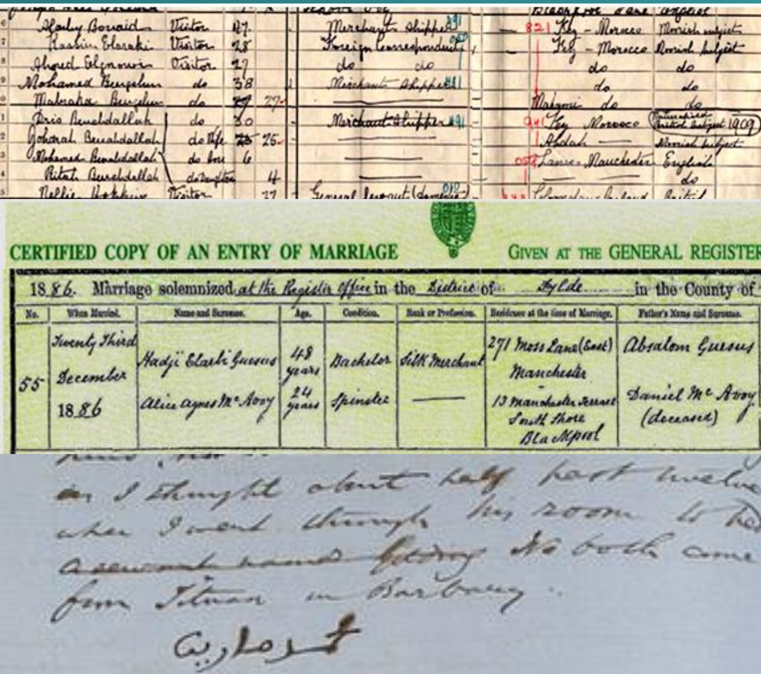
FASSI MERCHANTS COME TO MANCHESTER

BORDER CROSSING AND DIASPORIC CONSCIOUSNESS



CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF MARRIAGE — GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER

1886. Marriage solemnized at the Register Office in the District of Fylde in the County of

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.
55	Twenty Third December 1886	Hadji Elarbi Guessus	48 years	Bachelor	Silk Merchant	271 Moss Lane (East) Manchester	Absalom Guessus
		Alice Agnes McAvoy	24 years	Spinster	—	13 Manchester Terrace South Shore Blackpool	Daniel McAvoy (deceased)

Moroccan Cultural Studies Centre
University Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdallah

MOROCCANS IN EUROPE

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MOROCCANS IN EUROPE

FASSI MERCHANTS COME TO MANCHESTER

KHALID BEKKAOUI

MOROCCANS IN EUROPE

FASSI MERCHANTS COME TO MANCHESTER

BORDER CROSSING AND CONSTRUCTION OF DIASPORIC CONSCIOUSNESS

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Moroccan Cultural Studies Centre
UNIVERSITY SIDI MOHAMMED BEN ABDALLAH
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2016

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INTRODUCTION

In the old medina of Fez, the terms *manishisteer* and *ride* or *rite*, a corruption of Wright, are still invoked by silverware dealers to refer to very good quality tea-utensils. *Manishisteer* is used for *siniya* tea-tray and *ride* or *rite* for *barrad*, teapot. The entry of these terms in the Fassi commercial vocabulary dates back to the early twentieth century when the Fassi merchant community of Manchester exported to Moroccan markets silverware goods bearing the hallmark of Richard Wright of Manchester in Arabic and English.

1. Richard Wright teapot and tray

Moroccan Muslim and Jewish traders, predominantly from Fez, relocated to Manchester in the 1830s. This was made possible thanks to a series of treaties between Morocco and Britain granting each other's subjects the right to travel and conduct trade in the other country. In his negotiation of a

Treaty of Peace and Commerce with William Petticrew in 1751, Sultan Moulay Abdellah insisted that "his Subjects, whether Jewish or Muslim, should not be prohibited from living and working in Gibraltar, as they wished to do so."[1] A clause in the treaty signed in Fez on 28 July 1760, renewed in 1791, 1801 and 1824, guaranteed the right of Moroccan merchants to trade in Britain. It states:

> if any subject of the Emperor of Fez and Morocco desires to transport commodities from the dominions of the King of Great Britain, he shall be permitted to do it, without paying greater duties or impositions than other nations pay.[2]

On the socio-cultural level, settling and conducting commerce in Christian lands represent profound shifts in pre-colonial Morocco. Travelling for commercial reasons from Dar al Islam to Dar al Kufr, the land of unbelivers, ceased to be considered a religiously stigmatized activity in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In addition to Muslim merchants, perfomers from spiritual confraternities and students travelled and settled in Europe.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Moroccan Sufi brotherhood of the zawiyyas of Aissawiyya and Hmadu U Mussa began sending their adepts to Europe to perform in circuses, popular showplaces and music halls, impressing audiences with their amazing and sophisticated acrobatic

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[1] P. G. Rogers, *A History of Anglo-Moroccan Relations to 1900* (London: Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 1971), p. 96.

[2] *A Complete Collection of the Treaties and Conventions at Present*, vol. 2 (London: 1820), p. 105.

feats in Spain, France, and Germany. As early as 1843, Moroccan Sufi performers gave their first show in Britain at the London Victoria Theatre. *The Illustrated London News* writes under the title "The Morocco Arabs at the Victoria Theatre," that their "feats are nightly received with shouts of surprised delight. The performers … all have extraordinary suppleness of frame and limb. Their feats include leaps akin to flying, national dances, and evolutions of the 'impossible' order."[1]

Five years later, in the summer of 1848, the troupe was contracted to perform in London at the Royal Britannia Saloon. The show was an unprecedented success: "Unbounded applause and crowded houses every evening to greet the wonders of the world, the Bedouin Arabs and Morocco Arabians."[2] In November-December, 1856, after successful shows in Paris, "The Bedouin Arabs from Morocco," as they now had come to be ethnically labelled, performed at the London Royal Lyceum Theatre, "on which occasion they achieved a perfect triumph."[3] Following their success, they returned in 1857 to England to perform with Macarte's Cirque Imperial. To promote the show, the proprietor of the Circus, Mrs. Macarte, organized a street procession in Ipswich with Moorish acrobats adorned in their exotic native costumes and mounted on camels.

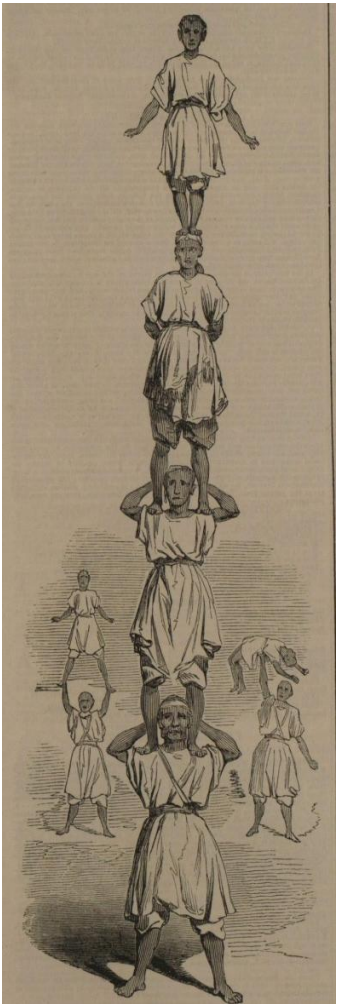
Travelling and performing in Europe, Ouled Hmadu Moussa became acquainted with foreign customs, traditions, and languages. A Moroccan acrobat, a certain Hadj Abdallah,

[1] *Illustrated London News*, 60 (24 June 1843), p. 439.
[2] *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper*, 6 August 1848.
[3] *The Era*, 7 December, 1856.

spoke English, French, German, Spanish, Turkish, Moghrebbin Arabic, and Shilha. "I know London well," he said; "I have an engagement to bring my troupe of acrobats to the Canterbury and the Oxford. I am a member of a Masonic Lodge in Camberwell."[1]

2. Moroccan male and female performers in England, 1850s

[1] Samuel Levy Bensusan, *Morocco* (London: A. and C. Black, 1904), p. 115.



3. Moroccan Acrobats at the London Victoria Theatre, 1843

Moroccan travellers' mastery of foreign languages and knowledge of European geography indicate that they both mixed with foreign communities and enjoyed sightseeing.

They were noted for their strict adherence to their Islamic faith and rituals, yet, because of exposure to foreign life and culture, they inevitably became acculturated and "readily take on external features of the different culture."[1]

Another early Moroccan encounter with Europe is a group of fifteen young students sent by Moulay Hassan to study in Europe.[2] Having studied foreign languages and accounting for two years (1873-1875) in Tangier, the students were divided into groups of three, and each group was sent to a European country: Spain, France, Germany, Italy, and Britain. The group for Britain, was composed of Muhammad Al Gabbas, Idriss ben Abd al-Wahed al-Fasi, and Zubeir Skirej. They joined the School of Military Engineering at Chatham.

British Consul General, Drummond Hay, who was very enthusistic about Moulay Hassan's modernization programme, wrote in support of the Sultan's initiative:

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[1] Ferdinand Ossendowski, *The Fire of Desert Folk: The Account of a Journey through Morocco* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co. 1926), p. 280.

[2] The project was first developped by Moulay Abderrahman (1822-1859) who was desirous of sending Moroccan students to study in Europe but his project was confronted with the opposition from the ulama and his ministers who warned againt exposure to Europe. The students were sent to Egypt.

> The young Sultan is evidently desirous of introducing reforms and improvements in his dominions; but he has a very difficult task as he is surrounded by ignorant and fanatical advisers … I trust that every reasonable facility may be afforded by Her Majesty's Government to the young Sovereign, to aid him in moving forward in the path of reform.[1]

In his autobiography, Skirej writes proudly that, having gained their diplomas after three years of study at Chatham, the young Moroccans were "favoured with an audience by her Majesty Queen Victoria."[2]

[1] Rogers, *A History of Anglo-Moroccan Relations*, pp. 185-86. FO99/169.

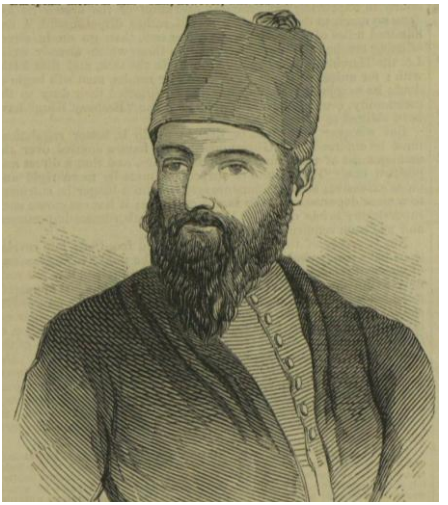
[2] "Mudakirat Zubayr Skiraj: Wathiqa Jadida Hawla al Baathat at-Tulabiya ila Uruba," *Majallat Dar Niyaba* (1985), pp. 28-32. On Moroccan students in Europe, see Mohamed Bargach, *Une famille au coeur de l'histoire* (Editions maghrébines, 1998).

4. Zubeir Skirej, studied at the School of Military Engineering, Chatham

5. Muhammad Al Gabbas, was appointed Minister of War

It is also significant to mention that in January 1846, the Sultan's physician sailed to London for thr purpose of "supplying himself with European medicines." He is described as

> about 50 years of age, is a man of much intelligence, and is well acquainted with the resources of European science; having cultivated the friendship of all the distinguished Europeans who visited Barbary, and from whom he has received information touching new discoveries and improvements.[1]



6. Moroccan Physician in London, 1846

[1] *Illustrated London News*, 26 January 1846.

The Morocan physician freely shared his medical knowledge with his British counterparts, which they found to be "full of interest, and contains facts, which, if widely promulgated, would have an important influence on medical science." A report in the *Illustrated London News*[1] notes that "in certain maladies, the mode of treatment prescribed by them is successful when the European methods fall" and goes on to remind readers that "the most precious European medicines of the present day have been derived from the information given by savages."

Being intent on reforming the health system Mawlay al-Hassan decided in 1876 to send five young students to Gibraltar to gain some training in medicine before sending them to Britain to get qualified as doctors. On this issue, Musa ben Ahmed, the Sultan chamberlain, wrote to Drummond Hay:

> As for the medical students, His Majesty has given them permission to make the journey to gain all the knowledge they need and to watch doctors treating their patients. Therefore, show us where they should go for this, how they should travel, and what formalities need to be completed.[2]

By the time the Moroccan youth arrived in Gibraltar to begin their medical training, Hajj Mohammed Zbidi was in

[1] *Illustrated London News*, 26 January 1846.

[2] Khalid Ben Srhir, *Britain and Morocco during the Embassy of John Drummond Hay, 1845-1886* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), p. 257.

Britain carrying out an ambassadorial mission in the company of his secretary Ibin Driss Jaaydi. Jaaydi records that during his tourist visit to Crystal Palace, he was approached by three men dressed in Christian clothes who greeted him in Arabic. Jaaydi enquired about their place of origin and learnt that one of them was from Marrakesh and the others from Sus. On inquiring about their business in England, they replied that fate had guided them there.[1]

Clearly, the initiative of the Fassi merchants to travel and conduct trade in Manchester should be considered as part of a reconfiguration of the encounter between Islam and Christendom. Britain was no longer to be seen as Dar al Harb, dreaded and avoided. Rather it was a place for economic opportunities, political missions, entertainment and sight-seeing, encountering a different culture and civilization, acquiring new commercial techniques and technological knowledge, and discovering wonderful innovations.

Fassi merchants' travel and settlement in the land of the Christians is in itself indicative of deep transformations in Moroccan society and heralds the emergence of a new socio-economic order. Business and religion had become re-defined and reconfigured in such a way so as to allow Muslim merchants to invest money made from the classical Islamic trade routes of North Africa and trans-Saharan to enter the world of capitalist market economy and global commerce.

The present book tries to shed some light on Moroccan merchants of Manchester, on how immigration and foreign

[1]Idriss Jaaydi Slaoui, *Ithaf an Akhbar bi Gharaibi al Akhbar*, ed. Az al Maghrib Maaninu (Abudabi: Dar Souadi Linashr wa Tawzia, 2004), p. 297.

commerce have transformed them into a cosmopolitan elite, on the participation of Moroccan women in such an enterprise, and on how foreign trade and travel impacted Moroccan culture and society during the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries.

PART I: MOROCCANS OF MANCHESTER: BORDER CROSSING AND DIASPORIC CONSCIOUSNESS

1. ANGLO-MOROCCAN TRADE

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, trade between Morocco and Britain increased substantially. The commodities imported into Morocco were mainly silverware, textile goods, Chinese tea, sugar, spices, coffee, pepper, iron, hardware, earthenware, glassware, saltpetre, and candles. Moroccan main exports to Britain, on the other hand, included grains, dates, honey, almonds, gums, oils, beeswax, wool, maize, hides, oil, leeches, ostrich feathers, slippers peas, and beans.

Year	Total Value (£)	From United Kingdom
1861	998,458	797,623
1862	1,198,729	717,398
1863	1,024,181	813,538

7. Total value of imports to Morocco

Most of this trade was conducted with the city of Manchester. A report in 1865 states that "Thirty thousand pounds' worth of Manchester cottons are absorbed annually in Rabat and Salli …. Sugar to the value of 36,710 came in during the year... Candles to the value of 7,206 comes next,

and tea to the value of 5,942."[1] In 1881, Morocco imported 16 million yards of Lancashire cloth. By 1900 the figure increased to 50 million.[2]

Year	Quantity in bales	Value (£)
1861	9,878	343,868
1862	8,825	379,029
1863	7,946	479,292

8. Quantity and value of Manchester goods imported into Morocco[3]

The goods arrived at the port of Tangier and were transported on mules, donkeys, and camels to various cities in the interior. Caravans laden with Manchester goods reached as far as Timbuktu. Shops, stalls and markets in major Moroccan cities were glutted with Manchester goods. Walter Harris notes that in Tangier "Manchester goods fill up the little bandbox shops."[4] In Salé, Frances Macnab observes, "there is a large covered market where nothing but

[1] Frances Macnab, *A Ride in Morocco Among Believers and Traders* (London: Edward Arnold, 1902), p. 163.

[2] Arthur Redford, *Manchester Merchants and Foreign Trade* 1850-1939 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1956), vol. 2, p. 68.

[3] *Reports from Her Majesty's Consuls on the Manufactures, Commerce* (London: Harrison and Son, 1865), vol. 3, p. 260.

[4] Walter Harris, *The Land of an African Sultan: Travels in Morocco* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1889), p. 13.

Manchester goods are sold."[1] Háj Mohammed Et-Tájir's store in Fez was "packed with valuable cloths, Manchester goods, silk, etc." In Chefchaouen, "The Jewish merchants have a fandak of their own in the town, where they sell principally Manchester goods," and, in El Ksar there were "eighty-five shops selling Manchester goods."[2] Henry Dugard affirms that wealthy Moroccans use mainly goods imported from Manchester: carpets, mural fabrics, tea utensils and, perfume burners.[3]

9. King George VI and Queen consort greet Moroccan merchant in England Abdel Hadji, March 1939

[1] Frances Macnab, *A Ride in Morocco*, p. 157.

[2] Budgett Meakin, *The Land of the Moors: A Comprehensive Description* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1901), pp. 319 and 336.

[3] Henry Dugard, *Le Maroc de 1919* (Paris: Payot, 1919), p. 245.

The Moroccan Manchester trade was initially monopolized and controlled by British agents and middlemen based in London, Manchester, and Gibraltar. Moroccan merchants decided to partake in this growing and lucrative trade as early as 1830's. Some of them travelled to London, Liverpool, and Manchester to take part in the commercial exchange between the English metropolis and their country.

2. EARLY MOROCCAN COMMERCIAL ENCOUNTERS WITH BRITAIN

Moroccan commercial ties with Britain dates back to the mid-sixteenth century. In 1551, a merchant ship called the *Lion* sailed from Portsmouth on the first commercial voyage between the two countries. The cargo consisted of "good quantitie of linnen and woollen cloth, corall, amber, let, and divers other things well accepted of the Moores." Interestingly, the letter reporting this voyage refers to two Moroccans who boarded the *Lion* to be conveyed back home. And we learn that "there were two Moores, being noblemen, whereof one was of the Kings blood, conuayed by the said Master Thomas Windham into their Countrey out of England."[1] We can safely surmise that their business in England was of commercial nature.

In 1600, the Saʿadian Sultan, Ahmed Al Mansur (1578-1603), dispatched Abd al-Wahad al-Anuri as his ambassador to Queen Elizabeth on a mission to propose a military alliance between Morocco and England as well to conduct

[1] See Thomas S. Willan, *Studies in Elizabethan Foreign Trade* (Manchester: University Press, 1959), pp. 96-97.

trade. Al-Nouri was accompanied by al Hage Moussa and al-Hage Bahmed, an interpreter, and a certain Abd el-Dodar. They arrived at St. Ives on the evening of January 12, 1589. The Moorish delegation frequently visited the London markets:

> During their half year's abode in London, they used all subtlety and diligence to know the prises, weights, measures and all kindes of differences to such commodities, as either their country sent hither or England transported thither. They carried with them all sortes of English weights, measures and samples of commodities.[1]

Their strict observance of Islamic rituals was also noted: "They killed all their own meat within their house, as sheep, lambs, poultry and such like, and they turn their faces eastward when they kill anything. They use beads and pray to saints."

The presence of the Moorish visitors in London must have been conspicuously visible. They stayed in London for six months, leading a very active life. They visited places, such as Hampton Court, and London markets, and were invited to attend national events such as the Queen's coronation day at Whitehall. We are told that for that occasion "a speciale place was builded onley for them near to the Parke door, to beholde that dayes triumph." A great number of Londoners must have met the exotic visitors from Barbary.

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[1] Henry de Castries, *Les Sources Inédites de l'Histoire du Maroc*, vol. II (Paris: Editions Ernest Leroux, 1925), p. 203.

After their return home, reports state that English merchants regularly supplied the Saidian Sultan Ahmed Al Mansour with "necessaries and furnitures for his own use … and sundrie merchandize," including the "transportation of a coach and bedd for the same late King."[1]

In 1711, Moulay Ismail sent Bentura de Zari, an Armenian Christian, to the court of Queen Anne. In a letter in January 1713, Moulay Ismail requested the Queen "to give to our Christian servant Bentura the aforementioned his due," explaining that he had authorized him "to reside in the city of London to fulfil for us any purposes of ours."[2]

Bentura was invested with full authority to negotiate "anything relating to a good Correspondence of Trade or Otherwise."[3] He resided in England from 1711 to 1715. He died in London and was buried in Westminster-abbey at the King's charge.

In the early 18th century, Moors were common visitors to Britain. In 1714 Simon Ockley met "the Moors themselves" in London and asked them about the meaning of a word he was translating.[4] In 1725, John Windus writes that

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[1]Ibid., p. 237.

[2] Rogers, *History of Anglo-Moroccan Relations*, p. 37. See also Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar, *Britain and the Islamic world, 1558-1713* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.187.

[3]Ibid., p. 182.

[4] Nabil Matar, "Britons and Muslims in the Early Modern Period: From Prejudice to (a Theory of) Toleration," in Maleiha Malik, ed., *Anti-Muslim Prejudice: Past and Present* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 23.

"we have been pretty well accustomed to see its [Morocco] Natives in our Streets."[1]

In October, 1762, Sidi Mohammed sent El Hadj Abdel Kader Hodiel as his ambassador to London to purchase arms and ammunition. Two years later, Hodiel was still in London at his residence in Panton Square Haymarket. In February 1764, his house was attacked by a mob:

> A man, having a claim for debt against a female servant of the ambassador for Morocco who resided in Panton Square, Haymarket, collected a mob, declaring that the woman was his wife, detained for unlawful purposes. The ambassador's windows were pelted with dirt and stones, and all the furniture destroyed. The ambassador and his retinue defended the first floor with drawn sabres, and were pelted with the legs of chairs, till a company of the Guards arrived and dispersed the irrational mob.[2]

The house was so damaged that the ambassador and his retinue had to move to another residence at Hammersmith. A guard remained stationed at the house during its reparation.[3]

Learning of the incident, King George III ordered "a Reward of One Hundred Pounds to such Person or Persons, who shall apprehend the said Mathew Delohanty and bring him before any one of His Majesty's Justice."[4]

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[1] John Windus, preface, *A Journey to Mequinez* (Dublin: 1725).

[2] *All The Year Round*, June 29 to December 7, 1867, vol. 18 p. 374.

[3] *London Evening Post*, 16 February 1764, 18 February, 1764.

[4] *London Gazette*, 6 March 1764.

The Earl of Halifax sent "a most civil and obliging Letter … to the Morocco Ambassador …expressing greatest Concern from for the Insult and Outrage committed upon his Person and Family."[1]

The instigator and the main rioters were eventually arrested and confined to Newgate. It was discovered that the real reason for the incident was that one of the female domestics of the ambassador had eloped with a lover. Her husband found her in a public house and dealt harshly with her. He sent his servants to release her and took her under his protection. The angry husband took revenge by spreading the rumour that the Moorish ambassador was exploiting his wife for lustful purposes.

The ambassador's secretary and five servants appeared at court and "were sworn on the Alcoran … by an interpreter."[2] They kissed the sacred book three times and on each time they put it on the top of their heads.

Upon the homeward departure of the Moroccan envoy, King George III sent a letter dated 25 May 1764 to Sidi Mohammed praising Hodeil as "a person of so distinguished a rank and merit...who hath executed Your Imperial Majesty's commands with great prudence, care and exactness; and we have therefore thought fit to give him, at his departure hence, the testimony of our entire approbation of his conduct during the time that he hath resided at our court."[3]

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[1] *St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post*, 3 March 1764.

[2] *Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser*, 14 March 1764.

[3] Rogers, *Anglo-Moroccan Relations*, p. 106. SP71/20, f. 661.

Two years later, the Sultan of Morocco sent El Hadj Elarbi Mistiri to England to purchase some merchandise for him, as well as deliver a letter to King George III.[1] El Hadj Elarbi Mistiri sailed on board the Moroccan royal warship, the *Tiger*, from Salé and landed in Plymouth on 17th October. The ambassador and his impressive retinue arrived in London on Friday night in two coaches and nine post-chaises and took residence on Suffolk Street, at Charing Cross, occupying three houses. Interestingly, the ambassador brought with him his wife and a band of Moroccan musicians. He spoke English, French, and Italian.[2]

During his reception by George III the Moroccan envoy was "grandly dressed; his scymeter was richly set with diamonds."[3] He was invited to attend a grand ball given at the St. James Palace ballroom.

In 1772, we learn of a Moroccan Jew, Salom Namias, who "for several years resided in London and acted in the capacity of merchant, and the better to carry on his business about six years ago went over to Sale in the Kingdom of Barbary carrying with him not only all his own effects but also the effects of several merchants of this nation to dispose thereof to their best advantage."[4]

Following the death of his father, who occupied the position of the Moroccan's emperor's advisor, Joseph

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[1] Ibid., pp. 106-107.

[2] *London Evening Post*, November 22 and 25 1766. The Sultan desired the King to send him "an engineer and ten workmen skilled in the use of marble," Rogers, *Anglo-Moroccan Relations*, p. 107, SP. 102/2,ff 22-3.

[3] *London Evening Post*, 1 January 1767, 3 January 1767.

[4] SP 71/21, f. 24.

Sumbel, a Jewish merchant from Fez, came to England with his family's rich inheritance. In London he married actress Beckey Wells (1759-1826) after her conversion to Judaism under the name of Leah. The ceremony took place on 13 October 1797 according to Jewish rites.

Around that time, Meir Macnin, a prominent Moroccan Jewish merchant from Marrakesh, was dispatched by Moualy Sulayman to conduct business for him in Britain. He resided in London for more than sixteen years conducting royal commerce and also sending shipments of merchandise to his brother in Essaouira (Mogadore). In addition to his trade activities we find him writing in 1808 to Lord Castlereagh asking for his assistance in procuring a passport for a Muslim merchant from Marrakesh to allow him to travel to Britain aboard a British ship.[1] In 1827, Meir Macnin was still in London carrying out business activities for Sidi Abderrahman, Moulay Sulayman's successor, who conferred on him the distinguished title of the Sultan's Jew.[2]

In 1817, Elio Zagury, a young Moroccan Jewish merchant from Essaouira, arrived from London on board a Genoese vessel flying a British flag, with a cargo of "dry goods, iron, steel, cotton, &c." The merchant "was dressed in the European fashion, had been educated in England, and spoke the English language fluently."[3]

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[1] FO 52/14, 10 Oct 1808. See also Yedida Kalfon Stillman, and Norman A. Stillman, eds. *From Iberia to Diaspora: Studies in Sephardic History and Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), p. 95.

[2] Ibid., p. 97.

[3] James Riley, *An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the American Brig Commerce* (Hartford, Conn.: Andrus and Judd, 1833), p. 203.

In London in 1820s, a merchant named Hadj Ahamed Ahardan, a royal tajar from a prominent Riffian family, conducted business on behaf of the Sultan in Marseilles and London.[1] On 7 August 1844, a Morocan merchant exported a cargo of muskets and balls to Tetuan.[2]

A Jewish mercahnt from Essaouira, Haim Benattar, conducted trade in Lodnon in the 1820s. He resided on Fish Street and Bevis-marks. He was declared bankrupt in 1825 and again in 1836.[3] A few years later in February 1853, Taleb Bohlal, a Muslim merchant from Essaouira was trading in Britain in gums and other goods. Bohlal, whom the press labelled as "A Man of Many Wives," resided at No, 3, Scarborough-street, Goodman's-fields, Middlesex, then at No. 23, Bevis Marks, London. He was arrested and incarcerated in the Queen's Prison for debt amounting to £9,000. Bohlal appeared in the Debtor's Court "dressed in the Moorish fashion, with turban, &."[4] Among his creditors appears the "Emperor of Morocco, who was inserted in the schedule for upwards of £2000."[5]

Another Moroccan merchant named Mollena offered to pay £600 and bail him out. On being asked to swear on the Old Testament, Mollena, who was attired in the Moorish fashion, explained that in his country it was not customary

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[1] See *Chronique de Tanger, 1820-1830: Abraham Bendelac*, edited J. L. Miège (Rabat: Editions La Porte, 1995), 75, and Daniel J. Schroeter, *Sultan's Jew: Morocco and the Sephardi World* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 126.

[2] *The Standard*, 8 August 1844.

[3] *The Manchester Times and Gazette*, 24 December 1836.

[4] *Evening Standard*, 21 January 1853.

[5] Ibid.

"to swear on the Koran or on any book. Taking an oath in his country was by turning the face to the east, calling on Mohamet, and swearing in God." The proposed bail was sworn in this fashion and Bohlal was released.[1]

Other Moroccan merchants travelled to Britain in the eighteenth century not so much to conduct trade but to seek compensation for the loss of their cargoes incurred while being transported on British ships. Nabil Matar refers to them:

> They wandered the streets of the metropolis, sometimes completely disoriented and confused, and wrote petitions with the help of locals who, as translators, made the petitions more palatable to English reading taste. They used phrases and expressions of supplication that the English translator deleted, but that have remained in use until today, such as 'Allah yirham walidayk', or 'May God have mercy (on the souls) of your parent.[2]

In July, 1763, a merchant named Tahir Mustapha, "a Moor subject of the Emperor of Morocco," travelled to London "soliciting satisfaction… for sundry effects of considerable value which he embarked on board an English vessel seized by the Spaniards before the late war." King George ordered the Treasury to pay the sum of £200 to the Moroccan merchant as a compensation for his losses and the

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[1] *The Standard*, 14 February 1853. See also *The Leeds Times*, 19 February 1853.

[2] MacLean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 21. See Nabil Matar, "The Last Moors: Maghariba in Britain, 1700-1750," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 14 (2003), pp. 37-58.

expenses of his journey to England, as well as "to prevent the Emperor from taking offence."[1]

In October of the same year, Sid Hadge Mulood Charif sent a letter to London to request taking possession of the merchandise his brother was transporting on board the Dutch ship, *Le Freeport*. The vessel had wrecked off the English coast causing the death of his brother.[2] During his time as ambassador in London, Hodeil repeatedly applied to Lord Halifax for the restitution of the cargo to Hadge Mulood. [3]

By the end of the eighteenth century, we learn about a merchant called Abd al-Salam Buhlal who traded in London in 1786. In 1799, Buhlal petitioned the British government for the restoration of his cargo captured on a Danish ship by an English privateer while being transported from Amsterdam to Morocco. Not receiving satisfaction, Buhlal returned to England in 1802 carrying a recommondation letter from Moulay Sulayman. Still not receiving any satisfaction, Buhlal sailed again to London in 1807, accompanied by his brothers al Abbas, Abd al-Karim and Abd al-Majid.[4] During their residence in London, the Buhlal brothers were assisted by Abraham Benjamin, who acted as

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[1] *Calendar of Home Office papers of the reign of George III: 1760-1775* (Great Britain: Public Record Office, 1967), p. 296.

[2] Ibid., p. 315.

[3] Ibid., p. 333.

[4]James Brow, *Crossing The Strait: Morocco, Gibraltar and Great Britain in the 18th- and 19th-Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 148-49. N.A. FO 52/n,f. 264; N.A. FO 52/14, ff. 1-3, 8, 13, 47 and 177.

"agent to the Moors" in London, and Mubarak Tioubay, a Moroccan merchant based in London.[1]

In the early eighteenth century, a Moroccan merchant travelled to London to complain "in mixed broken English and Spanish" of the capture and sale of his ship and cargo by an English frigate for breaking the blockade of Marseilles. At first he was given no redress; but when Lord Bathurst, Secretary for War and the Colonies, learned that the Moorish merchant was bearing a letter from his emperor to the King of England, he "treated him like a prince; that he not only paid him all his money, but sent him to 'Park in coachee' with fine horses, and then to play-house." It is reported that whenever the merchant went to the play-house, the newspapers announced "Moor Go to Play-house;" so that "on those nights there was a great deal of money made by the number of people that went to see him."[2]

However, not all Moroccan merchants were tujars of the Sultan or from the elite bourgeoisie. Actually, the first Moroccan community to land in England consisted of pedlers, both Muslims and Jews, predominantly from the city of Essaouira and concentrated in London.

In Essaouira people recounted stories of how young Moroccans made "plenty of money" selling rhubarb in the streets of London. Moroccans easily found a way to be smuggled to Gibraltar and work there long enough to pay for their passage to England. Hence, in the late eighteenth century, we read numerous newspaper reports on the arrival

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[1] See James Brow, *Crossing the Strait*, pp. 148-49.

[2] George Beauclerk, *A Journey to Marocco in 1826* (London: Poole & Edwards, 1828), p. 25.

of "Moors from Morocco" in Portsmouth aboard vessels coming from Gibraltar, Minorca and Lisbon.[1]

Hence, Moroccan peddlers appeared in the streets of London as early as 1800s. Dressed in their white turbans, they hawked their wares of ribbons, combs, handkerchiefs, and scissors, rhubarb, and spices. Being interviewed by journalist Henry Mayhew, a peddler gives valuable information on these Moroccans, as well as an intersting autobiography of his itinerary from his native city of Essaouira to Gibraltar, and then to London:

> I am one native of Mogadore in Morocco. I am an Arab. I left my countree when I was sixteen or eighteen year of age. …… I like to see foreign countries …When I got to Gibraltar, I begin to have a little stand in de street wid silk handkershiefs, cotton handkerchiefs. .. After I am six year in Gibraltar, I begin to tink I do better in England…. So I start off, and get I here I tink in 1811….. I live in Mary Axe Parish when I first come. …

The Moroccan peddler goes on to recount that he got married two or three years after coming to London and that he, together with his wife, travelled to work in various parts of England, Scotland, and Wales.[2]

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[1] *Times*, 2 November 1799.

[2] Mayhew, Henry, *London Labour and the London Poor* (New York: Dover Publications, 1968), vol. 1, p. 1861.

10. Moroccan peddler in London, 1800s

11. Moroccan Jewish peddler in London, 1850s

He explains that there were six or seven Moroccans selling rhubarb and spices in the streets of London. Another five travelled through the country. Interestingly also he explains that one of the peddlers was a "very old Arabian" named Sole who had been a peddler in London for forty year. "He wear de long beard and Turkish dress. He used to stand by Bow Shursh, Sheapside."

The Jewish Moroccan peddlers included Ben Aforiat and his two brothers and Azuli. The Aforiat's brothers sold their goods in St. Paul's churchyard.

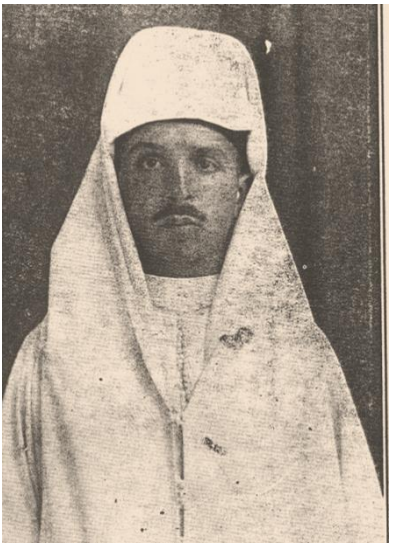
The interviewee explains that the Moorish peddlers worked in their native attire and that the English "like to buy de Turkey rhubarb of de men in de turbans."

3. *MOROCCAN TUJAR: CROSSING AND DWELLING*

Evidently, when the merchants of Fez decided in the 1830s to leave the old medina and immigrate to Britain, they were by no means moving to a *terra incognitta*. In fact, they were relocating to a country with which Moroccans had had a long-standing commercial experince. Moroccan merchants had accumulated geographical knowledge of their host country, were familiar with foreign trade networks, commercial contacts, and communication channels, and many of them spoke foreign languages.

Moroccan merchants' immigration flow to Britain in the early nineteenth century was, in fact, part of a complex process of globalization of Moroccan trade and human diaspora. Simultaneous to this movement to Britain, other

Moroccan tujars, circus and theatrical artists, and workers established themselves in other countries, such as Algeria, Senegal, Egypt, Spain, France, Italy, Germany, and Gibraltar. While others explored even more remote destinations by sailing to North and South Americas.



12. Abdrahman Hajji, Moroccan merchant in London

Moroccan commercial immigration to Dar Nasara benefited from the fact that the Moroccan court encouraged people to travel to the land of the Christians as part of the Makhzen's determination to open up to and know more about the West, understand the secret of its growing power, and learn from its experience.

The Moroccan immigrants to Britain were mainly from Fez, but some came from Tangier, Essaouira, Larache, Rabat, and Casablanca. Amor, Barnoussi, Ben Abdjelil, Ben Boubker, Benchakroun, Benjelloun, Benkiran, Benmassoud, Bennani, Bennaser, Benyakhlef, Berrada, Boayad, Elofer, Felloul, Guessous, Hajoui, Kabbaj, Kurtbi, Lahlu, Lazrak, Madani, Tazi, and Ziat were all prominent families that established businesses in Manchester.[1]

Because the journey was long and perilous for these merchants, "a merchant, before he set off, would make a pledge to enrich the shrine on his safe return." Bernard Newman notes that "A favourite gift was a clock," so that "most of the clocks in the shrine are English."[2]

There were also Jewish émigrés from Fez, Tangier, and Mogador such as Abensur, Abitbol, Afriat, Benzaquen, Benzarraf, Causins, Cohen, and Serfaty. With a few exceptions, these families, Muslim and Jewish alike, were educated, wealthy, and experienced in business.

Louis M. Hayes, a local Manchester merchant acquainted with the early Moroccans of Manchester, notes

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[1]On Moroccan families in Manchester, see Fred Halliday, "The Millet of Manchester: Arab Merchants and Cotton Trade," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 19 (1992), pp. 159-76; Hassan Kourounful, *Ahl Fas: Al Mal wa Siyassa* (Rabat: Dar Abbi Raqraq, 2007), p. 64; Jean Louis Miège, *Le Maroc et l'Europe, 1830-1894: Les difficultés* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962), p. 34; Roger Le Tourneau, *Fès avant le protectorat* (Casablanca: SMLE, 1949).

[2] Bernard Newman, *Morocco Today* (London: Hale, 1953), p. 201.

that one of the first tradesmen to conduct business with the Moroccans was Thomas Forshaw at Norfolk Street.

> Here, if you had any business to transact with any of these clients of his, you would usually find them congregated in his entrance lobby, where there were benches lining the sides, on which they would be seated, as it were, in general council. It was quite an Oriental picture to see them grouped around in their quaint picturesque attire, surmounted by the white turban or the red fez … If you had any communication to make to any of their number you were often obliged to make it in the presence and hearing of the entire conclave; and as a rule there was disposition to keep their transactions secret from each other, and at times they would consult amongst themselves before the one in treaty with you would make up his mind as to placing an order. [1]

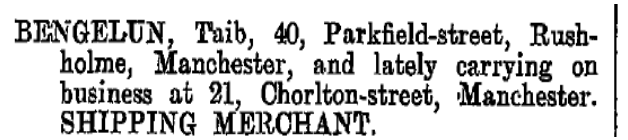
Later on, as the Moroccans became more acquainted with English trade practices, "Thomas Forshaw gradually lost his hold upon them, for the Moors discovered by degrees that they could go into the market and buy in their own names."[2]

One of the first Moroccans to be established in Manchester was Taleb Benjelun. Hayes describes him as

[1] Louis M. Hayes, *Reminiscences of Manchester, and Some of Its Local Surroundings from the Year 1840* (London: Sherratt & Hughes, 1905), p. 207.

[2] Louis M. Hayes, *Reminiscences of Manchester*, p. 207.

> a handsome man, although somewhat short of stature, but for his height he was one of the fattest men I had then come across. He seemed to carry a very mountain of adipose matter in front of him as he came paddling along the street, and swaying about from side and to side; and you could not but sympathise with him as you saw him panting for breath as he slowly mounted the stairs to his office.[1]


BENGELUN, Taib, 40, Parkfield-street, Rushholme, Manchester, and lately carrying on business at 21, Chorlton-street, Manchester. SHIPPING MERCHANT.

13. Taib Bengelun, Shipping Merchant, 1926

A Manchester paper gives a more detailed biographical account of Benjelun:

> Taleb Bengelum, a well-known Morocco merchant, of this city. Bengelum, who was a native of Fez, was one of the earliest Moors who established himself as a merchant in Manchester, and became a permanent resident in the city; and who subsequently was followed by quite a small colony of his countrymen. He had done for several years an extensive import business in native produce from Morocco; and was somewhat extensive shipper of Manchester, Bradford, Nottingham, and Birmingham manufactures to most of the Morocco and Algerian

[1]Ibid., pp. 207-208.

> ports; and was sometime engaged in Egyptian trade. His portly form—dressed in full oriental or Moorish costume—used to be the source of considerable attraction as he wended his way along the streets of Manchester, or in the suburbs, on the Oxford Road side of the city. Bengelum, both in his business transactions and his social relations, was an exceedingly straightforward and warm-hearted man, and enjoyed the highest regard and confidence of everyone with whom he came in contact.[1]

Benjelun used his office for business as well as a congregation place for his coreligionists who used to crowd in it, "filling the rooms to overflowing, some sitting, some reclining, whilst others would be squatted about Eastern fashion, with their legs doubled up underneath them…. and when they all got talking, more or less together, with their various intonations, accents and gesticulations, it was really quite entertaining to be in their midst." Sometimes Muslim traders from Cairo and Alexandria joined them.[2]

In the host country, Moroccan merchants tried to retain contacts with home. For instance, in July 1937, Ahmed Bouayad travelled to Britain with his family. He paid Laoufir, a bookshop keeper in Casablanca, to convey Arabic newspapers to his residence in Manchester.[3]

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[1] *The Manchester Evening News*, 31 July 1886.

[2] Hayes, *Reminiscences of Manchester*, p. 208.

[3] Mohammed Kenbib, *Les protégés: contribution à l'histoire contemporaine du Maroc* (Casablanca: Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines, 1996), p. 336, note 71.B.Q.I.P., 2 July 1937.

Name & date of birth	**Spouse: date & place of birth**	**Residence**	**Children: date & place of birth**	**Source**
Banyakliffe, Driss 1880	Fatima: 1884, Morocco	Lancashire	Fatima 1903 Chorlton	Census 1911
Ben Ali Mohamed	Sarah Downs Salford	Lancashire		Marriage index 1920
Benahdallah Driss:1881	Joharah: 1886, Morocco	Lancashire	Ritah 1907 Mohamed 1905, Manch	Census 1911
Benaki, Benasta 1845	Merjjonla: 1857, Morocco	8 Lothair St Chorlton on Medlock	Abdelkeda 1879, Manchester	Census 1881
Benaki, Haj Mahomed 1844		8 Lothair St Chorlton On Medlock, Lancashire		Census 1881
Benani, Driss 1825	married	Moss Lane East Moss Villas		Census 1881
Benani, Taher 1855		40 Derby St Moss Side Lancashire		Census 1881
Benani, Hamed 1856		Lancashire		1901
Benhamo Obdelkader 1873 Age 38	Yasmin 1885 Age 26 Fez	17 Parkfield St Rusholme, Manchester		1911

Benchekroun Mohamed 1866	Marinda 1879, Morocco	Lancashire		Census 1911
Bengelun, Taleb 1884	Fatima, 1896 Died in 1921	40 Parkfield Street Manchester	Abdelmajid 1918 Casablanca	various
Bengelun, Ahmed: 1867		Lancashire		Census 1911
Bengelun, Elarbi 1901	Habiba 1906 Morocco	42 Granville Rd Fallowfield Manchester	Nofyssa (7) Mohamed (4)	**Passenger** list: April 1935
Bengelun, Larbi 1847		160 Lloyd St Moss Side, Lancashire		Census 1881
Bengelun, Mohamed 1873	Mabraka 1884 Morocco	Lancashire		Census 1911
Benhamo, Abdelkader: 1873	Yasmin: 1885, Morocco			Census 1911
Benani, Mohamed: 1841	Fatim Zahra? 1869, Morocco	Lancashire	Azaya 1890, Manchester	Census 1891
Berada, Driss 1831		Lancashire		Census 1881
Berrada, Taleb 1846	Widower	53 Parkfield St, Moss Lane		Census 1881
Berdai Ahmed 1889	Fatima 1900	456 Moss Lane East, Manchester		**Passenger** list 9 April 1925

Boayed, Hamed 1886	Rhalia: 1890	460 Moss-lane East, Manchester	Abelouhab? 1923 Kenza 1925	**Passenger** list 1938
Elaraki, Kassin: 1883		Lancashire		Census 1911
Elcohen, Mohamed 1872		Lancashire		Census 1901
Elcohen, Sahdyn 1900		Lancashire		Census 1901
Elofer, Haghi 1836	married	8 Sylvan Gr Chorlton On Medlock Lancashire	Mehomed 1879 Rabat	Census 1881
Farah, Afeely 1885		Lancashire,		Census 1911
Gamoon, Hadge M: 1845	Adiga: 1863, Cairo, Egypt	11 Parkfield Street Moss Lane Lancashire		Census 1881
Grossen, Abdereaham 1856		Lancashire		Census 1901
Guesus, Hadji Elarbi 1841	Alice: 1865, Widnes, Lancashire	43 Denmark Rd Chorlton on Medlock	Lulu 1887, Blackpool, Randolph 1892 Altrincham	Census 1891
Hagea, Sealli 1825		Moss Lane East Moss Villas		Census 1881
Lazarac, Saleb 1851	Fatima: 1864, Cairo, Egypt	11 Parkfield St, Moss Lane		Census 1881

		Lancashire		
Lehluh, Hadie T. 1831	Fatima 1851 Ethiopia	63 Parkfield St, Moss Lane	Mohamed 1861, Morocco	Census 1881
Tazzi, Abdelmaged 1846	Meloka 1862 Constantinople	33 A Grafton St, Chorlton on Medlock, Lancashire		Census 1881
Ziat, Mohamed 1869	Batoun 1877 Morocco	30 Parkfield St Manchester	Ayesha 1906 Mohamed 1907 Khadoush 1909 Manchester	Census 1911

14. Moroccan Manchester merchants

AMOR, Ahmed, residing at 468, Moss-lane East, Manchester, BENGELUN, Mohamed ben Benasser, BENGELUN, Mohamed ben Abdeslam, and BENGELUN, Hadj Barmousi, of Fez, Morocco, carrying on business in partnership under the style of M. & M. BENGELUN & CO., at 27, Minshull-street, Manchester, and Fez, Morocco aforesaid. SHIPPING MERCHANTS.

15. Fassi Shipping Merchants in Manchester, 1926

Another early Moroccan trader to have resided in Manchester was Absalom Ben Abdallah. Married to the sister of Mohamed Meri, another Moroccan resident in Manchester,

he spent eight years in England and died in 1852 at his home in Chapel Place, Moreton Street, at the age of sixty-seven.[1]

Interesting, upon arrival in Manchester Moroccan émigrés did not reside in the same neighbourhood, but different streets, one mile to eight miles distance of each other. We find families living in Parkfield Street, Denmark Road, Grafton Street, Lloyd Street, Derby Street, Lothair Street, Ducie Street, Egerton Road, Grafton Street. Most of the Moroccan merchants established their offices in the busy Market Street.

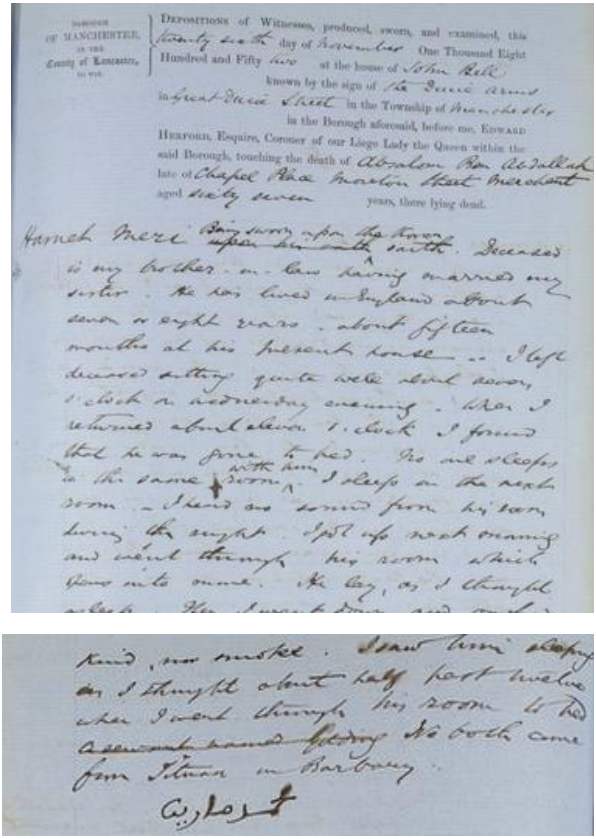
At first, being illiterate in English, they hired an Englishman who spoke Moroccan Arabic, perhaps a certain Mr. Jones, as their adviser.[2] Despite their ignorance of English they coped successfully with their alien environment:

> When one of them comes for the first time, he is bound to encounter some difficulties because of his ignorance of the language of the country and of its streets, yet such temporary ignorance had no impact on his dealings. He goes out alone, buys whatever he needs and communicates with people. How he does so and in what language, only God knows.[3]

[1] http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/448/archives _and_ local_ history/506/multi-cultural_manchester/9. /

[2] Halliday, "The Millet of Manchester," pp. 159-176.

[3] Abdelmajid Benjelloun, *Fi at-Tufula* (Rabat: Dar an-Nashr lil Maarifa, 1993), p. 34. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Arabic to English are mine.



16. Deposition of Witness, 26 November 1852, concerning the death of Absalom Ben Abdallah, merchant in Manchester, aged 67, signed by his brother-in-law, Hamet Meri (Mohamed Marin)

Their linguistic handicap was, however, short lived. The Moors, Ben Slimane, a merchant in Manchester, affirms, "not only learned standard English but had acquired a knowledge of Lancashire dialect as well."[1]

Convinced of their perfect knowledge of the English language, with English diplomatic style, and with English political affairs, Moulay Abdelhafid dispatched four Moroccan Manchester merchants on a diplomatic mission to the court of King Edward VII in 1908. The purpose of their mission was to secure London's recognition of his succession, following the deposition of his brother Moulay Abdelaziz.[2]

In addition to their high propensity for learning English the Manchester Moroccans earned a reputation for their businessmen acumen. "The main reason for their success," explains Henry Dugard, is that they "were able to explain to the English houses the habits and preferences of their co-religionists, whom they serve as intermediaries."[3]

Abdelmajid Benjelloun recounts a funny anecdote about a new arrival:

> It happened that a new visitor came from Casablanca and stayed with us. My father was ill and unable to

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[1] Jim Ingram, *The Land of Mud Castles* (London: John Long, 1952), p. 38.

[2] *The Manchester Guardian*, 12 June 1908. An interesting incident in relation to the Moroccan diplomats took place at their hotel at Bloomsbury. A "Moor, robed entirely in white, was endeavouring to persuade the official again to permit him to kill with his own hands chickens" in the Islamic fashion. The official refused. See *Yorkshire Evening Post* 15 October 1907.

[3] Dugard, *Le Maroc de 1919*, p. 128.

> go out. So, the visitor was obliged to go out alone. When he went out for the first time, my sister accompanied him to translate for him. My father gave him an envelope on which was written the house's address to show it to a policeman if necessary to help him find his way. Our fellow went out with my sister, street after street, took a public taxi and went far away from the house. When he had fulfilled all he had wished and wanted to return back home, he was lost. He asked my sister if she knew the way back but she understood not what he was saying to her. So she took him to one of the shops thinking that he wanted to buy something. He was frustrated at not being understood. Finally he approached one of the passers-by and greeted him with a smile. The other reciprocated the smile and our fellow put his hand in his pocket and took out the envelope and handed it to the man. The man realized from his look that he was a foreigner. He took the envelope, read the address, escorted him to one of the shops, bought a stamp and glued it to the envelope, then motioned to him to follow him. The Moroccan was utterly astounded when he saw the man approaching a letter box and putting the envelope in it. The Englishman was astonished when he saw our fellow about to fall from laughter and left in surprise.[1]

Although business ran in their blood, it "was not the sole mission of those people." Benjelloun explains, "they had

[1] Benjelloun, *Fi at-Tufula*, pp. 34-35.

a strange inclination to the enjoyment of life: that joyful life that English cities and their resorts offered them."[1] Elsewhere he affirms that "These are people who have learnt in their country to cherish Spring and its glorious days. So, they would meet in the afternoons and go out to public parks to enjoy the fascinations of fabulous nature."[2] Leisure time and holidays were spent outdoors: going to the theatre and cinema, visiting the zoo, hiking, picnicking, going on excursions.

In the summer, Moroccan families went on trips to the beach in Blackpool. In 1911, for instance, many Manchester based Moroccans, namely Kassin Elaraki, Ahoed Elgnouie**,** Stanely Bouiyad, Ahmed Bengelun, Mohamed Bengehun and his wife Mabraka, and Driss Benahdallah and his wife Joharah went on holiday to Blackpool at 8 Lansdowne Claremont. They were waited on by at least seven British servants. Even abroad the Fassi merchants pursued a life of ease and opulence.

4. *BRINGING ISLAM TO MANCHESTER*

The call to prayer sounded for the first time in the skies of Manchester upon the arrival of the Moroccans. Because there were no mosques in the city Muslims performed the Friday prayers in a house at Parkfield Street. The imam who presided over the prayer also meticulously supervised the procurement of *halal* meat from a local slaughterhouse for his fellow Muslims.

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[1]Ibid., pp. 33-35.

[2] Benjelloun, *Fi at-Tufula*, pp. 33-34.

During the month of Ramadan, the English were exposed to the manner of Muslim fasting from dawn to dusk. Muslims had to adapt to fasting in Manchester, where the days are longer than in their own homeland:

> During their long fast of Ramadan, the most of them neither ate, drank or smoked during the day. In their own country this was not such a serious matter as it is with us, as in Morocco the days and nights are more nearly equal in the summer months, when this fast takes place, than is the case in England. Here they required to fast from about three in the morning until about eight in the evening, which constituted a great strain upon the system for many weeks.[1]

When the faqih, religious scholar, Mohammed al Hajoui came as a tourist to Manchester in 1919, the Moroccans gathered around him and asked him for a fatwa concerning the religious issues they encountered abroad. They inquired, for instance:

whether prayer was valid for a Muslim who was dressed in clothes made of the wool of a sheep that was not slaughtered according to Islamic law;

whether it was halal to use yeast made by the fermentation of barley from which liquor was derived, hether it was permissible to combine prayers when necessary, and whether people were dispensed from the Isha, evening prayer, in a country where there was no twilight.[2]

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[1] Hayes, *Reminiscences of Manchester*, p. 208.

[2] Mohamed Al Hajoui, *Ar-Rihla al Urubbiya* (1919), in Said Ben Said al Alaoui, *Uruba fi Miraati ar-Rihla* (Rabat: Faculty of Letters, 1995), pp.177-184.

These fatwa questions reveal how Islam needed to adjust to its implantation in a Christian land.

The Moroccan merchants were most certainly the first Muslims that the inhabitants of Manchester had come in contact with and they were certainly eager to know about them and their different religious rituals and cultural practices.

This is also true of the children in Benjelloun's neighbouhood. When Abdelmajid returned from a visit to Morocco, his neighbourhood mates gathered around him in a back street to listen to his marvellous stories about his alien homeland. Abdelmajid, who had a thoroughly anglicized outlook, said about his Moroccan compatriots:

> The people eat and sleep in the same room, and sit and sleep on big pillows. At bedtime, it turns into a bedroom. At breakfast, lunch, and dinner ... a young maid comes with a yellow vessel in one hand and a pitcher in the other and moves round the sitters to wash their hands. We [in Manchester] go to the faucet, over there the faucet comes to them![1]

5. *MOROCCAN VIEWS OF MANCHESTER*

Coming from a highly sophisticated and affluent background and being proud of their long and rich civilization, Fassi merchants interacted with their host society without any feeling of racial or cultural inferiority.

To the Moroccans, Manchester seemed an utterly exotic land. Here they became acquainted with strange aspects of

[1] Benjelloun, *Fi at-Tufula*, p. 91.

modern life and amazing and complex innovations: the trams, trains, and telegraph enchanted them.

Back home, they entertained their bemused audiences with tales of the technological wonders of Britain. Ben Ahmed, a Fassi emigrant, told his audience upon returning from Manchester:

> A journey from London to Manchester, by Allah! costs no more than three or four dollars. It is a long journey. More than a thousand miles. God is my witness that I speak the truth. You take a seat in a sumptuous apartment and — pouf!! the room flies. In three or four hours, by the mercy of A'llah, you arrive at your destination.[1]

6. *THE MOROCCANS IN MANCHESTER: FASHIONING NEW IDENTITIES*

Though originally small in number, Moroccan immigrants conspicuously stood out in the Manchester streets in their oriental flowing robes, turbans, and yellow slippers. This Moorish apparel provoked curiosity among the inhabitants. "Early in the sixties [1860s]," Hayes writes in his chapter "Old Manchester Moors,"

> you passed along the business streets of the City, you would suddenly come in sight of some white turbaned individual, whose gay Eastern dress

[1] Lawrence L. Harris, *With Mulai Hafid at Fez: Behind the Scenes in Morocco* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1909), pp. 167-169.

> appeared in such strong contrast to the sombre of the attire of all those about him. At first the sight of one of these men in Moorish grab was a very uncommon occurrence, and people would stand and smile as one of them passed along.[1]

In addition to their alien outfit, the Moroccans behaved in the streets in a way that astonished the English:

> They walked not on pavements but in a long file of more than ten people in the wagon and car roads, while talking in loud voices. Their being in the street does not affect their screams, giggles and actions. In fact the neighbours have been accustomed to them and are no longer astonished at their behaviour.[2]

Following the success of the first émigrés, more Moroccans trickled in and "the number of white turbans to be seen in the streets of Manchester steadily and perceptibly increased."[3] Eventually, Moroccans became part of Manchester street landscape, contributing significantly to the fashioning of the city's ethnic and religious diversity and multiculturalism. Gradually, with the appearance of more white turbans in Manchester, the alien foreigners

> ceased to be a wonder, and so they go to do their business in their usual quiet way, and make their purchases at the shops without more than perhaps a casual glance from the passers-by …. Taken as a whole, these Moors were a thoughtful, peaceable,

[1]Hayes, *Reminiscences of Manchester*, p. 205.
[2]Benjelloun, *Fi at-Tufula*, p. 34.
[3] Hayes, *Reminiscences of Manchester*, p. 207.

> kindly and sociable set of men. Mohammedans by faith, one could not but admire and respect them for their strict observance of all that their religion enjoyed.[1]

Though strongly attached to their cultural and religious heritage, the Moroccans readily adapted to their diaspora environment. For instance, they began wearing boots instead of slippers, which they found to be impractical in the wet Manchester climate. They also changed their turbans for red fezzes so that "they were known among children as 'the red hats.'"[2]

Like other Moroccan children in Manchester, Adelmajid used to play with his classmates in the courtyard sliding on snow or throwing snowballs at each other. He mixed freely with his British neighbours and classmates, hardly aware of their religious and cultural differences. At school, he became aware for the first time of his Islamic identity.

While education in Morocco was strictly religious, Moroccans in Manchester had no qualms about sending their kids to British schools. Abdelmajid remembers his first day of school:

> At school, I learnt something new that disturbed me. I attended Sunday prayer with students and when I came back home and talked to my mother about it her face saddened. I heard her saying that she wouldn't allow me to pray with the children. She described them as being Christians and me with

[1] Ibid., p. 208.

[2] Benjelloun, *Fi at-Tufula*, p. 34.

> another label I didn't know until the following day when she accompanied me to school and implored the school principal to exempt me from prayer since Christianity was not my religion and told her that I was a Muslim. I expected a refusal from the principal as people said about her that she was pious. On the contrary, she consented to my mother's plea, deeming it understandable and reasonable. I knew I was different from those people in nationality, which pained me immensely, for why was I not like all the other people? And when I knew that I differed also in religion – though I knew not what religion meant – I was much distressed.[1]

Although eager to preserve their cultural identity and Islamic customs, the Moroccans of Manchester participated in the culture of their host country. Abdelmajid Benjelloun frequently went to cinemas, theatres, zoos, and public gardens in the company of Miss Millie Paternos.

During Christmas, holidays Moroccans exchanged visits and gave gifts and toys to their kids. In his autobiographical novel *Fi at-Tufula*, Abdelmajid Benjelloun recounts vivid memories of Moroccans' celebration of Christmas:

> Christmas was a joyous day, full of exultation and pleasure. We visited the Paternos family in the morning and listened to the storyteller who was chanting wonderful songs in that room decorated beautifully with flowers, pictures and nice furniture.

[1] Ibid., pp. 58-59.

> It was indeed a magnificent Christmas, and it was a delightful day of the year, always abounding with toys, gifts, decorations, songs, and smiles.[1]

They also attended a Christmas party organized by their English friends. Abdelmajid remembers this party:

> As we entered the party hall our eyes were fascinated by the Christmas tree, wonderfully decorated with gifts and toys. All the children participated in the game of discovering the secret, laughing and playing. We sat at the dining table, which was laden with sweets and delicious food. Then we bade our host goodbye and spent the afternoon in the public garden, and in the evening we went in a group to see a movie.[2]

Abdelmajid's house was usually crowded with Moroccan visitors, sometimes new arrivals from Fez. He remembers how utterly strange their outfits and behaviour struck him and how unintelligible their language seemed to him. Abdelmajid's astonishment at the exotic dress and behaviour of his compatriots and his ignorance of their language shows the extent of the assimilation and acculturation of the Manchester Moroccans.

They were reshaped by the culture they came in contact with. In this respect, Eugene Aubin says about Hadj al Madani Tazi, a Fassi who established himself in Manchester for about thirty-three years, that "His long stay in England

[1] Benjelloun, *Fi at-Tufula*, p. 70.

[2] Ibid., pp. 70-71.

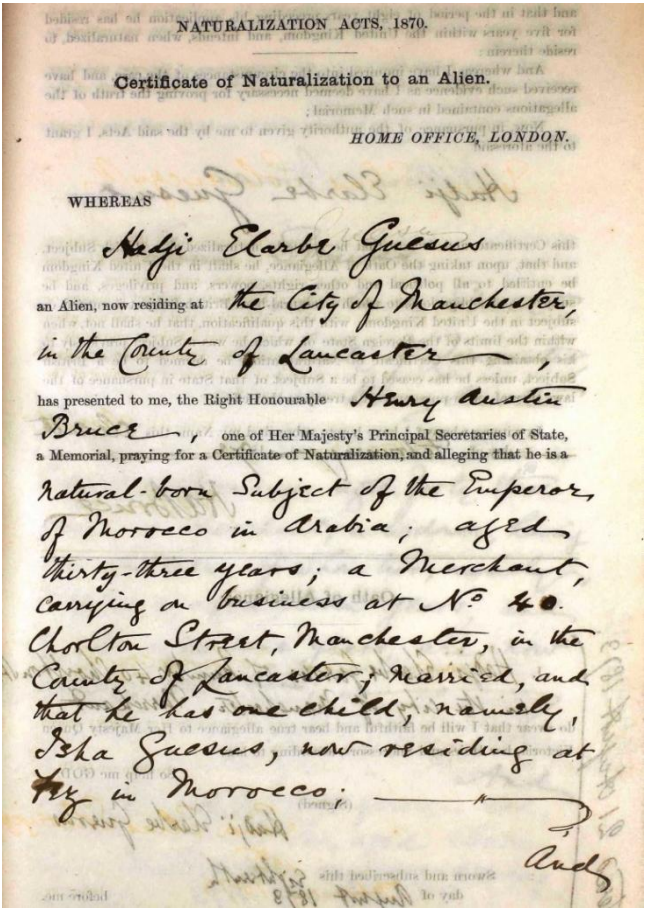
has given his features and complexion a somewhat British appearance."[1]

This hybridity is also expressed in the Moroccans' adoption of British citizenship. Despite the Makhzan's and Ulams' vilification of naturalization, a considerable number of Moroccans did apply and receive British citizenship.

The first British citizenship being granted to a Moroccan took place as early as 1850. Adelsalam Lahbabi received British citizenship in 1862. Hadj Elarbe Guesus's Certificate of Naturalization on August 21,1873, states that Hadj Elarbi was a

> natural born subject of the Emperor of Morocco in Arabia; aged thirty-three years; a Merchant, carrying on business at N40 Chorlton Street, Manchester, in the Country of Lancaster, married, and that he has one child, namely Isha Guesus, now residing at Fez, Morocco, and that in the period eight years preceding his application he has resided for five years in the United Kingdom, and intends, when naturalized, to reside therein: Hadji Elarbe Guesus of number 40 Chorlton Street in the city of Manchester Merchant, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, her Heirs and Successors, according to law. So help me God.

[1] Eugene Aubin, *Morocco of To-Day* (London: J.M. Dent & Co., 1906), p. 269.



NATURALIZATION ACTS, 1870.

Certificate of Naturalization to an Alien.

HOME OFFICE, LONDON.

WHEREAS

Hadji Elarbe Guesus

an Alien, now residing at the City of Manchester, in the County of Lancaster,

has presented to me, the Right Honourable Henry Austin Bruce, one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, a Memorial, praying for a Certificate of Naturalization, and alleging that he is a natural-born Subject of the Emperor of Morocco in Arabia; aged thirty-three years; a Merchant, carrying on business at No. 40. Chorlton Street, Manchester, in the County of Lancaster; married, and that he has one child, namely, Isha Guesus, now residing at Fez in Morocco;

Andy

17. Certificate of Naturalization for Hadji Elarbi Guesus

It is, indeed, very interesting that a Muslim, who had performed pilgrimage to Mecca and earned the venerated title of Hadj, should renege on his allegiance to a Muslim sovereign and Commander of the Faithful and transfer it to a Christian one and become a subject of a foreign nation. This is quite reveling about the refashioning of Muslim identity in the nineteenth century.

The children of Moroccan parents became British subjects when born in England. Indeed, the Moroccans knew the advantages of having British children. The *Manchester City News* writes:

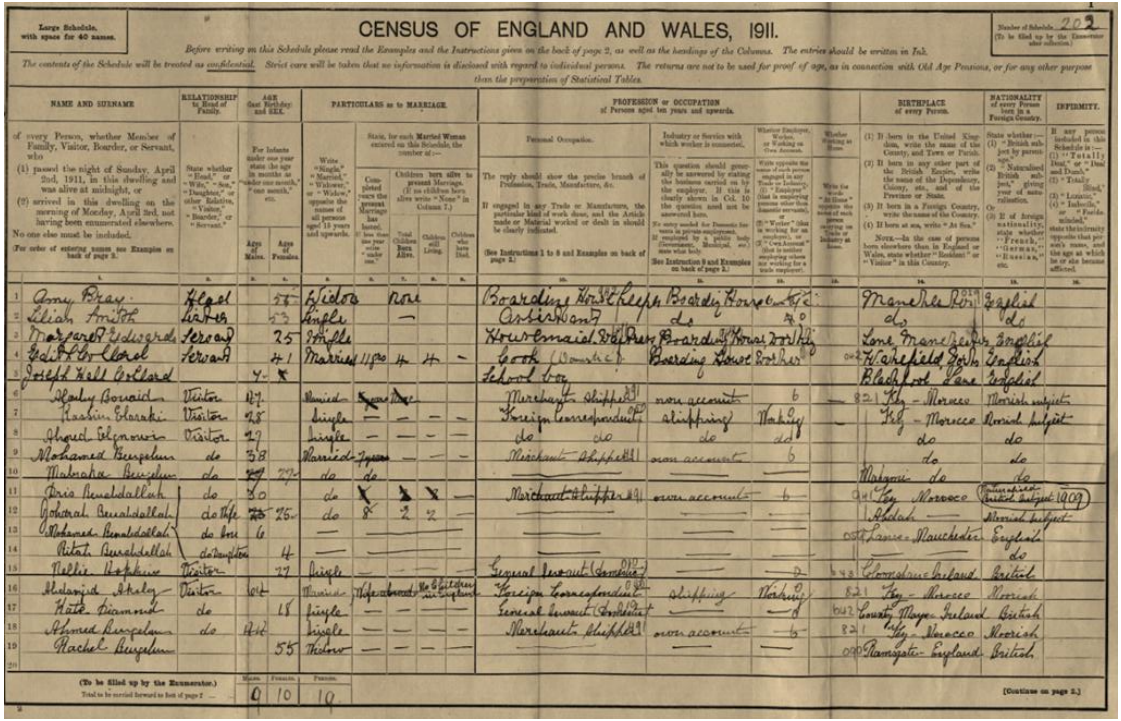
> Having borne a large family, many of the children born in Manchester enjoy British nationality, and although returned to their native city of Fez, other generations born in Morocco claim by right British nationality, of which they are very proud and value its privileges, although they may never probably see the country, which through accident of birth they claim, and which will be enjoyed for generations to come. The British Consul at Fez has records of these numerous British subjects. These privileges are unfortunately lost to the female sex when they marry.[1]

For the Fassi bourgeoisie, business interests were far more important than national or even cultural identity. In a dynamic world of travel and trade, the Fassi bourgeoisie felt a need to assume new identities without being troubled with any religious consciousness or national loyalties.

[1] *Manchester City News*, 2 October 1936.

Name	Marital status	Age, date & place of birth	occupation	Nationality
Stanley Bonaid	Married	47, 1864, Fez	Merchants Shipper	Moorish
Kassin Elaraki	Single	28,1883, Fez	Foreign Correspondent	Moorish
Ahored Elgnowi	Single	27, 1884, Fez	Foreign Correspondent	Moorish
Mohamed Bengelun	Married	38, 1873, Fez	Merchant Shipper	Moorish
Mabraka Bengelun	Married	27,1884, Fez		Moorish
Dris Benabdallah	Married	30, 1881, Fez o		Naturalized 1909
Joharah Benabdallah	Wife	25, 1886, Abdah Morocco	Merchant Shipper	Moorish
Mohamed Benabdallah	Son	6, 1905, Lancs Manchester		English
Ritah Benabdallah	Daughter	4,1907, Lancs Manchester		English
Ahdamjed Aksly	Married	64, 1847, Fez	Foreign Correspondent	Moorish
Ahmed Bengelun		44, 1867, Fez	Merchant Shipper	Moorish

18. Census 1911



CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

Large Schedule, with space for 40 names.

Number of Schedule 202

Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the back of page 2, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.

The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.

	NAME AND SURNAME of every Person, whether Member of Family, Visitor, Boarder, or Servant, who (1) passed the night of Sunday, April 2nd, 1911, in this dwelling and was alive at midnight, or (2) arrived in this dwelling on the morning of Monday, April 3rd, not having been enumerated elsewhere. No one else must be included. For order of entering names see Examples on back of page 2.	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family. State whether "Head," or "Wife," or "Son," or "Daughter," or other Relative, or "Visitor," or "Boarder," or "Servant."	AGE last Birthday and SEX. For Infants under one year state the age in months as "under one month," "one month," etc. Ages of Males. Ages of Females.	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE. Write "Single," or "Married," or "Widow," or "Widower," opposite the names of all persons aged 15 years and upwards.	Children born alive to present Marriage. (If no children born, write "None" in Column 7.) Completed years the present Marriage has lasted. If less than one year write "under one." Total Children Born Alive. Children still Living. Children who have Died.	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards. Personal Occupation. The reply should show the precise branch of Profession, Trade, Manufacture, &c. If engaged in any Trade or Manufacture, the particular kind of work done, and the Article made or Material worked or dealt in should be clearly indicated. (See Instructions 1 to 8 and Examples on back of page 2.)	Industry or Service with which worker is connected. This question should generally be answered by stating the business carried on by the employer. If this is clearly shown in Col. 10 the question need not be answered here. No entry needed for Domestic Servants in private employment. If employed by a public body (Government, Municipal, etc.) state what body. See Instruction 9 and Examples on back of page 2.	Whether Employer, Worker, or Working on Own Account. Write opposite the name of each person engaged in any Trade or Industry. (1) "Employer" (that is employing persons other than domestic servants). (2) "Worker" (that is working for an employer). or (3) "Own Account" (that is neither employing others nor working for a trade employer).	Whether Working at Home. If "At Home" opposite the name of each person engaged in Trade or Industry at home.	BIRTHPLACE of every Person. (1) If born in the United Kingdom, write the name of the County, and Town or Parish. (2) If born in any other part of the British Empire, write the name of the Dependency, Colony, etc., and of the Province or State. (3) If born in a Foreign Country, write the name of the Country. (4) If born at sea, write "At Sea." NOTE.—In the case of persons born elsewhere than in England or Wales, state whether "Resident" or "Visitor" in this Country.	NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country. State whether:— (1) "British subject by parentage," or (2) "Naturalised British subject," giving year of naturalisation. Or (3) If of foreign nationality, state whether "French," "German," "Russian," etc.	INFIRMITY. If any person included in this Schedule is (1) "Totally Deaf," or "Deaf and Dumb," (2) "Totally Blind," (3) "Lunatic," (4) "Imbecile," or "Feeble-minded," state the infirmity opposite that person's name, and the age at which he or she became afflicted.
1	Amy Bray	Head	25	Widow	None	Boarding House Keeper	Boarding House	Worker		Manchester Rom	English	
2	Elijah Smith	Visitor	53	Single	—	Artist Wood Engraver	do	Worker		do	do	
3	Margaret Edwards	Servant	25	Single		House Maid	Boarding House	Worker		Long Marston Yorks	English	
4	Ethel Mabel Carol	Servant	21	Married	1 year	1	1	—		Cook (Domestic)	Boarding House	Worker		Wakefield Yorks	English	
5	Joseph Hall Ackland		4							School boy				Blackpool Lancs	English	
6	Haby Bouzaid	Visitor	27	Married	[illegible]	[illegible]				Merchant Shipper	own account	b		Fez - Morocco	Moorish subject	
7	Rashin Eharaki	Visitor	28	Single	—	—	—	—		Foreign Correspondent	Shipping	Worker		Fez - Morocco	Moorish subject	
8	Abdel Selgmawin	Visitor	29	Single	—	—	—	—		do	do	do		do	do	
9	Mohamed Benjelun	do	38	Married	7 years	—	—	—		Merchant Shipper	own account	b		do	do	
10	Mabaha Benjelun	do	29	do	do									Marjana	do	
11	Idris Benabdallah	do	30	do	X	X	X	—		Merchant Shipper	own account	b		Fez Morocco	Moorish subject	1909
12	Yakutah Benabdallah	do Wife	25	do	8	8	42	—						Rabat	do	
13	Mohamed Benabdallah	do Son	6											Lancs - Manchester	England	
14	Ritah Benabdallah	do Daughter	4											do	do	
15	Nellie Hopkins	Visitor	27	Single	—	—	—	—		Governess Nursery		D		Cloonclare Ireland	British	
16	Mohamed Haby	Visitor	24	Married	Not returned	No Children				Foreign Correspondent	Shipping	Worker		Fez - Morocco	Moorish	
17	Kate Diamond	do	18	Single	—	—	—	—		General Servant Domestic				County Mayo Ireland	British	
18	Mohamed Benjelun	do	44	Single	—	—	—	—		Merchant Shipper	own account	b		Fez - Morocco	Moorish	
19	Rachel Benjelun		55	Widow	—	—	—	—						Ramsgate England	British	
20																
	(To be filled up by the Enumerator.) Total to be carried forward to foot of page 2		Males. 0	Females. 10	Persons. 10											

[Continue on page 2.]

19. Census 1911

It was this urge for new identities that prompted some Moroccan merchants to anglicise their names such as Bin Sikri, which was converted to Sicree,[1] marry English women, and give foreign names to their children, such as in the case of Hadj Elarbi Guessus who named his son Randolph.

Naturalization was prompted by an aspiration to integrate more into the host country and benefit from the protection of the British crown. In the Tetuan Historical Archive there are numerous British Consular letters recommending Moroccan naturalized merchants based in Britain to the Moroccan authorities. A letter dated 11 November 1886, for instance, announces the arrival in Fez of Taleb Lazrak from Manchester and solicits the Makhzen to offer him due assistance. Another letter dated 26 May 1886 requests the intervention of the Mayor of Fez for the restitution of hides to Hadj Boubker Guessous and a compensation payment. And on 12 May 1891 Consul Herbert White wrote to Hadj Mohammed Torres to alleviate the additional tax imposed on Mohammed Bennani.[2]

[1] See Halliday, "The Millet of Manchester," p. 164.

[2] See Samir Bouzouita, "Qadaya fi al Alaqat al Maghribiya al Britaniya khilala al Qarn Atasia Ashar," in *Al Maghrib fi al Kitabat al Anglo Saxsoniya* (Rabat: Al Mandubiya aSamiya li Qudamaa al Muharibin wa Jaysh Atahrir, 2015), pp. 29-90.

Name	**date of Naturalization**	**Place of Residence**
Benabdala, Elhach Abdeslam	1 July 1850	
Benabdellah, Driss	21 Sept 1909	10, Parkfield-street, Moss Side
Benani, Tahar	14 Jan, 1885	Withington
Benasher, Hadji Elofer	5 Sep, 1881	Manchester
Benazuz, Mehamed	19 Jan 1850	
Bengelun, Elarbi	23 June 1933	42, Granville Road, Fallowfield
Bengelun, Taleb	27 Feb 1880	Manchester
Boayed, Hamed and his son Abelouhab	27 March, 1935	7, Sherwood, Avenue, Fallowfield
Elhadjwy, Hadj Hassan	15 Aug 1889	Brooklands
Ganoon, Hadji Mahomet Belcasson	1 Aug 1882	
Guessus, Mohammed	5 May 1897	5, Parkfield St, Moss-lane East
Guesus , Hadji Elarbe	11 Feb 1873	
Lahbadi, Adelsalam	12 July 1862	
Lazarac, Taleb	1 Oct 1894	40, Parkfield-street, Moss-lane East
Lehluh, Hadj Talb	11 Dec 1882	Manchester
Tazzi, Abdelmaged	1 Nov, 1877	Chorlton on

		Medlock, Lancashire
Weld Silmon, Mahomed	3 Sept 1877	
Ziat, Mohamed	20 Sep 1910	Manchester

20. List of Manchester Moroccans who naturalized British

7. *PREDICAMENTS OF EXILE IN FOREIGN LANDS*

The Moroccans involved themselves in business and enjoyed the various attractions and amusements that Manchester afforded. Life in diaspora, however, was by no means straightforward or smooth. Living among a mono-ethnic and mono-cultural community far from home carried its own risks. Sometimes the Moroccan émigrés were exposed to xenophobia. During his visit to Morocco, Lawrence Harris met a former Moroccan who had conducted business in Manchester. As Harris began eulogizing chauvinistically of the virtues of the British and their kindness towards immigrants, the Moor interrupted him:

> What is it you say…the N'zeranis are better? How? Show it me. Did I not see prisons in your lands, larger than the biggest Kaid's house in Morocco? Have I not heard enough and more of what is done in your great cities? When I was in Manchester, did

> not the boys who saw me in the streets throw stones at me, because I wore a turban?[1]

In addition to racism, Moroccans were sometimes victims of theft and embezzlements. At his residence at Parkfield Street, Rusholme, Mohamed Bennani had under his employment as a 21-year-old housemaid, Annie Holmes. The Manchester papers report that on 16 June 1876, Annie stole "a diamond ring, gold watch and chain, pair of earrings, and other articles of jewellery from the house of Mahomet Benani." The police eventually arrested Annie Holmes while trying to sell the stolen items to a pawnbroker in Liverpool.[2] At the Manchester County Police Court, Bennani stated that

> he was a merchant carrying out business in Manchester, and living in Rusholmes. The prisoner was at his employ for about six months. On 16th June he and his wife went out on a visit, and upon their return found that the prisoner had decamped, taking with her amongst other things, the articles in respect of which the charge was made.[3]

[1] Harris, *With Mulai Hafid at Fez*, pp. 39-40.

[2] "A Dishonest Servant Girl," *Edinburgh Evening News*, 26 September 1876. See also the *Manchester Evening*, 24 October 1876, and the *Manchester Times*, 30 September 1876.

[3] *Manchester Times*, 30 September 1876.

21. Rusholme, Manchester, 1904

Taleb Bengelun, too, fell victim to theft. His clerk, James Thorn, employed at the warehouse of Bengelun and Brothers at 2, South Street, embezzled him of the "sume of money, amounting to 416.10s."[1] Thorn was tried and sent to jail for four months.

The Manchester papers that printed these thefts also recorded the tragic story of Driss Benkiran's wife, Yasmine. Born in 1884, Yasmine arrived in Manchester in May 1906[2] at the age of 22. She resided with her husband, Driss, at Parkfield Street, Rusholme. Five months later, in 26 October, Yasmine was found hanging dead in her kitchen. Under the title "Moorish Lady's Death" the *Manchester Courier* gives this account:

[1] "Embezzlement by a Clerk," *Manchester Evening News*, 26 April, 1878, and *Manchester Times*, 27 April 1878.

[2] Yasmine Benquiran, born about 1884. Death: October 1906, Chorlton, Lancashire: Ancestry archives.

> Zassamein Benquiran, a Moorish lady, died under tragic circumstances at Parkfield Street, Rusholme, on Wednesday. The husband of the deceased, Dris Benquiran, carries on the business of a shipper in the city. The evidence showed that Mrs. Benquiran, who had only been in England five months was a very excitable person. On Wednesday she had some words with a servant employed at the house, and it was alleged that the servant struck her, but this was denied by the servant, Jane O'Connor. Later, Mrs. Benquiran was found dead in the kitchen, having hanged herself with a rope fastened to a hook at one end of the ceiling.[1]

A few years later, in 1882, Larbi Bengelun, Mohamed Benani and his son, Taher, appeared in a court in Moss Side under the charge of having assaulted Francis Sommerville, an upholsterer, when he came to Benani's residence at 40 Derby Street, Moss Side, to collect his payment for having repaired a mattress. The plaintiff accused the three "Moors" of having attacked and beat him with umbrellas, breaking two upon his head, and cutting his lips. In their defense, the Moroccans said that Sommerville had overcharged them 7s above the price of 10s initially agreed on and, upon refusing to pay, he commenced the attack on Benani's son with the help of his assistants. Taher lost his watch in the scuffle and his father showed the court bruises on his body and a loose tooth as a consequence of Sommerville's assault. The Moorish defendants spoke

[1] *Manchester Courier* and *Lancashire General Advertiser*, 27 October 1906.

through an interpreter and the papers noted that Bengelun "caused some amusement by frequently answering the questions before they had been translated to him." Benani's housekeeper, Kate Cullen, and two English boys from the neighbourhood gave their testimonies in the Moroccans' favour. The bench fined Sommerville 20s and.

The Moroccans must have been pleased with the British judicial system. However, the press commented on their behaviour, condemning their "brutal assault" as being consistent with their nature and "the precepts of the Koran, being Mahometans, or following their own natural instincts." "From first to last," one of the papers concluded, "the two Benanis and Bengelun acted like 'regular Turks.'"[1]

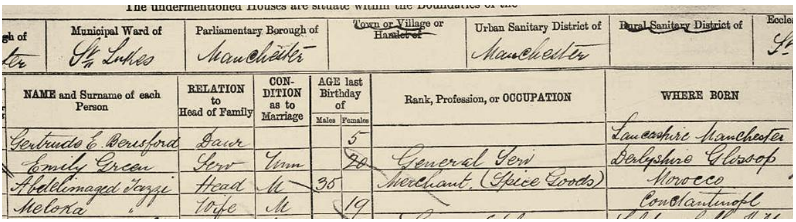
8. *MOROCCAN MANCHESTER MERCHANTS AND BRITISH WOMEN*

In British literature, Othello's countrymen are routinely portrayed as having an uncontrollable fondness for white women.[2] However, when real Moroccans actually came to British lands, they evinced little interest in white women. Most of the Moroccans who immigrated to Manchester were accompanied with their own native spouses. In most cases,

[1] *The Manchester Guardian*, 20 January 1882.

[2] In Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, the Prince of Morocco travels to Venice in the hope of winning the hand of the fair Portia. In Penelope Aubin's *Count Albertus* (1728), Eliza Haywood's *The Fruitless Enquiry*, and William Chetwood's *The Voyages and Adventures of Captain Robert Boyle* (1726), North Africans have a passionate desire for white women.

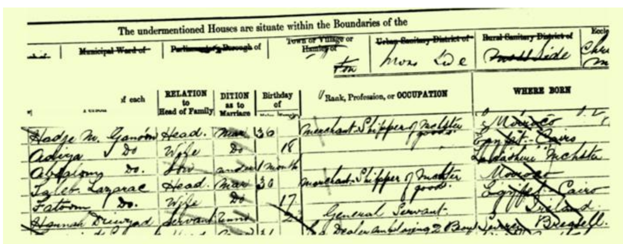
they were newly wedded couples. When they eventually married outside their nation they usually chose their brides from Islamic countries. Thus, Taleb Lazarac and Hadge Gamoon took Egyptian wives, Abdelmaged Tazzi's bride was Turkish, named Meloka, while Hadj Lahlu married an Ethiopian woman named Fatima.


The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the

Municipal Ward of St Lukes; Parliamentary Borough of Manchester; Town or Village or Hamlet of; Urban Sanitary District of Manchester; Rural Sanitary District of

NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CONDITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of Males	AGE last Birthday of Females	Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN
Gertrude E. Beresford	Daur			5		Lancashire Manchester
Emily Green	Serv	Unm		20	General Serv	Derbyshire Glossop
Abdelmaged Tazzi	Head	M	35		Merchant (Spice Goods)	Morocco
Meloka "	Wife	M		19		Constantinople

22. Abdelmaged Tazzi and Meloka, his Turkish spouse, born in Constantinople


The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the

NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CONDITION as to Marriage	AGE (Males)	AGE (Females)	Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN
Hadge M. Gamoon	Head	Mar	36		Merchant Shipper of Manchester goods	Morocco
Adiya Do	Wife	Do		18		Egypt Cairo
Ab[illegible] Do	Son		under 1 month			Lancashire Manchester
Taleb Lazrac	Head	Mar	30		Merchant Shipper of Manchester goods	Morocco
Fatom Do	Wife	Do		17		Egypt Cairo
Hannah [illegible]	Servant	[illegible]		[illegible]	General Servant	Ireland

23. Hadge Gamoon and Taleb Lazrak and their Egyptian spouses

For the Fassi merchants, being mostly from middle and upper class families, social hierarchy, class respectability, and sense of racial and religious superiority were paramount social and cultural values.

Ben Ahmed, a returnee from Manchester, told his audience in Fez:

> that in England the women were shameless. They went about unveiled and showed their mouth to everybody. Certainly there were some that wore veils, but then you could see through the veils, and they were only worn to prevent men from kissing them in the street.[1]

Hence their avoidance of taking white brides. Such an attitude is expressed by Mohamed Barrada, a Fassi merchant in New York. He charmed American ladies with his exotic looks and says, "wherever I went in that city I was taken for Rudolph Valentino. I was pursued on all sides." He received letters from them in which they vented their passion for him. To avoid their harassment Barrada fled to San Francisco. "I have told women repeatedly that I am in this country exclusively for business."[2]

The only known cases of a Moroccan merchant marrying an English woman are Hadj Larbi Guesus and David Bensuade. Guesus was a widow, aged 51 when, in 1886, he married a much younger women, 26 year-old Alice Agnes McAyoy of Blackpool. She bore him a daughter, Lulu, born in 1887, and a son, Randolph Sidi Mohamed, born in 1892.

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[1] Harris, *With Mulai Hafid at Fez*, p. 168.

[2] "Girls Harass Royal Moor," *Los Angeles Times*, 15 September 1924.

David Bensuade was a Jewish businessman from Essaouira trading in London.[1] In 1884, he married Miss Violet Cameron, a Manchester stage actress who performed in the musical comedy *Morocco Bound* with great success. Bensuade met her in Manchester during one of her performances. Here is his account of himself and of his marriage:

> He said he was born on the West Coast of Africa, but had lived in England since he was five years old. He first saw Miss Cameron in Manchester, and became acquainted with her in 1881. He was then carrying in on business in the city, and had income of over 2000*l* a year. They were married in 1884, after a courtship lasting about three years. He gave her valuable presents.

Bensuade adds that "when he married, his wife was engaged at the Comedy Theatre. She had then a small salary and he used his influence and capital in furthering his wife's professional interest."[2]

---

[1] David Bensaude naturalized British on 5 September 1878.

[2] *Hawke's Bay Herald*, 14 April 1888. The contemporary press compared their intermarriage to that of Othello with Desdemona, wishing there would be no Iago in the family. Bensuade found that his wife had a lover and led a tempestuous life with her, especially during her tour in America. See *The Sun*, 28 September 1886 and *Syracuse Daily Standard*, 2 October 1886.

24. Miss Violet Cameron, a Manchester actress, wife of Moroccan businessman David Bensuade

The available historical archive indicates that, while merchants shunned white women, Moorish acrobats and circus performers who toured Britain did not demonstrate the same aversion. These artists came mostly from rural areas. They were often of modest means and could not afford to wed native women and pay their travel expenses to the West. So they willingly married white women, in most cases from the entertainment profession whom they had met in circus and theatrical venues.

For instance, Ben Mohamed was married to Charlotte. They came in England from France in 1847 to perform with a troupe of acrobats. The troupe included Mohamed Ben Hagy and his French wife Marie, and Mohamed Bensaib and his with his wife Josephine, his daughter Zara and son Ahmed. The wife of Moroccan acrobat Hadj Abdullah Mohammed, who performed in England in the early twentieth century, was

Hungarian, Paula Mahanes, who bore him three kids: Maryam, Fatma, and Ali. Mohamed Jamai was married to an English woman called Jane, and Mohammed Bencacem to Clara Casey.

The last case arouses a lot of interest. Bencacem met 17 year old Clara in Manchester while he was performing with a troupe of Moroccan acrobats at the Ardwick Empire Theatre. Clara, daughter of an engineer from Salford, was engaged as a dancer at the Queen's Theatre. She fell in love with, converted to Islam, and married a Moroccan, Bencacem, on March 17th, 1905. The marriage was solemnized in Liverpool according to Muslim rites at the first mosque established in England,[1] and the ceremony was presided over by Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam, a Briton who had embraced Islam in Morocco in 1887.[2] A newspaper reports that "There was a striking scene at Liverpool in a Mosque when a young English bride renounced Christianity for Islam on her marriage to a Mahometan. The parties were Mohammed Ben Bilcassim and Miss Clara Casey, both of whom were members of the Achmet Ibrahim music hall troupe."[3]

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[1] The Liverpool Mosque was established in 1890. It included a madrassa, library, and a printing press.

[2] In 1884, Henry Quilliam travelled to Morocco where he was exposed to Islam in Fez and converted to Islam under the name Abdullah Quilliam. Upon embracing Islam, the Sultan awarded him the title of an honorary *alim*. After his return to Liverpool, he established a mosque and began spreading Islam in Britain. Occasionally, he travelled to Manchester to perform funerals and marriages for the Muslim community.

[3] *New Zealand Herald*, 13 May 1905.

25. Wedding Presided by Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam at Liverpool Mosque, 1903

26. Miss Clara Casey

After the wedding, Clara accompanied her Moorish husband to Tangier and, following a misunderstanding, she wrote to the British Council complaining of mistreatment. The British, American, and Australian newspapers capitalized on this problem, printing articles with sensational titles such as "A Modern Desdemona," "Sensual Abduction: A Moor and an English Girl," "English Woman in Harem of a Moorish Acrobat". Some papers reported that the Moor kidnapped and forced an English girl to wear the Muslim veil and confined her in his polygamous harem. The papers pressed the Foreign Office for her immediate release. Acting British Consul summoned the groom to the Consulate in Tangier and angrily accused him of having unlawfully married and abducted Clara Casey to Tangier and urged him to send her back to her parents and pay her travel expenses. Furious, Bencacem flourished a gun, for which he was arrested and incarcerated.[1]

Upon her return to England, however, the Moor's bride denied the newspapers' reports about kidnapping and abuses. In a statement to the *Daily Mail*, she declared that "she loves him still, and will go to him as soon as he is released. She returns to England shortly to fulfil as engagement with a Moorish troupe."[2] Another newspaper writes:

[1] For more on the story of Clara Casey and her Moorish husband, see Layachi El Habbouch, "Moroccan Acrobats in Britain: Oriental Curiosity and Ethnic Exhibition," *Comparative Drama*, 45: 4 (2011), pp. 381-415.

[2] *Auckland Star*, 15 July 1905.

> It was during her theatrical career that she first met her Moorish husband at Salford. They quickly became intimate, and it was at her own suggestion (made to please Bulkhassan) that they proceeded to Morocco. But a few days in Tangier convinced the girl … that Morocco was not a desirable dwelling-place. Arrangements were accordingly begun by her husband for her return to England. There was never any suggestion of making her wear Mussuilman women's clothes. … "I am very sorry," concluded Miss Casey, "that the trouble with my husband ever arose. In fact, I wish I were back with him now."[1]

The *Wanganui Herald* stated of on August 7th, 1905, that "She expected that when he was released from prison he would again come to England. It was not true that there was anything like kidnapping in connection with her journey to Tangier."[2]

There is no evidence of a reunion between the Moroccan acrobat and the Manchester actress.

9. *MOORISH WOMEN IN MANCHESTER DIASPORA*

The Manchester trade prompted Moroccan women to participate actively in the diaspora experience, "cross water," accompany their spouses on their long voyages, and reside in utterly foreign lands.

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[1] *Grey River Argus*, 12 August 1905.

[2] *Wanganui Herald*, 7 August 1905.

In their homeland, having come from aristocratic backgrounds, these women were accustomed to a life of luxury and affluence. They always had several maids at their service whom they often took with them when relocating abroad.

And it is indeed of great historical significance to observe a pattern in the case of Moorish servant girls: they sailed between their native country and Britain without male companionship.

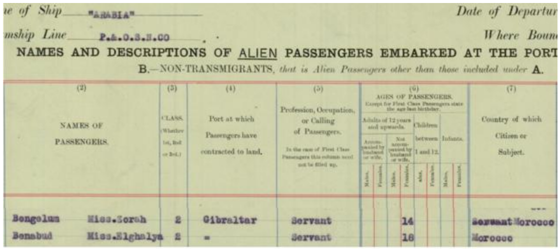
On February 20th, 1915, for instance, three Moroccan women embarked from the port of London on board the ship *Morea* to Morocco: Zaidah Benquiran, housemaid, 30 years old, born in 1885; Aycha Hassan, cook, aged 32, born in 1883; and Amber Benabdallah, housemaid, 22 years old, born in 1893.

On March 19th, 1926, Miss Zahra Bent Omar Tazzi, 25 years old, servant, residing at 17 Parkfield Street, Rusholme, sailed from London to Casablanca on board *Ranpura*.

Miss Elghalya Benabud, 18 years old, and Miss Zorah Bengelum, aged 14, servant, sailed from England to Morocco on board the ship *Arabia* on December 19th, 1914.

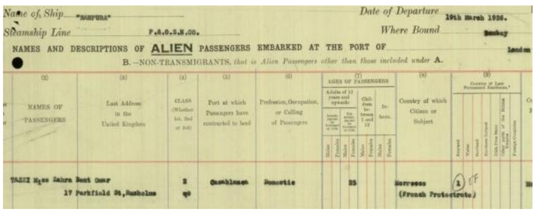
Djaip Fathma Thoura, servant to Guessus, aged 29, left for Morocco in 1926 with 11-year-old Guessus Azouz Ben Mohamed, of 422 Moss Lane Manchester.

On 13 April 1935, 30-year-old Tahra Guessous, nurse by occupation, was travelling alone, first class, on board the *Viceroy of India* from London to Tangier.


Name of Ship "ARABIA"
Steamship Line P.&.O.S.N.CO
NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF ALIEN PASSENGERS EMBARKED AT THE PORT
B.—NON-TRANSMIGRANTS, that is Alien Passengers other than those included under A.

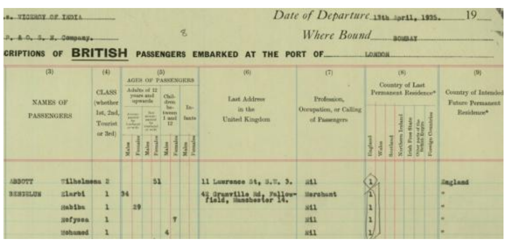
Names of Passengers		Class	Port at which Passengers have contracted to land	Profession, Occupation, or Calling of Passengers	Age	Country of which Citizen or Subject
Bengolum	Miss.Zorah	2	Gibraltar	Servant	14	Servant Morocco
Benabud	Miss.Elghalya	2	"	Servant	16	Morocco

27. Elghalya Benabud and Zorah Bengelum sail back home on board the *Arabia*, 19 December 1914


Name of Ship "RANPURA" Date of Departure 19th March 1926.
Steamship Line P.&.O.S.N.CO. Where Bound Bombay
NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF ALIEN PASSENGERS EMBARKED AT THE PORT OF London
B.—NON-TRANSMIGRANTS, that is Alien Passengers other than those included under A.

Names of Passengers	Last Address in the United Kingdom	Class	Port at which Passengers have contracted to land	Profession, Occupation, or Calling of Passengers	Age	Country of which Citizen or Subject
TAZZI Miss Zahra Bent Omar	17 Parkfield St, Rusholme	2	Casablanca	Domestic	25	Morocco (French Protectorate)

28. Zahra Bent Omar Tazzi sails from London to Casablanca on board *Ship Ranpura*, 19 March 1926


VICEROY OF INDIA Date of Departure 13th April, 1935.
P. & O. S. N. Company. Where Bound BOMBAY
DESCRIPTIONS OF BRITISH PASSENGERS EMBARKED AT THE PORT OF LONDON

Names of Passengers		Class	Age	Last Address in the United Kingdom	Profession, Occupation, or Calling of Passengers	Country of Intended Future Permanent Residence
ABBOTT	Wilhelmena	2	51	11 Lawrence St, S.W. 3.	Nil	England
BENGELUN	Elarbi	1	34	41 Granville Rd, Fallowfield, Manchester 14.	Merchant	"
	Habiba	1	29		Nil	"
	Sofyssa	1	7		Nil	"
	Mohamed	1	4		Nil	"

29. Elarbi Bengelun, his wife and children sail back home on board the Viceroy of India, 13 April 1935

Such examples of Moroccan female journeys in the absence of males are bound to challenge conventional perception of Oriental gender.

More often, instead of bringing their own native servants, the Moroccans found it cheaper and more convenient to hire white women as maids. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries' English censuses indicate that Moroccan households in Manchester often had more than one white maid.

Name	Servant, age & place of birth
Dris Benane	Kate Donallin: 28, Ireland Ellizabeth Blattan: 18, Manchester
Taher Benane	Kate Cullen: 40, Ireland
Benasta Benaki	Annie Whitehead: 14, Manchester Alala: 48, Morocco
Larbi Bengelun	Martha Gregg: 21, Mobberley, Lancashire Rachel Bengelum: 30, Ramsgate, Kent
Abdelkader Benhamo	Kate Walsh 29 Manchester
Haghi Elofer	Mae Milligan: 22, Scotland Sarah Radan: 13, Manchester
Saleb Lazarac	Hannah Dringad: 23, Ireland
Hadie Lehluh	Catherine Beatty: 33, Ireland
Abdelimaged Tazzi	Margaret Challenor: 21 Lyth Hill, Shropshire: England

30. British domestic servants in Moroccan households

Exempt from housekeeping duties, Moorish women had plenty of time to exchange visits and socialise, especially during the day when their spouses were busy at work. On these occasions they used to wear their magnificent kaftans, jewellery and make-up. Young Abdelmajid vividly remembers these female gatherings at his home on Parkfield Street:

> Women used to visit my mother during the day and their noise rose while speaking so loudly that you could hear them from the street. Their voices rose as though in dispute, which seemed incompatible with the laughter that interspersed with their conversation, which bewildered me.[1]

One day a young Moorish girl was tempted to try on English clothes. Abdelmajid writes:

> I beheld one of them joke by wearing an outfit that resembled Angie's. She became so fascinating and enchanting, and resembled her in beauty, elegance and attractiveness. Hence, I discovered the secret of a beauty that had been veiled to me by curtains and dyes, and it grieved me deeply to see her back in her traditional apparel.[2]

Though intra-Moorish visits were frequent, Mrs Benjelloun seemed to interact more often with the Paternos,

[1] Benjelloun, *Fi at-Tufula*, p. 30.

[2] Ibid., p. 32.

her English neighbour of Greek origin, than with her countrywomen. Mrs Benjelloun spoke English very well as revealed in her conversations with the policeman who came to inform her that her son, Abdelmajid, had reached school age, and with the school headmistress when Mrs Benjelloun requested her to exempt her Muslim son from attending Christian prayer sessions. The fact that even the wives of merchants spoke English indicates great exposure to English life and culture and a far-reaching adaptation to the conditions of diaspora.

While discussing Moroccan femininity in diaspora it is quite telling to mention that Mrs. Benjelloun often visited the Paternos family and went in the company of her child and her foreign female neighbours to the theatre to watch an evening performance. On these occasions she wore European clothes and went out unveiled.

The fact that the spouses of émigrés, like Mrs Benjelloun, went out dressed in European fashion is recorded by Roger Le Tourneau in his book *Fès avant le protectorat*. Le Tourneau affirms that some Fassi women who accompanied their spouses to Europe "used to wear European clothes and lead the life of the women of the country where they existed, and upon returning back to Fez they resumed their traditional way of life."[1]

Sometimes when business or family matters urgently called husbands to travel back home, spouses were often left behind in Manchester as in the case of Mr. Benjelloun who travelled with his son, leaving behind his wife and young daughter.

[1] Roger Le Tourneau, *Fès avant le protectorat*, pp. 445-446.

Living in exile inevitably necessitated a significant degree of adaptation and acculturation. Moroccan women enjoyed new freedoms in Manchester unavailable in their conservative society at home.

Trade prompted Moroccan women to leave their homeland and participate in the global movement of people in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. This gained them the acquisition of foreign languages and permitted them to encounter new cultures and people. Their diaspora experience fashioned for Moorish women new freedoms and new identities.

10. *HOW ENGLISH TEA BECAME MOROCCO'S NATIONAL BEVERAGE*

One of the most important influences that the commercial encounter with Britain had on Moroccans was the shift from drinking Turkish coffee to drinking English tea. British and French redemptionists, ambassadors , and merchants introduced tea to Morocco in the late seventeenth century. Moroccan potentates and high state officials first consumed it before gradually becoming a popular beverage in the second half of the nineteenth century. In this respect, Al Arbi Al Masgrifi writes in his book *Nuzhat al Absar li Dawi al Maarifa wa al Istibsar*:

> this beverage is now current in the habit of people so that it is offered to the guest, and if it happens that he is offered food without tea, he would assume that he has been mocked...and for this reason it is used by the noble and the layman, the wealthy, the poor and the destitute. Destiny has ushered its utensils

> into every house and its tray roams in urban as well as rural areas.[1]

During his travels in Morocco, Gabriel Charmes observes that

> the drink one is offered everywhere is tea, as though the English have been there! .... But it must be added though, as an attenuating circumstance, that the Moroccan tea, which is called ataïy, is seasoned with mint called nânây and verbena called luisaj... which prevents it from resembling the detestable English tea.[2]

Making and drinking tea became quite an elaborate ceremony that required special paraphernalia: a teaset of Manchester manufacture. The silver-plated teaset includes tea-tray, teapot, kettle, samovar, boxes of tea and sugar, and a perfume-burner. Owning a Manchester silver teaset and serving tea in a teapot (barrad) bearing the hallmark of Richard Wright (whose name entered the Moroccan language as *rayt* or *ryde*) of Manchester in Arabic and English evolved into a mark of social refinement, elegance, and prestige.

Emily Keene, the English wife of the Shareef of Wazzan, provides a description of the Moorish tea ceremony:

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[1] Abdalahad Sabti and Abdrahman Lakhsasi, *Mina Shay ila Atay: Al Ada wa at-Tarikh* (Rabat: Faculty of Letters Press, 1999), p. 110.

[2] Gabriel Charmes, *Une ambassade au Maroc* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1887), pp. 78-79.

> Fatimah, dressed in gala costume, brings in a low table, and her second follows her when she returns with a tray laden with tiny cups and saucers, in the centre of which are two teapots, to be used for black and green tea respectively. On another small table is a tray containing two tea receptacles, or caddies. These may be of glass, silver, or ordinary tin canisters. A large glass bowl or dish containing about two pounds or more of sugar, a glass containing mint, lemon, verbena, wild thyme, or some other herb, a glass or any fancy box containing slips of scented wood, a plated or brass incense-burner, two plated scent- sprinklers, containing rose and orange flower water, and a tumbler with a long-handled silver spoon in it, and also used as slop-basin, complete the equipment.[1]

[1] Emily Keene, *My Life Story* (London: Edward Arnold, 1911), p. 92.

31. A wealthy Fassi lady uses Manchester tea utensils to make tea

32. Wealthy Moroccans posing before Manchester tea paraphernalia

Like many travellers to Morocco, Budgett Meakin became fascinated with the elaborate ritual of making tea:

> Before the host or his deputy there is placed on the ground a large brass tray on which are arranged many more tiny glasses and cups ... with a pear-shaped metal tea-pot, one long-handled spoon, and a tumbler larger than the rest, wherein is now a bundle of mint, verbena or lemon thyme…. Then comes in a steaming samovar of brass — quite the Russian article, — a painted tin tea-caddy, and a basin of chunks of loaf sugar, broken with a hammer specially kept for the purpose. The operator having measured a certain amount of the tea in his hand, it is placed in the pot, and a little hot water is poured on to wash it lest the Nazarene dealers should have added colouring, for it is almost always green. This being quickly poured off, the pot is filled with sugar, and the water is added. After a minute or so sprigs of mint are placed under the lid, with the stalks protruding, and it is left a few minutes to brew. Tasting a little in a glass, the host pours back what remains, and if need be adds one or other of the ingredients, proceeding to fill the glasses and cups. This is performed in a specially graceful manner, bending forward each time, then rising and almost replacing the pot on the tray before repeating the operation. Passing the glasses one by one to the guests, the most honoured first, these hold them by the top and bottom between the right fore-finger and

> thumb, and take the longest and most audible sips they can.[1]

Tea quickly became the national beverage and poets sang poems in its praise. Abd Salam az-Zamouri al Fassi (died in 1862) devotes a poem to the British beverage:

> Praise be to God who blessed us with every delicious victual
> And with every beverage pure and sweet as clouds of rain
> Such as the golden London tea on a sparkling tray.
> Sorrow departs from he who drinks it
> And his breast abounds with joy.[2]

The poet goes on to sing the virtues of drinking London tea with Moroccan delicacies and pastries and the English biscotti, which interestingly, the poet transliterates into Arabic in his verse.

However, the introduction of tea in Morocco triggered a debate on whether its drinking was halal or haram, permissible or prohibited. Ahmed Hamid ibn Muhammed, a religious scholar from Chinguetti, wrote a treatise entitled *Forbidding Tea*. He observes that there is "no beverage or food as lovable as tea; the people crave for it as they crave for women, nay with an even stronger desire, and sing and compose verse about it."[3]

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[1] Meakin, *The Land of the Moors*, pp. 82-85.

[2] Sabti and Lakhsasi, *Mina Shay ila Atay*, p. 309.

[3] Ibid., pp. 212-213.

Ibn Muhammed forbids the consumption of tea on account of its promotion of promiscuity and the mingling with women, "since the tea trade is conducted mostly by women." He goes on to condemn it as a drink that encourages indolence and idleness, and diverts pious people from attending communal prayers at the mosque. Like wine, he claims, it is addictive and drunk according to the wine ritual, causing the squandering of money and time, and encouraging the frequenting of the wicked and dissolute.[1]

Despite such strictures, English tea continued to be drunk throughout Morocco. The Moroccans boiled Chinese tea in teapots manufactured in Manchester and added their own distinctive touch: fresh green mint, or shiba. The brew became an integral part of Moroccan hospitality ritual that developed in urban centres then quickly spread to rural areas, with the Manchester barrad in its pear shaped form as an icon of the nation's hospitality.

11. *THE LAST MOORISH MERCHANTS IN MANCHESTER*

In the second decade of the 20th century, the Moroccans of Manchester began experiencing financial difficulties as a consequence of international competition. On March 17th, 1923, the first Moroccan of bankruptcy case occurred and was reported by *The Manchester Guardian* under the title "The First Moroccan Failure in Manchester." In this article, Ahmed Amor, a partner in M. Bengelun's Company, attributes his failure to the "heavy depreciation in the values

[1] Ibid., pp. 209-224.

of goods bought for future delivery, and bad debts in Morocco owing to fluctuations in the rate of exchange." [1] The fluctuating prices were caused mainly by the influx of Japanese goods in the Moroccan market, especially in cotton and silk.

Hamed Boayad, a merchant of Manchester writes optimistically in *The Manchester Guardian* that the Moroccan authorities took measures "intended to protect the market against unreasonably low priced goods and re-establish a normal level of prices."[2] Nonetheless, the market continued to be unstable and prices unsettled and irregular. One could only hope for a miracle to save oneself from bankruptcy.

An anecdote relates that a Fassi merchant based in Manchester sent a shipment of cotton worth a million and a half to Morocco, which he had insured with an English company. On the way, the value of cotton fell by twenty percent. The merchant prayed and vowed to buy a carpet as a gift to Moulay Driss's mausoleum in case the ship sank with his goods. His prayers were heard and the insurance company paid the full value of his cargo. He fulfilled his vow and offered a magnificent carpet for the saint of Fez.[3]

A century after their arrival, in the 1930's, the Manchester Moroccans began their journeys back home for good.[4] In 1936, the *Manchester City News* comments:

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[1] *The Manchester Guardian*, 17 March 1923.

[2] *The Manchester Guardian*, 11 March 1933.

[3]Jérôme Tharaud, Jean Tharaud and Abdeljlil Lahjomri, *Fès ou les bourgeois de l'Islam* (Rabat: Marsam, 2008), p. 67.

[4] Halliday, "The Millet of Manchester," p. 164.

> Apart from the considerable material loss to the city, Manchester has lost a body of good citizens who, while retaining their oriental customs and attributes, built up for themselves a reputation second to none for honest dealing and clean living.[1]

By September 1936, "the last Moorish merchant in Manchester [had] closed his office and left the city."[2]

12. *FAREWELL MANCHESTER: THE BENJELLOUNS RETURN TO FEZ*

In *Fi Tufula* return home of a Fassi family and the emotions associated with it are described through the eyes of a child. Abdelmajid became aware that his parents were contemplating returning home when his father began spending more time at home than at work and heard his mother begging him to return to their country. The house seemed enveloped in an air of mournful gloom. Abdelmjid feared return but was reassured by Miss Millie who kept telling him that "all Moors might return to Morocco, but Mr. Benjelloun will remain with us forever... He is accustomed to life here and will not be able to part with it." She would also say that "Mr. Benjelloun will not travel at all, he has become a piece of this country."[3]

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[1] *Manchester City News*, 2 October 1936.

[2] *The Manchester Guardian*, 17 September 1936.

[3] Benjelloun, *Fi at-Tufula*, p. 102 and p. 105.

But his mother continued to "hurl curses on this black country that teemed with wicked people and infidels" and implore his father to take her back to Morocco. Mr. Benjelloun would only smile and change the course of the conversation.[1]

With her health deteriorating, Mrs. Benjelloun's homesickness grew intense and so did her insistence on return to her country. For her, Abdelmajid writes, "Morocco was the Promised Land." As for young Abdelmajid, though Morocco fascinated him during his six weeks' visit to the country, "nevertheless," he writes, "I don't wish to return and live there forever."[2]

When it became obvious that the Benjellouns had decided to return home, Millie went to Mr. Benjelloun and implored him to leave Abdelmajid with her family so that he could continue his studies in Manchester. But all she could get was Mr. Benjelloun's consent to let Abdelmajid spend his last night in Manchester at her family home.

The next day at Manchester Victorian train station, the Benjellouns and the Patermos − Abdelmajid does not record the presence of any other Moroccans at their departure − said their last farewell in tears. As the train started moving, Abdelmajid looked out the compartment's window and burst into a poetic chant on England:

> O wonderfully beautiful country! O land with which my soul has been forever inextricably interwoven. In many of your corners I have memories that will never fade not even after long periods of time. O dancing and

[1] Ibid., p .102.

[2] Ibid., p. 103.

> smiling resorts! O fields blooming green and rich of colours! O black city with tall chimneys and bustling streets! O organized and joyful gardens − O England, the pasture of my boyhood − farewell![1]

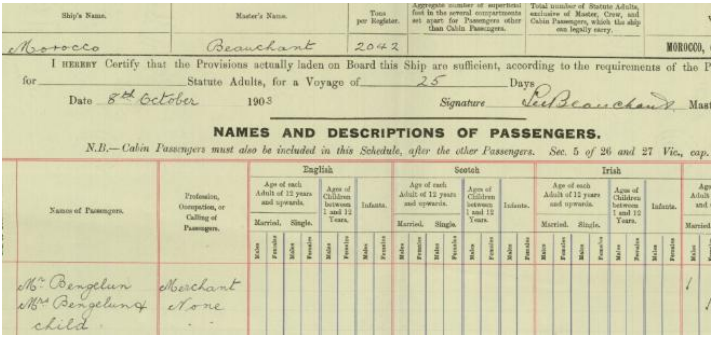
Taleb Bengelun returned to Fez in 1932, essentially to fulfil his wife's dream of going back to her native country. Three years later, he travelled on a business trip to Manchester with his 18 year old son, Abdelmajid. Like other returnees he kept business connections with Manchester.

While visiting the city of Fez in the 1940s, Harold Ingram met Ben Slimane, a former trader from his native city of Manchester. Ben Slimane "had been sent there as a young man to learn the shipping trade…. Now he was back in Fez selling cotton goods to his countrymen." Ingram learnt that Ben Slimane kept business correspondence with Manchester. Because the clerk who handled his English correspondence was ill that day, he solicited Ingram to type some letters for him. As such, his guest found himself "seated at the rickety table pounding away on a battered typewriter letters and invoices destined for my home town." To many Moroccans, Ben Slimane said, "the name of Manchester was far more familiar than was London."[2]

[1] Ibid., p.113.

[2] Ingram, *The Land of Mud Castles*, p. 38.

33. Abdelmajid Benjelloun



Ship's Name.	Master's Name.	Tons per Register.	Aggregate number of superficial feet in the several compartments set apart for Passengers other than Cabin Passengers.	Total number of Statute Adults, exclusive of Master, Crew, and Cabin Passengers, which the ship can legally carry.	
Morocco	Beauchant	2042			MOROCCO,

I HEREBY Certify that the Provisions actually laden on Board this Ship are sufficient, according to the requirements of the P
for _____ Statute Adults, for a Voyage of 25 Days.

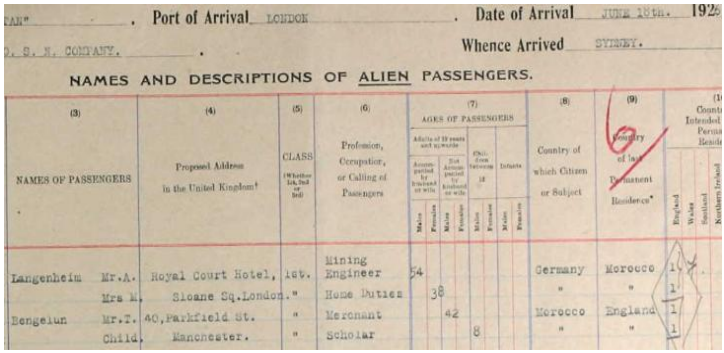
Date 8th October 1903 Signature Jul Beauchant Mast

NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF PASSENGERS.

N.B.—Cabin Passengers must also be included in this Schedule, after the other Passengers. Sec. 5 of 26 and 27 Vic., cap.

Names of Passengers.	Profession, Occupation, or Calling of Passengers.	English						Scotch						Irish						
		Age of each Adult of 12 years and upwards.				Ages of Children between 1 and 12 Years.		Infants.		Age of each Adult of 12 years and upwards.				Ages of Children between 1 and 12 Years.		Infants.		Age of each Adult of 12 years and upwards.			
		Married.		Single.						Married.		Single.						Married.		Single.	
		Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Mr Bengelun Mrs Bengelun & child	Merchant None																				

34. Bengelun, his wife and child sail from London to Casablanca on board the ship *Morocco*, 8 October 1903



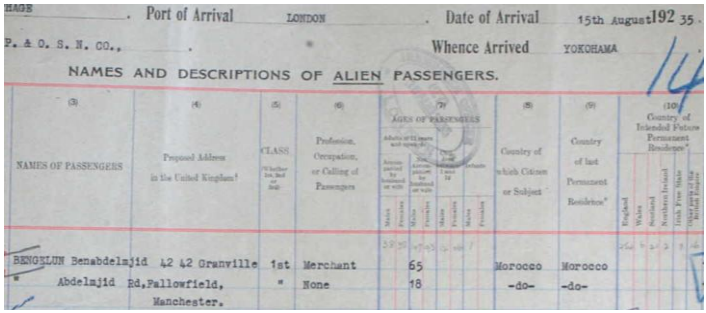
. Port of Arrival LONDON . Date of Arrival JUNE 18th. 1926

. S. N. COMPANY. . Whence Arrived SYDNEY.

NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF ALIEN PASSENGERS.

(3) NAMES OF PASSENGERS	(4) Proposed Address in the United Kingdom†	(5) CLASS (Whether 1st, 2nd or 3rd)	(6) Profession, Occupation, or Calling of Passengers	(7) AGES OF PASSENGERS: Adults of 16 years and upwards — Accompanied by husband or wife: Males	Females	Not Accompanied by husband or wife: Males	Females	Children between 1 and 16: Males	Females	Infants: Males	Females	(8) Country of which Citizen or Subject	(9) Country of last Permanent Residence*	(10) Country of Intended Future Permanent Residence*: England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Langenheim Mr.A.	Royal Court Hotel,	1st.	Mining Engineer	54								Germany	Morocco	1			
Mrs M.	Sloane Sq.London."		Home Duties		38							"	"	1			
Bengelun Mr.T.	40,Parkfield St.	"	Merchant			42						Morocco	England	1			
Child.	Manchester.	"	Scholar					8				"	"	1			

35. Bengelun and his son arrive in London on board the *Mooltan*, 18 June 1926



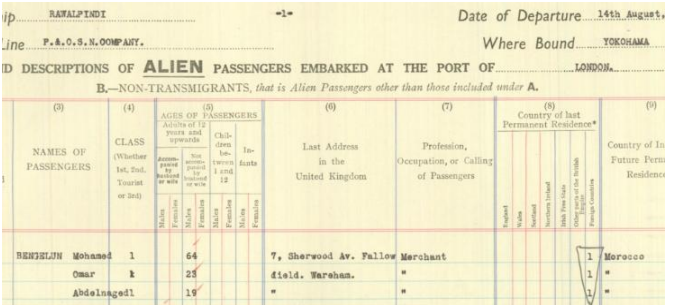
. Port of Arrival LONDON . Date of Arrival 15th August 1935

P. & O. S. N. CO., . Whence Arrived YOKOHAMA

NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF ALIEN PASSENGERS.

(3) NAMES OF PASSENGERS	(4) Proposed Address in the United Kingdom†	(5) CLASS (Whether 1st, 2nd or 3rd)	(6) Profession, Occupation, or Calling of Passengers	(7) AGES OF PASSENGERS	(8) Country of which Citizen or Subject	(9) Country of last Permanent Residence*	(10) Country of Intended Future Permanent Residence*
BENGELUN Benabdelmjid	42 42 Granville	1st	Merchant	65	Morocco	Morocco	
" Abdelmjid	Rd,Fallowfield, Manchester.	"	None	18	-do-	-do-	

36. Bengelun and his son Abdelmajid arrive in London on board the *Carthage*, 15 August 1935



ip RAWALPINDI -1- Date of Departure 14th August,

Line P.&.O.S.N.COMPANY. Where Bound YOKOHAMA

D DESCRIPTIONS OF **ALIEN** PASSENGERS EMBARKED AT THE PORT OF LONDON.

B.—NON-TRANSMIGRANTS, *that is Alien Passengers other than those included under* **A.**

(3) NAMES OF PASSENGERS	(4) CLASS (Whether 1st, 2nd, Tourist or 3rd)	(5) AGES OF PASSENGERS: Adults of 12 years and upwards — Accompanied by husband or wife — Males	Females	Not accompanied by husband or wife — Males	Females	Children between 1 and 12 — Males	Females	Infants — Males	Females	(6) Last Address in the United Kingdom	(7) Profession, Occupation, or Calling of Passengers	(8) Country of last Permanent Residence* — England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Irish Free State	Other parts of the British Empire	Foreign Countries	(9) Country of In Future Perm Residenc
BENSELJN Mohamed	1		64							7, Sherwood Av. Fallow	Merchant							1	Morocco
Omar	k		23							field. Wareham.	"							1	"
Abdelmaged	1		19							"	"							1	"

37. Mohamed, Omar, and Abdelmajid Bengelun sail back to Tangier on board the ship *Rawalpindi*, 14 August 1936

Another telling anecdote is that while visiting the bazaar of Fez, Mr. Rider Nobles came across a Moroccan who had been sent with eight merchants to Manchester to select "the goods more suitable for wear in Morocco" and who, during his stay; had learnt enough English to read newspapers. The Moroccan asked him "How is my friend Mr Gladstone." Upon being informed that his good friend had passed away, the Moroccan evinced great grief. The mournful feelings of a Moor for his Manchester friend was deemed newsworthy by the *Aberdeen Journal*, which recorded the news for its readers.

Another meeting with an ex-Manchester merchant took place in Rabat. In *A Ride in Morocco among Believers and Traders*, Frances Macnab recounts:

> In Rabat I met an old Moor who had been sixteen years in England. He was able to chat quite fluently in English. He told me that Manchester was "really a very nice place, but he liked Barbary better." Nevertheless he added, with a friendly nod, "the English are good people. They do not push Moors about, like other Christians, and I think they are a kind people. Yes, and I like them even better in England than I do in Barbary." [1]

While visiting Egypt in 1886, two Britons met an old Moroccan acquaintance from Manchester. The "Moorish gentleman" helped them find a hotel and gave them a tour in the Egyptian capital. Moreover, he introduced them to his uncle, a successful business-man who generously welcomed the Manchester travellers to spend their afternoons in his "fine Eastern mansion" and entertained them lavishly.[2]

Cheikh Tazi was a calico merchant in Manchester. Upon his return, he was appointed Chief of customs at the port of Asfi, then he was summoned by the Grand Vizier, Ba Ahmed, to the court and promoted to "Amin ech-Ckhara." Following the death of the Sultan and formation of a new government, Tazi was nominated Minister of Finance.[3]

> The other side of the river Fez stands in a dense garden, the house of a rich Fasi merchant, el-Hadj

[1] Macnab, *A Ride in Morocco*, p. 164.

[2] *The Manchester Quarterly*, vol. 6 (1887), pp. 331-332.

[3] Eugene Aubin, *Morocco of To-Day* (London: J. M, De-Nt & Co. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co, 1906), p. 176.

> el-Madani el-Tazi. He left Morocco thirty-three years ago, and settled first in Algeria, and then in Manchester. He has just returned, with his fortune made, and is completing his house, whose colonnade, with its wrought plaster and painted panelling, looks out over the whole Karaouiyin bank and the mountains on the north of the city. His long stay in England has given his features and complexion a somewhat British appearance. He remembers only a few words of English. He knows it well enough, however, to explain his position, and expresses his extreme satisfaction: "Before, no money; now, plenty of money."[1]

The story of a female returnee that could be traced is that of Miss Kenza Bouayad. She was born in Manchester in 1925 to Hamed, a rug merchant, and Rhalia, who resided in 460 Moss-lane East, Manchester. Kenza returned with her parents to Fez where she enrolled in the Adiyel School, an educational institution for young Moroccan bourgeois women established and run by two French women, Renée Ravès and Louise Soulé.

Since her teenage years, Kenza "had assimilated Western habits and wore Western clothes,"[2] which exposed her to the hostility of her Quranic teacher, faqiha Fatima Alamiya. Alamiya persecuted and reprimanded her students who adopted Western manners and customs and "targeted

[1] Ibid., p. 269.

[2] Hamid Irbouh, "French Colonial Art Education and the Moroccan Feminine Milieu: A Case Study from Fez, 1927-1930," *The Marghreb Review*, 25: 3-4 (2000), p. 284.

most of all Kenza Bouayad.[1] However, Kenza was intransigent in her European attitudes.

the school authorities accused Fatima Alamiya of sorcery and fired her. "Eventually, the French replaced Fqiha Alamiya with Zhor Bint Ali Ben Souda, a fqiha from an illustrious Fassi family, who, beginning on 1 August 1930, 'seemed to be pleased about serving in the school'."[2]

In 1940, Kenza married Mohamed Laghzaoui, a young Fassi capitalist who made his fortune in real estate, chocolate production, and bus transportation.[3] Laghzaoui used his business to finance the Istiqlal Party, a nationalist party that advocated independence from France. Being a militant and nationalist, Laghzaoui was often persecuted

38. Mohammed Laghzaoui, 1949

[1] Her name is wrongfully spelled Bou-Zayad.

[2] *The Marghreb Review*, p. 284.

[3] Mohamed Laghzaoui was born in 1906. He studied at Fez Moulay Driss High School.

by the French colonial authorities. Consequently, his wife decided to immigrate to America. At the time Kenza was pregnant and her sole dream was to have her baby born in America to "become the citizen of a free country and enjoy all the privileges denied to its father."[1]

Because of the travel restrictions imposed on her husband by the colonial authorities, twenty six year old Kenza left in December 1951 for Gibraltar in the company of British writer, Rom Landu, a close friend of her husband and an advocate of Moroccan independence. In Gibraltar she boarded the steamer *Independence* and sailed alone to New York. In June 1952, her husband and two children, Aicha and Mohammed, joined her by plane, flying Trans World Airlines, from Lisbon. They intended to reside in America for five years to gain eligibility for US citizenship.

Laghzaoui family resided in Croton Falls. Kenza bore two of their children, Khalid and Souad, both of whom acquired American citizenship. During his residence in America Laghzaoui conducted commerce and politics, campaigning for Moroccan independence. At the same time of the birth of his daughter, Souad, in June 1956, which coincided with the independence of Morocco, Sultan Mohammed V summoned Laghzaoui to occupy the position of Director of the Moroccan security forces.

Laghzaouis returned many times to the US. In June 1957, Kenza's mother, Rhalia, who never relinquished her British nationality, accompanied them to the USA.

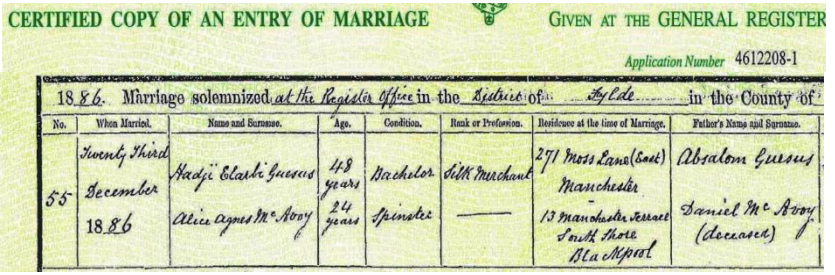
[1] Rom Landau, *Portrait of Tangier* (London: Robert Hale, 1952), p. 223.

13. *NEW ROUTES, NEW EXPERIENCES*

Because Anglo-Moroccan trade was in decline, Moroccan merchants began exploring new business routes and opportunities. On May 4th, 1934, for instance, a contingent of eight merchants, Taieb Guenouni and Mohamed Ben Sliman (from Fez), Ahmed Bouziane (Marrakesh), Abdenbi Ben Karaba, Abdellah Mohamed, Hassani Mohamed, Ahmed Charkaoui, Abdelkrim Ben Abdallah (Rabat), boarded the Italian steamer *Conte Di Savoia* from Gibraltar to New York.

Another Manchester Moroccan who established himself in America is Randolph Geussus. His was an extraordinary biography.

Born on November 18th, 1891, in Altrincham, southwest of Manchester, from an Anglo-Moroccan marriage, Hadji Elarbi Guesus and Alice Agnes, Randolph came to Fez with his parents as a child. In 1926, he returned to England and boarded a ship from Southampton to Boston where he opened a leather goods store.



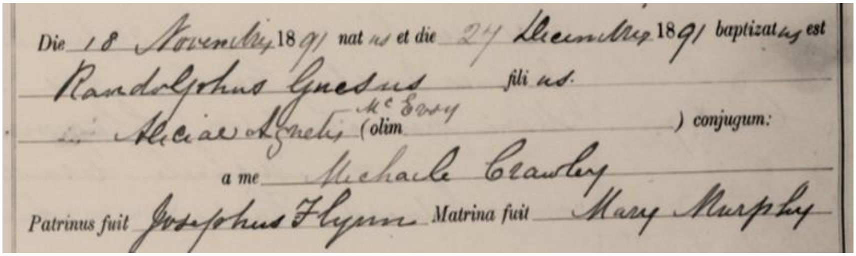
CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF MARRIAGE — GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER

Application Number 4612208-1

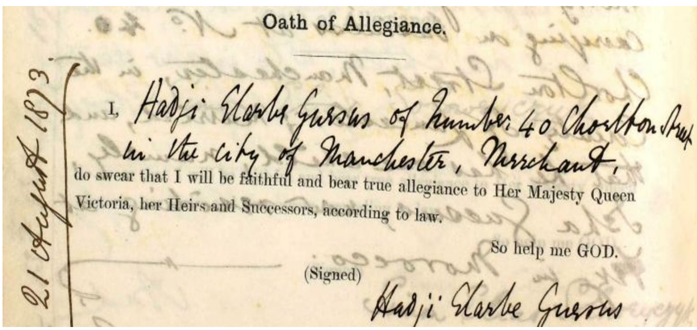
1886. Marriage solemnized at the Register Office in the District of Hyde in the County of

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.
55	Twenty Third December 1886	Hadji Elarbi Guesus	48 years	Bachelor	Silk Merchant	271 Moss Lane (East) Manchester	Absalom Guesus
		Alice Agnes Mc Avoy	24 years	Spinster	——	13 Manchester Terrace South Shore Blackpool	Daniel Mc Avoy (deceased)

39. Marriage Certificate of Hadji Elarbi Guessus and Alice Agnes, 1886


Die 18 Novembris 1891 natus et die 24 Decembris 1891 baptizatus est
Randolphus Guesus filius
Aliciae Agnetis (olim McEvoy) conjugum:
a me Michaele Crawley
Patrinus fuit Josephus Flynn Matrina fuit Mary Murphy

40. Birth Certificate of Randolphus Guesus, 1891


Oath of Allegiance.

21 August 1893

I, Hadji Elarbe Guesus of number 40 Chorlton Street in the city of Manchester, Merchant, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, her Heirs and Successors, according to law.

So help me GOD.

(Signed) Hadji Elarbe Guesus

41. Hadji Elarbi Guesus' Oath of Allegiance

He returned to Morocco in 1942 and worked for the British Secret Service, then the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) recruited him because his "profound knowledge of Morocco."[1] At the time, Operation Torch, the American invasion of Vichy Morocco, was underway and the OSS was actively working on a propaganda campaign to

[1] Carleton S Coon, *A North Africa Story: The Anthropologist as OSS Agent*, *1941-1943* (Ipswich, Mass.: Gambit, 1980), p. 12.

create a favourable environment the invasion. As an OSS operative, one of Geussus's important tasks was the translation into Arabic of President Roosevelt's message to the Moroccan people into Arabic. Captain Gordon Browne and anthropologist Carlton Coon, who were coordinating the translation, first reworded the original English version of the proclamation to make it sound Arabic. Coon explains this process: "Browne and I would reword the English in a more Arabic-sounding way, and Gusus would sing out an Arabic poetical version and then write it down. Every time Mr. Roosevelt mentioned God once, we named Him six times; and the result was a piece of poetry that might have come out of the Koran."[1] The English translation from Guessus's Arabic version reads:

> Praise be unto the only God. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. O ye Moslems. O ye beloved sons of the Moghreb. May the blessings of God be upon you. … Behold. We the American Holy Warriors have arrived. Our numbers are as the leaves on the forest trees and as the grains of sand in the sea. We have come here to fight the great Jihad of Freedom. …. Assemble along the highways to welcome your brothers. …We are not as some other Christians whom ye have known, and who trample you under foot. … Our soldiers have been told about your country and about their Moslem brothers and they will treat you with respect and with a friendly spirit in the eyes of God. …If we are thirsty, show us the way to water. If we lose our way, lead us back to

[1] Ibid.

> our camping places. Show us the paths over the mountains if needs be, and if you see our enemies, the Germans or Italians, making trouble for us, kill them with knives or with stones or with any weapon that you may have set your hands upon.
>
> Pray for our success in battle, and help us, and God will help us both. The day of freedom hath come. May God grant his blessing upon you and upon us.[1]

The leaflet is filled with flowery Islamic rhetoric. It was printed in thousands of copies and distributed secretly in the Spanish Zone and later broadcast several times on Rabat radio.[2]

Besides the translation of Roosevelt's speech, Guessus was involved in the translation of articles from the Arab press for the Americans.[3] He was also the principle contact of the US with Moroccan tribes and worked closely with Browne and Coon. During a meeting with them, we find "Randolph Mohammed Guessus, drinking beer and eating ham sandwiches in the U.S. consulate at Gibraltar."[4] Life in the West had made him less observant of Islamic culinary taboos.

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[1] Anthony Cave Brown, *The Last Hero: Wild Bill Donovan: The Biography and Political Experience of Major General William J. Donovan* (New York, N.Y.: Times Books, 1982), pp. 252-253.

[2] Coon, *A North Africa Story*, p. 14.

[3] Ibid., p. 15.

[4] Brown, *The Last Hero*, p. 252.

Mohamed Barada, a Fassi merchant born in 1904 in Fez, landed on Ellis Island in about 1922. He set up a shop in New York, explaining: "My father who is one of the wealthiest men in Fez sent me to America to establish an exclusive Moorish shop for the sale of Moroccan rugs and other novelties." He says "I like America. I am thinking now of starting a shop in Hollywood. If I can find suitable quarters, I'll stay here as long as I live."[1]

He set up a store at Hollywood Boulevard and imported and sold artefacts from Morocco and other Arab countries. He also rented Oriental costumes and swords to the motion picture industry.

He says that his father had advised him "to marry a fine American girl, preferably a blond, and settle down. But I don't want to get married. I don't want to do anything except attend to my business which is to sell Moorish rugs and things."[2] He eventually abandoned celibacy and married a rich heiress from Baltimore. The *Los Angeles Times* writes on 1 December 1933:

> This Sidi Mohamed Ali Barada is a Moroccan who has spent more time in this country than in his own. In fact, he seems to have used Morocco mainly as a place to be born in, for he went to school in Paris four years, had a concession for Moroccan importations in a great New York store, created a flurry in Baltimore society by marrying Miss Isabel McCormick Finney of Baltimore and has been an American citizen for five or six years. A few years

[1] *Los Angles Times*, 15 September 1924.

[2] Ibid.

> ago he returned to Morocco. "There I met the late Motley H. Flint of Los Angeles," Barada says. "He liked me and made arrangements for me to come to Los Angeles to establish a department in the Dyas store." At one time Barada had a chain of seven Moroccan stores in the United States. Now he has one on Hollywood Boulevard and one in San Francisco. He avers that he would much rather be a New World businessman than an Old World prince.[1]

Though based far from his country in Los Angles, Barrada never dissociated himself from the concerns of his country. He contributed several articles to American newspapers to promote the image of Morocco, its decolonization, and its democratization. In the *Los Angeles Times* of April 12th, 1943, he writes:

> It is strange that the report of President Roosevelt's visit to North Africa gives so little mention of the Sultan and other appeasers. Did the pashas and Wazirs and merchants of Fez receive him? … Did President Roosevelt see the starvation, filth and sickness of the population or did he only view the wonders of the palaces? I feel that we must do away with the thought that the people of North Africa are but heathens and savage tribesmen or pirates of the Mediterranean, that the country itself is merely a well-centered one richly endowed with natural resources: therefore good for colonization without regard for its people. We in America must

[1] *Los Angeles Times*, 1 December 1933.

help to correct the corrupt form of government that exists in all North Africa…. This is the ideal time for America to help put democracy into practice all over the world.[1]

42. Sidi Mohamed Ali Barada

[1] "No Time for Tea Parties: Sidi Mohamed Ali Barada," *Los Angeles Times*, 8 March 1943. See also "Now Is No Time for Lambs: Sidi Mohamed Ali Barada," *Los Angeles Times*, April 12 1943.

CONCLUSION

Evidently, reading the history and experience of the Fassi merchants' immigration to Manchester unfolds a fundamental critique of many theses promoted by French colonial historiography on Morocco and reiterated by some postcolonial Moroccan historians. First the theory that, after the decline of its maritime power and French conquest of Algeria; Morocco became enclosed upon itself, fearing interaction with the Christian world, is a fallacy. Second, the process of modernisation in Morocco did not with French colonialism, but almost a century earlier, with the discovery of Europe by Moroccan diplomats, travellers, and merchants.

43. Moorish Arch built on the Liverpool Manchester Railway in 1830. Its architectural design must have reminded Moroccan merchants of their home town of Fez.

The third theory to refute is that the liberation of Moroccan Islamic femininity from traditional customs and practices was impacted by exposure to French culture and civilization. In fact, as it can be gleaned from this book, it was initiated by the active involvement of Moroccan women in and experience of European diaspora.

Moroccans, men and women, alike crossed borders and became involved in international voyages. And with this they participated actively in the global flow of goods, cultural commodities, ethnic identities, and intercultural dialogue. They helped usher modernity into a traditional Morocco and shaped Moroccan global consciousness and plural identities.

Reading the history Moroccan migrant community urges us to deconstruct French colonial scholarship on Morocco and come up with new approaches and perspectives on Moroccan social history and cultural identity.

PART II: ARCHIVAL SOURCES

1. MOROCCANS OF MANCHESTER, 1860S[1]

Early in the sixties as you passed along the business streets of the City, you would suddenly come in sight of some white turbaned individual, whose gay Eastern dress appeared in such strong contrast to the sombre of the attire of all those about him. At first the sight of one of these men in Moorish grab was a very uncommon occurrence, and people would stand and smile as one of them passed along. But now they have ceased to be a wonder, and so they go to and fro and do their business in their usual quiet way, and make their purchases at the shops without more than perhaps a casual glance from the passersby.

When these Moorish pioneers first appeared as the precursors of those who afterwards settled amongst us, their numbers might have been counted almost on the fingers of one hand; but after the first plunge had been taken, they steadily increased in numbers, until at their full strength they formed quite a compact little business community.

My connection with them commenced with the first arrivals, as they were purchasers of my class of goods, and for this reason I became very friendly with them all. When a new arrival came upon the scene he was always easily distinguishable from the rest, as he would be seen shod with Oriental slippers, to which he had been accustomed in his own footwear was not serviceable in a climate like ours, where a wet day would play sad havoc with those gay-

[1] Hayes, *Reminiscences of Manchester*, pp. 205-2012.

looking slippers without any heels; so one of the first lessons to be learned by a new arrival was to get his feet encased in boots with more understanding in their nature.

Most of these Moors seemed to learn English almost as quickly as they changed their footgear; or at any rate they were soon quite capable of making a bargain, and able to buy their goods at the cheapest possible prices, in fact bargaining seemed their English grammar, and excellent use they made of it. If for a short time you did succeed in petting a trifle more margin on your sales to a newcomer, he very soon posted himself up in matters, and you found out that, however limited his knowledge of English might be, he always knew enough to be able to beat you down in price.

I think the first English house to introduce these Morocco Moors in any number to the Manchester marked was Thomas Forshaw, who then had his place of business to in Norfolk Street. Here, if you had any business to transact with any of these clients of his, you would usually find them congregated in his entrance lobby, where there were benches lining the sides, on which they would be seated, as it were, in general council. It was quite an Oriental picture to see them grouped around in their quaint picturesque attire, surmounted by the white turban or the red fez. I believe they were not entitled to wear the full white turban unless they had made at least one pilgrimage to Mecca. If you had any communication to make to any of their number you were often obliged to make it in the presence and hearing of the entire conclave; and as a rule there was disposition to keep their transactions secret from each other, and at times they would consult amongst themselves before the one in treaty with you would make up his mind as to placing an order. At times this was somewhat embarrassing to the seller, but their

manner of doing business was pleasant and easy enough when you had once been admitted to their general friendship. They first of all required to have confidence in your mode of doing business, but having once had the "open sesame" pronounced in your favour you could go in and out among them and get along with them very comfortably.

As the years went by, and their friends in Morocco found out that their countrymen were doing so well at this side, the numbers increased; but Thomas Forshaw gradually lost his hold upon them, for the Moors discovered by degrees that they could go into the market and buy in their own names, thus saving the commission with which he charged them. I am afraid credit was granted them too freely, and were thus encouraged to trade beyond their means. However, the consequences of this appeared later on, and in the meantime the number of white turbans to be seen in the streets of Manchester steadily and perceptibly increased.

One of the first of these Moors to establish himself in business on his own account was a man of the name of Bengelun. He was a handsome man, although somewhat short of stature, but for his height he was one of the fattest men I had then come across. He seemed to carry a very mountain of adipose matter in front of him as he came paddling along the street, and swaying about from side and to side; and you could not but sympathise with him as you saw him panting for breath as he slowly mounted the stairs to his office. After the first established council broke up little by little at Thomas Forshaw's, it seemed to naturally transfer itself to the offices of Mr. Bengelun; so that if you could not find your man at his own place of business you would nearly always be safe in looking for and finding him at Mr. Bengelun's, where the bulk of them would be congregated

together, filling the rooms to over to overflowing, some sitting, some reclining, whilst others would be squatted about Eastern fashion, with their legs doubled up underneath them, and here they would hold their midday palaver. These Moors came from various quarters; Tangiers, Essaouira, Larache, Casablanca, Fez, etc., and when they all got talking more or less together, with their various intonations, accents and gesticulations, it was really quite Entertaining to be in their midst. Associated with these Morocco Moors were some of their co-religionists from Cairo and Alexandria. Amongst the latter was a Mr. Benani, a very clever, intelligent, capable man of business. He also took quite a lead amongst them, and after the death of Mr. Bengelun, the daily meetings used to be held at his offices.

Taken as a whole, these Moors were a thoughtful, peaceable, kindly and sociable set of men. Mohammedans by faith, one could not but admire and respect them for their strict observance of all that their religion enjoined. Of course, these are black sheep in every fold, but as a body of men they set an example to many Christians of sobriety and religious zeal, with which those who cam closely in contact with them could not but be struck. During their long fast of Ramadan, the most of them neither ate, drank or smoked during the day. In their own country this was not such a serious matter as it is with us, as in Morocco the days and nights are more nearly equal in the summer months, when this fast takes place, than is the case in England. Here they required to fast from about three in the morning until about eight in the evening, which constituted a great strain upon the system for many weeks. This fast commenced with the new moon, and so strict were they that they should not err as to the time for starting the fast, that rather than make any mistake about the exact time

of the new moon in their own country, they would begin fasting the day before.

Many of the Moors who flourished here in the past have altogether disappeared, many are dead, other have left the country. Their names, too, would sound strange to English ears, such as Luarzazi, Elofer, Benquiran, Lehluh, Benabsolam, Dris and Benassi Benani. Benani and Tassi were two of the most usual names amongst them and, I presume, answered to Smith, Jones, and Robinson in this country. Then there were such names as Gueasus, Lushi, Meecoe, Bomar Larashe, Benabdislam, and Benmassoud. The Bens were profile as the sons of many ancestors. Where there were several of the same surname they were recognized by some personal peculiarity. For instance, one man was called Big Tassi, on account of his almost gigantic proportions; and yet although he was large physically, he was particularly mild and gentle-looking in appearance, but he was not so soft-hearted that he could not drive a very keen bargain. There was also Black Tassi, so called from his swarthy complexion. He was as keen as a knife and as sharp as a needle, but I am afraid his heart partook of the nature of his complexion, for there came a day when he suddenly vanished to the tune of "the debts I left behind me."

Meecce, bright and cheery in nature and disposition, came with a long purse, and with the impression that his purchasing power was unlimited. For a short period he was quite the darling of the Manchester Market. He bought, and bought; and we sold, and sold, and sold, just as dear old Manchester loves to do. And we should all have continued happy if, after the long purse became empty, we had not wanted payment for his more than liberal purchases. Waiting for those proverbial "remittances from the other side" is at

the best a dreary and unsatisfactory business. Yet our friend seemed quite cheerful and happy, and if reiterated promises and offers of fresh orders for goods could have only satisfied creditors all might have been well. When these at length failed to give comfort and contentment, our dear friend betook himself to Morocco, so that he might try and hurry them up on the other aide, but unfortunately his people abroad declined to be hurried up, and so his departure was followed by further delay, disappointment and eventually loss. His long purse had not proved long enough for its purpose, and Mr. Meecoe's light-hearted pleasantries could not convert themselves into bank notes, or even dollars, which with wool was the usual mode of remittance, and so the creditors had to whistle for their money (in vulgar parlance), and that was the end of it.

There was another man amongst these Moors so diminutive in height that he might almost have passed for a dwarf. He had a sallow complexioned face and shifting eyes, and was not altogether attractive in appearance. He could be very oily and sweet when he wished to get his own way in some matter of business, but a very firebrand when anything went wrong. The greater his passion the yellower he became, probably he was of a bilious nature, which may have accounted for his extreme irritability. I remember on one occasion when I had to insist upon him doing what was right in some transaction between us, the oily smile with which he first tried to have his own way gradually disappeared as he found he could make no impression upon me; a gloomy scowl was succeeded by such a fit of rage that he actually foamed at the mouth. When he had arrived at this stage, the only thing of which he seemed capable was to point his finger at his tongue and cry out: "Look at my tongue, look at my

tongue. Why I should do so I cannot say; the whole scene was very comical and would have made a splendid photograph. Slowly he cooled down and eventually retired, but there was no look of love in those shifting eyes as he passed out of my office.

Such an incident was of quite an exceptional nature, and for many of these Moors I had a very sincere respect, doing their business as they did, in a quiet, almost placid kind of manner. Some of this white-turbaned fraternity are still to be found here, but their numbers have considerably diminished. Bad government, coupled with the demonetization of silver have well-nigh killed this once prospering and promising trade. They were, and are, a class of men who, if circumstances had favoured them, were capable of developing a satisfactory business; but the government of the Sultan of Morocco was so wretchedly bad that it was impossible for them to make any headway. At times official intimation would be received by one of their number that he must return to act in the capacity of a tax gatherer in his own country, a position very abhorrent to most of them, as to make an existence in such a calling, after paying the Government the sum for which the taxes had been farmed to such an one, extortion, cruelty and robbery were a necessity. When these calls were made upon them they tried to get appointed as nominal agents for English firms, so that they might claim the support and protection of the English Consul abroad.

2. PICTURESQUE MOROCCAN COLONY LEAVES MANCHESTER[1]

A Manchester merchant who had close connections with the Colony for over forty years ... gave some interesting details of the Moroccans, who conducted all their business and foreign correspondence from their homes, in Arabic. 'This community was well known in the locality by the wearing of the red Fez, with which was worn a huge overcoat which covered the native dress and invariably also was carried an umbrella', he said, 'The womenfolk − mostly black women, some of whom had been previously purchased in the slave market, married and brought to England, as it was considered "infra dig" to bring one of the real white wives to England-in a short time mastered the language, much quicker than their lords and masters. Having borne a large family, many of the children born in Manchester enjoy British nationality, and although returned to their native city of Fez, other generations born in Morocco claim by right British nationality, of which they are very proud and value its privileges, although they may never probably see the country, which through accident of birth they claim, and which will be enjoyed for generations to come. The British Consul at Fez has records of these numerous British subjects. These privileges are unfortunately lost to the female sex when they marry. The habits of this Moroccan Colony in Manchester were not unusual, except that one of the gentlemen undertook to see that the meat was provided in accordance with the Mohammedan rites. A butcher in Rusholme had the monopoly of supplying Welsh lamb, having in his yard a

[1] *Manchester City News*, 2 October 1936.

small abattoir, and each morning this gentleman proceeded with the killing of the required number of sheep. This same gentleman also led them to prayer every Friday, the service of which was held in a house in Parkfield Street. Their offices in the city were mostly in the building known as Chepstow House, at 32 Oxford Street, and many readers will no doubt remember the following names: Canoon, Elhadjwy, Madhani Tazi, Lazarak, Guesus, Benabdelsh, Benchocron, Benquiran and Boeyed. These Moroccans enjoyed a name second to none for honest and good citizenship. One of its members, well remembered for his perfect speaking of English, was looked upon as their chief adviser, and was the means of settling many differences which arose in business. When any merchant had recourse to legal advice, there was an old-established firm in King Street (Messrs. Atkinson, Saunders & Co) who can be termed to have been the official solicitors for the Moroccan merchants, and the late Mr. Seville, a partner of the firm, always managed to keep the Moroccan merchants out of court. Despite the enormous business they did in the city, it is not within memory that they ever had recourse to the Assizes. I remember many times the kind hospitality which I enjoyed. Luncheon consisted of many highly spiced dishes, followed by Oriental sweets and a quantity of fruit. Green tea served with mint helped to digest the unusually heavy meal. Of course, food was only served to the men, the womenfolk having their meals separately; and what appeared most odd was that the dishes that went back were those intended for the womenfolk.'[1]

[1] *Manchester City News*, 2 October 1936.

44. Mogadore Market where Manchester goods were sold

45. Trademark of a Moroccan merchant based in Manchester (Abdelmajid Tazi?)

3.MOROCCANS ENJOY THE MANCHESTER TURKISH BATH[1]

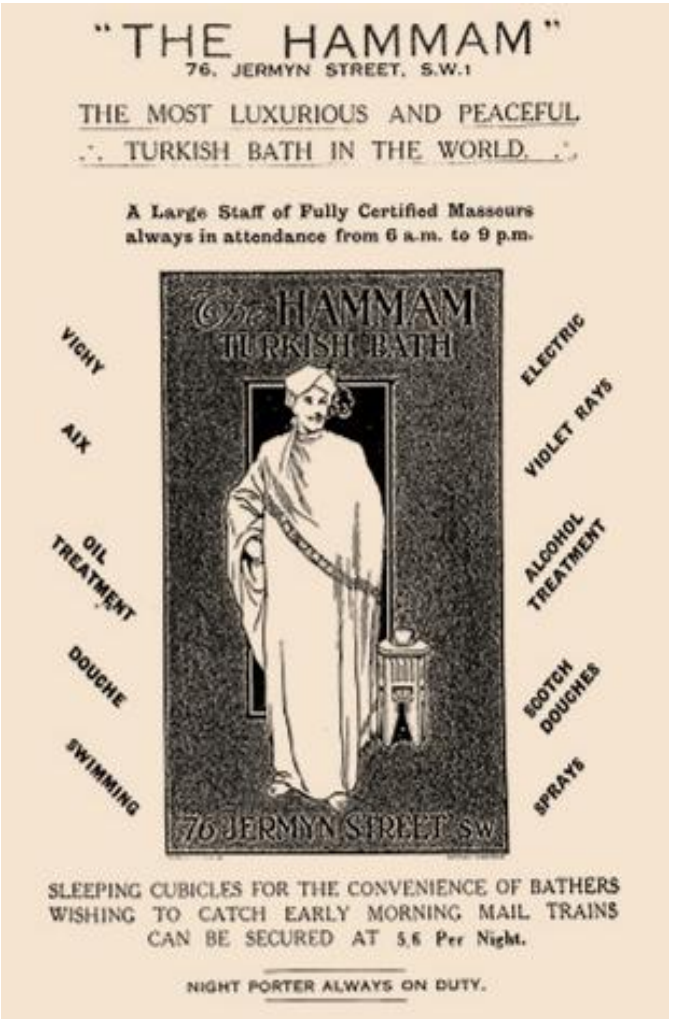
Grown men wearing European lounge suits and lolling about among silk and satin cushions should really-have looked ridiculous. Yet, inexplicably, host and guests were far more acceptable to me in their new role than while displaying their best party manners at a French dinner. Reclining among the cushions, and sipping black coffee or mint tea, my companions disclosed not only new personalities but also new enthusiasms and interests. Politics were forgotten, and were replaced by more pleasant topics, with personal reminiscences predominating. These reminiscences were to provide my second unforeseen experience of the evening, for I could never have anticipated that England would play so great a part in them. Now I found that several of my companions had very intimate links with my own country. The wife of our host was actually British, born in England, where before 1914 her father had resided as a Moorish merchant. From England had come most of the furniture in his house, furniture that had instantly struck a familiar note. The oldest member of the company had for many years been trading with Manchester, and he regarded the fortnight he had spent in London as the highlight in his life, and the Hamam in Jermyn Street as the most memorable impression of that sojourn.

[1] Rom Landau, Moroccan *Journal* (London, Hale, 1952), p. 38.

46. Hammam on Jermyn Street, Manchester

47. Hammam on Jermyn Street, Manchester

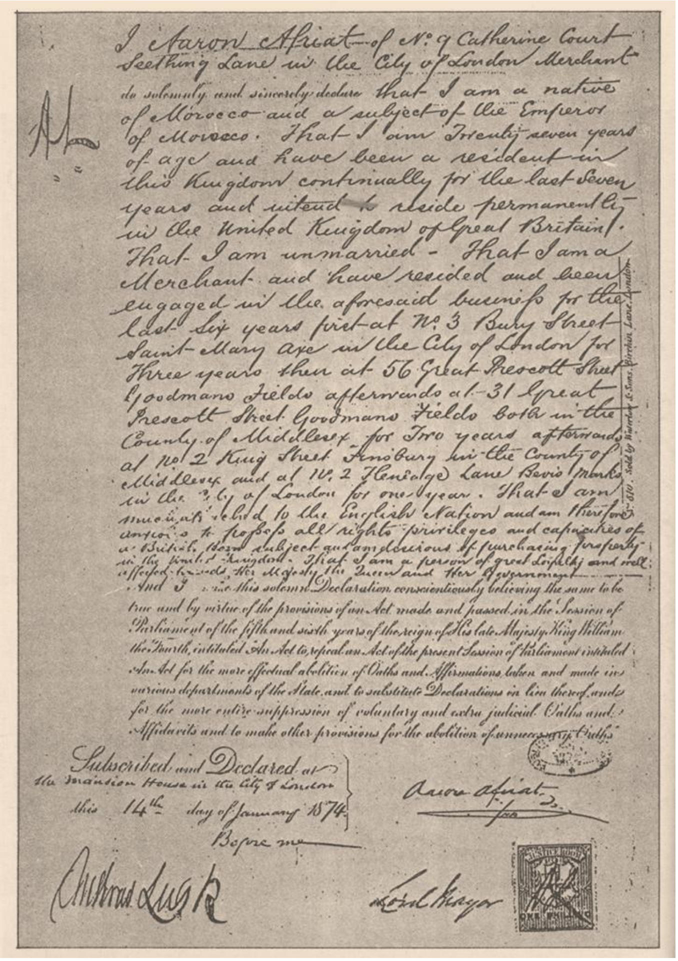
His son, who was one of our party, was hoping to obtain a French exit visa so that he might spend a year in England to learn the methods of our textile industry. The forebears of another guest had lived most of their lives in Birmingham. Gradually England made room for Fassi gossip, and conversation became rather more outspoken than I had come to expect in Moorish society. Yet it never descended to that level of bawdiness so easily reached in a convivial all-male assembly. When at midnight I took my leave, I no longer felt that I had been among strangers. That which I had originally undertaken as a mere duty had developed into a most enjoyable experience. I may not have added to my knowledge of Moroccan politics, but I had learned a fair amount about the essential Moor. And all this, thanks to a collection of garish silk and satin cushions.



48. Advertising poster for the Manchester Hammam

4. AARON AFRIAT APPLIES FOR BRITISH CITIZENSHIP, 1874

I Aaron Afriat of N: 9 Catherine Court seething Lane in the city of London Merchant do solemnly and sincerely declare that I am a native of Morocco and a subject of the Emperor of Morocco. That I am Twenty Seven years of age and have been a resident in this kingdom continually for the last Seven years and intend to reside permanently in the United Kingdom of Great Britain. That I am unmarried – That I am a Merchant and have resided and been engaged in the aforesaid business for the last Six years, first at N: 3 Bury Street Saint Mary axe in the City of London for three years there at 56 Great Preseott Street Goodmans Fields, afterwards at 31 Great Preseott Street Goodmans Fields both in the Country of Middlex for Two years, afterwards at N: 2 King Street Kensburg in the Country of Middlex and at N: 2 Henery Lane Bevis Marks in the City of London for one year. That I am ... [unreadable] to the English Nation and am therefore anxious to possess all rights, privileges and capacities of a British Born subject and am desirous of purchasing property in the United Kingdom – That I am a person of great Loyalty and well .... [unreadable] Her Majesty the Queen and Her government.



I Aaron Afriat of No 9 Catherine Court Seething Lane in the City of London Merchant do solemnly and sincerely declare that I am a native of Morocco and a subject of the Emperor of Morocco. That I am Twenty seven years of age and have been a resident in this Kingdom continually for the last seven years and intend to reside permanently in the United Kingdom of Great Britain. That I am unmarried - That I am a Merchant and have resided and been engaged in the aforesaid business for the last six years first at No 3 Bury Street Saint Mary Axe in the City of London for three years then at 56 Great Prescott Street Goodmans Fields afterwards at 31 Great Prescott Street Goodmans Fields both in the County of Middlesex for two years afterwards at No 2 King Street Finsbury in the County of Middlesex and at No 2 Heneage Lane Bevis Marks in the City of London for one year. That I am much attached to the English Nation and am therefore anxious to possess all rights privileges and capacities of a British born subject and am desirous of purchasing property in the United Kingdom. That I am a person of great loyalty and well affected towards Her Majesty the Queen and Her Government.

And I make this solemn Declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of an Act made and passed in the Session of Parliament of the fifth and sixth years of the reign of His late Majesty King William the Fourth, intituled An Act to repeal an Act of the present Session of Parliament intituled An Act for the more effectual abolition of Oaths and Affirmations taken and made in various departments of the State, and to substitute Declarations in lieu thereof, and for the more entire suppression of voluntary and extra judicial Oaths and Affidavits and to make other provisions for the abolition of unnecessary Oaths.

Subscribed and Declared at the Mansion House in the City of London this 14th day of January 1874.

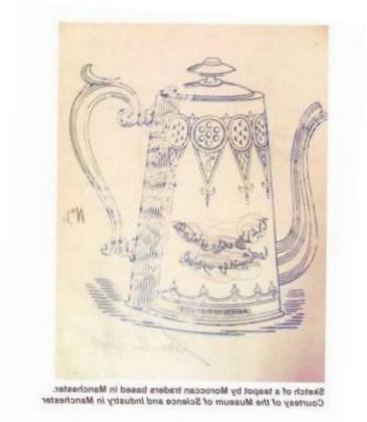
Before me

Andrew Lusk Lord Mayor

Aaron Afriat

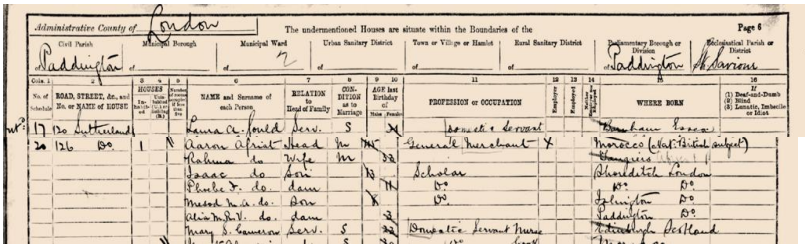
810. Sold by Waterlow & Sons, Birchin Lane, London

49. Aaron Afriat's Application for British Citizenship, 1874



Sketch of a teapot by Moroccan traders based in Manchester.
Courtesy of the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester

50. Sketch of a coffeepot with Arabic inscription and the name of Aaron Afriat



Administrative County of London — The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the — Page 6

Civil Parish: Paddington | Municipal Borough | Municipal Ward: 7 | Urban Sanitary District | Town or Village or Hamlet | Rural Sanitary District | Parliamentary Borough or Division: Paddington | Ecclesiastical Parish or District: St Marylebone

Col. 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
No. of Schedule	ROAD, STREET, &c., and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES Uninhabited	HOUSES Building	Number of Rooms with more than One Family	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CONDITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of Males	AGE last Birthday of Females	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION	Employer	Employed	Neither Employer nor Employed	WHERE BORN	If (1) Deaf-and-Dumb (2) Blind (3) Lunatic, Imbecile or Idiot
17	No Letting Land				Laura A. Gould	Serv.	S		24	Domestic Servant				Bombay Parsee	
20	126 Do	1			Aaron Afriat	Head	Mr	45		General Merchant	X			Morocco (what British subject)	
					Rahma do	Wife	Mr		32					Tangiers	
					Isaac do	Son		13		Scholar				Shoreditch London	
					Phebe D. do	Dau		11		Do				Do Do	
					Mesod M. A. do	Son		8		Do				Islington Do	
					Alice M. D. do	Dau		2						Paddington Do	
					Mary S. Cameron	Serv.	S		22	Domestic Servant Nurse				Scotland Scotland	

51. Cenus of Aaron Afriat

5. MOHAMMED MUSTAFA DUCALY[1]

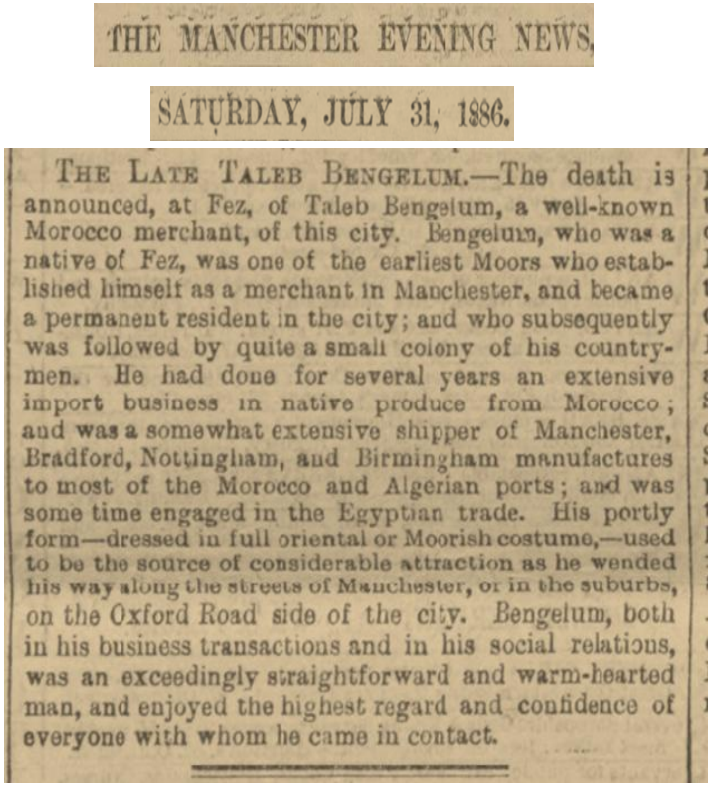
Un des Maures les plus distingués de la ville de Tanger, Mohammed Mustafa-Ducaly, qui possède une fortune considérable, entreprit un voyage en Europe dans le courant de l'année 1845. Après avoir visité les grandes capitales, avoir fait un séjour prolongé à Paris, il se rendit en Angleterre où l'appelait une commande d'armes assez considérable pour le compte de l'empereur du Maroc. Quand Mustafa Ducaly eut terminé ses affaires à Londres, il voulut également connaître une partie de l'Angleterre et principalement ses grands centres manufacturiers. Ce fut dans ce but que, de Liverpool, il se rendit à Manchester où il descendit dans un des premiers hôtels de la ville. Il était accompagné, dans ce voyage, d'un drogman et d'une suite de serviteurs assez nombreuse. Mustafa Ducaly joignait à l'originalité de son costume national les charmes d'un physique fort agréable, et il n'en fallait pas tant pour attirer sur lui les regards. Aussi sa présence à Manchester n'était-elle ignorée de personne, et, chaque fois qu'il sortait, il y avait toujours aux abords de son hôtel une foule assez nombreuse qui se montrait avide de l'apercevoir. Comme ceci se passait en 1845, c'est-àdire il y a dix ans, on comprendra facilement que, dans chaque ville où il s'arrêtait, l'arrivée d'un tel personnage était un véritable événement; car, aujourd'hui encore à Paris, il n'en faut pas autant pour mettre souvent en émoi tout un quartier de la capitale. Mustafa Ducaly habitait Manchester depuis

[1] H. De T. D'arlach, *Le Maroc Et Le Rif En 1856* (Paris: Chez Ledoyen, Libraire-Éditeur, 1856), pp. 12-14.

quelques jours, quand il reçut l'invitation de se rendre à une fête brillante que donnait lord W. dans le somptueux domaine qu'il possède à quelques lieues de la ville de Manchester. Au jour fixé, un magnifique équipage, monté à la Daumon, conduisait Mustafa Ducaly au domaine de lord W. A son arrivée, il fut introduit dans un vestibule richement décoré, qui donnait accès à un vestiaire où se tenaient quatre huissiers. De ce vestiaire, on passait dans une vaste antichambre qui conduisait dans un premier salon dont les ornements étaient d'une extrême richesse. L'un des deux hallebardiers placés à chaque battant des portes ayant annoncé à haute voix: Mustafa Ducaly! le maître de la maison vint à sa rencontre. Un silence général ne tarda pas à succéder à l'animation qui régnait dans cette opulente demeure, et chacun des invités porta ses regards sur le nouveau venu, avec la lenteur involontaire d'une curiosité qui se satisfait. La fille du maître de la maison surtout ne pouvait se lasser de contempler l'étranger; elle ne tarda pas à lui adresser plusieurs questions sur son pays, et une des premières qu'elle lui posa fut celle de lui demander s'il avait plusieurs femmes. Mustafa Ducaly ayant avoué qu'il en avait sept, elle lui dit, avec une charmante naïveté, qu'il lui paraissait impossible qu'on pût aimer sept femmes à la fois.

“Je regrette, lui répondit Mustafa Ducaly, que les lois de votre pays ne vous permettent pas de devenir la huitième, car vous comprendriez alors que je pourrais, au besoin, en aimer huit.” Miss W., de plus en plus surprise de voir un Maure s'exprimer avec une certaine élégance dans un idiôme qui n'était pas le sien, ne put retenir son étonnement lorsqu'elle entendit les derniers mots que venait de prononcer son étrange visiteur. Donnant bientôt un libre cours à sa stupéfaction, elle chercha du regard lord W., et, l'apercevant à

l'autre extrémité du salon, elle s'écria à haute voix: “Mon père! ce Maure parle comme une personne.” Mustafa Ducaly rit beaucoup et rit encore aujourd'hui de cette aventure lorsqu'il la raconte. Il est vrai d'ajouter que la jeune personne dont il est ici question, et qui porte à cette heure un des grands noms de l'Angleterre, avait eu affaire au Maure le plus astucieux du Maroc; car Mustafa Ducaly ajoute à une certaine finesse d'être bien certainement le seul Maure un peu instruit de tout l'empire. Quoi qu'il en soit, cet exemple seul ne prouverait-il pas suffisamment que la Barbarie occidentale, si peu connue et si digne de l'être, n'a été que fort imparfaitement décrite, et qu'en Europe, on n'a reçu jusqu'à ce jour, sur le Maroc, que des notions très-vagues.



THE MANCHESTER EVENING NEWS.

SATURDAY, JULY 31, 1886.

THE LATE TALEB BENGELUM.—The death is announced, at Fez, of Taleb Bengelum, a well-known Morocco merchant, of this city. Bengelum, who was a native of Fez, was one of the earliest Moors who established himself as a merchant in Manchester, and became a permanent resident in the city; and who subsequently was followed by quite a small colony of his countrymen. He had done for several years an extensive import business in native produce from Morocco; and was a somewhat extensive shipper of Manchester, Bradford, Nottingham, and Birmingham manufactures to most of the Morocco and Algerian ports; and was some time engaged in the Egyptian trade. His portly form—dressed in full oriental or Moorish costume,—used to be the source of considerable attraction as he wended his way along the streets of Manchester, or in the suburbs, on the Oxford Road side of the city. Bengelum, both in his business transactions and in his social relations, was an exceedingly straightforward and warm-hearted man, and enjoyed the highest regard and confidence of everyone with whom he came in contact.

52. Taleb Benjelun: One of the Early Moroccan Merchants to Settle in Manchester

THE MANCHESTER COURIER

FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 1903.

APPEAL TO MANCHESTER MERCHANTS.

[REUTER'S TELEGRAM.]

PARIS, THURSDAY.

A telegram from Fez, dated the 8th of June, describing the arrival of Mulai Hafid, says criers ordered all the shops to be shut and decorated. Uniformed troops of Mulai Hafid lined the streets from the gate to the mosque of Mulai Idriss. Mulai Hafid was escorted by about six hundred men, mostly in rags. A large crowd of sight seers collected outside the sanctuary, which Mulai Hafid entered barefooted.

It is rumoured that Hafid has instructed four Moorish merchants of Manchester to spare no efforts to secure his recognition in London.

The German physician, Dr. Holtzmann, is with Mulai Hafid.

Taieb Tazi, the brother of the Sultan Abd-el-Aziz's Minister of Finance, has gone over absolutely to Mulai Hafid, and declares that he has received a letter from the German Legation at Tangier, stating that when Mulai Hafid entered Fez he would be recognised as Sultan by Germany, and that other Powers would soon follow her example.

53. Diplomatic Mission for Moorish Merchants of Manchester

6. A DISHONEST SERVANT GIRL[1]

At the Manchester County Police Court, a well-dressed young woman, named Annie Holmes, was yesterday charged with stealing a diamond ring, gold watch and chain, pair of earrings, and other articles of jewellery from the house of Mahomet Benani, a Greek merchant, residing in Parkfield Street, Husholme. The prisoner had been employed as domestic servant by the prosecutor, and on the 16th June last left the house during the temporary absence of the family. Next morning the stolen articles were missed from one of the bed-rooms. A few days after the robbery the prisoner offered the diamond ring in pledge at Liverpool, and said it belonged to her brother, who was dead. The pawnbroker retained the ring, and communicated with the police, and the prisoner was apprehended in Liverpool about a week ago by Police-constable Fitzpatrick. She was committed for trial at the sessions.

7. A MOORISH MERCHANT AND GLADSTONE[2]

A good story is told by Mr. Rider Noble attached to the Moorish Court, who is at present in England. He was one day in a bazaar in Fez, when he was stopped at one of the stalls and addressed by a Moor in fairly good English. “How do you do?” said the Moor. After being assured on the point he began to ply Mr. Noble with questions about England. “And

[1] *Edinburgh Evening News*, 26 September 1876.

[2] *Aberdeen Journal*, 10 January 1903.

is my friend Mr. Gladstone?" was the one that most tickled Mr. Noble. On being informed that Mr. Gladstone was dead the Moor evinced great regrets. It seems that he had lived for a little time in England. He was sent along with eight others to Manchester to select the goods most suitable to wear in Morocco, and while there he had picked up enough English to read the newspapers.

8. BENANI AND BENJELOUN AT COURT[1]

An Affray at Moss Side. Mahomed Benani, Taher Benani (father and son), Turkish merchants, residing at 40, Derby-street, Moss Side, and Alarbi Bengelun, an Algerian, living at 160, Lloyd-street, Greenheys, were charged with having assaulted Francis Sommerville, upholsterer, Lloyd-street, Greenheys. Cross summonses had also been taken out by the two Benanis charging Sommerville and two other men, named Hugh Stranaghan and Charles George Garland, with having assaulted them. The following magistrates were present on the bench:—Mr. C. Leigh Clare, Mr. J. Chadwick, Mr. George Lord, Mr. C. P. Henderson, jun., and Mr. E. Herford. Mr. Nash, barrister, appeared for Sommerville; and Mr. Blair, barrister, for the Benanis and Bengelun.— Mr. Nash said he thought after they had heard the evidence the magistrates would come to the conclusion that the defendants, either carrying out the precepts of the Koran, being Mahometans, or following their own natural instincts, had been guilty of a brutal assault. Mr. Sommerville had an account of 17s. against the Benanis, and as his collector had

[1] *The Manchester Guardian,* 20 January 1882.

failed to obtain payment he went for the money himself on Saturday afternoon. When he entered the house he found the two Benanis in and Bengelun. When he asked for payment of the account one of the Benanis offered 13s., which he refused. Subsequently the three defendants commenced to assault him, and beat him about the head with two umbrellas until they broke them; they were going to use a third when Sommerville's collector and a man named Stranaghan went to Sommerville's assistance. From first to last the two Benanis and Bengelun acted like "regular Turks:" − Mr. Blair gave, a different version of the affair. He stated that there was a dispute between the Bennie and Sommerville with respect to the cost of repairing a mattress, which was to have been done for 10s. but for which Sommerville charged 17s. Because they refused to pay that amount Sommerville commenced an assault on the Benanis in the lobby of the house, and was joined in that assault by both Stranaghan and Garland. Sommerville gave evidence in corroboration of the statement made by Mr. Nash. He said the younger Benani hit him first, and then the others attacked him using umbrellas on him with such force that they broke them. He was hurt on the head, and his lips were cut. His injuries were dressed on the following day by Mr. A. Chambers, surgeon.—Hugh Stranaghan, 150, Main Road, Moss Side, collector for Sommerville, and C. G. Garland, traveller, 98, Cranworth-street, Chorlton-on-Medlock, gave evidence on behalf of Sommerville. Their statements went to show that Stranaghan waited outside to see whether his employer succeeded in getting the account, and that while he was waiting in the street he was accosted by Garland. As they were talking together they heard a noise at the residence of the Benanis, and observed the door open. Strannghan saw the Benanis

striking Sommerville on the head with umbrellas; Garland said he could see the umbrellas, but could not see the persons who were striking.—Mahomed Benani and Taher Benani gave evidence to the effect that Sommerville, finding he could not get the 17s. he demanded, commenced to assault Taher, and that then Mahomed Benani went to the assistance of his son, who while in the lobby was also being attacked by Stranaghan and Garland. The father showed a bruise on the left temple, which he said had been caused by a blow from Sommerville. He also said that one of his teeth was loosened in the affray. The son asserted that his watch was taken by someone during the struggle, and added that he received a severe blow from Sommerville while he was in the lobby. Both of these complainants gave their evidence in a very excited manner. Alarbi Bengelun gave corroborative testimony through an interpreter, though he caused some amusement by frequently answering the questions before they had been translated to him—Kate Cullen (housekeeper to the Benanis) and two boys residing in the neighbourhood having given evidence, the Bench imposed a fine of 20s. and costs on Sommerville, and dismissed the other cases.

9. A BLACK SERVANT GIRL, FROM TAROUDANT TO MANCHESTER[1]

I observed a little black woman of indeterminate age confronting me.

"You come from Manchester, master," she greeted me. "I lived in Fallowfield— on Eger ton Road."

[1] Jim Ingram, *The Land of Mud Castles* (London: John Long, 1952), p. 39.

"Did you—my home is near there," I told her. "How did you come to be there?"

"My master bought me in Taroudant, beyond the Atlas Mountains" she replied. "He took me to Manchester and there I stayed for many years. Now he is dead, and I am back here."

Listening to her I could not help thinking how very odd it all was, this girl, for girl she had been then, bought in the slave market in the distant Sous Valley, taken to live in a big old house in Manchester, then coming back to end her days in Fez. Two worlds farther apart it would be harder to imagine, and one wondered what these Moors, in their secret minds, thought of modern civilization as typified by Lancashire? Certainly there was more warmth and colour, more quiet peace and beauty in Fez, than amid the dingy, squalid buildings of the cotton towns.

10. BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE WITH MANCHESTER[1]

While I sat on a cushion sipping it Ben Slimane described commercial relations between Fez and my native city of Manchester. A number of Moors from Fez, it seemed, lived in Manchester, dealing in cottons for the Moroccan market. Ben Slimane had been sent there as a young man to learn the shipping trade, and with the Moor's ready facility for learning languages had not only learned standard English but had acquired a knowledge of Lancashire dialect as well. Now he was back in Fez selling cotton goods to his

[1] Jim Ingram, *The Land of Mud Castles* (London: John Long, 1952), p. 39.

countrymen. To many Moors, he said, the name of Manchester was far more familiar than was London.

"Can you type?" asked Ben Slimane suddenly.

"I've used a typewriter since I was eight years old," I replied modestly.

"Do you want a temporary job?" he continued. "The clerk who handles my English correspondence is ill and I want somebody to do his job for a few days."

"I am just the man you need," I told him. "I know typing and shorthand and writing letters is my particular delight. Now just show me what you want me to do."

Anxious to earn some money to keep me while staying in Fez I eagerly listened to his instructions. Ben Slimane's business, I discovered, was not only extensive but extended into some curious byways. Caravans distributed the cotton goods to the various agents and traders located around Fez, often making payment in figs and dates, grain or hides, so that perhaps several transactions took place before a deal was completed. So behold me a short time afterward seated at the rickety table pounding away on a battered typewriter letters and invoices destined for my home town. What an incongruous picture it created in my mind, a vision of rainy Manchester contrasted with this old inn with its cobbled courtyard with haughty camels tethered there, and the high red walls of Fez beyond. In my spare time I took advantage of the situation to type out stories and articles for submission to magazines in England.

11. MOORISH LADY'S DEATH[1]

At the Manchester City Coroner's Court yesterday the Deputy Coroner (Mr. W. Sellars) held an inquest on the body of Zassamein Benquivan, a Moorish lady, who died under tragic circumstances at Parkfield-street, Rusholme, on Wednesday. The husband of the deceased, Dris Benquiran, carries on the business of a shipper in the city.

The evidence showed that Mrs. Benquiran, who had only been in England five months, was a very excitable person. On Wednesday she had some words with a servant employed at the house and it was alleged that the servant struck her, but this was denied by the servant, Jane O'Connor. Later Mrs. Benquiran was found dead in the kitchen, having hanged herself with a rope fastened to a hook at one end of the ceiling.

Mr. Benquiran, in reply to the Deputy Coroner, said suicide was considered "a very great crime" in his country; in fact, it was so seriously considered that it was scarcely ever heard of. The husband was not allowed to attend the funeral, or take any notice of it.

The Deputy Coroner: I am asking you this to show that the woman could scarcely have been in her right senses to do this.

The jury returned a verdict of "suicide while of unsound mind."

[1] *The Manchester Courier*, 27 October 1906.

12. MANCHESTER TRADE LETTER FROM HAMED BOAYED[1]

To the Editor of the *Manchester Guardian*. Sir,−Since you kindly published my letter of February 13 regarding "Japanese Goods in Morocco," there have been further developments.

The Dahir, which is intended to protect the market against unreasonably low-priced goods and re-establish a normal level of prices, may go into effect any day, and the extra tax will immediately be added to the invoices. Consequently most merchants are afraid to buy these goods, and the banks are refusing to guarantee credit on them, as they would obviously lose heavily if merchants were not well established financially.

Therefore the trade in Japanese goods has fallen off decidedly although the agents have dropped their prices still lower in the effort to recover the lost business, for instance, the striped drill mentioned in my last letter has declined from 4s. 3d. to as low as 3s. 10d., and the artificial silk material in 30-yard pieces from 10s. to 7s. The prospects at present seem good for greater stability of trade on a reasonable basis of values.

The report, cited in the letter signed "El Hak" in your issue of February 21, that the Dahir may be rescinded is without foundation, and emanated directly from the agents of Japanese firms. The law is directed at no particular nation, but as before stated only "endeavours by a proportional tax to raise inferior-priced goods to the normal level on the basis of equality for all."

[1] *The Manchester Guardian,* 11 March 1933.

----Yours, &c.,

Hamed Boayed, Partner in Elarbi Boayed and Co. Fez, Morocco, March 6.

13. THE FIRST MOROCCAN FAILURE IN MANCHESTER.[1]

Ahmed Amor, a partner in the firm of M. and M. Bengelun, shipping merchants, of 27, Minshun Street, appeared at the Manchester Bankruptcy Court yesterday for public examination. The debtor stated that he was the first Moroccan merchant to fail in Manchester, and his solicitor said he believed this was the case.

Amor's liabilities were £71,524, and his assets £28,697 net, leaving a deficiency of £42,827. He attributed his failure to "heavy depreciation in the values of goods bought for future delivery, and bad debts in Morocco owing to fluctuations in the rate of exchange." He became a partner in the firm in 1920. There were three other partners in Morocco, and from 1921 he had controlled the Manchester end of the business. It was not the Moroccan custom to book orders at fixed prices, but merely to accept goods at prices current at the date of delivery. The result was that when values fell goods bought at high prices in Manchester had been sold for less than cost price some months later. Customers had also refrained from paying accounts in the hope of the exchange improving to their advantage, and there were accounts to the value of £50,000 outstanding, which would not realise anything like this amount. The examination was closed.

[1] *The Manchester Guardian*, 17 March 1923.

14. A SENSATIONAL ABDUCTION:[1] A MOOR AND AN ENGLISH GIRL.

A charge of abducting a Salford girl, named Clara Casey, brought by Mr. Mitchell, the acting British Consul at Tangier, against Ben Cassem, a travelling Moorish acrobat, has had a sensational result. Mr. Mitchell summoned Ben Cassem to the Consulate, and accused him of unlawfully marrying at Manchester Clara Casey, who was under age, while he had a wife living. He ordered the Moor to restore her to her parents in England, paying the fare back, or else be brought before the Governor for summary judgment.

The Moor burst into a torrent of abuse, and after refusing to obey, whipped on a revolver and pointed it at the Consul's head. A clerk attempted to grapple with the Moor, but he was too quick, and fled. The clerk slipped out by another door, and closed with him in the passage. The Moor thereupon struck him on the face with the butt end of the revolver, and escaped. He was chased by a crowd as he fled down the street, flourishing the revolver. He was eventually arrested and lodged in prison.

The girl whom the Moor is accused of unlawfully marrying is only 17 years old. It is said she was terrorized into going through the ceremony, which was performed according to Mohammedan rites. It appears that her parents consented to the marriage, but repented afterwards. The woman who says her Moorish husband has a violent temper, and has ill-treated her on several occasions. She declares that

[1] *The Advertiser*, 4 July 1905.

she loves him still, and will go to him as soon as he is released. She returns to England shortly to fulfill an engagement with a Moorish troupe. A Liverpool correspondent called at the office of Sheik Quilliam, and was supplied with information as to the marriage ceremony.

The marriage ceremony, according to the Islamic law, has some peculiarities of its own which, if the greatest care is not exercised, may easily give rise to misunderstandings between a couple, one of whom is a European, and does not understand Moslem customs.

The Islamic authorities in England are fully alive to these difficulties, and their marriage laws and customs would certainly seem stringent enough in case of mixed marriages to reduce misunderstandings to a minimum. Thrice have had to be sworn by both parties that there is no impediment to the marriage: thrice does the man swear that he is a bachelor, and thrice does the woman swear that she has no legal tie against the marriage; in addition to this the woman is interrogated apart from her intended husband, the consequence and meaning of the marriage contract are explained to her, and finally they thrice swear that "without qualification or mental reservation of any kind or what-ever they each, of his and her own free and unfettered will and accord, agreed and consented to intermarry one with the other according to the Holy Law and undying faith of Islam".

In the case of the marriage referred to, it is stated that the woman embraced the faith of Islam, and visited the mosque in Liverpool on one or two occasions after the marriage, and seemed quite happy.

15. THE MOSQUE MARRIAGE:[1] CLARA CASEY TELLS HER STORY.

The *Express* correspondent at Tangier has interviewed Clara Casey, the Manchester girl who is said to have been terrorised into marrying Ben Cassem, a Moorish acrobat, at the Mosque in Liverpool on March 13.

He telegraphed yesterday that the girl made the following statement to him: "I am seventeen, and a native of Manchester, where my parents and most of my friends live. I have danced for five years in the pantomime at the theatre where I first met Ben Cassem four months ago. Two months afterwards I was married to him at the Liverpool Mosque. Mrs. Quinlliam, the wife of the Sheikh, who was present at the ceremony, told me that the marriage was perfectly valid. I have shown my marriage certificate to the Consul, who has taken a copy of it to send to the Foreign Office. I knew at the time of my marriage that Ben Cassem had another wife and it is I alone who am to blame for all this trouble. Ben Cassem struck me and I wrote home. If I had not done that he would not be in custody now and I should be with him. The Consul wants to send me home, but I am Mahomedan and shall return to Cassem as soon as he is set free."

[1] *The Manchester Courier*, 20 May, 1905.

16. MARRIED TO A MOOR: ROMANTIC STORY FROM TANGIER [1]

Particulars were given at Liverpool on Saturday of the circumstances of the marriage of the Moorish acrobat to a Lancashire girl, whom the British Consulate at Tangier is reported to have demanded should be sent back to England. It appears that the man is the son of a farmer, and the girl the daughter of an engineer at Salford. In March last the man was performing with a troupe of acrobats at the Empire Theatre, Ardwick, and the marriage took place on the 13th March at the Liverpool Mosque. The ceremony was performed by Billal Quilliam Bey, chief of the Moslems of the United Kingdom, who states that the marriage took place according to Moslem rites. The man, as by Moslem custom, swore three times before the ceremony that he was a bachelor, and the girl stated privately that she was being married of her own free will. She also said she was a theatrical artist, and that she had become a convert to Mahommedism. Both seemed happy, and promised to revisit the Mosque on their return to England.

News from Tangier says: The English girl who has been brought here by a Moor as his wife has been interviewed. Her name is Clara Casey, and she comes from Salford. She belongs to the theatrical profession. It appears that her parents consented to the marriage, but afterwards repented. Casey states that her Moorish husband has a violent temper, and has ill-treated her on several occasions. She

[1] *Wells Journal*, 1 June 1905.

declares that she still loves him, and will go to him as soon as he is released. She returns to England shortly to fulfill an engagement with a Moorish troupe.

54. Clara Casey: Bride of Mohamed Ben Belkassem

17.THE LAST OF THE MOORS[1]

Driven out of business by foreign competition, the last Moorish merchant in Manchester has closed his office and left the city this week, and with him have gone the remnants of a picturesque colony of Moroccan people which for many years lived in Parkfield Street, Rusholme. The forerunners of this little colony came to Manchester over half a century ago, and at one time there were some thirty families living in Rusholme. They were quiet people, having their own social life, and the men, wearing the red fez, were often to be seen taking the air in Whitworth Park. As adherents of the Mohammedan faith, they worshipped in a house in Parkfield Street. As business men they had an excellent reputation for straight dealing. They dealt exclusively with Sewell's Bank, afterwards incorporated into the Union Bank, and a well-known Manchester solicitor, who understood their mentality in a way few Englishmen could hope to do, became the adviser to whom they always took their difficulties in the first instance.

18. KENZA LAGHZAOUI IN AMERICA[2]

The Brewster businessman who recently assumed the post of National Director- General of Police in Morocco has the necessary background for the Job—he spent two years in jail there. Mohammed Laghzaoui, a native of Morocco whose wife still lives in Croton Falls, was imprisoned from 1944 to

[1] *The Manchester Guardian*, 17 September 1936.
[2] *Chappaqua sun*, 19 April 1956.

1946 because he was a member of the Istiqlal Party seeking Morocco's Independence from France.

"So you see he has some experience with police work," his wife, Kinza, laughs pleasantly.

Mrs. Laghzaoui expects to join her husband in June after the school year is ended. She is not too eager to return to Morocco.

"I certainly hope we'll be back soon," she says. "I feel that this is our home and I want my four children to get their education in this country."

The wife of the Brewster businessman has some unpleasant memories of her children's education in Morocco. "They had to attend French schools," she says, "where they were looked down upon. When they started going to school here, they found that they were accepted and treated

55.Laghzaoui Family in America: Top, left to right: Aicha, Mrs. Kenza Laghzaoui and Dafir. Front, left to right: Aziz and Khalid

the same as American citizens. They love this country very much."

When the children return to Morocco, Mrs. Laghzaoui will enroll them in an American school in Tangiers in the International Zone. She would rather have them learn English than French because she feels it is a more useful language to go with the Arabic they already speak.

The Laghzaouis came to this country after they were politely asked to leave Morocco. The request came when Mr. Laghzaoui, then President of the National Chamber of Commerce, made a highly critical speech about the French, before the National Assembly in Morocco in 1950.

They settled in Croton Falls where they have won many friends. Mrs. Laghzaoui, however, is often surprised at how little they know about Morocco. She still chuckles about the person who asked, "How far is it from Formosa?"

Mrs. Laghzaoui was born in England, but her parents were from Morocco and that's where she's spent most of her life. Her last visit to England was in 1938.

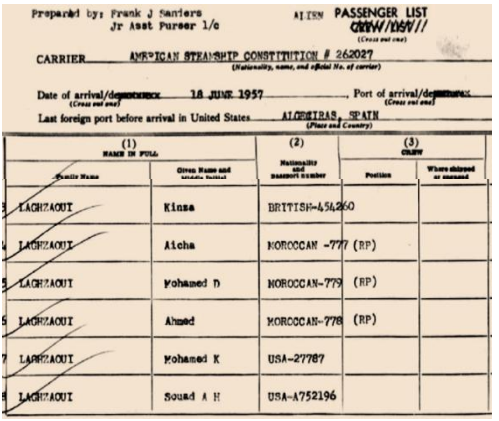
In February of this year, Mr. Laghzaoui went to Morocco for a short visit just before the French protectorate won its complete in dependence. While there he paid his respects to an old friend, Mohammed Ben Youssef, Sultan of Morocco, who is now busy trying to gain North-Morocco's independence from Spain. The Sultan offered him the post of National Director-General of Police which he assumed March 23.

In 1955 Mr. Laghzaoui had entered a partnership with Rexford J. Cole of Brewster. They erected a block of stores at the intersection of Routes 6 and 22, known as the Cole Building. Mr. Laghzaoui has named Mr. Cole his legal

representative in America, with full power of attorney during his absence.

"And I certainly hope the absence won't be long." Mrs. Laghzaoui says. "The job has no definite term of office and I hope it doesn't become permanent because I will be anxious to return to my friends in America."

The Laghzaouis have one daughter, Aicha, 14, and three sons, Mohammed Dafir, 10, Ahmed Aziz, 6, and Mohammed Khalid, 4.



Prepared by: Frank J Santora
Jr Asst Purser 1/c

ALIEN PASSENGER LIST

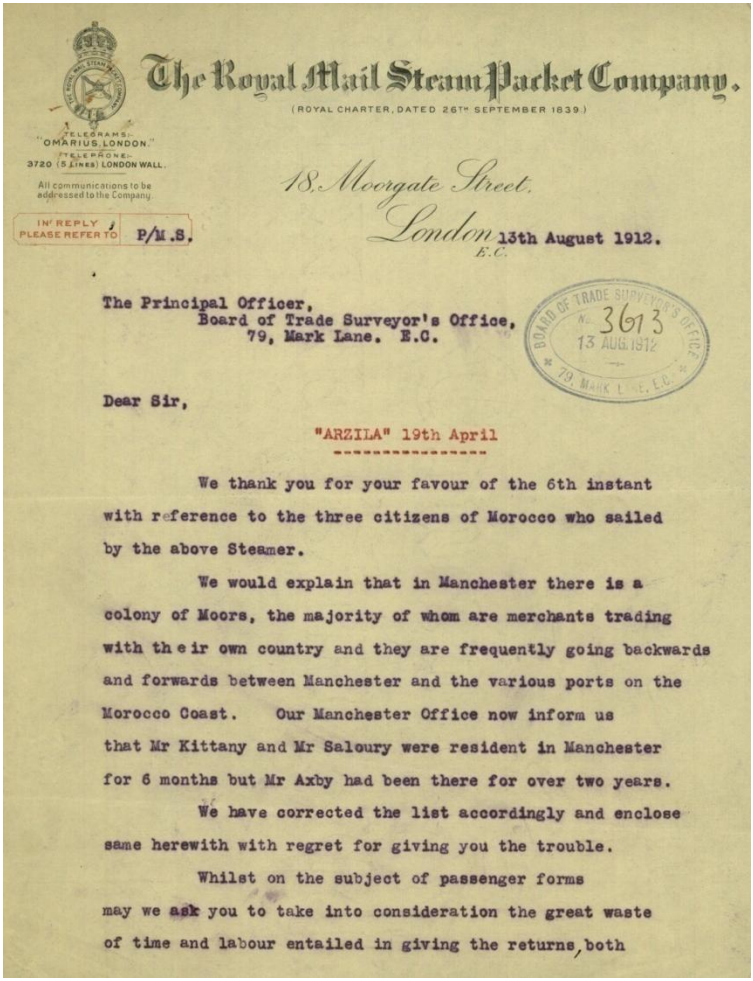
CARRIER AMERICAN STEAMSHIP CONSTITUTION # 262027

Date of arrival/departure 18 JUNE 1957, Port of arrival/departure

Last foreign port before arrival in United States ALGECIRAS, SPAIN

(1) NAME IN FULL		(2)	(3) CREW	
Family Name	Given Name and Middle Initial	Nationality and Passport Number	Position	Where shipped or assumed
LAGHZAOUI	Kinza	BRITISH-456260		
LAGHZAOUI	Aicha	MOROCCAN -777 (RP)		
LAGHZAOUI	Mohamed D	MOROCCAN-779 (RP)		
LAGHZAOUI	Ahmed	MOROCCAN-778 (RP)		
LAGHZAOUI	Mohamed K	USA-27787		
LAGHZAOUI	Souad A H	USA-A752196		

56. Arrival of Mohamed and Kinza Laghzaoui and their children to New York in June 1957



The Royal Mail Steam Packet Company.

(ROYAL CHARTER, DATED 26TH SEPTEMBER 1839.)

TELEGRAMS:
"OMARIUS, LONDON."
TELEPHONE:
3720 (5 LINES) LONDON WALL.

All communications to be addressed to the Company.

IN REPLY PLEASE REFER TO P/M.S.

18, Moorgate Street,
London E.C. 13th August 1912.

BOARD OF TRADE SURVEYOR'S OFFICE
No. 3613
13 AUG. 1912
79 MARK LANE, E.C.

The Principal Officer,
Board of Trade Surveyor's Office,
79, Mark Lane. E.C.

Dear Sir,

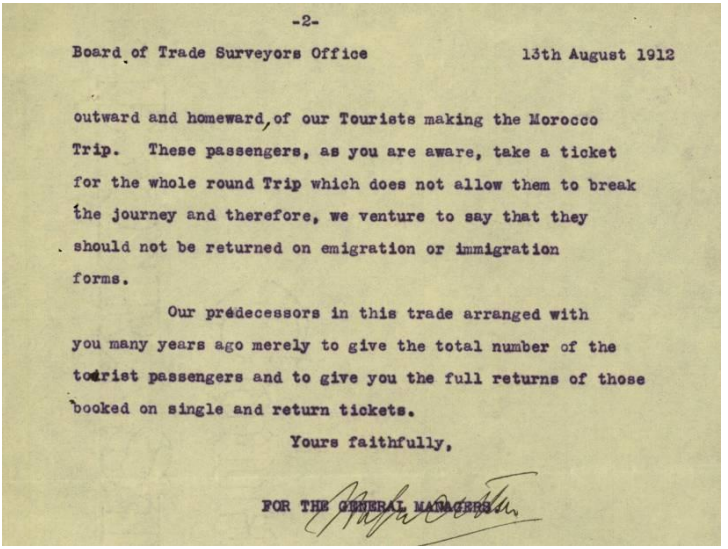
"ARZILA" 19th April

We thank you for your favour of the 6th instant with reference to the three citizens of Morocco who sailed by the above Steamer.

We would explain that in Manchester there is a colony of Moors, the majority of whom are merchants trading with their own country and they are frequently going backwards and forwards between Manchester and the various ports on the Morocco Coast. Our Manchester Office now inform us that Mr Kittany and Mr Saloury were resident in Manchester for 6 months but Mr Axby had been there for over two years.

We have corrected the list accordingly and enclose same herewith with regret for giving you the trouble.

Whilst on the subject of passenger forms may we ask you to take into consideration the great waste of time and labour entailed in giving the returns, both



-2-

Board of Trade Surveyors Office 13th August 1912

outward and homeward, of our Tourists making the Morocco Trip. These passengers, as you are aware, take a ticket for the whole round Trip which does not allow them to break the journey and therefore, we venture to say that they should not be returned on emigration or immigration forms.

Our predecessors in this trade arranged with you many years ago merely to give the total number of the tourist passengers and to give you the full returns of those booked on single and return tickets.

Yours faithfully,

FOR THE GENERAL MANAGER.

57. Correspondence making reference to Moroccan traders based in Manchester

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