a century of French rule and its cultural aftermath, is not available to all educated Moroccans.

The Summer Mawsem

The explanation of the winter *Mimon* festival covered in the previous section raises the question of what its summer equivalent may have been. In attempting to dismantle the randomizing effects of the Islamic lunar calendar, it has been noted that there are some events that have resisted being “lunarised”. Amongst these is a festival called *Mawsem*, (festival, Arabic). *Mawsems* are organized at harvest time throughout Morocco, invariably in the name of the saint of the local town or village. A significant feature of this festival is the slaughtering of a bull⁸³⁹ as an offering to the local saint.⁸⁴⁰ This is also the time of year for weddings to take place. The festival lasts for seven days with music, dancing and the consumption of liberal quantities of food, mainly *tajīns* and *kesksu*. The meat supply is plentiful, since animals are sacrificed every day. Only occasionally does a *Mawsem* coincide with the *Mawlid* (birthday of the Prophet), which is lunar.

In Ancient Egypt the harvest festival was marked by *Min-Orion* appearing in the form of a bull.⁸⁴¹ This season was called *shemu*,⁸⁴² when the *Min* bull⁸⁴³ festival was celebrated. This festival coincided with the celestial appearance together of Orion and Sirius, regarded as the time of ritual union, symbolic as an expression of physical love.

The Showafa (Astrologer) Sha^cbana party

This party, as described in Chapter V, is also based upon the same type of primitive pagan astrology, i.e. the order of appearance of the planets and their colours. The only

⁸³⁹ Ibid.p.48. A black and white bull is sacrificed at harvest time.

⁸⁴⁰ See Chapter V., under Seasons. The bull is slaughtered in the name of the local saint to avoid offending Islamic susceptibilities.

⁸⁴¹ S.Aufrère op.cit. p.471 *Min-Orion*.

⁸⁴² H.Gauthier.op.cit. p.69. It is of interest that this season is known as *Smaïm* in Morocco.

exception is that the meat from the sacrifice of the adherents is cooked colourless and salt-less by the seer and served to those present for the night party. There is also a *tbiqa* (tray) for consecrated food that holds seven bowls, (one for each planet). These contain the following: honey, blood, olive oil, water, milk, one with organic and with non-organic fumigation materials and one containing *daghnoo* (grilled wheat mixed with sour milk). Eggs, dates and candles from the *tabiyta* i.e. overnight food, are distributed by the seer to the adherents the following morning.

End of year festival

The *mawsem* of *Sidi shem Aroj* (the Sultan of Spirits), as described in Chapter V., is celebrated in Morocco on the first Thursday after the 20th August. The festival involves the sacrifice of a black cow, previously fumigated with fragrances and bedecked with ribbons and flowers. In Ancient Egypt the goddess Hathor is the mistress of the vegetable and mineral realms, of natural resources, of the changeover of the year and the agrarian cycle. She also presides over the Ennead.⁸⁴⁴ As a primordial goddess she is depicted as a celestial cow (Nut) that gave birth to all the celestial bodies.⁸⁴⁵ It is she, who has ordered the mountains to yield their riches and has given them immortality in return. In terms of symbolic representation there are pictorial descriptions from Ancient Egypt that show her as a cow bedecked with ribbons and flowers in exactly the same manner as described above.⁸⁴⁶ She is part of the cosmic myth of Sothis and is associated with the continuation of the earthly world and of the star-spangled heavens. Her celebration in Ancient Egypt was on the 20th August, when Sothis is high in the sky.⁸⁴⁷ She was recognized as the mother of Osiris as far back as the time of the earliest pyramid.⁸⁴⁸ The coincidence of the Ancient Egyptian and Moroccan festival dates, (20th August), and the resemblance of the decoration of the Moroccan cow to that of the Ancient Egyptian symbolic representation of the goddess Hathor would seem to be highly significant. Another

⁸⁴³ S.Aufrère.op.cit. p.473. "Allusion à la puissance sexuelle. Orion garantit la fécondité et se comporte comme un taureau."

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid.p.134.

⁸⁴⁵ L.Manniche, *L'Art Egyptien*-.Flammarion.Paris 1994.p.378.

⁸⁴⁶ Hart. Veneration of the cow goddess in pre-dynastic Egypt. See picture on p.. 11.

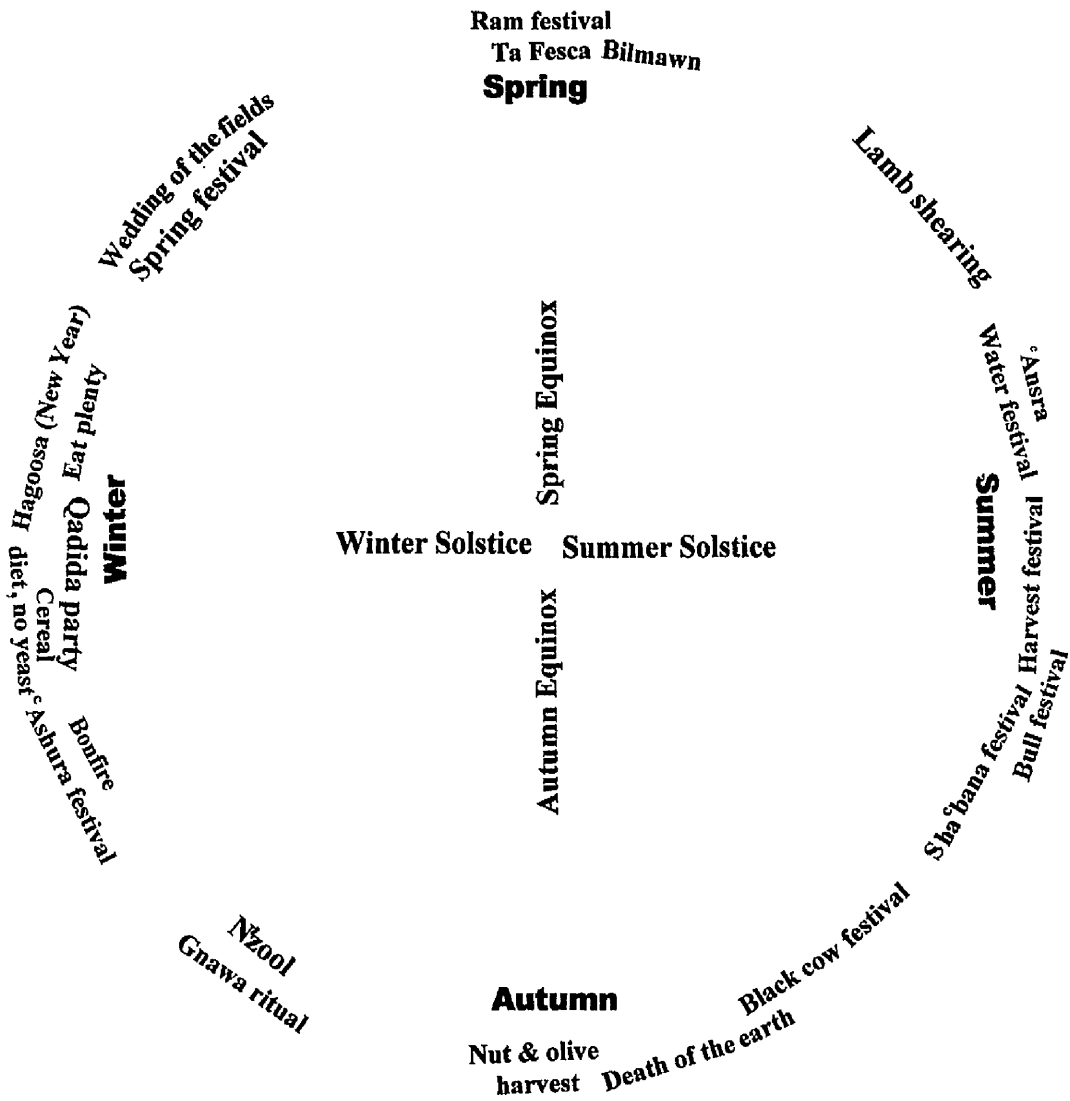
⁸⁴⁷ S.Aufrère.op.cit. p.135.

⁸⁴⁸ J.Griffiths.op.cit.p.13.

link between this goddess, in her role as the mother of Osiris is to be found in *Taghandja*, the rainmaking ceremony,⁸⁴⁹ where a ribbon and flower bedecked cow is again the central figure of the ceremony. Here the chanter sings to her, reminding her to revive her son, who is still in the ground, by sending rain. The words used are: “*Taghandja um Andja!*” (Taghandja mother of Andja!), “give us rain!”.

⁸⁴⁹ See Chapter.V.

**AGRARIAN FESTIVALS ACCORDING TO THE SOLAR
CALENDAR**



The Gnawa

The description in Chapter V of the *Gnawa* party names four spirits: *Mimon*, *Hamon*, *Mera* and *Merika*. In Chapter IX, it was shown that they were regarded as spirit-planets, linked to particular colours. In searching for the origins of these names in the pre-Islamic era, various names of ancient gods have been found that bear a close resemblance to the *Gnawa* spirits.

Mimon

Mimon seems to be the leading spirit in the *Gnawa* party, where the colour used and the food symbols are both black. Furthermore, this spirit seems to be the most important element of the party. In searching for the origin of this spirit name, we find that yet again in Ancient Egypt there was a God *Amon*, whose ithyphallic form was the God *Min*⁸⁵⁰, which together gave a combination *Mimon*,⁸⁵¹ (*Min* + *Amon* = *Mimon*). The fifth month of the Sothic year, *Prd* (Ancient Egyptian 'winter'), corresponds to the first month of winter⁸⁵², when *Amon*, the rain god becomes *Mimon* during the sowing period. According to M.C. Betro⁸⁵³, *Min* is an ancient god of about 4,000 BC and belongs to the group of Ogdeads who were said to have invented the cosmos. *Min* was referred to as the "black of skin". *Min* is also the god, who "resides in the sky above the clouds",⁸⁵⁴ the god of fertility, agriculture and bringer of rain. His attributes are:

⁸⁵⁰ G.Hart, A Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses-Routledge & Kegan Paul London 1986.p.125. *Min* was an ancient agricultural deity, reputed to ensure the fecundity of the crops.

⁸⁵¹ H.Gauthier. Op.cit "*Min*. Son origine remonte à une époque beaucoup plus ancienne que les premières dynasties. Il est, avec les dieux du cycle osirien, une des premières divinités adorées par les Egyptiens à l'époque protohistorique ou même préhistorique. pp.17 and 149.

⁸⁵² H.Gauthier op.cit. p.3. Idem pp.154-155.

⁸⁵³ Maria Carmella Betro, Hieroglyphics- Abbeville Press Publishers. New York- London- Paris 1996. P. 83 and 211.

⁸⁵⁴ H. Gauthier, Le Personnel du dieu Min- Imprimerie de l'Institut français d'Archéologie orientale" Le Caire MCMXXXI- The festival of the god *Min* was associated with agriculture. Adherents male and female made offerings to this god. Priests wore long dresses, singing and dancing were performed for the festival and religious music was played. The adherents were amongst the artisans, builders, bakers, potters etc. it also had women participants. .pp 91-95.

“The creator of men and beasts - who created fruit trees and made green herbs. The one who gives breath to the chick in the egg. The one who fashioned the earth with men, cattle and all wild beasts, who has put the sweet taste in food...etc.”⁸⁵⁵

The god Mimon was deemed to have celestial power, with the ability to fertilize the earth.⁸⁵⁶ He was also identified in Ancient Egypt as a foreign god, coming from the land of “mountains and palm-trees”.⁸⁵⁷ The festival of this god is celebrated in winter, as he is the god of vegetation. “Seigneur des bestiaux, créant leur subsistance, assurant leur pain perpétuellement.”

The festival of *Amon* the creator was called *genaw* and was also referred to as the Festival of the Stairway, i.e. the god coming down.⁸⁵⁸ The rituals of this festival were performed exclusively by black priests and black singers. It is also noteworthy that *Min* himself was represented with a black face.⁸⁵⁹ The black singer, praising the god, chants: “Salute to you, god *Min*! In the form of a bull you came from the mountainous foreign land.” All the dances and the singing were executed only by black performers.⁸⁶⁰

The above not only identifies *Mimon* and explains its rituals but also indicates the remoteness in time of its existence. It indicates that the cult is archaic and predates the Egyptian innovations that occurred in the New Kingdom (XVIth century BC).⁸⁶¹ *Mimon* also has a feminine form called *Mimonat*,⁸⁶² his female consort.⁸⁶³ In the Moroccan *Gnawa* she is worshipped by women, who sing hymns to her and perform dances (as described in Chapter V under *Sha^bana*). The colour attributed to this spirit/planet is black, which relates again to the meaning of its name. *Amon* (several variants: *Amen*, *Amun*) literally means the “hidden” or the “unseen” in ancient

⁸⁵⁵ A. Erman, *The Ancient Egyptians*- Harper & Row Publishers. New York 1966. pp. 283-284.

⁸⁵⁶ H.Gauthier.op.cit.p.195.

⁸⁵⁷ H.Gauthier.op.cit.p.197 and p.234 “ ‘Origine de *Min*: montagnes et palmiers. Une indication précieuse.” Comments Gauthier. Could this be referring to the Sahara and the Atlas?

⁸⁵⁸ Ibid p. 45.

⁸⁵⁹ Ibid p 202.

⁸⁶⁰ Ibid p.179.

⁸⁶¹ A. Erman op.cit. Stipulates that the union of Ré and Amon did the latter an injury. The hymns and attributes were a complete jumble. pp 282-283.

⁸⁶² H.Gauthier.op.cit.p.285.

⁸⁶³ A. Mercantante op. cit. pp 6-7.

Egyptian.⁸⁶⁴ Therefore, being attributed the furthest planet, i.e. Saturn, accounts for them (*Mimon/Mimonat*) the “unseen” gods dwelling in darkness.⁸⁶⁵

Hamo/Hemen

The second spirit-god celebrated in the *Gnawa* party is *Hamo/Homan*, whose character is linked with violence, blood and injuries. The god *Hemen* in Ancient Egypt is associated with a silver falcon depicting eternal youth.⁸⁶⁶ J.G.Griffiths emphasizes that this god, known in the Pyramid Texts as *Hemen*, is the harpooner *Horus*.⁸⁶⁷ He is the avenger of his father and the pillar of strength of his mother, famous for the legendary combat that opposed him to his uncle and enemy *Seth*.⁸⁶⁸ In the Moroccan *Gnawa* party, when the host salutes *Hamo* and praises him to invoke his protection against any danger, he also injures himself. This involves wounding himself on each leg and on each arm, symbolic of the enemies of *Horus* in the Four Corners of the world.⁸⁶⁹ In the Theology of Metals *Horus*, identified with the planet Mars was considered to be the one who put “iron to the anvil of the blacksmith.”⁸⁷⁰

Mera

The other important spirit/planet name in the *Gnawa* food ritual is that of *Lalla Mera*, (the lady *Mira*), in whose honour only women dance. It is interesting to note that there appears to be an Ancient Egyptian parallel to this spirit/planet. L.Manniche writes “Some members of the Egyptian pantheon had a particular affinity with music....” “On a rather intellectual level, a goddess called *Meri(t)* was considered to

⁸⁶⁴ Siegfried Morenz, *The Egyptian Religion*- Methuen & Co Ltd London 1960.p.213. Amon, the hidden one.

⁸⁶⁵ A. Erman op. cit. According to the legend, Amon hid himself from the gods and his nature is not known. He is too mysterious. pp. 299-300.

⁸⁶⁶ S. Aufrère op.cit. pp.412-413.

⁸⁶⁷ (i) J.G.Griffiths, *The conflict of Horus and Seth*- pp.47-49 The name *Hemen* is in the earliest tradition. (ii) N.Grimal.op.cit.p.55.

⁸⁶⁸ J.G.Griffiths op.cit. p. 101 also H.Gauthier.op.cit.. See Min *Horus* p.231.

⁸⁶⁹ H.Gauthier.op.cit. “... the enemies of *Horus* are symbolically destroyed in the ceremonial that marks the anniversary of the fight between *Horus* and *Seth*. p.215.

be the personification of music. Her major task was to establish cosmic order by means of song and gestures.”⁸⁷¹ One of the hymns associated with her ritual calls upon her in the following terms:

“Come, O Golden Goddess, to shine over the feast at the hour of retiring and to enjoy the dance at night.”⁸⁷²

In the same hymn there is a reference to women and girls dancing and carrying flowers. In seeking for an interpretation of a “Golden Goddess” that “shines” at “the hour of retiring”, the most obvious choice is the “Evening Star” i.e.Venus. It is noteworthy that the Egyptian hieroglyph for the name of this goddess is synonymous with the one signifying “love”.⁸⁷³

Thus we have an ancient feast celebrated at night with music and dancing, performed by women and girls carrying flowers, all in honour of a “golden” (i.e. yellow) goddess, associated with the planet Venus. In a similar vein the Moroccan *Gnawa* food ritual, which takes place always at night, includes a dance in honour of the planet *Mera* (Venus)⁸⁷⁴. This dance is performed exclusively by women, who have made themselves elegant and beautiful for the occasion. Dressed only in yellow, they perfume the onlookers and distribute sweets. One element present in the Ancient Egyptian feast that is missing from the Moroccan *Gnawa* food ritual is the consumption of alcohol, which is referred to in the hymn quoted above as follows:

“Come, the procession takes place at the site of drunkenness...”

The Moroccans are of course prevented by their Islamic education from using alcohol. However, it is noteworthy that on certain rare occasions, under the cover of

⁸⁷⁰ S.Aufrère op.cit. p.434. also see p.443 N.29.

⁸⁷¹ (i) L.Manniche op.cit. p. 57 (ii) Hans Hickmann, *Musicologie Pharaonique* p. 69 Librairie Heitz, Kehl (Rhin) 1956.

⁸⁷² L.Manniche op.cit. p.61.

⁸⁷³ (i) R.Faulkner. A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian. p. 111 OUP Oxford 1962. (ii)

L.Manniche op.cit. Chp 8 “Music and Sexuality” pp. 108-119.

⁸⁷⁴ As explained in Chapter IX.

celebrating a Jewish *mlook* (invented for the occasion), alcohol in the form of *mahya* (fig brandy) is served with food prepared as for the Shabbath.⁸⁷⁵

Melika/Merika

In order of appearance this spirit is the last. This signifies that it is linked with a closer planet than the others. Women worship it more than men do and its importance is less emphasized than is the case for the other spirits. The colour the dancers wear is green. The apparent antiquity and rarity of this name made it difficult to trace. Consequently, it was only when the name was split into its component parts that a possible origin was identified. The two sentences that have led to this god are in Aufrère, "*Heka* is the main force against the enemy of his father" and "son of *Osiris*, guardian god, with links to the Moon".⁸⁷⁶ In the Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts, he is also called *Mer Heka*, meaning *Heka* the beautiful of face, "Anubis au visage parfait, divinité lunaire", i.e. close to the moon.⁸⁷⁷ In a previously quoted Latin text, Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* XI II, *Anubis* is described as "...: *Anubis*, who in his left hand holds a caduceus and in the right hand is waving a green palm."⁸⁷⁸ This establishes that *Anubis* represents the planet Mercury: *Mer Heka* (Ancient Egypt), *Mercurius* (Latin) and *Merika/Melika* in the Moroccan *Gnawa*.

The importance of salt-less food

In Morocco the *Gnawa* party is also called "*derdiba*" meaning "the coming down". The explanation of this can only be that the god or spirit dwells in the furthest celestial heights.⁸⁷⁹ The *Derdiba* (*nzool* for the farmer) may be interpreted as the

⁸⁷⁵ A. Chlyeh. Les Gnaoua du Maroc.- Ed.Le Fennec Casablanca 1998 p.103. See also R .Montagne. The Berbers- Their Social and Political Organisation-. (1931) Trans. David Seddon- Frank Cass : London (1973). There were instances, when Berbers were claiming to be Jewish, i.e. *Ahl al Kitāb*, thereby avoiding persecution, whilst continuing their pagan practices. "Berber society in the Maghreb" p.9.

⁸⁷⁶ S.Aufrère.op.cit.p.219 and p.265.

⁸⁷⁷ idem. op.cit. pp.417-418.

⁸⁷⁸ J.C.Grenier. See p.71. "Unde vocetur Mercurius, canino capite pinguitur, unde et anubis dicitur, quia nihil cane sagacius esse noscitur." Indicating that Mercury is *Anubis*. In Vatican II (mid 7th century AD) see p.56.

⁸⁷⁹ (i) H.Gauthier.op.cit. "Fête en connection avec des circonstances célestes." p.23 &p.33. (ii) S.Aufrère op.cit. for influence of planets upon Earth. pp.809-821.

contact with earth, the ground being fertilized in winter by the god *Min* to revive it. Hence people in pre-Islamic Morocco held this party on a yearly basis according to the solar calendar, between October and November.⁸⁸⁰ In this they acted just as the Ancient Egyptians, worshipping the god, sacrificing to him, singing liturgies in the name of the vegetal, mineral and animal worlds. This would explain the ritual of the dancer in the Moroccan *Gnawa* going down on all fours to represent the animal world by eating green grass and by behaving like both wild and domesticated animals. Organic and non-organic fumigation of all sorts and colours were made during the *Gnawa* party, since *Min/Amon* is the god of all minerals, except salt.

The salt-less food in the Moroccan party is quite significant, since the party seems to be an agrarian supplication to the god. Thus the one item not to be included is an offering of salt. In Ancient Egypt, salt is referred to as “the foam of Seth” and the priests in the temples never ate bread with salt, because of its malefic effect upon arable land.⁸⁸¹ One is reminded of the destruction of Carthage in the IInd century BC when, having decreed that “not one stone should be left standing upon another”, the Roman authorities ordered that the land should be ploughed and sown with salt. This also explains the reason for food without salt for the agrarian god at his sowing/fertilizing festival.

Planetary order and its importance

Although the *Gnawa* celebration under examination was basically a Black spirit/Saturn night, the other planets were also celebrated in descending order of apparent proximity: Saturn, Mars, Venus, Mercury and Orion/Sirius, representing the Milky Way. The final event depicted in the celebration is called *M'halla* (opening) and shows the woman *Aïsha/Qadisha*⁸⁸² in a black and white spotted robe, representing Sirius, looking for her husband, the “long-strider” *Saih* (Ancient

⁸⁸⁰ As described in the Chapter V under ‘Seasons’, H. Basset op. cit. describes the October festival as *n'zoul* (meaning coming down in Arabic), before the farmer starts his ploughing. p. 96.

⁸⁸¹ S. Aufrère. op. cit - In ancient Egypt the priests ate saltless bread. Salt was the worst enemy to agriculture. Also it relates to Seth/Typhon Vol II .pp .636-637.

⁸⁸² R. de Mesnil du Buisson, *Etudes sur les Dieux Phéniciens Hérités par l'Empire Romain* E.J. Brill, Leiden 1970. “Qdsh” in Ancient Egypt pp. 71-138.

Egyptian *Sahu* = Orion)⁸⁸³, who appears dressed in tatters. Thus, with a depiction of the two lowest of the celestial bodies, the ritual ends at daybreak with a *harīra* soup, duly salted. Thus the period of salt-less food ends with a return to normal food. The above planetary order is an important clue to the antiquity of the *Gnawa*. This order is in fact that used in Ptolemy's *Almagest* (IInd century AD), which showed Mercury as being below Venus and as the nearest planet to the Moon.⁸⁸⁴ This planetary order remained valid until corrected in the Islamic period, when Venus was deemed to be nearer the Moon than Mercury.⁸⁸⁵ Hence the *Gnawa* is definitely pre-Islamic and is probably of great antiquity. Another signpost of this antiquity is the absence in the party of a spirit for the planet Jupiter, indicating that the *Gnawa*'s origins could well predate the discovery of that planet.⁸⁸⁶

The earth renewed from above

According to Aufrère,⁸⁸⁷ the Ancient Egyptians saw the mineral world as being more powerful than the vegetable world. Many deities had mineral identities that were understood to guarantee their immortality and their eternal youth. Under the influence of the celestial bodies the earth receives minerals and metals to ensure its survival and also that of plants, animals and mankind. Hence gold is attributed to the Sun, silver to the Moon, lead to Saturn and iron to Mars.

The *Gnawa* celebration therefore depicts the importance of the spirit-planets worshipped by the ancients, who believed that at the onset of winter, the earth receives all its different fertilizing minerals from above. The god *Min-Amon* is presumed to come down from the celestial world, stepping down from one planet to another to bring all the necessary minerals to the earth.⁸⁸⁸

⁸⁸³ Guy Rachet, *Le Livre des Morts des anciens égyptiens* - Editions du Rocher, Lonrai, France 1996- p. 240.

⁸⁸⁴ R.Rashed, *Histoire des Sciences arabes* - Editions du Seuil. Paris 1997- Vol I - 'Astronomie, théorique et appliquée' pp. 71-138.

⁸⁸⁵ Ibid : G.Saliba, *Histoire des Sciences Arabes*, Vol I . p. 87.

⁸⁸⁶ W.Budge, *Osiris* Vol II p.250. Jupiter was known to the Ancient Egyptians of the New Kingdom, but apparently not before.

⁸⁸⁷ S.Aufrère.op.cit. p.810.

The significance of ʿAshura

In Morocco, the time when ʿAshur, (the one, who is being buried),⁸⁸⁹ is called “*Baba*” is during the mourning rituals of the ʿ*Ashura* festival. Some Muslim scholars refer to it as the mourning for Hossein⁸⁹⁰, but for the people at large it is *Baba ʿAshur* that is mourned. The word “*Baba*” (father) is used as a prefix to denote old men, hence “*Baba ʿAshur*” (Father ʿAshur), who, in the twilight of his manhood, is no longer capable of reproduction and is therefore buried to be reborn in the New Year.

Throughout the ʿ*Ashura* rituals and practices the number “ten” appears continually. The almsgiving is a tithe (i.e. a tenth) of what, on the 10th day of *Muḥaram*, the giver reckons to be his production or taxable income. In remoter areas of the Atlas and, during the colonial period, ʿ*Ashura* was celebrated in the 10th month of the agrarian calendar October, in preference to the month Muḥarram. In some cases the celebration was held twice, in both Muḥarram and October, indicating that confusion existed between the Agrarian and Islamic months. Continuing with the theme of “ten” the farmer, at the end of the winnowing of his crop, performs ten symbolic rounds of the threshing floor.⁸⁹¹ After the threshing the helpers watch in silence as the farmer measures out the grain. In the Atlas the first and tenth measures are placed in separate sacks to be given as charity, the farmer retaining the other eight measures for his own use. Elsewhere it is only the tenth measure that is set aside for charity. Once the measuring is complete, salt is put on the grain to show that it is for human

⁸⁸⁸ S.Aufrère.op.cit. pp.121-122.

⁸⁸⁹ See Chapter V under “ʿ*Ashura*”.

⁸⁹⁰ Hossein the great son of Prophet Mohammed who was murdered in Karbala (Iraq) in 680 A.D.- (i)M. Vaziri “The Emergence of Islam” – Paragon House, New York 1992: Hossein’s brutal killing disturbed so many believers that as time passed his martyrdom was magnified to such an extent that many myths originating long before the Islamic period became attached to it. Another connection is the fact that Hossein was apparently married to a Persian princess from Ray, the shrine of the Zoroastrian cult. pp. 107-112. (ii) N.J.G. Kaptein op. cit. Apparently the Prophet Muhammad used to fast on ʿ*Ashura*, as he heard about the Jews fasting to commemorate Moses’s victory over Pharaoh. The Muslims followed suit and normally fast on that day. p. 87. Hence the link of Hossein to ʿ*Ashura* proves to be at best controversial.

⁸⁹¹ See Chapter V under “Seasons”.

consumption. In seeking an explanation for the farmer's "tenth" for charity,⁸⁹² the notion of an offering to the tenth god may perhaps be apt. After the nine primeval gods, the Enneads,⁸⁹³ Osiris/Ashur is the tenth god⁸⁹⁴, the son of the sky-goddess Nut and the earth-god Geb. Thus the tenth part of the harvest distributed by the farmer as charity may well have its origins in a form of thanksgiving to the tenth god.⁸⁹⁵ For it is he, who is eternally associated with the annual revival of the fertility of the earth and of its death,⁸⁹⁶ once it has yielded its harvest.⁸⁹⁷

According to the movement of the star-clock the constellation of Orion/Osiris disappears from the heavens at the end of August, which, in Morocco is when the *moot al 'ard* (death of the earth)⁸⁹⁸ is declared, signifying that all growth has ended. This is the beginning of autumn, symbolising the death of Osiris, following which the star-clock shows Sirius (Isis) in search of her husband. This is followed by the pagan festival of 'Ashura,⁸⁹⁹ which involves the mourning for 'Ashur, his burial in the ground, (the sowing season), visiting the cemetery and sprinkling water on the graves.⁹⁰⁰ The fireworks⁹⁰¹ used in 'Ashura mean that Isis has found the body of Osiris/Ashur and is burying it. Thus they symbolise the burning of the wooden pillar (the pillar *Andjet*), in which his brother Set placed Osiris. The children present at the rituals are rewarded with toys perhaps to commemorate those children,⁹⁰² who helped Isis to find this pillar in the river.

The Myth of Creation

⁸⁹² L. Chénier op. cit. (1970) relates an incident in which the Alaouite sultan was opposed by the population for selling the dime paid to him in wheat as taxes in 1775. p. 35.

⁸⁹³ (i) Anthony S. Mercatante for Enneads see *Who's who in Egyptian Mythology*, p.42. (ii) S. Sauneron op. cit. p. 105. (iii) G. Racht "Dictionnaire de la Civilisation Egyptienne" pp. 106-107.

⁸⁹⁴ (i) Adolf Erman op. cit. p. 143. (ii) W. Budge, *From fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*: The plinth (of Osiris's throne) should have nine steps, one for each god of the 'Company of Osiris...' pp 191. This further underlines that Osiris is the tenth god.

⁸⁹⁵ W. Budge "Osiris" Vol. I p.23.

⁸⁹⁶ W. Budge in *Egyptian Religion* relates that the death of Osiris occurred when the sun was in Scorpio i.e. between October and November. p. 66 and pp.179 in *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*.

⁸⁹⁷ H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*- pp. 184-188.

⁸⁹⁸ See Chapter. V - Seasons.

⁸⁹⁹ See Chapter. V - Seasons, for details.

⁹⁰⁰ W. Budge *Egyptian Magic*- see jars connection with children of Horus. pp89-91.

⁹⁰¹ W. Budge "Osiris" Vol. I p. 15.

⁹⁰² Mercatante, A. *Who's who in Egyptian Mythology*- p. 30.

There is another myth that precedes that of Osiris, which is the Myth of Creation.⁹⁰³ The fundamental belief enshrined in the Myth of Creation is that the god alone, without the help of a uterine recipient, could not perform it. Thus, from the primeval ocean (Nun), appeared a lotus flower, mysteriously raised above the water. The flower opened to reveal the Sun God. From the waters also rose eight gods,⁹⁰⁴ male and female, who were the first fathers and mothers. They made light and brought order out of chaos, bringing into being the simpler forms of life, followed by the more complex. This concept is depicted in various Ancient Egyptian tombs and monuments and is attributed to the God *Ta-Tjenen*, (The Risen Land), “he is *Ta-Tjenen* who begot the gods. Everything came from him, nourishment and food. The nourishment of the gods and every good thing.”⁹⁰⁵

The Gods of Creation

Sun

Shu (air) - Geb (earth) – Nut (sky) – Nun (water)

(Each⁹⁰⁶ with a consort)

In Morocco, the concept of a sacred flower also existed in early religious beliefs. Near Meknés lie the ruins of the ancient city of Volubilis⁹⁰⁷ (Roman spelling), known in Berber as Oualili,⁹⁰⁸ meaning Oleander (the sacred flower).⁹⁰⁹ This name is

⁹⁰³ Siegfried Morenz op.cit p. 159 & for primaeval egg. see pp. 178-179.

⁹⁰⁴ H.Frankfort Kingship and the Gods- University of Chicago 1948- p.151 Ennead/ Ogdoad gods.

They are also referred to as the fathers and mothers who made the light.

⁹⁰⁵ See H. Frankfort pp. 152-161. The image of land rising from the waters is evocative of the curiously-shaped cooking vessel, widely used in Morocco, called the *tajin*. It is an earthenware recipient composed of two elements: a conical top with a circular recess at the top, acting as a cover for what is cooked in the second element, which is a circular concave dish. The notion of a vessel made in what might be construed as the image of “risen land”, designed to contain (hopefully) “nourishment of the gods and every good thing”, with a name so close to that of the Earth God *Ta-Tjenen*, is an interesting one.

See also Athenaeus Diepnsophistae, VI, 228-9. Trans. C.B. Gulick III. Havard University Press, Massachusetts. Writing around 300 A.D. Athenaeus makes several references to the “téganon” pan or casserole, apparently well known to the Graecophone Mediterranean world and known also to have been in use in the time of Juba II.

⁹⁰⁶ The four male gods were portrayed with frog heads. See Dictionnaire de la Civilisation Egyptienne- G. Posener, S. Sauneron, J. Yoyotte p. 96. This might explain the feeding of the frogs in the Atlas (see p. 123).

⁹⁰⁷ See S. Moscati, The Phoenicians- Milano 1988, p. 181.

⁹⁰⁸ Tissot, Ch. “Oualili”, Recherches sur la géographie comparée de la Mauretanie Tingitane. Paris 1877- p. 283.

⁹⁰⁹ Jodin, André Volubilis Regia Jubae- Contribution à l'étude des civilisations du Maroc antique pré-claudien. City named after the Berber word *Alili* meaning Oleander pp.195-96 and p. 227 (for laurier-rose) oleander- Paris 1987. *Alili* (Berber ; defla Arabic ; Nerium Oleander L.) grows from Morocco

reputed to be the old name of a Berber town that existed on the same site, which lies between two rivers, with an abundant spring called *Festassa* nearby. The site rises well above both riverbeds, which are heavily populated with the sacred river-version of the Oleander. Thus there is an apparent association between “risen land” and a “sacred flower” at this site and one is bound to ask whether this was a matter of chance or of intention, based upon knowledge of the myth.⁹¹⁰ Archaeological investigation has shown that the irrigation system was planned before the town was founded.⁹¹¹ The original Berber town was destroyed circa 300 BC and subsequently rebuilt by the Romans, but was eventually destroyed by an earthquake.

Taghandja and its associations

It was established in Chapter V that the name of the wooden-ladle doll described in the rainmaking ceremony was either *Taghandja* or *Ta'andja*. In Fés a similar doll is referred to as *Tandjawiya* (the one from Tangier). The above names have a common consonance “*Ta'andja*”, which interestingly, is the Berber name for the city known as Tangier. The name of this city seems hardly to have varied greatly over the millennia. The Phoenicians knew it as *Tinji*,⁹¹² recording that it was named after a Libyan god⁹¹³. Setting aside the Berber prefix “*Ta*”, we are left with *Andja* in our quest to identify this Libyan god. Unfortunately, very little is known about Libyan gods, but it has been established that the Osiris of Ancient Egyptian mythology was known as *Andjet*⁹¹⁴ in pre-Pharaonic times and *Ta-Andja* refers to the “dweller in *Andjet*”, (the marshes).⁹¹⁵ Moreover Budge⁹¹⁶ indicates that some manuscripts show the *Andjet* fetish as a head, on the top of a pole, wearing a crown formed by the two plumes of

to Libya, is a sacred tree in Morocco, especially the variety that grows in rivers. See Mohammed Ibn Azuz Akim, *Diccionario de Supersticiones y Mitos Marroqies*- op. cit. p.15.

⁹¹⁰ Hesperis 1915-16 - pp.254 - 256.

⁹¹¹ D. Cherry, *Frontier and Society in Roman North Africa*- Clarendon Press, Oxford 1998. pp. 16-17.

⁹¹² Sabatino Moscati *The Phoenicians*- op. cit. pp.180-184.

⁹¹³ A. Jodin refers to statue found at Volubilis of Herakles “Statue peut-être dédié à Hercule, dieu Mauritanien non oublié par eux” p.237- He cites: “Pliny the Elder, répète le mythe de Hercule et Persée dans l’Atlas Marocain” *ibid.* p.238 – in *Volubilis Regia Jubae*- Contribution à l’étude des civilisations du Maroc antique et Pré-Claudien - 1987 – Paris.

⁹¹⁴ G. Hart, *A dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses* -Routledge & Kegan Paul- London 1986.

“The meaning of Andjety is: he of Andjet, a forerunner of Osiris responsible for rebirth in the afterlife. A precursor of Osiris in Ancient Egypt and a name for the nome 9. pp. 18-19.

⁹¹⁵ (i)W.Budge *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*-Dover Publications Inc. New York reprinted 1988. pp. 184-187. (ii) H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* p. 200 & p.202.

the god Osiris, a pair of ram's horns and a solar disk. Another depiction from a bas-relief shows a Canopic jar containing the head of Osiris, with the same adornments as above.⁹¹⁷ In Ancient Egypt these fetish poles, duly dressed and adorned, were carried in ceremonies dedicated to assisting the spring vegetation.⁹¹⁸

In a Moroccan context:

- The *Taghandja* or *Ta'andja* rainmaking rogational ceremony is to persuade the god to release his waters⁹¹⁹ so that the grain may germinate and sprout.
- The doll described as *Tandjawiya* in the celebration of *°Ashura* in Fés is decorated in a manner similar to the doll in *Taghandja*. However, after being carried in the procession, it is solemnly buried in the ground, signifying the death of *Ashur/Andjet/Osiris*.⁹²⁰
- The *Tandjiya* dish from Marrakesh, apart from the consonance of the name, is significant because it is never cooked in fire, but only in hot ashes or in a well, into which quicklime has been poured. The latter method is particularly appropriate to Osiris, since the dish is effectively cooked in water. The meat for this dish is cut into pieces and placed in a sealed jar, suggestive of the dismembering of Osiris.
- Finally, the depiction of the *Andjet/Osiris* fertility symbolism can be found in the traditional dress of the bride that is specific to the Fés-Salé-Tangier triangle. Here the bride, symbolising fertility, wears an ornate costume, in which the iconography of *Andjet/Osiris* can be identified, consisting of: the crown of

⁹¹⁶ W.Budge op. cit p.185.

⁹¹⁷ W.Budge op.cit.*Osiris* Vol. I p. 56.

⁹¹⁸ (i) A. Moret op. cit. A ceremony repeated in Ancient Egypt in souvenir of the event of the sky goddess Nut giving birth to Andjet the pillar. p. 31.(ii)W.Budge *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt* -p. 188. The cow in the ceremony probably relates to Osiris's birth from the cow goddess Hator (one of the aspects of the goddess Nut.).

⁹¹⁹ See A.S.Mercatante op.cit. p.28 Canopic jars. Osiris was believed to be the source of the Nile's flood, whose waters were magically thought to be contained in such jars.

⁹²⁰ See the Djed ceremony in Guy Rachet, *Le Livre des Morts des anciens égyptiens*- Editions du Rocher. Lonrai France, 1996.

plumes, with the horns and solar disk; the uraeus; the three symbols of the backbone; the pectoral decoration depicting the nomes that Osiris covers.

Developing the suggestion that *Tandja* (Tangier) derives its names from the ancient North African god *Andjet*, synonymous with Osiris, it is noteworthy that some short distance to the East, along the same coast, lies the town of Sebta (Septa; Ceuta). Sebta is in fact another name for Isis.⁹²¹ The proximity of these two celestial names evokes the Ancient Egyptian hymn⁹²²:

“Thy divine emanation glorifieth Sahu (i.e. the Osiris/Orion god) in the heavens, rising and setting each day, and I am like Septet (i.e. Sirius) behind thee, and I go not away from thee. Heaven possesseth thy soul, earth possesseth thy similitudes, and the *Tuat* thy secret things.”

Thus the toponymy shows Osiris accompanied by his sister-wife Isis⁹²³ at the edge of the known world, guarding it from the great unknown of the Western Ocean, which could well be how the ancients envisaged the *Tuat*, the underworld kingdom of Osiris.

⁹²¹ W. Budge “Like the Star Sept” – ‘Osiris’ Vol. I p.93 - Sebta is the native Moroccan pronunciation of Ceuta (French- Septum in Roman Time). Aat is an Ancient Egyptian word for ‘abode or place’.

⁹²² E.W.Budge *Osiris* Vol II- p. 63.

⁹²³ In Moroccan dialect the number 2 (ethnin) is never said but the word for “pair” (zooj or zoog) is used. Perhaps there is a fetish significance here.

XII – The Ancient Egyptian Connection

The Tuat

It was during Napoleon's campaign in Egypt that the process of understanding the language and religion of Ancient Egypt began. Champolion's pioneering work allowed historians, for the first time, to reconcile oral tradition with the content of hieroglyphic writings. This process has continued with each archaeological discovery until the present day. However, avoiding the distraction of the glowing world of cult objects revealed by the treasures of Tutankhamon and of other kings and queens, it would be more pertinent to trace the origins of the cult itself. According to Egyptologists, the earliest written form of religious cult material survives in what are called the religious texts. Wallis Budge claims that the primitive Egyptians worshipped a god called An-her. Before the pre-dynastic period, (i.e. 3350 BC) this cult was replaced by one which came from the West⁹²⁴ namely; the cult of Osiris.⁹²⁵ This was an agrarian fertility cult, which also involved the belief that the souls of the dead would be judged after death. This judgement concept was expressed in the Pyramid texts, works of great antiquity that depict scenes of man in the underworld after death. Whatever might have been the moral concepts of the primitive Egyptian, we know that the Tuat was seen as the realm of the god Osiris, where all men are to be judged for their behaviour on earth. The religious message relating to the Tuat was recorded in written form around 3100 BC as prayers, hymns and incantations with the original set of Texts being eventually compiled in two sets of Books:

- a. The Shat am Tuat (That Which is in the Tuat)
- b. Shat en Sbau (The Book of Pylons or Gates)

⁹²⁴ E.A. Wallis Budge, The Gods of the Egyptians- Vol I & II Methuen & Co London 1904- Vol. I p. 173-

⁹²⁵ Cf (i) Henri Frankfort Kings and the gods The University of Chicago Press Ltd London 1978- (ii) Paul Barguet Le Livre des Morts des anciens Egyptiens- Les Editions du Cerf, Paris 1967- (iii) The Egyptian Book of the Dead -The complete papyrus of Ani by : Dr R.O. Faulkner, Dr Ogden Goelet, Dr Wallis Budge, Carol Andrews- Chronicle Books. James Wasserman San Francisco 1994- (iv) Gustave Lefebure Romans et contes Egyptiens -Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient Paris 1988-

According to W. Budge, the above date was a late one for a doctrine that had existed for some time, a detail that he sought to explain by the fact that the priests were already trying to adjust parts of it to their own requirements.⁹²⁶ Eventually the cult was modified so often that the identity of Osiris was eclipsed by that of Ra, the God of the living, in the same way that Osiris had replaced An-her in the remote period⁹²⁷.

It is now appropriate to address the question of understanding the Tuat, in order to explain its inclusion in this thesis. The Tuat was likened to the body of Osiris, for he was the personification of the Tuat⁹²⁸. The description of it had its own topography: mountains, green valleys, rivers and lakes, in fact all the features of a large country. The only difference between the upper-world and the underworld was light. According to the Egyptian priests, the Tuat was a place of deep darkness where the boat of the god Osiris sailed in the twelve division of time: twelve hours for the daylight and twelve for the darkness. The analogy of day and night represents man in daylight and man in darkness, where he needs to be led to find his way. The link is between death and resurrection, to accommodate man's natural desire to continue in life after death. The Tuat was under the sovereignty of Osiris who, once he has judged the dead, releases them to the realms of eternal life and happiness. Each geographical division of the Tuat was expressed as an imaginary division in the original religious texts, so that the priests depicted the Tuat as twelve such divisions. A book was compiled to support their description of what the Tuat looked like⁹²⁹. The Tuat was deemed to start where the sun sets, which in Egypt would be in the direction of North Africa. A list of names was included with their positions defined in an accurate manner, so that the dead soul, once provided with a copy, would never be lost. Included also were prayers and words of power to accompany the dead.

According to the text the Boat of the Sun sails into the Tuat and enters the first division/hour, towards the Mountain of the West, whose god is *Saa Set*. The boat sails on to the second division, which is under the protection of the great serpent *Mehen-Sat*. The boat meets other gods and continues to carry the souls of the righteous,

⁹²⁶ W.Budge op.cit. p.174.

⁹²⁷ ibid p.172.

⁹²⁸ ibid p. 156.

whilst those of the evildoers are left in the darkness of this hour as well as in the third division. In the fourth division the scene is of two groups of six women who are the personification of the twelve hours in the Tuat. Between them lie the multitudinous coils of the serpent *Herert*. The latter is about to give birth to twelve young ones, who are to devour the hours⁹³⁰. Food and offerings are made to the gods in the form of cakes and green herbs in the fifth division. At the sixth division, in the middle of the Tuat, Osiris watches the weighing of the souls. This emphasizes the fact that the Book of the Pylons is essentially Osirian, because it is he that is depicted as the judge seated on his chair, before whom the souls are brought for judgement. The procession sails on through the seventh division. The eighth division is called *Bekkhki* and the souls who accompany the god here are called 'the sovereign chiefs', who distribute bread and green herbs. Here a huge serpent that belches forth a stream of fire in their faces punishes the enemies of Osiris, specifically those, who have tarnished his image. The God Horus has commanded this punishment, to avenge his father. The pylon of the ninth division is called *aat*⁹³¹ *Shefsheft*. The gods and people that cross this division all wear individual crowns. They are followers of Osiris and followers of Horus who are holding fast a rope to prevent the serpent *Apep* entering the boat of the god. In the tenth division the motive is definitely the struggle to overcome *Apep*, the serpent of darkness. The huge body of *Apep* is being tied down with ropes and chains, whilst a hidden body with a mighty hand is controlling the struggle. At the end of the picture Osiris is watching the dwellers of the Tuat destroying the serpent of darkness and making their way towards sunrise. A solar disc, bearing the name *Pastet*, which according to W.Budge⁹³² is probably connected with a well-known star that rose heliacally at particular seasons of the year. Maspero refers to Pastet "l'étoile, dame de la barque qui pousse l'impie en ses sorties- Etoile du matin elle guide ce grand dieu vers les voies des ténèbres claires, éclairant ceux qui sont sur terre"⁹³³. The duty of this disk is to guide the boat towards the light. This particular moment of the eleventh division is called *Keskesu*: light as opposed to darkness. The circle of the Tuat terminates at sunrise with the righteous ones accompanying the solar disk to the Light. On the other hand, those who have escaped punishment and are enemies of the God

⁹²⁹ W.Budge op.cit. pps. 178 et seq.

⁹³⁰ W. Budge op.cit. p186.

⁹³¹ Aat. The domain of Osiris is divided into aat which means "house" or "land of...".

⁹³² Ibid p.250.

are delivered to the lion-headed goddess called *Ketit*⁹³⁴, who belches fire at them and with huge knives in both her hands hacks them to pieces. She then passes them on to other goddesses, who finish the task by putting them in chambers containing fiery pits. Those goddesses are *Sefu* and the goddess of the blazing desert *Hersha*. Literally, the lady of the swords, the lady of furnace and flames from the slaughtering blocks. The enemies of the god are hacked into pieces in such a way that they can never live on earth again. It is Horus⁹³⁵ that has ordered this slaughter of the enemies.

In the previous paragraph, certain names have been printed in thick type in the text. This has been done so that they may be referred to more easily, since each one appears to have its counterpart in the names of dishes belonging to the traditional Moroccan cuisine of today. This apparent coincidental relationship between names, drawn from a religious text originating more than five millennia ago and dishes found in the cuisine of an area situated well to the west of Egypt, is one that calls for investigation and if possible, an explanation. The examination of the texts has led to the suggestion that the symbolic connection between the dishes named above and their namesakes in the Tuat is essentially religious. The symbolic lesson to be taught by each of the dishes seems to be in line with one of two basic doctrinal concepts that are usually present in all religions, namely:

- I. The promise of salvation for the righteous.
- II. The inevitability of punishment for the wicked.

Thus, in the first category are to be found:

Mehensha, evoking Mehen-set, protector of souls, in the second division,

Ḥarīra, evoking prevention of the birth of young to the serpent in the fourth division,

Shefenj, evoking controlling the Snake of Darkness in the ninth division,

Keskesu, evokes light as opposed to darkness in the eleventh hour,

⁹³³ Gaston Maspéro, *Etudes de Mythologie et d'Archéologie Egyptiennes*- Bibliothèque Egyptologique Paris Ernest Leroux, Editeurs 1893 Tome II p.1-181.

⁹³⁴ W.Budge Op. cit p.255.

⁹³⁵ The son of Osiris, born to Isis after her magical conception.

Pastilla/bastella, recalls the cat's victory over the Snake of Darkness and the arrival of the dawn (or resurrection),

Whilst in the second category we can identify the following warnings of retribution:

Beghrir. The snake belching fire in the faces of the wicked in the eight division,

Sefu f. The Goddess Sefu burns the bones of the wicked in the eleventh hour.

Ḥersha. The Goddess from the blazing desert burning the evil-doers in fiery pits,

Qadid. The Goddess Ketit in the eleventh hour, who cuts up the evil-doers into small pieces

Mehensha

In the preparation of this dish almonds are blanched and then ground giving a white paste that is then mixed with gum arabic, rose water, butter and sugar (or honey). Thin pastry similar to that of *Bastella* is prepared beforehand so that the white almond-paste can be rolled in it into cylinders. Once a few of these have been made, they are joined together and coiled into a snake-like shape. This is then cooked gently in the oven so that it remains white (i.e. it must not brown). After cooking it is decorated with cinnamon and sugar, to resemble the markings of a snake. Before serving it is cut into segments about ten centimetres long, to be accompanied by fresh mint tea.

In the context of the *Tuat*, the serpent Mehen acts as a saviour to the souls that have been pardoned. According to Faulkner⁹³⁶ the word "mhn" has three meanings in Ancient Egyptian:

- a. Coil of serpent.
- b. Name of serpent-spirit: the coiled one.

c. A board game.

The board game described by W.Decker,⁹³⁷ (see illustration), was in use only in the Old Kingdom. In the game the coiled body of the snake was divided into sections. An example of this game was found among a set of games in a tomb of the IIIrd dynasty. A text has also come to light, in which the deceased played against a snake, won the game and then threw the snake into a “watery field”.⁹³⁸ The name *Henesh* in Arabic means “serpent”, hence *Mehensha* “snake-like”. This word is familiar to North Africans but less so to Middle Eastern ears, despite being included in dictionaries of Classical Arabic⁹³⁹. Thus North Africa seems to be the only place where this reptile is identified by its old name *henesh*.

It is clear that in the Old Kingdom of Ancient Egypt the “Mehen” game was a favoured tomb object, not only because of its recreational value, but also because of its association with the defeat of serpents. Nonetheless, whatever may have been its value to the Ancient Egyptians, it is a fact that the “Mehen” shape and name has survived five millennia to appear as the *Mehensha* pastry of Moroccan cuisine. This is possibly the most impressive of all the links found between the Ancient Egyptian civilization and the cuisine of Morocco.

Harīra

This soup is peculiar to North Africa and to Morocco in particular. It is used for breakfast or as a first course during the month of Ramadan. Strangely enough, it is always served with dried figs and honey cakes, an odd combination of two opposite tastes, sweet and spicy. However, this has a meaning, which will become evident

⁹³⁶ R.O.Faulkner, *A concise dictionary of Middle Egyptian* – The Griffiths Institute University Press Oxford 1972. pp. 114-115.

⁹³⁷ W.Decker, *Sports and Games of Ancient Egypt*- Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1993- p.132.

⁹³⁸ Ibid pp. 131/133.

⁹³⁹ Arab dictionary *Al Munjid fi loogha wal ^lilm*- Dar al Mashriq, Beirut 1986. p.158.

during the interpretation of the significance of this dish. *Ḥarīra* appears green when it is served, as the main components are fresh green coriander, fresh parsley, celery and pulses. This soup has several recipes recorded in the *Kanz* and the *Maghribi-Andalusi* cookbooks⁹⁴⁰, which all require the soup to be green and slightly bitter in taste. When the pulses have cooked, small vermicelli are added; this is obligatory. Finally, just before serving, an egg is broken into the boiling soup. The image produced by this recipe appears to be symbolic of the story contained in the IVth hour of the *Tuat*, when the serpent Herert with “multitudinous coils and windings” menaces the women representing the hours⁹⁴¹, since it is about to give birth to young serpents to devour them. Thus the imagery of this soup is that the pulses represent the eggs and the vermicelli the young of the serpent. For his part the cook that prepares the *Ḥarīra* breaks an egg into it, which might signify the breaking of an evil serpent’s egg and the destruction of its contents in the boiling soup. He then serves this soup at breakfast, (i.e. when the darkness has been overcome), accompanied by figs and honeyed cakes. The latter items are the same as those that in Morocco are carried to the cemetery at the time of burial⁹⁴² and distributed to the poor to assist the soul of the dead. This is comparable with the Ancient Egyptian offerings at the tombs of the dead for the benefit of the *Ka*⁹⁴³ of the deceased, with the object of ensuring that the soul does not return to earth⁹⁴⁴. The suggestion is therefore, that in *Ḥarīra* we have the medium, by which man may celebrate daily the miracle of the triumph of light over darkness, as he breaks his fast with a soup that signifies the defeat of the progeny of the evil serpent in the IVth division of the *Tuat*. At the same time he confirms his belief in the life after death by consuming the accompanying figs and cakes, the offerings that ensure that souls do not return to earth.

Baghrir

In the *Tuat*, *Bakhkhi* refers to the punishment of wrongdoers by the snake that belches out fire to mark their faces. As depicted in the picture, red-hot sparks are sprayed out

⁹⁴⁰ See Chapter VIII.

⁹⁴¹ Op.cit. W.Budge p.,186.

⁹⁴² see Chapter VI on Bereavement

⁹⁴³ W.Budge op..cit. p. 262.

⁹⁴⁴ W. Budge *Osiris* vol. II pp.128-129.

from the snake's mouth into the faces of the evildoer. Interestingly, the same action is still used today in Morocco by healers for a less violent purpose. The natural healer used his mouth to spray the aching areas of the body of the patient in order to effect a cure, sometimes ingesting salt to burn the skin. This action is called "*Bakhkh*". The Baghrir pancake, whose vital ingredient is yeast, raises another interesting comparison⁹⁴⁵. This pancake is cooked on its reverse side only, whilst the upper side is marked by holes, caused by the bursting of the rising bubbles of gas produced by the yeast.⁹⁴⁶ Thus we have a pancake pitted with holes, with a name not far removed from *Bakhkhi*, the serpent that in the eighth hour of the *Tuat* spits red-hot sparks to mark the faces of evildoers.

Shefenj - doughnut

Moroccan doughnuts have a special place in history having been mentioned by both Al Idrissi and Ibn Khaldoun. The preparation of the dough requires a special kneading technique to achieve the desired elasticity for the mixture. The baker prepares the dough in the evening and in the early morning tests it by pulling it like a rope with one hand and cutting it with the other, using water to weaken the attachment. Pieces of this "rope" are subsequently formed into "crowns" (circles) before frying. The other important ingredient in the dough is the use of special yeast. In attempting to trace the origin of these peculiar doughnuts, the name of the god *Shesheft* in the IXth division of the *Tuat* has been noted. The similarity between this name and *Shefenj* suggests a possible etymological connection, where the difficult double *sh-* of the ancient word may have resulted in the second syllable being mutated to *-nj*. This mutation of letters, possibly over millennia, is quite justifiable when one examines a more modern example of a similar root, which has a time-scale of less than a millennium.

⁹⁴⁵ Yeast was known in Egypt from antiquity. Hilary Wilson *Egyptian Food and Drink*- Shire Publications Ltd Aylesbury 1988. pp 11-19.

⁹⁴⁶ There is a superstitious notion in Morocco about the cooking of these pancakes. When the cook prepares them, the people around her start talking about smallpox, in order to "encourage" the multiplication of the holes in the face of the pancake.

| Arabic | English | French | Spanish | Greek |
|--------|---------|-------------|---------|-----------|
| Asfenj | Sponge | Eponge | Esponja | Sfoungari |
| | | (OF Eponge) | | |

Whatever view philologists and linguists may take of the above deduction, it has led to an examination the IXth hour of the *Tuat*. Here the “crown” and “rope” associations of the *Sfenj* are to be found in two sets of four gods, each wearing a crown, all of which are grasping a rope. The rope motif is mentioned again at several points in the text⁹⁴⁷, with particular reference to the restraining and eventual defeat of the Serpent of Darkness *Apopis*.

Pastilla/Bastella

Pastet is the name given to a Solar disk in the *Tuat*⁹⁴⁸, apparently associated with a star that appears just before daybreak and signifies the dying of the Snake of Darkness. *Bast* (*Bastet*) is also the name of the Cat-goddess⁹⁴⁹. In the zoology of Egyptian mythology, the cat is the enemy of the snake, as is the case in real life in hot countries, where the domestic cat warns the family of the presence of snakes. Thus in the XIth hour of the *Tuat*, the star Bastet announces the cat's⁹⁵⁰ victory over the Snake of Darkness (Set). It shines triumphantly on the horizon, announcing the rising of the sun, the return of daylight, with the true face of the earth revealed again, whilst recalling also the triumph of the resurrection of Osiris over his murder by Set. The Moroccan dish *Bastella* (*Pastilla*) is traditionally made from pieces of boned pigeon. Since the star that appears in the sky is (apparently) in the heights of the atmosphere, so the pieces of pigeon being offered must be wrapped in leaves of the lightest and

⁹⁴⁷ W.Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians*- pp. 194-196.

⁹⁴⁸ *Ibid* p.250.

⁹⁴⁹ (i) *Ibid* pp. 514-515. (ii) Mercatante A.S. *Who's Who in Egyptian Mythology*- p.20.

⁹⁵⁰ In Morocco cats are very highly regarded by the womenfolk. It is known that, in certain families, when a cat has had its kittens, it is given offerings of boiled eggs, milk and cosmetics, during a period of ten days. The cat is carefully protected and no one can see her, other than the mistress of the house.

finest pastry that man could devise. The whole dish⁹⁵¹ is thus assembled in wrapped layers in a circular shape, signifying the solar disk of the sun. It is then lightly cooked in an oven, until it has begun to brown. It is then decorated in a contrast of two colours, light and dark, a design that may be interpreted as symbolising the dawn star.

*Kesksu*⁹⁵² (Couscous)

In the XIth hour of the *Tuat*, immediately following the reference to *bastet*, there is a mention of “.. at the end of the eleventh hour, where the darkness faded away; the texts call the darkness at this point *keku keskesu*, i.e. the opposite of *Kekui samui*, or the thick total darkness.....”⁹⁵³. Using semolina formed from finely crushed hard wheat, the cook has created the image of tiny particles of white light as seen in the pre-dawn twilight, by ingeniously steaming the grains to keep them separate. Whatever may have been the reasons for naming this dish *Kesksu*, the similarity to the Ancient Egyptian name for the dawn twilight is remarkable.

Qadid (*Ketit*)

In the XIth hour of the *Tuat* there is a “punishment” area known as the “Pits of the *Tuat*”. The first of these pits is under the charge of a lion-headed goddess called *Hert-Ketits*, who stands by the side of the pit belching fire into it. The creatures in this pit, who have been subjected to this treatment, are now hacked to pieces by her with a huge knife that she holds in both hands⁹⁵⁴. The *Qadid*, sun-dried meat, cut into long strips, described in Chapter V carries what is effectively the same name.

Sefu -f

In the Book of the Dead, the cat is seen as an old solar being, who protects man principally against rodents and snakes. Bastet is also a cat-headed goddess.

⁹⁵¹ André Jacques in *l'Alimentation et la Cuisine à Rome-* (CNRS) by Librairie Klincksieck Paris 1961 p.215 mentions a *libum* (i.e.a sacred offering to the gods) called *pastillum* (lat.). The same source (p.213) points out that Roman patisserie was only rudimentary and that all the more sophisticated elements had been brought from Greece.

⁹⁵² This was baptised couscous by the colonial French, but *kesksu* is the correct pronunciation used by Moroccans.

⁹⁵³ W.Budge op.cit. p.250.

Amongst the fiery chambers of the “Pits of the *Tuat*” there is one presided over by *Hert-Sefu-s*. The name *Sefu-s* is thus synonymous with “grilling and crushing to powder”⁹⁵⁵. The method of preparation of *Sefuf* (see Chapter III) is one of roasting, grilling and grinding the ingredients in the same manner that the souls of evildoers have been treated in the *Tuat* by the goddess *Sefu-s*.

Hersha

The hot dry winds of the desert are associated in the *Tuat* with four goddesses all of whom have names with the approximate meaning of “fiery”.⁹⁵⁶ One of these goddesses is *Hershas*. Those who have eaten Moroccan *Hersha* and have immediately looked around for something to drink will have no difficulty recognizing the association. It is very dry crumbly bread indeed⁹⁵⁷, made from coarse semolina, butter, salt and a sprinkling of water⁹⁵⁸.

Ka^cab

According to the Book of the Dead vocabulary, the Ancient Egyptian meaning of “*Ka ab*” is “Horn of the divine bull”⁹⁵⁹. “*Ka^cab*” pastries are made with an almond filling similar to *Mehensha*. Fresh almond paste is encased in very thin dough and formed into the shape of a crescent⁹⁶⁰. It is then gently cooked in order to obtain a white crunchy pastry with a white filling. We have here two images, firstly the “horn of the divine bull” and secondly a “crescent”. Budge⁹⁶¹ and Frankfort⁹⁶² in the story

⁹⁵⁴ Ibid, p.255.

⁹⁵⁵ ibid p.256.

⁹⁵⁶ W.Budge op.cit. p..256.

⁹⁵⁷ See table in Chapter I.

⁹⁵⁸ Just the minimum of water used to depict the environment and the scarcity of water.

⁹⁵⁹ W.Budge Hieroglyphic Vocabulary of the Book of the Dead- Dover Publications Inc, New York 1991. Pp. 407 and 79.

⁹⁶⁰ H.Frankfort in Kingship and the gods -p.196- University of Chicago press 1948. Quoting Plutarch: “..in late times crescent-shaped figures of moist earth and seeds were made as soon as *Osiris* was found. It is interesting to note that in Morocco, there is a variant of “*Ka^cab*” that is decorated with a covering of sesame seeds.

⁹⁶¹ (i) Siegfried Morenz op. cit. pp 201-204. (ii) W.Budge Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection- Vol. I p.21 Dover Publications -New York 1973.

⁹⁶² H.Frankfort ibid p.196.

of the resurrection of *Osiris* state that he is likened to the waning and waxing of the moon⁹⁶³. He is the divine bull reborn from his Mother the cow Nut.

⁹⁶³ W.Budge Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection- Vol. I pp. 398 & 399.

Ka^cak

The vocabulary of the Book of the Dead also tells us that *Aqu*⁹⁶⁴ is “cakes and loaves of bread”. Hence *Ka^cak* may well be Divine cake/bread. In Morocco *Ka^cak* are invariable associated with children, either as gifts for them brought by their mothers from parties, or distributed to them at festivals. They are shaped like fetters, as described in Huici Miranda’s translation of the 13th Century cookery book.⁹⁶⁵ It appears that they were known in Marrakesh as “children’s wrists” *ma^cašim*. There seems to be no logical explanation for the association of children with fetters/wrists until the combination of the two is noted in the XIth division of the Tuat⁹⁶⁶, where the children of Horus are participating in the punishment of the evil worm by placing fetters on it.

Ancient origins : a commentary

We have used myths, borrowed from Ancient Egypt, to guide us to understanding their presumed Moroccan equivalent in order to identify the origins of that country’s cuisine. Not only have similarities been identified between the beliefs prevalent in the two countries, but also doubts have arisen about the geographical origin of the basic cult. The situation in Ancient Egypt was, to a great extent, confused by the political manipulations of priests, who wished to establish a permanent Pharaonic domination of the population, which, as already mentioned, was not in line with the basic cult of Osiris.⁹⁶⁷ Unfortunately, it is plainly evident that the seasonal cycle of Egypt does not follow the celestial calendar of the Osiris myth. Thus, in an Egyptian context, at the time when Osiris should be “in the ground causing the grain to sprout”, i.e. when the Nile floods (on or about the Summer Solstice), he is already high in the sky. Consequently the “rebirth” ritual can not be performed, a problem which probably led the Egyptian priesthood to incorporate “Re”, so that the Summer Solstice could

⁹⁶⁴ W. Budge, A Hieroglyphic vocabulary to the Book of the Dead - p. 92.

⁹⁶⁵ Anonymous Manuscript tr. Huici Miranda op. cit recipe n° 198.

⁹⁶⁶ W. Budge The Gods of the Egyptians- p. 202.

become the celebration of the birth of the King-God Pharaoh. Moreover, at the time that the agricultural year starts in Egypt, the two star-actors in the cosmic drama Orion/Osiris and Sirius/Isis are already in the sky⁹⁶⁸, ready to mark the harvest, which is still some time away in Egypt. By contrast, in Morocco this event is celebrated as a true wedding of the two stars, joining hands after harvest-time, when they have already performed their agrarian duties.

It follows that, in all aspects, Egypt⁹⁶⁹ is out of phase with the agrarian interpretation of the Osiris celestial calendar, whereas Morocco is completely in phase in every detail. The conclusion therefore is that, however much sophistication, artistry and embellishment may have been added to the cult by the Ancient Egyptian priesthood, the cult's origin was not in Egypt but must have been in an area enjoying distinct seasons marked by the four equinoxes. North Africa is geographically a candidate for this distinction and certainly its food rituals point to the existence of a cult very close if not identical to that of Osiris. Whilst there is no direct evidence to suggest that the cult of Osiris did in fact travel from North West Africa to the Nile Delta, it is certain that the latter was a recipient of the cult whilst the former could have been either an initiator or a recipient. As to the ancient cuisine of Morocco, it is evident that it has served throughout the millennia as a symbolic repository of the religious cult of the area, which itself has many parallels with that of Ancient Egypt.

This conclusion would be sufficient in itself, were it not for the fact that there are two quite distinct types of cuisine in Morocco. These differ in the sophistication or absence thereof of the dishes and their ingredients. The first type appears to be older than the second and is fundamentally rural. In all its details it is intimately linked to an agrarian society. It carries symbolic messages from the people to the gods that they are worshipping. Examples of this are the preserving with spices of the meat of the

⁹⁶⁷ Siegfried Morenz op. cit. denounces the distortions of earliest inscriptions on coffins and manuscripts (classical manuscripts) to a state which is beyond recognition. p. 223.

⁹⁶⁸ S.Aufrère.op.cit.pp.471-472. "Copulation annuelle Orion/Sothis à l'image des constellations. Les dieux astres ne sont en conjonction qu'à une seule époque de l'année."

⁹⁶⁹ For H.H. Lamb in Climate, Vegetation and Forest Limits : the Nile River flooding was recorded from 3,000 B.C.- It had always been fed by the summer monsoon. See The Place of Astronomy in the Ancient World.- A Joint Symposium of the Royal Society and the British Academy. Edited by F.R. Hodson. Oxford University Press - London 1974.

sacrificed ram and the ritual eating of a special diet at the changing of the year,⁹⁷⁰ so that the new god can see what they have received from his predecessor, whom they are now mourning. Each season is marked by its corresponding diet of thanksgiving:⁹⁷¹

- Winter solstice cereals only diet, without yeast
- Spring festival meat, fresh vegetables, especially broad beans
- Summer new cereals
- Harvest fruit, including fresh and dried nuts

Thus for the rural communities, the temple is the land itself and the husbandry and nurturing of it is an act of worship to the gods.

The second type of cuisine is essentially urban and highly sophisticated in character. As can be seen from the previous chapter, its inspiration appears to be drawn from the same concepts as were used in the Ancient Egyptian "Book of the Dead", describing the passage of the soul of the deceased into the netherworld and, hopefully, the attainment of salvation. This cuisine is based on ingredients that in ancient times must have been rare and costly. Consequently, the serving of such dishes would most likely have been confined to royal courts and to the presentation of offerings in the temple, as "food for the gods". It could well be that the recipes for such offerings were a closely guarded secret.

The question that now has to be addressed is that of how this highly refined and possibly secret cuisine reached a relatively small area of urban sites in Morocco, an essentially agricultural country. The area under scrutiny is that part of North Africa, known in Roman times as Mauretania Tingitana. Outside this small area the type of cuisine under discussion appears to be unknown, even in the urban areas of Algeria and Tunisia. Furthermore, since the Egyptian, Graeco-Roman and Phoenician worlds have left no outward trace of such a cuisine, it is necessary to search elsewhere for the

⁹⁷⁰ See Ch.V under Seasons, - Hagoosa. The French noted the similarity of this festival to ^c*Ashura*; a clear indication that the latter had been dragged away from its roots by the introduction of the Islamic lunar calendar.

⁹⁷¹ See Ch.V. under Seasons.

medium of transmission. It is possible that the process of transmission of Ancient Egyptian court and temple cuisine to Morocco may have been a gradual one. In an earlier chapter, mention has been made of the XXIInd and XXIIIrd “Libyan” dynasties. But this was by no means the beginning of Libyan penetration, which was already apparent in the upper echelons of the combined fields of the military and priesthood during the XXth dynasty.⁹⁷² This meant that many Libyans domiciled in Egypt were familiar with whatever refined cuisine existed in both court and temple. Over a period of time some of this knowledge may have been diffused westwards.

However, a more likely candidate for establishing this cuisine was the famous Berber king of Mauretania, Juba II. This prince had been educated in Rome prior to acceding to the throne and had also learnt Greek. But it is his connections with the Egyptian civilization that are significant. His queen was none other than Cleopatra Selene, daughter of Queen Cleopatra of Egypt and Marcus Antonius. This princess is credited with having introduced the cult of Isis to Morocco.⁹⁷³ Doubtless she would also have brought her own priests and retainers when she arrived there in 25 BC. What is even more intriguing is that Juba II proved to be an ardent follower of the cult of Isis and built Iseums, endowing one with a crocodile brought from the South. Furthermore, whatever may have been the skills of the sovereigns themselves, the queen’s retainers and especially the priests would have been able to read Demotic, which was still a very live language and the more senior ones may have been able to read religious texts. Thus the queen’s retinue would almost certainly have known all the secrets of temple cuisine. It follows that the royal court of Mauretania must have been a sophisticated one and it is fair to assume that Juba II and his queen were no strangers to the court cuisine of the latter’s motherland.

Within a generation Rome had absorbed both Mauretania Tingitana and Egypt as provinces. Almost three centuries later Christianity became the official religion of the Empire and pagan cults were forbidden. The massacre of priests in Alexandria in 391 AD and subsequently that of the elite of that city, of Memphis and of Thebes⁹⁷⁴ must have extinguished the last elements of the Ancient Egyptian religious practices.

⁹⁷² K.A.Kitchen in D. Leahy Libya and Egypt c 1300-750 BC: SOAS, The Society for Libyan Studies London 1985. p.23.

⁹⁷³ Picard. Les religions de l’Afrique antique- Paris.

However, in the far West of the Empire the Berber populated province of Mauretania Tingitana was fortunate in having an indigenous governor. The latter may well have been less diligent than his colleagues in suppressing pagan cults. Not only would ties of blood have inhibited him, but also he may also have lacked the necessary military force to carry out the Imperial edicts to their full extent. In any event, the Romans retired from Volubilis not long afterwards.

The evidence provided in previous chapters of the survival in Islamic Morocco of many of the pre-Islamic cults, albeit in disguised form, shows that the Roman persecutions failed in their objective. It is clear that the Berbers retained their rituals and preserved the accompanying ritual cuisine. With the arrival of Islam the cults were officially suppressed, but hardly extinguished. Arabic was spoken only in the cities, but in the countryside the Berber language and its people's rites and customs persisted. Furthermore, the refined ritual cuisine was too impressive to be discarded and it soon became a major element of court cuisine, so carefully recorded by Islamic scholars from the VIIIth century onwards.

In assessing the development of Moroccan cuisine in the pre-Islamic period, it has been established that there are in effect two cuisines to be considered one rural and the other urban. It seems fairly certain that the rural cuisine is indigenous, whose associated rituals derive from myths of great antiquity that it shares in a purely mythological context with Ancient Egypt. Whether these myths arose in Morocco or not is impossible to say, but the evidence of the agrarian calendar excludes them from being native to Egypt.

As to the urban cuisine, its origins are less clear. Its dishes can be shown to be ritually linked to Ancient Egyptian "Pyramid Texts". The preparation of such dishes may well have been a temple secret that was only finally divulged to foreigners, when the latter had attained the high offices of the priesthood. A discreet and gradual transmission westwards of culinary information may thus have been possible. However, the reign of the Berber king Juba II in Mauretania, several centuries later,

⁹⁷⁴ Nicolas Grimal *op.cit.* p.9.

with the religious imports of his Egyptian-born queen, would be a more definite candidate for the introduction of the elements of refined temple and court cuisine. That the latter subsequently survived the prohibitions of Imperial Rome to be collected and collated several centuries later by Islamic scholars, is a witness to the tenacity of the Berber people in preserving the heritage of their unique culture, both in an urban and in a rural environment.

Epilogue

This brief epilogue has been compiled to fulfil a need to explain how it was that a country, that was one of the principal areas of development in the Golden Age of Islam, became marginal and therefore conservative of its past achievements, so that these have survived, certainly in the culinary sense, down to the present day. The state in which the French found Morocco at the beginning of the XXth century bore no resemblance to the world of the Islamic Agricultural revolution.⁹⁷⁵ The countryside was a wilderness with no irrigation system worthy of the name. The sugar industry had broken down and the towns and cities were in a state of economic decay. This was not a recent situation, for it had existed for more than two centuries. In 1772 the French Consul L.Chénier wrote “subdued under the yoke of a rigorous despotism, they have no kind of luxuries, nor any thought of fortune that (in any case) they would be hard pressed to enjoy no luxury, no industry and consequently no commerce.”⁹⁷⁶ The Spanish spy, Ali Bey,⁹⁷⁷ active in 1803, wrote that the mosques relied upon his watch to know when to call the faithful to prayer.⁹⁷⁸ The same source records that the English were already supplying Morocco with sugar. In the fields of medicine and science we learn that the last of the Moroccan physicians of the Islamic school, Abdel Wahab Ad-Derraq, died in 1746. It appears that from this date the health of the Sultan and that of his close relatives was usually entrusted to European doctors. F.Lemprière, the English doctor from Gibraltar,⁹⁷⁹ was in fact called in to treat one of the Sultan’s wives, who had apparently been poisoned. Another visiting physician in the XVIIIth century, the Algerian Abderrazaq M. Ibn Hamdush,⁹⁸⁰ recorded his disappointment that he could not find anyone in Morocco who appeared to know anything about astronomy, medicine or engineering.

In order to understand how this sorry state of affairs came about, it is necessary to refer to the last known period when society was well-ordered and culture flourished

⁹⁷⁵ See chapter VII.

⁹⁷⁶ L.Chénier op.cit.p.29.

⁹⁷⁷ B. Meakin op. cit. The true name of this venturesome Spanish traveller was General Domingo Badia y Leblich. p. 452.

⁹⁷⁸ Ali Bey op.cit.p.27.

⁹⁷⁹ See Chapter X under “Origins of the Tea Ritual”.

⁹⁸⁰ F.Harrak State and religion in 18th century Morocco. SOAS Thesis 1637.-London 1989. p. 62.

throughout the country. We have seen in Chapter X how from the XIIIth to the XVIth centuries an increasing number of brotherhoods were involved in the religious welfare and education of the *Umma*. These *zawiyas* were self-funded communities, supported by *haboos* Trust (voluntary endowments). They taught crafts, instructed in the sciences and dispensed medical care. Under the umbrella of Sufism they gathered all the elements of Muslim society. Each village, each craft guild and each school had its own Sufi lodge, thereby cementing society and giving it its unity and strength. The *Umma* or the people at large were thus able to reject an inept leader,⁹⁸¹ should he fail to defend his territory or look after his subjects. This was well understood by the dynasty that came to power in the XVIIth century, which used the *tolba* (students) of the *zāwiyas* to project a false picture of its alleged mission. Once in place the new leaders became the implacable enemies of the social institutions that had brought them to power. They were aware of the threat that the latter had posed to previous dynasties and were thus determined to give them no chance to continue influencing the population.⁹⁸² An autocratic despotic power was thus instituted that inhibited the people's true culture and led to the propagation of popular Sufism⁹⁸³ based upon "Maraboutic" beliefs⁹⁸⁴ throughout rural Morocco. As trade and contact with the outside world declined, the towns and cities⁹⁸⁵ became less economically attractive and people reverted to the inland plains to try to wrest a living from the land. Thus contact with urban influences gradually died out and the people, lacking the moral support of learned intermediaries, reverted to supernatural beliefs, typified by annual pilgrimages to the sanctuaries of local saints. The Sultan of the day did nothing to discourage this drift away from Islamic institutions and encouraged popular

⁹⁸¹ H. Basset op. cit. the *zawiyas* prevented the occupation of Morocco by the Turks. amongst the most important Berber *zawiyas* was the Dila in the Tadla which was destroyed by Moulay Rachid in 1079/1668. pp. 210-211.

⁹⁸² Leaders of the remaining Maraboutic *Zawiyas* were also curbed whenever they started to increase in influence or become wealthy. Thus the Sultan Muhammad Ben Abdellah (1759-1790) deported the Sherqawi leader to his birthplace and the *zawiya* itself was destroyed in 1785. C.F.Eickelman op.cit. *Moroccan Islam- University of Texas Press*. p.42.

⁹⁸³ R. Bourqia State and rural society in Morocco Ph D. Thesis 1948, Manchester 1987. The breakdown of the Wattasid dynasty created a political crisis and competitive conflict over power. The new dynasty favoured popular *zawiya* and popular Islam and changed the characteristics of the religious order.p.23.

⁹⁸⁴ R. Bourqia op. cit. The sultan created a second Issawa *zawiya* in Marrakesh to lessen the power of that of Meknés. In similar manner help was given to the Hamdushiya sect in their struggle against the Issawa. p.37.

⁹⁸⁵ Mantran, R. *L'Expansion musulmane- (VIIème – XIème siècle siècles)- Presses Universitaires de France -Paris 1969.* "Une des caractéristiques de l'Islam c'est le développement des villes." p. 143.

Maraboutic *zāwiyas* by granting them *Dahir Tawqir wal ʿIhtiram* (Decree of Respect) and exempting them from taxes. Only an educated urban minority continued to cherish the learning inherited from the past. It was also the urban bourgeoisie that preserved culinary know how, since it could afford to continue using the more expensive ingredients essential to its correct application. Thus the richer merchants and the privileged classes participated in preserving the repertoire of court cuisine and its associated rituals. Needless to say the reigning sultan always had palaces in several cities with a resident retinue of soldiers, slaves and concubines. Thus all major towns preserved their own part of the repertoire of dishes from the traditional court cuisine.⁹⁸⁶ Even in the rural areas the elite did not lack refinement, since they recruited special cooks trained in the best establishments, (palaces and rich urban households), for whom they had to pay a high price. In fact, during my fieldwork I noted that the best cooks were found at the foot of the mountains near Marrakesh, where the feudal lords of the Atlas had until recently several urban and rural residences. For their part the rural bulk of the population, culturally isolated from the towns, continued to use its ancient food repertoire derived from calendar-related food rituals that were essentially pagan in origin. No one was concerned about its Islamic spiritual guidance, nor about how the cultural vacuum left by the demise of the *zawiyas* it had been filled. The cultural guidance of the past was thus soon replaced by maraboutic magico-orientated spectacles of fire and snake-eating rites as described in Chapter V. Thus the rural population continued to prepare dishes in which the presence of dried meat and the collection of the first grain for the first *kesksu* of the *ʿAnṣra* indicated its agrarian Ram-cult links. Hence from the XVIIth century the two types of cuisine, rural and urban remained separate from each other. The former continued to exist in its ancient form, whilst the latter ceased all development and became static, since all the forces that had evolved and modified it in the past had now disappeared from society.

It would seem that the above situation might have persisted indefinitely, since the structure of society appeared no longer to contain any mechanism capable of inducing change. However, the establishment of the French and Spanish protectorates in 1912

⁹⁸⁶ Moulay Slimane (1792-1822) lived in Boujad in his youth. Until today this town excels in producing traditional dishes, perhaps due to its political and socio-economic significance dating from

effectively jolted Morocco into the capitalist environment of the XXth century. Having opted for a system of leaving local affairs to the Sultan of the day, the colonial powers had no incentive to attempt to redress the cultural and religious degradation of the last three centuries.⁹⁸⁷ The general stagnation has meant that the urban cuisine has gradually lost a significant part of its heritage over the last three centuries. For its part the rural cuisine has carried on in parallel, with its ethnocentric elements of food symbolism for the fertility of the fields. It is perhaps ironic to note that, but for the establishment of a despotic regime in the XVIIth century, the rituals of pagan origin described in the pages of this work might long ago have disappeared and with them the clue to the origins of this unique cuisine.

the XVIIIth century.

⁹⁸⁷ J. & J. Tharaud op. cit. pp. 207-208.

Conclusion

The examination of the cuisine of Morocco conducted for this thesis has revealed many features worthy of note. First and foremost is the striking originality of the Moroccan cook, whether professional or domestic, in terms of the techniques used for converting even the most ordinary of basic ingredients into a variety of dishes. An example of this can be found in the pages of tables in Chapter II showing all the ways in which cereals can be transformed. The next feature of note is the combination of versatility and simplicity that characterizes the utensils necessary for this cuisine. Everything described in Chapter III is portable and although a kitchen range might be useful, every cooking process, except for the overnight simmering of dishes in the public oven, can if the need arises be performed using a portable *mejmar* (stove). With the exception of some of the spices used, virtually every ingredient, essence or conserve listed or described can be produced within the country itself. This combination of all the above added to the descriptions of dishes in Chapter IV, form together an impressive picture of how much man has been able to take from nature and how much more he has been able to do with what he has taken. However, all this versatility and originality centres upon the cook, whose long and hard apprenticeship,⁹⁸⁸ whether in palace or private house, is the guarantee of the quality of the dishes produced. The chapters on festivals and private celebrations, (V and VI), illustrate to what extent food is a cohesive social force in Morocco, uniting both families and groups. In this environment there can be no festival, celebration or ritual without its correct food. In Chapter VI it can be seen that this characteristic is also true of Moroccan Jewish festivals.

Once the subject of the history of Moroccan cuisine is broached, it rapidly becomes evident how much of its catalogue of ingredients is owed to the agricultural revolution that was facilitated by the rapid evolution of Islamic science and culture in the medieval period. Furthermore, the same calendars of seasonal and climatic change that had assisted the farmers in their task were also widely used throughout society. It

⁹⁸⁸ Described in Chapter IV.

was thus possible for physicians to recommend to the general public what they should eat or avoid in each season. The concept of maintaining and correcting health through a proper diet soon prompted physicians to evolve prescriptive recipes and eventually to compile lists of those that were seasonally appropriate. To these were added the inputs of all those interested in refined cuisine, including the cooks themselves, thereby forming the body of Moroccan court cuisine in the form that has survived until the present day. Thus whatever may have been the origins of the elements of court cuisine, we can conclude that its evolution and later refinement was definitely Islamic. However, court cuisine represents only a part of the spectrum of Moroccan cuisine and thus the conclusion must not be regarded as the end of the road in the search for origins. Rather it should be seen merely as a milestone upon that road.

From this point onwards the road is less well marked and the general paucity of recorded information about pre-Islamic Moroccan cuisine has left no choice but to adopt a different methodology. It is here that the food related rituals and festivals described in Chapter V come into their own, for many of them are clearly non-Islamic and must thus have originated in a more distant past. They are therefore open to being compared with historically attested rituals and beliefs existing at other times and in other places. The first step in this process was to separate from the pre-Islamic research those festivals whose origins are unquestionably Islamic, from those of questionable or plainly pagan origins. Here the principal deciding factor was calendric association. Thus festivals with solar calendar associations were judged to be pagan, whilst those with lunar calendar associations were considered *a priori* as Islamic. In the latter connection several festivals were found to have doubtful Islamic associations. Some were revealed as pagan festivals allowed to persist in Islamic guise, whilst others were unquestionably pagan rites fixed within the lunar calendar because of a ritual requirement to use food obtained at an Islamic festival. Such relationships have been discussed in Chapter X, whilst the origins of festivals and rituals identified as essentially pagan were examined in Chapter XI. It is in this latter chapter that the comparative research referred to above begins to show results. The whole fabric of Moroccan food related rituals and beliefs has been trawled back through the history of every civilization that has had some kind of contact with North

West Africa: Roman, Phoenician⁹⁸⁹ and finally Ancient Egyptian. The result of this process has been that there is little evidence that the local population in effect received any ritual beliefs from either the Romans or the Phoenicians. The apparent exceptions to this being the similarities between the cult of Mithras and the rituals and organization of the *Issawa* brotherhood plus the fact that Juba II practised the Graeco-Roman version of the cult of Isis. However two significant facts have emerged from the study of the pagan rituals of Morocco:

- I. The omnipresence of an ancient Ram-cult involving a spring sacrifice followed by the ritual consumption of the meat in fresh and preserved form in essentially agrarian rites, with the bones being saved for further ritual use.
- II. A constant occurrence of connections with Ancient Egyptian mythology and in particular the Osiris cult.

What has also been noted is the number of occasions when both I. and II. above are apparent within the same ritual. An example of this is Bujlud/Bil Mawn, whose accoutrements derive from the sacrificed ram, (feet, horns and skin), whilst the miming is evocative of a dead Osiris accompanied by a long-eared Anubis being prevented from returning to life on earth, when instead he should be reborn as the new generation of seeds sprouting in the ground.

Although the distance separating Morocco from Egypt may seem to tend to negate such ritual connections, it has been explained in Chapter XI that the Ancient Egyptians defined all peoples living westwards up to the Atlantic coast as "Libyans". Libyans held high office under the later dynasties and ruled Egypt as Pharaohs for two centuries (XXIInd and XXIIIrd dynasties). Furthermore, what has also been revealed in the same chapter is that the Osiris cult in its strictly agrarian interpretation is climatically inappropriate to Egypt, whilst on the contrary it is definitely climatically relevant to North West Africa. Whilst it is not within the terms of the present study to attempt to identify the origins of ancient cult of Osiris, it is however pertinent to note

⁹⁸⁹ The Greeks were physically excluded from the Western Mediterranean by the Phoenicians.

in the context of food related rituals that something very similar must have been included in the ancient beliefs of Morocco. It follows therefore that both countries must have had similar ritual motivations. In attempting to identify such motivations various Ancient Egyptian texts relating to Osiris have been examined, one of which the "Tuat" has produced some interesting and intriguing comparative information. These have been examined in Chapter XII, where an unexpected element has appeared, namely, that the appellations of certain dishes from the Moroccan repertoire can be related to scenes described in the Tuat. These similarities appear within the context of two doctrinal concepts found in most religions:

- I. The promise of salvation for the righteous.
- II. The inevitability of punishment for the wicked.

It follows that a dish or food carrying a name with such associations must have that association as its ritual message. In an Ancient Egyptian context such dishes might well have been offerings to the gods. However, in a less elegant or opulent environment, i.e. beyond the western frontiers of the Kingdom, they could well have been prepared individually as ritual reminders of I. or II. above. The very existence of "Libyans" as both soldiers and priests in Ancient Egypt suggests that a two-way traffic in ritual customs and ritual food preparation between Libyans and Ancient Egyptians was both feasible and probable. In the absence of further information we must assume that this must be as far back as the origins of Moroccan cuisine can be traced. The conclusion is therefore that a significant part of the cuisine originated as ritual food, whose context was based upon beliefs that existed in similar form in both North West Africa and Ancient Egypt.

This may at first seem difficult to accept. On the one hand there is an ancient civilization that has left to posterity a quantity of impressive monuments, palaces and tombs. On the other hand, it is alleged to have had a "cousin" civilization that has left nothing to posterity but a series of food rituals. However it should be remembered that the former is now dead, whilst the latter is very much alive. Secondly it must not be forgotten that the common cult beliefs are agrarian. Thus, although the Ancient Egyptians had the good fortune to populate an area that enabled them to build up a

rich civilization, the cult they adopted did not relate correctly to the climatic pattern of that area. An Ancient Egyptian Pharaoh in his opulence might well have painted the walls of temples and tombs in accordance with any cult that was in vogue, whereas the “Libyan” farmer would have had a different approach. For him the temple was the land itself and its husbandry and the offerings or ritual consumption of its fruits an act of worship to the gods. He had therefore no need of fine temples and graven images. Finally the hypothesis of a Libyan(Berber) and Ancient Egyptian connection is by no means new. Various authors have tried to establish such a connection on the grounds of similarities between the names of deities, even to the extent of proposing that certain Ancient Egyptian gods were in fact Libyan gods.⁹⁹⁰ However, this must be the first time that evidence has been presented of parallel beliefs between the two peoples founded upon food rituals.

Having reached the apparent end of the road in respect of origins, it is now necessary to address the question of identity and also that of transmission. It is evident from the first six chapters of this work that there are two type of Moroccan cuisine, differing greatly in their sophistication. The first is rural and lacks any pretensions of elegance. It has been kept alive by seasonal rituals that formed an integral part of the life of the people. As such it has survived the arrival of Islam with most of its pagan food rituals intact, albeit occasionally disguised. In all its aspects this cuisine can only be seen as indigenous. The other type of cuisine is urban and highly sophisticated. As has already been mentioned, its evolution and expansion were essentially Islamic, but it is clear that much of its refinement already existed. Into this category fall the more refined amongst the dishes with names relating to Ancient Egyptian sacred texts. Chapter XII suggests that Ancient Egyptian sacred cuisine had secret recipes that were unlikely to be known outside the circles of the priesthood. It is further suggested that when Juba II's Queen Cleopatra Selene came to Mauretania Tingitana in 25 BC, she may well have brought refined Egyptian court cuisine to grace the table of her new home. This could well have been the starting point for the development of a court repertoire, where the imported cooks exchanged ideas with their local colleagues. This seems to be a feasible route by which the sacred cuisine could have reached North West Africa and, except for the possibility of gradual infiltration via

⁹⁹⁰ I.Gwyn Griffiths. The Origins of Osiris (i) quoting Bates and Petrie. p.56. (ii) quoting Scharff. p.90.

the families of Libyans (Berbers) settled in Egypt, it could well be the only route. There is no evidence of Roman transmission, simply because Roman cuisine has nothing in common with Moroccan cuisine.⁹⁹¹ Finally, the cuisine of the Islamic countries of the Middle East, apart from a small number of items evolved during the Islamic period, has little in common with that of Morocco. Consequently, they must thus be excluded as avenues of transmission of the cuisine of Ancient Egypt.

It is clear from the contents of the preceding pages of this concluding section that a great deal of ground has had to be covered to obtain the information that has been gathered. This is due to the fact that the research involved has proved far more complex than might have been anticipated. Consequently it seems necessary to produce an abridged list of the conclusions that have been reached.

- I. Food is a cohesive social force in Morocco, for there can be no festival, celebration or ritual without its correct food. Food rituals are an essential element of the Moroccan culture and are present in the life of every Moroccan, from the moment he is born until his post-funereal rites are held.

- II. In tracing the origins of this cuisine we have identified two principal sources or contributions:
 - a. A massive development of refined cuisine during the Islamic Golden Age of the medieval period, centred upon Morocco and Al Andalus. The major contributors to this were the Islamic Physicians, who devised the concept of correcting and maintaining health through a correct diet. The majority of recorded recipes are attributed to them as are calendric lists of appropriate seasonal foods.

Verlag Bruno Hessling, Berlin 1966.

⁹⁹¹ Their descendant still believe that pasta was brought to them by Marco Polo, whereas it existed in Morocco long before his era. (see Chapter IX).

- b. An important legacy of ritual food dating back to ancient times. This appears to be essentially indigenous, but could have originated within a general North African or "Libyan" (i.e. Berber) culture. Its context is based upon beliefs that existed in similar form in both North West Africa and Ancient Egypt, albeit not apparently originating in the latter country. A probable Libyan (Berber) and Ancient Egyptian two-way traffic of ritual customs can not, on present information, be realistically dated earlier than the XXth dynasty.

III. Two distinct types of cuisine have been identified in the Moroccan repertoire, namely, rural and urban. Their identities and how they were transmitted or evolved can be summarised as follows:

- a. **Rural.** This consists of the bulk of ritual food mentioned in II.b. above. It is current throughout the rural areas of Morocco and as such is regarded as indigenous. Its survival is directly linked to the survival of rural life in its traditional form. Although parts of its repertoire are still in use in urban areas, the general falling off of ritual observance and the competition of packaged foods in the domestic diet means that the knowledge of these recipes is gradually being lost.
- b. **Urban.** This is a highly sophisticated cuisine, whose eventual development and expansion belonged to the Islamic period, as mentioned in II.a. above. This cuisine is perpetuated by professional cooks employed in palaces and the houses of the more fortunate. Much of its repertoire is also known within families, although the gradual erosion of traditional life that has occurred in recent years makes it less probable that this knowledge will be passed on to the next generation.

Appendix I - List of Plates

- I- a-*Sfenj* for breakfast.
b-Crown-like *sfenj* piled in a dish.
- II- Honeyed cakes for Ramadan
a-The *sfenj* making *zelabiya*.
b-*Zelabiya*, *briwat*, *shebakiya* ready for sale.
- III- a-The cook making *trid*, pulling the dough to make it thin.
b-Another form of *trid*.
- IV Hadja Zineb from Kénitra preparing *rezza*
a-The dough is rolled in threads.
b-Several thinnings of the threads.
c-Cooked *rezza*.
d-Shredding of *rezza* before serving with a sauce.
- V a-*Ka° ak* and *ka°ab*.
b-A child's hand with a *Ka°ak* as a fetter.
- VI- a-*Tanjiya* ready to be cooked in ashes.
b-Cooked *tanjiya* served to guests.
- VII Hossam preparing *qata°if*
a-Liquid dispensed onto a hot plate.
b-The pasta-like threads filled with nuts.
c-Hossam twisting them before cooking.
- VIII *Bastella* ready for eating, decorated with icing sugar and two shades of grilled almond.
- IX a-Cooked *beghrir*.
b-*Ka°ab al ghazal* (horns).
- X *Kesksu* (couscous) cooked and scattered raw.
- XI a A seven-cupola *bastella: bil qbab*.
b-Tray to celebrate *Gnawa* party (7spirits/planets).
- XII a-*Meshwi* being cooked for a large party.
b-Olive residue being mixed for fuel or traditional soap making.
- XIII a-*Sello/Sefoof* powdered nuts and grilled wheat.
b-The same, as served for Ramadan and birth.
- XIV a-*Mukhalalat*- olive merchant.
b-Display of pickled lemons, olives, peppers etc.
- XV a-A little girl with her small *tajin* for *khaylota*.
bDried fruit for *°Ashura*.
- XVI *Mehensha* pastry
a-Ready for cooking.
b-Out of the oven.
c-Decorated with cinnamon and icing sugar before serving.

- XVII** Mehen snake games found in Ancient Egyptian tombs.
- XVIII** Cooked duck in a jar found in Ancient Egyptian tombs of the 18th Dynasty.
- XIX** a-Ground spices in a market.
b-A practising herbalist in the sooq.
- XX** For home distillation
a-Rose petals.
b-Orange blossoms.
- XXI** a-Cooking pots and serving trays displayed for hire.
b-*Qettara* for home distillation and *khlī*^c cooking pots; exhibited for hire.
- XXII** a-Silver samovar *babbor*.
b-Bread *hersha*.
- XXIII** Images of spring
a-Marshmallows.
b-Wild artichokes (cardoons).
c-Snails and skinned birds.
- XXIV** a-A *cascas* made by the potter.
b-*Berma o cascascas*- traditional seksu utensils.
c-Traditional *cascas* made of raffia.
- XXV** Utensils from the potters' shop
a-*Tajīns* with different sizes.
b-*Ta inoorī*: the bottom for cooking bread and the top for simmering *tajīns* (from the Imin-Ta-Nut region.)
c-Kettle for boiling water on a *mejmar*.
d-*Berada* water cooler from Tatta, with several holes at the top to assist for condensation.
- XXVI** a-Salé potter's shop.
b-Water cooler (with 2 holes only) and drinking set, decorated with tar (*qetran*), (i.e.insect and vermin repellent).
- XXVII** 11th/12th century Ice-houses in Uzbekistan.
- XXVIII** a-Noria on the Wad Fas (still standing).
b-Same principle applied for children's *na^cura* on *Ansra*.
- XXIX** a-*Issawi* collecting alms and exhibiting his snake.
b- *Issawa* dancing wearing their red striped *wendiya*.
- XXX** Protective scorpion charm for children made of glass beads.
- XXXI** a- Lantern festival in Salé *Id Shumi^c*.
b- Lantern displayed in a sanctuary after the procession.
- XXXII** A Renaissance representation of Abu Ma^cshar 's work on astrology. 1489 AD. In "Arabic science and Medicine"- Bernard Quaritch, Catalogue 1186 pp. 22-23.
a-Mars in red with a sword.
b-Jupiter in green distributing money.



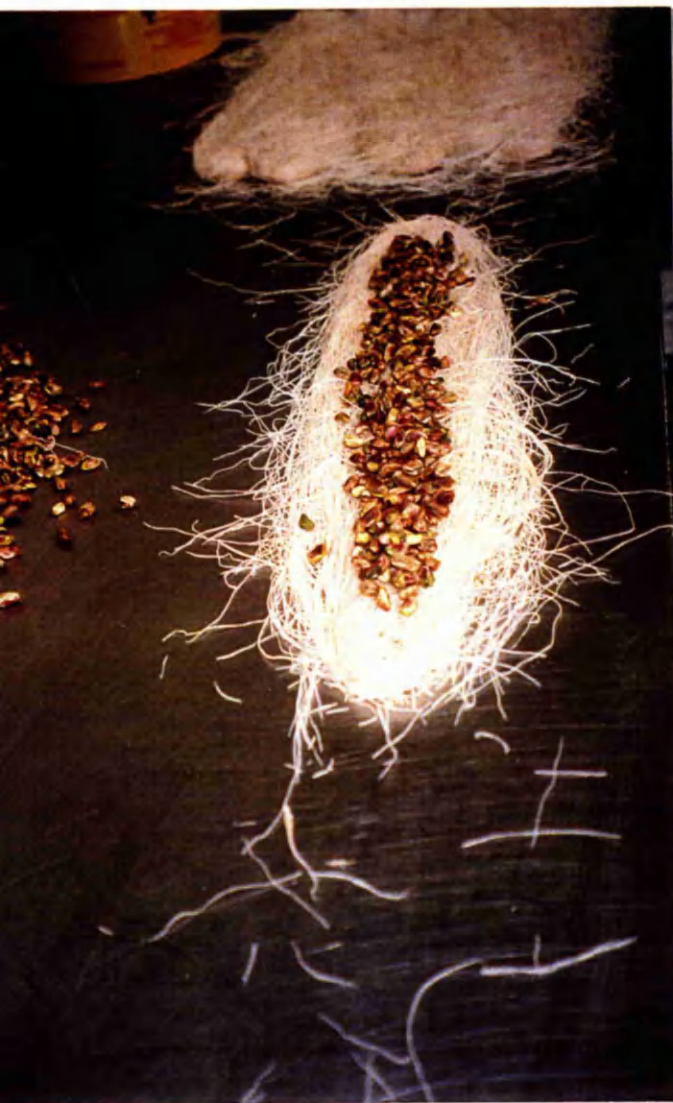
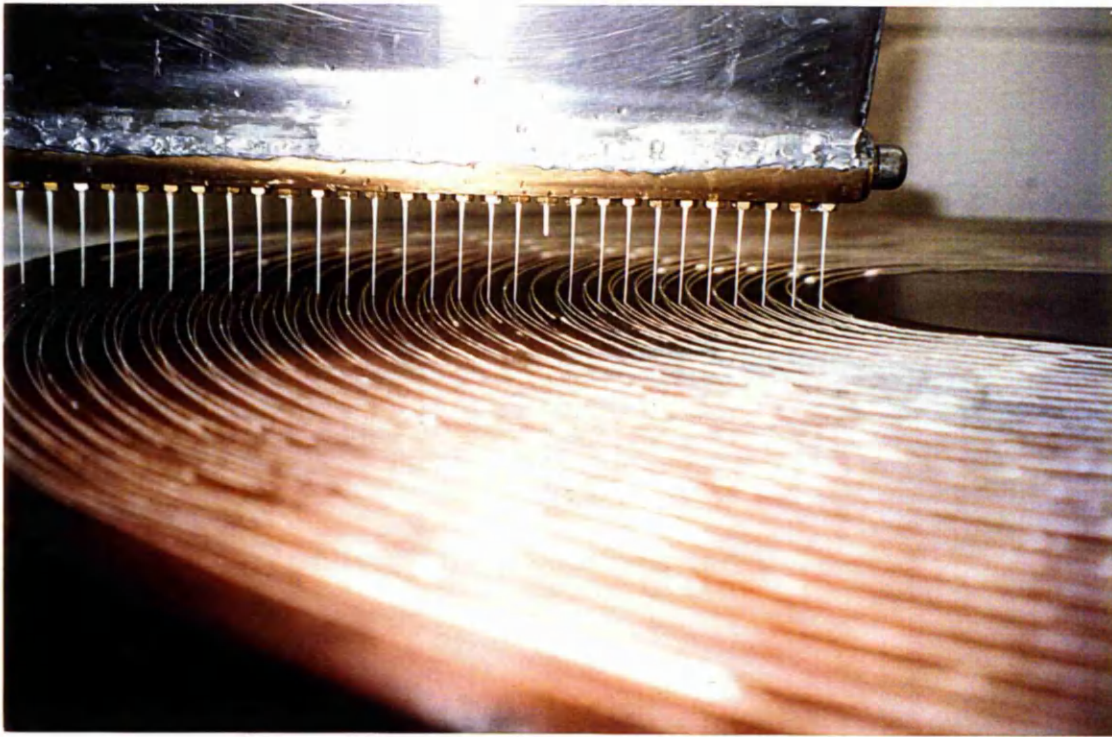




















Bastella Bil Qbab – Cupola Bastella



Tbiqa/Tray for Gnawa celebration











Sports and Games of Ancient Egypt

Wolfgang Decker

Yale University Press

1990



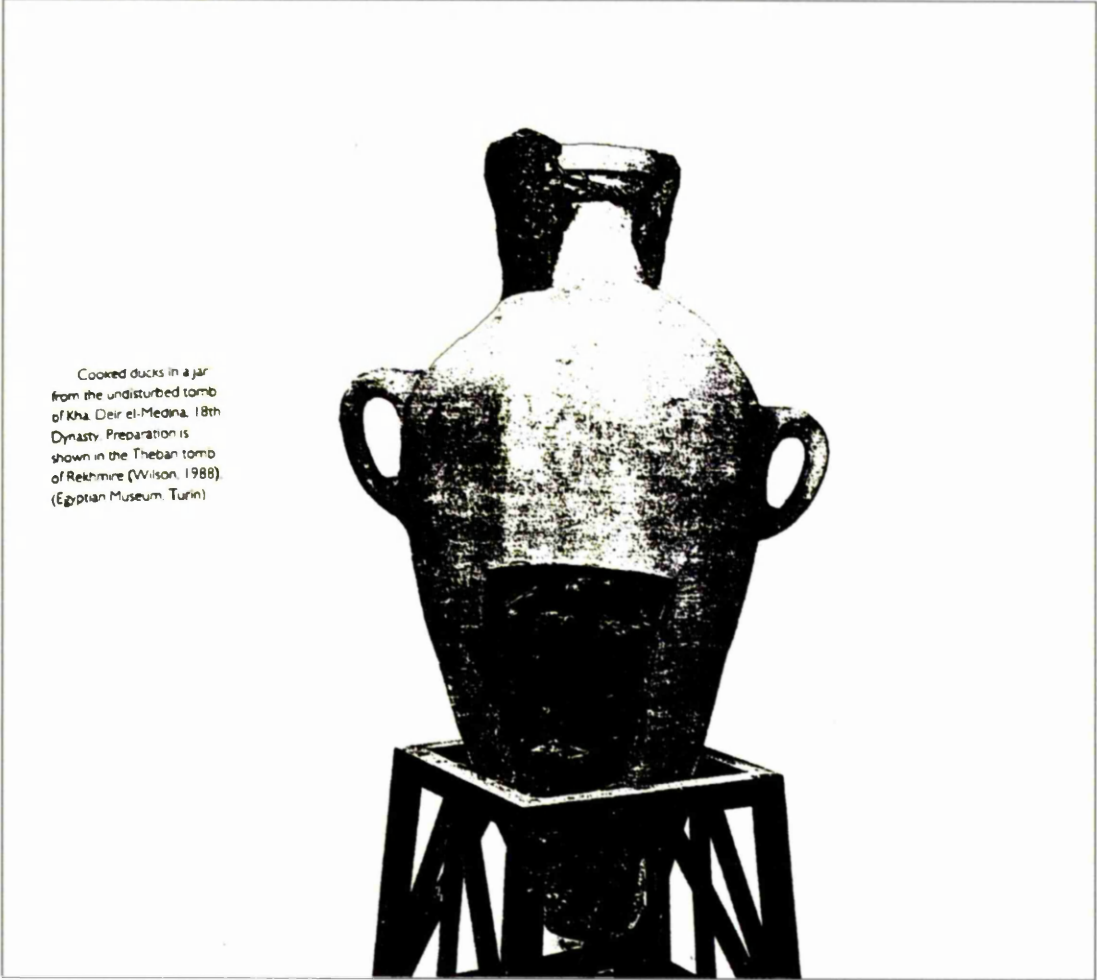
Mehen Senet game
Old Kingdom
(N° 94 – p. 132)



Snake game
Early Period
(N° 93 – p. 132)

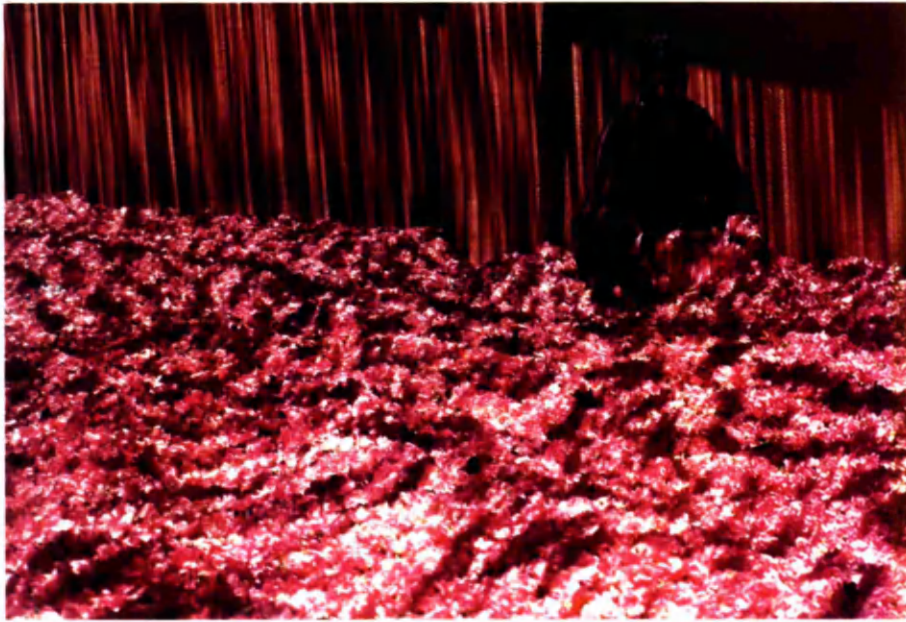


Mehen: Snake Game
3rd Dynasty
(N° 95 – p.133)



Cooked ducks in a jar
from the undisturbed tomb
of Kha, Deir el-Medina, 18th
Dynasty. Preparation is
shown in the Theban tomb
of Rekhmire (Wilson, 1988)
(Egyptian Museum, Turin)



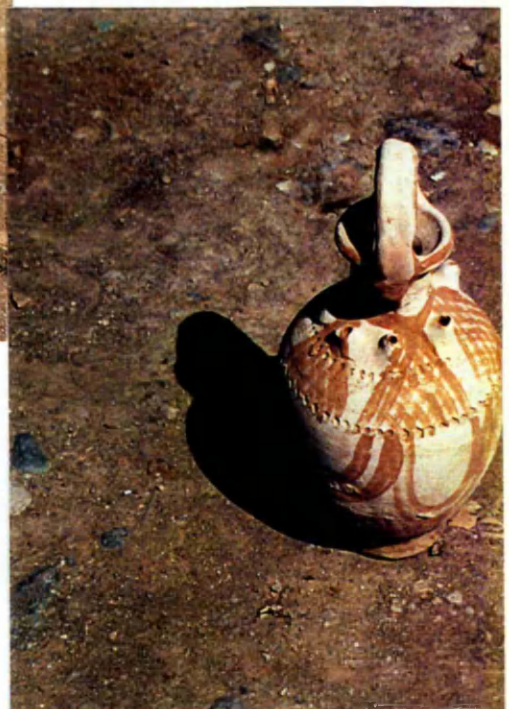
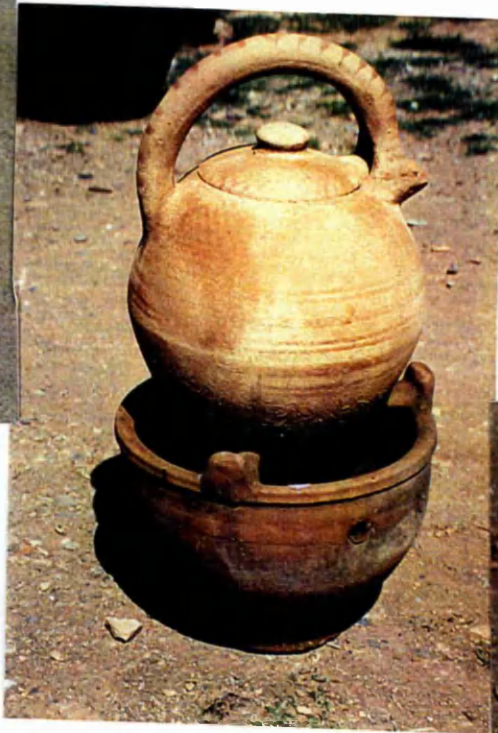












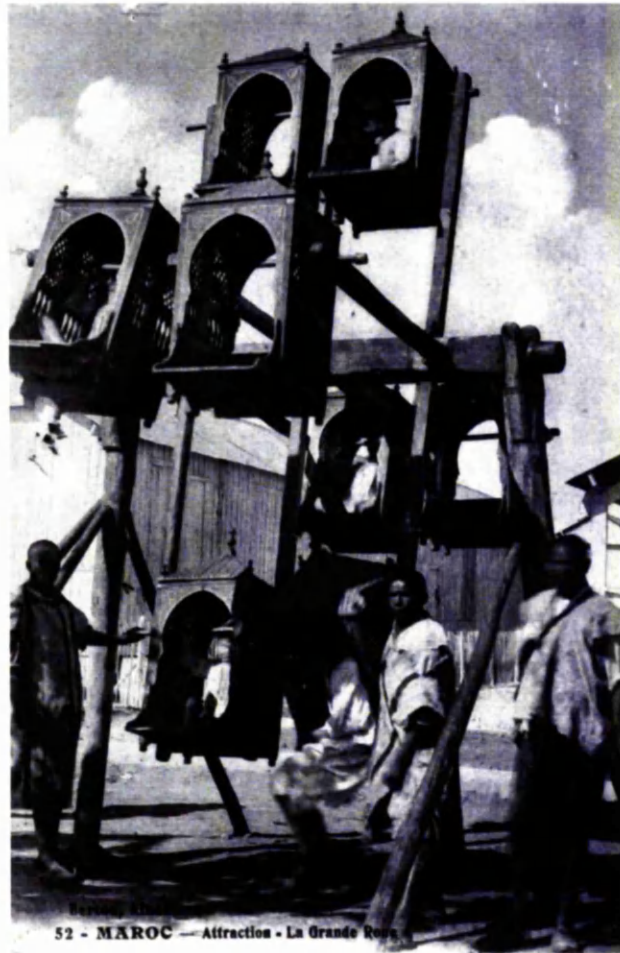




Ice-House – Uzbekistan – Timurid Period (11th/12th centuries)

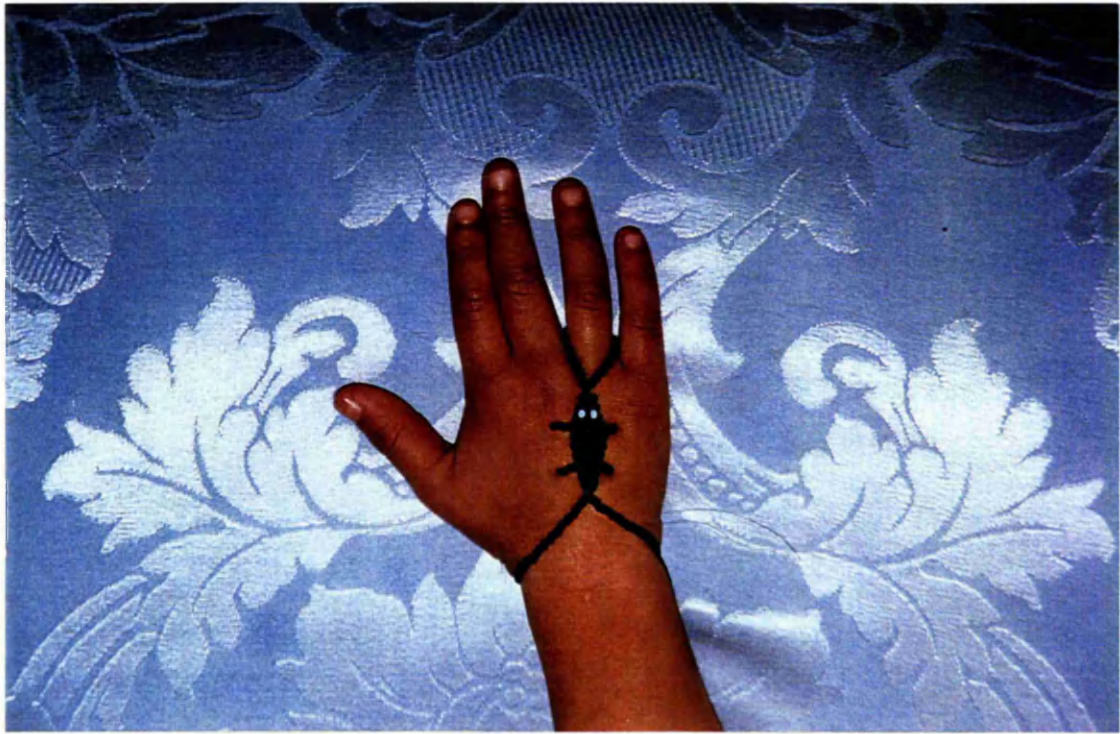
Kindly donated by Dr.Hermann, School of Archaeology , London University

18 - FEZ. - Jardin de Bou-Jeloud
Roue élévatrice d'eau d'arrobage



52 - MAROC — Attraction - La Grande Roue



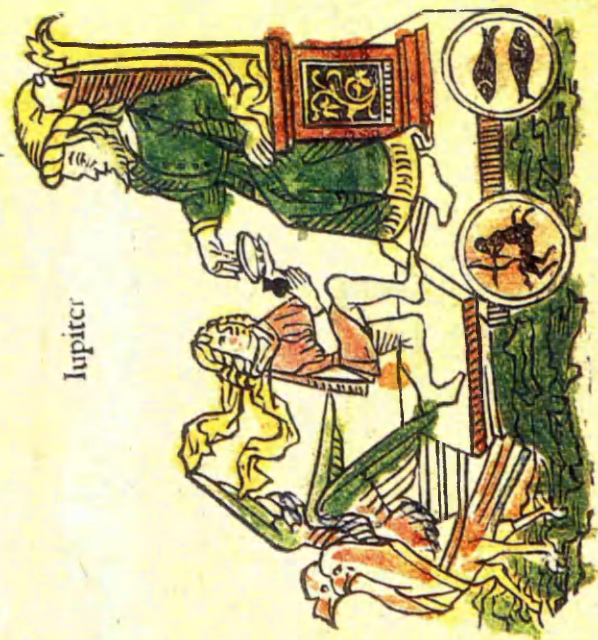




erit ecōtrario ca q̄ dixi. ¶ Qui si fuerit impedire hora reuolutiois iudica de
 structione ⁊ impedimētū. ¶ Et si fortunat⁹ fuerit in signis huius dicitū est in
 perī. ¶ Et si in terreis signis tribulationes ⁊ iniurias ex tremore ⁊ terro motu
 destructione domoz: ciuitatū ⁊ villarū. ¶ Et si fuerit aereo erit corruptio
 aeris ⁊ ei⁹ tenebre cū tonitruis ⁊ fulgorib⁹ cū scintillis ignitis ⁊ fulminib⁹
 aere discurrentib⁹ ⁊ maxie si fuerit ifortunat⁹ in signis aereis. ¶ Et si fuerit
 aquia erit impedimētū in aq̄ ⁊ naufragio pstrationem nauū in mari in
 picitabit⁹ pegrinatē in aq̄ ⁊ morient⁹ aialia aquiaz. ¶ Si aut⁹ fuerit i loco
 mali: fortuna vere iniaz ⁊ loco mali dic bonū: ⁊ loco timotis securitatem
 Et aspice planetā impedietē eū vel caudā q̄ signū sit qz si fuerit i signo igne
 erit radij: impediet⁹ ex ignib⁹ ⁊ cōbustioib⁹. ¶ Si fuerit i signo lupoz erit
 impedimētū ex lupis. ¶ Si aut⁹ fuerit mal⁹ i signo terreo erit radij: impediet⁹
 ex pte terrestriū. Sicut erit narratio tua i ceteris signis. ¶ Si aut⁹ aspe
 rit eū fouia i hora reuolutiois iudica fortunā ⁊ bonū. ¶ Si aut⁹ aspe
 xerit eū mal⁹ iudica fm eū q̄ pluris fuerit testimonij ⁊ nō frustraberis oim
 opus debile: qz natura facit op⁹ suū nisi sit prolixus oim debilis. Sicut he
 ⁊ operare per ea ⁊ nō errabis si deus voluerit.

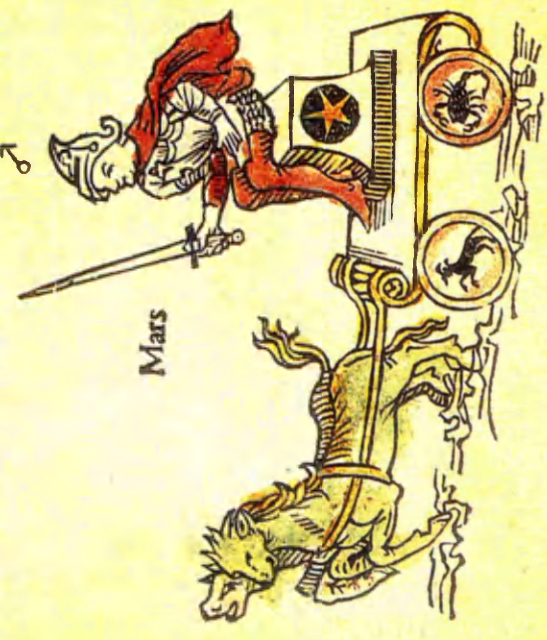
74

Iupiter



Iupiter est significator nobilit⁹ ⁊ iudiciū epoz ⁊ cōsiliū religio
 soz bonoz ciuiū ⁊ sectaz. Qui si fuerit impedire hora reuolutio
 nis tūc detrimētū patiet⁹ qd fuerit ei appropriatū. ¶ Qui
 si fuerit i huius signis signis detectione nobilit⁹ ⁊ diuitū ⁊ pia
 uitate rerū earū ⁊ paucitate donationū eoz ⁊ frustrationes
 ordinū eoz cū solitudine erga ppiquos suos destructiones
 quoqz regnoz babilonic ⁊ arabū ⁊ paucitate subarū cū multitudine curioff
 tatis: erit hoc sup ciuitates q̄ sūt i diuisione signi in q̄ ⁊ est cū exercitio me
 dacū in locutōib⁹ hoīz cū ostēsiōe mali ⁊ iniuriarū ⁊ infirmitates copozū
 cū debilitate acqfisiōis hoīz. ¶ Si aut⁹ fuerit i signo terreo signis destructio
 ne terraz ⁊ paucitate fructū arborū tritici ⁊ ordeī: ⁊ casū palloz i messib⁹
 ¶ Si fuerit in signo aereo signis paucitate pluuiarū ⁊ corruptionē vctozū ⁊
 aeris. ¶ Si aut⁹ fuerit i signo aquico signis destructionē nauigatiū in mari cū
 paucitate eoz acqionis ⁊ cōsptionē aq̄rū ⁊ paucitate piscū. ¶ Et si fuerit
 i signo bestiali signis impedimētū i bestijs marie in his qb⁹ vnuū hoies dehis
 q̄ pūnet⁹ ad ipsū signū. ¶ Si aut⁹ fuerit i loco mali fortuna vte iniaz ⁊ dic lo
 co mali bonū: loco iniurie inficiā: deiectionis sublimitate dedecozis honozes
 ⁊ aspice planetā impedietē eū in q̄ signo sit ⁊ cōmisse eū ⁊ loqre fm qd expoli
 tū est i reb⁹ ⁊ filij inuamēto ⁊ cū fortuna vel maio erit narratio tua.

Mars



Glossary

Notation:

(Berb.) denotes Berber words, * denotes Moroccan Colloquial Arabic

| Word | Meaning | Arabic |
|------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| °Adas bil khli° | Lentils with dried meat | عدس بلخليع |
| Adur | A turn | ادور |
| Afiyāsh (Berb.) | Argan nut outer skin | افياش |
| Agrur (Berb.) | Loft | اگرور |
| °Ainik mezanik * | “Your eye is your measure” | عينك ميزانك |
| °Aj°ooj * | Three-stringed guitar | عجموج |
| °Ajīn sukar | Meringue | عجين السكر |
| Al °aqīqa | Birth celebration | العقيقة |
| Albāb | Soft part of the bread | الباب |
| Alīlī (Berb.) | Oleander | الايلي |
| Amlō (Berb.) | Argan and almond paste | املو |
| Amoqrān (Berb.) | Big great | امقران |
| Anrār (Berb.) | Threshing floor | انرار |
| °Anṣra | Summer festival | عنصرة |
| °Aqda | Almond paste | عقدة |
| °Ār | Shame | عار |
| °Ashar | Tithe | عشر |
| Asmās (Berb.) | Hearth | اسماس |
| Assellō (Berb.) | Honey-based stimulant | اسلو |
| Atranj/utruj | Citrus fruit | اطرنج |
| Attai * | Tea | اتي |
| °Attār | Spice merchant | عطار |
| Azenboo (Berb.) | Green-barley based dessert | ازبوو |
| Azerg (Berb.) | Water mill | ازرق |
| Bābbor * | Samovar | بابور |
| Badāz * | Maize semolina | بداز |

| Word | Meaning | Arabic |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| Bain Narayn | Cooked between two fires | بين نرين |
| Barād * | Teapot | البراد |
| Baraka | Blessing (Divine) | البركة |
| Bastella | Pastry with several fillings | بصطلة |
| Bawarid | Cold dishes | البوارد |
| Benīna | Tasty | بنينة |
| Benna | Taste | البينة |
| Bent remād * | Daughter of ashes | بنت الرماد |
| Benti * | My daughter | بني |
| Biraniya * | The foreigner/aubergines | البرنية |
| Bogha di jīr * | Quicklime | بغة دجير |
| Būlfaf * | Kebab wrapped in caul fat | بولفاف |
| Būshiyār * | Type of bread | بوشيار |
| Boqrāj * | Kettle | بقراج |
| Brema o cascās * | Kesksu utensils | البرمة و كسكاس |
| Briwāt * | Triangular pastry | بروات |
| Btāt * | Trousseau | البقات |
| Cascās * | A food steamer | الكسكاس |
| Dab ^o āt * | Female hyena | دبعات |
| Dabtha * | Blood sacrifice | الدييحة |
| Dajāj | Chicken | الدجاج |
| Dakhla | Entry inauguration | الدخلة |
| Daqiq | Flour | الدقيق |
| Daqqa * | Dried Saharan dates | الدقة |
| Dār Makhzen | The authorities | دار المخزن |

| Word | Meaning | Arabic |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Dashīsha | Porridge | دشيشة |
| Derra | Handkerchief | الدرة |
| Dezzāz (dezzaza) | Shearer | الذزاز |
| Diā ³ b | Jackals | ذاب |
| Diāfa | Special dinner party | ضيافة |
| Diāla * | Sheep tail | ديالة |
| Djāja țaret * | “The bird has flown” | الدجاجة طارت |
| Dowāqa * | Test sample of olive oil | الدواقه |
| Dowāra * | Offal | الدوارة |
| F’hāl * | Ram | الفحال |
| Fajr | First prayer of the day | الفجر |
| Faqīh (pl. Fuqaha) | Teacher | الفقيه |
| Farāḥ * | Earthen dish | الفراح |
| Farān al ḥoma * | Public oven | فران الحومة |
| Farnatshī * | Hammam furnace attendant | الفرننشي |
| Farūj | Cock | الفروج |
| Fatyr or Faṭayer | Unleavened bread | الفطير |
| Felfla mreḡda * | Pickled pepper | فلقلة مرقدة |
| Ferrān | Oven attendant | الفران |
| Fetra | Wheat (for charity) | الفطرة |
| Fidāwsh * | Vermicelli | فداوش |
| Fliyo * | Marjoram | فليو |
| Fōrs | Fine flour | فورس |
| Foṭōr | End of the fast | الفطور |
| Fraja * | Show | الفرجة |
| Frenna * | Larger brazier | الفرينة |
| Frissa * | To eat raw meat | الفرسة |
| Ghalīd | Thick food | الغليد |

| Word | Meaning | Arabic |
|---------------------------------|--|------------|
| Ḥab rashād | Dried Watercress | حب الرشاد |
| Ḥadqa * | Skilful housewife | الحدقة |
| Ḥadra * | Party | الحدرة |
| Ḥagoosa (Berb) | Agrarian New Year | حكوسة |
| Ḥajām * | Hairdresser | الحجام |
| Ḥajāma * | Guild of Hairdressers | الحجامة |
| Ḥaloof (Berb.) | Wild boar | الخلوف |
| Ḥalwa | Sweets | الحلوة |
| Ḥammām | Public bath | الحمام |
| Ḥānūt * | Spicer | الخانوت |
| Ḥarīra | Soup for Ramadan | الحريرة |
| Ḥaydōra * | Lamb's skin | الميدورة |
| Ḥazīn * | Sad | حزين |
| Ḥedqa * | School qualifications | حاذقة |
| Hergma * | Calves feet | المهرجمة |
| Herma * | The decrepit | هرمة |
| Ḥloowa * | A beautiful person | حلوة |
| Ḥok (in the Tadla) * | Wild artichoke "hair" | الحك |
| I°dār | Circumcision | الاعدار |
| °Id | Festival | العيد |
| °Id al Adhā | Festival of the Sacrifice | عيد الاضحى |
| °Id al Mawlid or °Id Seghir | The small festival or Prophet's birthday | عيد المولد |
| °Id Amoqrān or Ta Fesca (Berb.) | The great festival | عيد امقران |
| °Id Fiṭr | End of fasting in Ramadan | عيد الفطر |

| Word | Meaning | Arabic |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Igornt (Berb.) | Slaughter house | اكرنت |
| °Ijja | Oven-cooked omelettes | العجة |
| Isafarn arghanim (Berb.) | “To thwart black magic” | اصفرون ارغنين |
| Isgar (Berb.) | Ritual meal | اسگر |
| Jabān kooliban * | “All the nuts can be seen” | جهان كولبان |
| Janāba | Sexual intercourse | الجنابة |
| Janāt | Paradise | الجنة |
| Jben * | Ricotta-type cheese | الجبين |
| Jerāra | Pastry-wheel | الجرارة |
| Ka°ak | Type of bread | الكعك |
| Kabāb maghdoor | The “betrayed” Kebab | كباب مغدور |
| Kanoon * | Oven | الكنون |
| Kefta | Minced meat | الكفتة |
| Kenāfa | Type of pastry | الكنافة |
| Kesksu | Couscous | الكسكس |
| Kesksu belbola | Barley couscous | كسكس البلبلة |
| Khābia * | Jar | الخابية |
| Khāles * | Fine flour | الخالص |
| Khansha * | Bag | الخنشة |
| Khanzoor or Qambi* | Cooked pears | الخنزور، قمبي |
| Kharja | Departure | الخرجة |
| Kharshōf or guernina * | Cardoons | الخرشوف |
| Khaṣa | Educated class | الخاصة |
| Khaylōṭa * | Children’s cooking party | خيروطة |
| Khayṭ | Thread | الخييط |
| Khli° * | Preserved meat | الخليع |
| Khobz wa attāi* | Bread and tea | الخبز و اتاي |
| Khoṭba | Sermon/ discourse | الخطبة |
| Kissān | Glasses | الكسان |

| Word | Meaning | Arabic |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| Klīla * | Dried milk | الكليلة |
| Kurdās* | "The bundled one" | الكرداس |
| Kūsha * | Oven | الكوشة |
| L'biyat (l'biya)* | Lionesses | البيات |
| La ^c rāda * | Invitation | لعراضة |
| Laftama * | Weaning | لفطمة |
| Laḥam m'bakhar* | Steamed meat dish | لحم مبخر |
| Lahdiya * | Present | لهدية |
| Laḥlāl * | Ritual Meal | لحلال |
| Laḥlāwa | A bribe | لحلاوة |
| Lailat al qadri | The Sacred Night | ليلة القدر |
| Lakhdīma* | A clay jar | لخدیمة |
| Lawya* | Faint | لوية |
| Leba* | Whey | لبة |
| Leban | Buttermilk | لبن |
| Lebsa | Dress | لبسة |
| Left mahfōra* | Turnips | لفت محفورة |
| Lektef * | Shoulder | لكتف |
| Lemfenid | Sugared (icing) | لمفند |
| Lemḥaḍar* | Students in Quranic Schools | لمحضر |
| Lemlāk* | Engagement party | لملاك |
| Lemma | Gathering meal | لامة |
| Lemsakhan* | Spices | لمسخن |
| Lila | Night | ليلة |
| Līmon ad doq* | Light-skinned lemon | ليمون الدق |
| Līmon as shat* | Common lemon | ليمون الشط |

| Word | Meaning | Arabic |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Līmon bōsera * | Wild nipples lemon | ليمون بوسرة |
| Līmon mseyar* | Pickled lemon | ليمون مسير |
| Lohām* | Craving | لحام |
| Loobia * | Beans | اللوبية |
| Looz masqōl | Sugared almond | الاوز مصقول |
| Loozi ^c a * | Communal sacrifice | لوزيعة |
| M'guina* | Omelette | المكينة |
| Ma ^c ājīn | Preserve | المعاجين |
| Ma ^c asal * | Honeyed | المعسل |
| Ma ^c joon | Cake fortified with hashish | المعجون |
| Ma ^c rōf (Berb.) | Ritual meal | المعروف |
| Madrasa | School | المدرسة |
| Mahlaba | Dairy | المحلبة |
| Makhfiya* | Dish of kesksu | المخفية |
| Makhmar* | Leavened bread | المخمر |
| Malk (pl.mlook)* | Spirit | الملك، ملوك |
| Maqfool or Maghmoom* | Sealed | المقفول |
| Maqla | Girdle | المقلة |
| Marabā | Jam | المربى |
| Markab | Boat | المركب |
| Marqa ḥazīna* | "Sad" sauce (i.e. no meat) | المريقة حزينة |
| Mashqōq* | Incised olives | المشقوق |
| Matrid * | Large dish | المترد |
| Mawsem | Season | الموسم |
| Medīna | City | المدينة |
| Meḥensha* | Coiled pastry | المحشنة |
| Mejra | Gutter | المجرة |
| Mekharqa* | Type of cake | المخرقة |

| Word | Meaning | Arabic |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Melwī * | Type of bread | ملوي |
| Mesharkīn ta'ām* | Sharing a meal | مشاركين الطعام |
| Meshmūm | Tea with ambergris | المشموم |
| Meshwī | Grilled meat | المشوي |
| Midoona * | Platted palm-frond basket | المدونة |
| Mihrajān | Festival | المهرجان |
| Milodiya * | Prophet's birthday celebration | الملودية |
| Minbar | Pulpit | المنبر |
| Mkazez* | Tough | مكزز |
| Mlabas * | Marzipan | ملبس |
| Moghazla* | Distaff | المغزلة |
| Moot* | Death | الموت |
| Moqadem * | Leader of a village/group | المقدم |
| Mqalī | Fried or sautéed in oil | مقلي |
| Mrakba * | Wedding cake | مراكبة |
| Mresha * | Perfume sprinkler | المرشة |
| Mubakhar | Steamed | المبخر |
| Mucarmal | Caramelised | المكرمل |
| Muḥalabat or Maqshadat | Dairy products | المحلية، المقشدة |
| Muhammar or Mujammer | Cooked until golden | المحمر، المجر |
| Muḥtasib | Market controller | المحتسب |
| Mul fakiha* | Dried fruit sellers | مول الفكهة |
| Mūrōziya* | Meat preserved in honey | المروزية |
| Mushtarī | Jupiter | المشتري |
| Muwaqit | Time-keeper | الموقت |
| N'fās * | Birth | نفاس |
| N'mūra* | Panthers | غوري |
| N'shā | Starch | النشاء |

| Word | Meaning | Arabic |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Na [°] ūra | Noria | النعورة |
| Naffār | Trumpeter | النفار |
| Nafikh | Brazier | النفخ |
| Nafqa* | Herbal hair treatment | النفقة |
| Neggafa* | Bride's attendant | النگفة |
| Nezāha* | Party in public gardens | النزاهة |
| Niyaq *(in Fés) | Wild artichoke "hair" | النيق |
| Nwā * | Nougat | النوا |
| °Ors | Wedding/ party | عرس |
| Qadīd* | Strips of dried marinated meat | القديد |
| Qalian hoot* | Fish frying | القلين الحوت |
| Qaloosh * | Clay pot | القلوش |
| Qanānet* | Cigar-shaped pastry | القنانت |
| Qat °a* | Appetisers | القطعة |
| Qata°if | Rope-like cake | القطائف |
| Qawādīs | Pipe | القواديس |
| Qeṭṭāra | Alembic | القطارة |
| Qofa * | Basket | القفة |
| Qrāshel* | Type of bread | القراشل |
| Qushūr* | Broken shells of the argan nut | القشور |
| Raḥa * | Hand mill | الرحة |
| Raib* | Yoghurt | الريب |
| Rās al Hanūt* | Special spices | راس الحنوت |
| Ratl | A measure of grain | الرطل |
| Rebāb | Traditional violin | الرباب |
| Riyād | Park | الرياض |
| Rōh | Spirit | الروح |

| Word | Meaning | Arabic |
|--|------------------------------|--------------|
| Rozza* | Turban or "crown" | الروزة |
| Şaboniya | Iced cake | الصابونية |
| Şadaqa | Charity alms giving | الصدقة |
| Şahīb al fakiha | Dried fruit sellers | صحيح الفكهة |
| Şalāt ad-dhuhr | Midday prayer | صلاة الظهر |
| Şalāt al ʿId | Festival prayer | صلاة العيد |
| Şalāt tarawah | Evening prayer in Ramadan | صلاة التوارح |
| Samā ^c | Listening to poetry/litanies | السماع |
| Sambusek (Persian) | Pastry | السميسك |
| Samīd | Semolina | السميد |
| Saqiya | Water mill | السقية |
| Şāt * | Dragon | الصايط |
| Sba ^c *(sboo ^a) | Lion (s) | السبع |
| Sefnāj or Shefnāj* | Doughnut maker | السفناج |
| Sello or Sefūf* | Honey-based stimulant | سلو، سفوف |
| Sha ^c Tr | Barley | شعير |
| Sha ^c ar m'look* | Angel's hair | شعر الملوك |
| Sha ^c rya* | Handmade vermicelli | شعرية |
| Shabel* | Shad (Alosa vulgaris L.) | الشبل |
| Shahr al ghufrān | Time of forgiving | شهر الغفران |
| Shamāli | From the Rif region | الشمال |
| Sharīḥa* | Figs on strings | الشريحة |
| Shebakiya* | Ramadan honey-pastry | الشبكية |
| Shība * | Wormwood | الشبية |
| Sheḥma | Caul fat | الشحمة |
| Sheikh shyoukh* | Oldest of all | شيخ الشيوخ |

| Word | Meaning | Arabic |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Shekwa* | Goat skin | الشكوة |
| Shīḥ * | Artemisia | الشيح |
| Shikhāt* | Female entertainers | الشخات |
| Showāfa* | Seer | الشوافة |
| Shwā* | Grilled meat | الشوا |
| Ṣimāt | Banquet table | صمات |
| Smen * | Clarified butter | السمن |
| Smiya* | Name | السمية |
| Ṣuḥūr | Last meal in Ramadan | الصحور |
| Sooq | Market | السوق |
| Soussi | Inhabitant of the Souss | السوسي |
| Sukar | Sugar | السكر |
| Ta Fesca (Berb.) | Festival of the sacrifice | تفسكة |
| Ṭa ^c rīja * | Small drum | الطعريجة |
| Ṭa ^c ām | Food | الطعام |
| Taghanja* | Doll / rain making ceremony | التغنجة |
| Tagoola (Berb.) | Porridge | تگولة |
| Ṭahera | To be (ritually) clean | طهرة |
| Ṭajīn | Cooking dish with a conical cover | الطجين |
| Talahwant (Berb.) | Test sample of olive oil | تلهوانت |
| Taleghsha (Berb.) | Broad beans | تلفشة |
| Ṭālib /ṭolba | Student | الطالب |
| Tamezwārt (Berb.) | First | تمزوارت |
| Ṭanjīr | Large cooking pot | الطنجير |
| Ṭanjiya* | Dish cooked in a jar | الطنجية |
| Taragt (Berb.) | Present | ترگت |

| Word | Meaning | Arabic |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Ṭarāh* | Bread porter | الطراح |
| Ṭarīqa | Sect | الطريقة |
| Tasha ^c alt (Berb.) | Firework | تشعلت |
| Tashhīra* | Mashing (of tea) | تشحيرة |
| Ṭaslīt anzar (Berb.) | Bride of rain | تسليت انزار |
| Taswiqa * | Shopping | تسوقة |
| Tazegmoont (Berb.) | Bitter argan nut residue | تزاگمنت |
| Ṭbīqa * | A tray | الطبيقة |
| Teshlīla* | The mashing of tea | تشليلة |
| Tharīd | Type of flat bread | الثريد |
| Timezguīda (Berb.) | Mosque | تمزگيطة |
| Timīja (Berb.) | Sage | تميجة |
| Tuarga* | Royal Court employees | توارغة |
| ^o Uma | The masses or people at large | الاوامة |
| Waldī* | My son | ولدي |
| Wārka | Wafer | الوارقة |
| Waşla * | Wooden platters | الوصللة |
| Yanāir | January | ينائر |
| Za ^c tar* | Thyme | الزعتر |
| Zaīt al ^c ood* | Olive oil | زيت العود |
| Zaīt arqan* | Argan oil | زيت ارگن |
| Zaīt zitoon* | Olive oil | زيت زيتون |
| Zakāt | Alms giving | الزكات |
| Zakoonī (Berb.) | Oregano | زكوني |
| Zawāj * | Wedding | الزواج |
| Zāwiya | Traditional Religious school/inn | الزاوية |
| Zebda beldiya* | Butter | الزبدة بلدية |
| Zameṭa* | Powdered grilled barley | الزميطة |
| Zenān* | Meat skewers | الزنان |

| Word | Meaning | Arabic |
|---------------|---------------------|---------|
| Zgawa (Berb.) | Basket | الزگوة |
| Ziyāra | Tombs | الزيارة |
| Zrība* | Gathering of a sect | الزربة |
| Zuhal | Saturn | زحل |

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