

# A Brief History of the Jews of Arab Lands

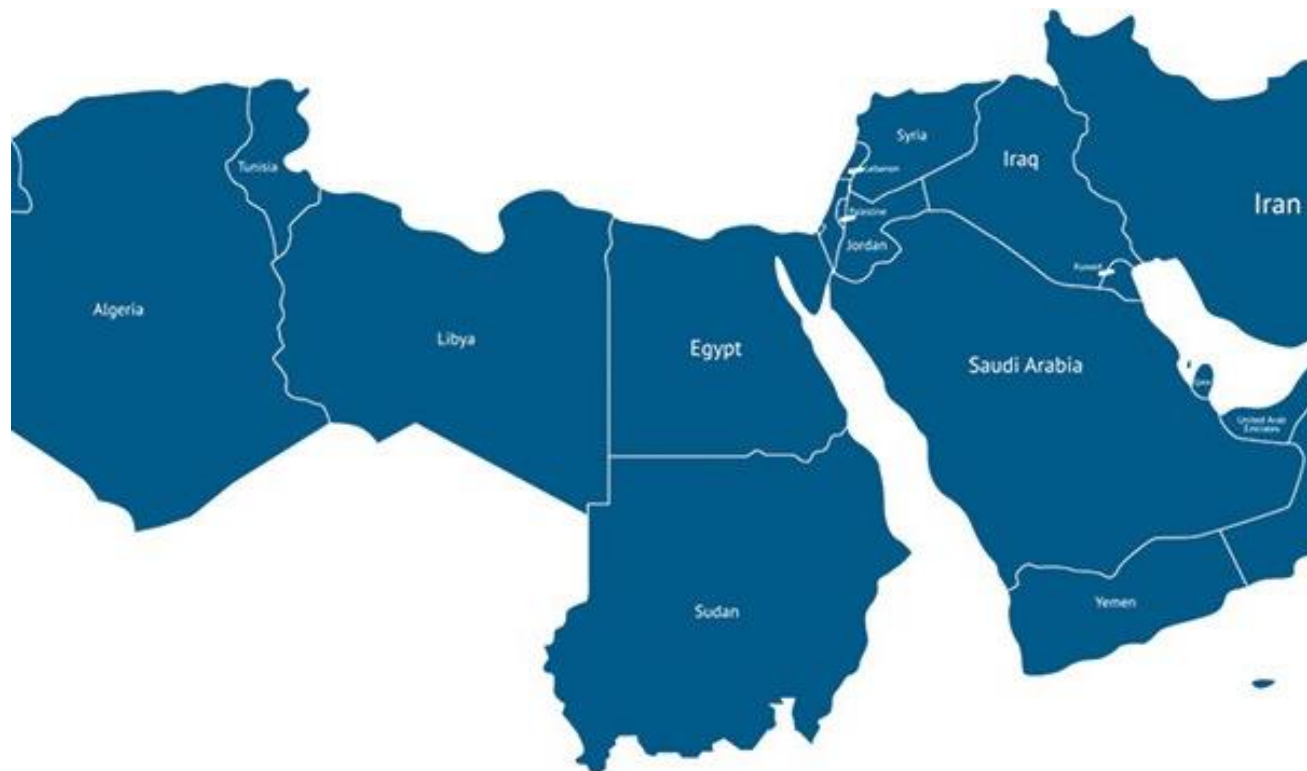
Dr. Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah

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Genootschap voor de Joodse Wetenschap in Nederland

NIETS UIT DEZE PRESENTATIE MAG ZONDER TOESTEMMING VAN DE SPREKER GEBRUIKT WORDEN.

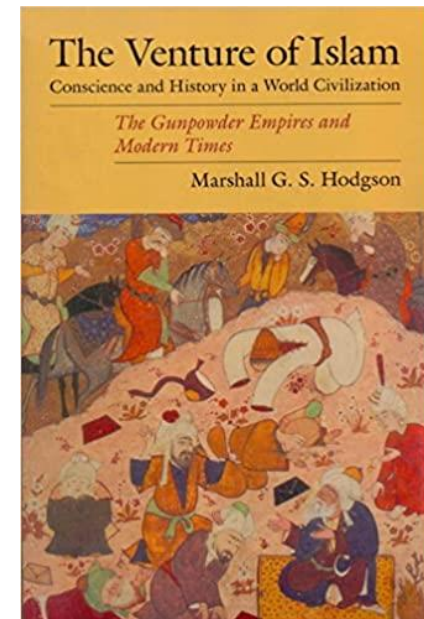
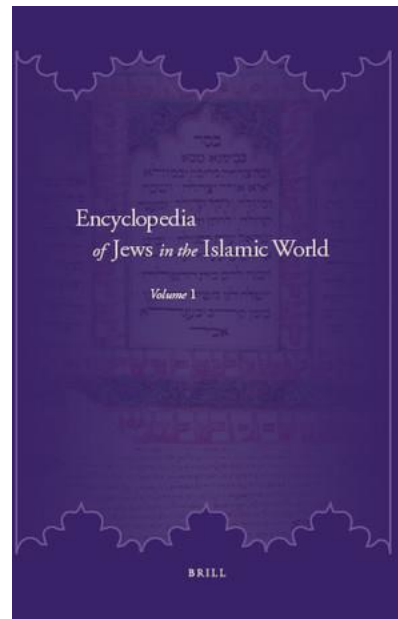
# Jews in MENA 1947-1948



• Lebanon	10.000
• Syria	40.000
• Iraq	135.000
• Yemen, Aden	53.000
• Egypt	75.000
• Libya	35.000
• Tunisia	80.000
• Algeria	133.000
• Morocco	280.000

# Islamicate Society

“Islamicate is a term invented by world historian **Marshall Hodgson**. At once precise and woolly, it invokes Islam—its past, present, and future—yet marks its influence as exceeding any creedal or cultural limits. It reflects a Muslim presence as both aesthetic taste and ethical project. ”



# Pact of 'Umar -History

- Exact origin on unknown
- Ascribed to caliph 'Umar 634-644
- Most likely developed over time
- Agreement between Muslims & Christians in Syria/Mesopotamia/Jerusalem (!?)
- Social-political contract
- Basis for legal position of Jews in the Islamic world



# Legal Structure

- *Ahl al-Kitab* – people of the book
- *Dhimma* – protected status of “people of the book”
- *Kharaj* – agricultural tax on non-Muslims
- *Jizya* – tax on non-Muslims
- *Mellah/Mahallah/Harat al-Yahud* – traditional Jewish quarters



# How does life differ from law?



# Shared Islamicate Culture

- Music
- Dress
- Literature (mostly religious)
- Art
- Food
- Social Mores
- Language



# Middle East in 1800

- Morocco – Sharifan Sultanate
- Algeria to Persian Border – Ottoman Sultanate
- Main religious minorities – Jews and Christians (in the Levant and Egypt)
- Borders relatively closed, Jewish/Christian elites act as the bridge cultural bridge.
- Traditional Communities
  - *Ahl al-Kitab, Dhimma, Jizya, Mellah/Mahallah/Harat al-Yahud*
  - Religious law is civil/criminal law
- Traditional dress
- Traditional gender roles
- Culture (shared with local Muslim Society)
  - Music
  - Literature (mostly religious)
  - Art (mostly handiwork)
  - Food
  - Social Mores (minhagim)
  - Language



# Forces of Change (Modernity)

- Sources of change
  - Western Influence (not specifically Jewish) – Colonialism/Empirialism, Missionaries
  - Internal Political Reforms (not specifically Jewish) - Tanzimat
  - Jewish Migration from Arab Lands – Rural to Urban, Europe, Latin America, East Asia, Indian Sub-Continent
  - Emergence of Jewish Internationalism
- Consequences
  - Social Transformation (gender norms, dress, professions, etc.)
  - Westernization (cultural & linguistic)

# Communal Challenges

- Poverty/Economic Insecurity
- Public Health
- Education
- Persecution/Political Insecurity
- Public infrastructure

\*Not different from the challenges in Muslim Society

# Ottoman reforms (Tanzimat)

- Changes in Jewish civil and communal status incidental in the overall wider changes in the Empire
- Changes are uneven depending on Ottoman Authority in the region
- 1839 – Khatt-i Sharif
- 1856 – Khatt-i Humayun
- Development of Jewish Bureaucracy
  - Haham Bashi
  - Majlis Jismani
  - Majlis Ruhani





# Birth of Jewish Internationalism

- **Damascus Affair 1840**
- Blood Libel: Capuchin monk and his servant disappear,
- Local Jews accused of murdering them to make matza; arrested, tortured and forced to confess
- Predicament of Syrian Jewry arouses deep concern among European Jewry
- Beginning of 'Jewish Internationalism': Moses Montefiore and Adolphe Crémieux petition Muhammad Ali to release the imprisoned Jews
- **Mortara Case 1858**
- In Bologna, Catholic nanny to a Jewish family secretly baptizes Edgardo Mortara at age 2
- Catholic church decrees that the child is Catholic for life and removes him from his family
- Italian Jewry, British Jewry, and French Jewry petition to have the child returned to his family, they fail
- Alliance Israélite Universelle is founded as a direct consequence of this case



# Transnational Jewish Solidarity

- Alliance Israelite Universelle
  - Founded in Paris in 1860
  - First Modern Jewish Humanitarian/Philanthropic Organization
  - *Mission Civilatrice*
  - *L'émancipation par l'instruction*
- Anglo-Jewish Association (1871)
- American Joint Distribution Committee (1914)
- Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden (1901)





# Haskala Movement

- *Haskala* movement originates in Europe ±1770s
  - Rejuvenation of Jewish society through self-development and self-cultivation
  - Emergence of secular Hebrew literature
  - Modernization of Jewish education
  - Religious reform, interest in authentic Judaism
- MENA Jewry participates in late period *Haskala*
  - Mostly Rabbis and Teachers
  - Participation in Jewish literary culture (local and global)
  - Founding of salons and societies to discuss the ideals of emancipation and enlightenment

# Education – Traditional vs. Modern

- Basic Religious Education
- Large heterogeneous groups
- No/limited secular subjects
- Similar to education in Madrasas
- Few opportunities for girls
- Elite schooled by private tutors in secular subjects
- Taught by Rabbis
- Instruction in Hebrew
- Secular Subjects (Maths, Sciences, History)
- European Languages (French, English, Italian)
- Open to Girls
- Multiple options (Christian Missionary Schools, AIU, State schools – Algeria)
- Funding: Fees & Donations
- Taught by trained teachers
- Instruction in European Languages





# Modern Zionism in MENA

- Perceived as Ashkenazi-centric
- MENA Jews have closer geographic/linguistic ties to the region and its people.
- Most interest related to religious Zionism
- In general MENA Jews are more aware of the political reality in Palestine.
- Ambivalent engagement



# Algeria



- 1830 French conquest
  - French consider Jews “Friendly Natives” “Indigenous people”
- 1845 French remove traditional Jewish autonomy (in Algeria) – install the ‘Consistoire’ with French “Ashkenazi” leadership
- October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1870 – Décret Crémieux
  - 30,000 Algerian Jews become French
- Zionism
  - 1894 – Joseph Barukh from Istanbul, establishes small Zionist Association, he is kicked out of Algeria in 1897.
  - Algerian attends the First Zionist Conference.
  - Little interest in Zionism.



# Morocco

- Limited European intervention in the 19<sup>th</sup> century
  - With Yemen, harsh pre-Modern treatment of Jews
- Jews in coastal towns obtain British and French passports through various strategies
- First AIU school in Tetouan 1862
- Mission of Moses Montefiore in 1863
  - *Dahir* of protection granted, later nullified
  - No real change in civil status
- Zionism
  - Imported via North African Jews who either settled in Europe or regularly traveled to Europe
  - Zionist societies are founded in pre-WWI North Africa.
  - AIU and French government do not support Zionism.
  - Post-WWI Zionism becomes more prominent, mostly philanthropic.
  - Post-WWII Zionism becomes more ideological.







# Iraq



- Traces its origins to the Babylonian Exile
- Main center of Jewish life is Baghdad with smaller communities in Basra and Mossul
- Alliance Israelite Universelle opens first schools in 1864
- Important Baghdadi Diaspora in South East Asia
- 1924 constitution grants citizenship to all Iraqi Jews
- By 1928 all Jewish schools are under the management of the local communal hierarchy
- In the 1920s about %25 of the city of Baghdad is Jewish
- Represent an important educated middle class in Baghdad

# Egypt

- Dates to the Hellenistic Era
- Main population centers are Cairo and Alexandria
- Alliance Israelite Universelle opens first schools in 1868
- By 1919 the AIU considers its mission complete and transfers schools back to the community
- Majority of Egyptian Jews do not apply for citizenship with the passing of the 1929 Egyptian Nationality Law
- By 1947 the literacy rate of Egyptian Jewry was 82.2 (country's literacy rate in 1976 is 38.2)





# Networks & Influence - Iraq



- Laura Kadoorie Girl's School founded in 1893
- Endowed by the Kadoorie family of Hong Kong and Shanghai
- Managed by the Jewish community of Baghdad
- Curriculum by the Alliance Israelite Universelle (Paris)
- Teachers come from Iraq, MENA, and Europe
- School serves all strata the Baghdadi Jewish community

# End of Jewish Life

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- Iraq
  - *Farhud* in 1941, 180 Jews are killed but the majority of Jews do not leave Iraq (not the beginning of the end)
  - 1948 Iraq place under martial law, Jews prevented from legally leaving the country
  - 1948 Jewish civil servant dismissed, quotas placed on university students, merchants denied trade licenses. Economic life becomes untenable
  - Approximately 123k Iraqi Jews leave between 1949-1952 and are denaturalized
  - Majority of Jews settle in Israel with a smaller group settling the UK
- Egypt
  - Company law of July 1929, 1947: All companies and subsidiaries of foreign companies in Egypt must employ Egyptian citizens for 75% of their staff and 40% of their boards
  - 1948 Jews are prevented from leaving the country
  - Many Jews find themselves stateless
  - Around 800 Jews arrested on the pretext of being communists
  - 1949 to 1951 16k lower/middle class Jews leave for Israel and 6k emigrate to Europe
  - Lavon Affair 1954
  - Suez Affair: 1956-1958 25k leave Egypt (*laissez-passer sans retour*)
  - Between 1967-1970 almost all remaining Jews leave Egypt





# Dank je wel !

Dr. Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah

[s.r.goldstein@rug.nl](mailto:s.r.goldstein@rug.nl)