

The Portuguese rout near Ksar el-Kebir during the famous Battle of the Three Kings was received as a miracle from God and the 1st / 2nd of Elul went down in the calendar as a day of celebration. Thus was instituted the *Purim de los Christianos* or *Purim Sebastiano*. The memory of this *Purim* was still vivid in Tetouan and Tangier Synagogues where, on that day a *megillah* written on parchment, in the best tradition was read out: “ a great miracle took place in the year 5338 favouring the Jews dwelling in diverse regions of Morocco. The greatness of this miracle arises from the fact that the King of Portugal, whose name was Sebastian, may his name and memory be obliterated, arrived full of arrogance and, after devious machinations, presumed to conquer Morocco. This was a time of anguish for Jacob for this wicked man had, in his overbearing heart vowed in the house of his God made of wood and stone, to subject to baptismal waters all who would recommend themselves of the name of Israel and to have all rebels run through by sword. And we prayed the Holy One blessed be his name and he remembered us. Praise be to God, blessed be he who made this day, let us be merry and rejoice in it....

Adapted from Joseph Tolédano, *L'esprit du Mellah Humour et Folklore des juifs du Maroc*, Éditions Ramtol, 1986.