



CASA DA INQUISIÇÃO

Interactive Jewish History
Center in Monsaraz



MEZUZAH / PRAYER

Another evidence that attests to the antiquity of the Jewish community in Monsaraz relates to evidences on the Mezuzah, which we found in a doorframe of a building in Rua de Santiago. These marks identify an ancient Hebrew ritual which seeks to fulfil the words of Dt 6:4-9 (Book of Deuteronomy, Chapter 6, verse 4 to 9) ordering the engraving of the monotheistic faith on Jewish doorframes.

Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord.

And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart;

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9



Detail of a Mezuzah in Monsaraz, where pray was placed.



Menorah: seven arms chandelier, represents the light of the Torá, and is one of the most important Jewish symbols. Probably appeared when the Jews fled from Egypt.



Évora Street in Monsaraz, the probable location of the medieval Jewish quarter.

JUDAISM

Judaism, a monotheistic religion, has about 4.000 years. It was born on the claim that the Hebrews were the chosen people by the One Lord «Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord.» (Dt. 6.4), a prayer recited twice a day, in the morning and at night, according to the rites and precepts of the Torah or Law - which were revealed to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses, to whom He gave, on Mount Sinai, the Tablets of the Law containing the 10 commandments, a spiritual, ethical, historical and cultural foundation of this religion that refuses polytheism. The Hebrew word was used for the first time in the Bible to describe Abraham, a native of the village of Ur in Mesopotamia. Around 1760 BC, Abraham settled with his people in Canaan, the promised land. The Hebrews, living from agriculture and animal breeding, branched, settling in Sichem, Hebron, the city where Abraham was buried, and in Bersheva and Gerar.



The Municipality of Reguengos de Monsaraz suggests the discovery of our county through the use of digital media.



VisitReguengos

THE INQUISITION IN MONSARAZ

According to the existing documentation, from 1553 to 1767, 86 inquisitorial proceedings were initiated against residents/natives of Monsaraz in courts of the Holy Office of Évora (77), Lisbon (8) and Coimbra (1). Of the 86 existing proceedings, 67 were initiated for Judaism, heresy and apostasy and the others were related to witchcraft practices, superstition, Lutheranism, bigamy, sorcery and a pact with the devil. From this list, 53 men and 33 women were charged. Among these, two men and a woman were sentenced to secular justice, i.e., they were burned to death in the fires of the Inquisition. In some of the processes we find references to various practices described as Jewish, of which stand out: sweeping the house backwards (from the front door towards the interior of the house), owning a low height table, not eating pork, rabbit, hare and fish without scales, praying to Moses and lighting a candle in the Shabbat (Saturday, the Jewish day of rest).



Sculptural Detail in Monsaraz Parish Church.



Act of faith in Lisbon.

THE MEDIEVAL JEWISH QUARTER

For over four centuries we found several references to the ancient Jewish quarter of Monsaraz.

In 1276, the Foral of D. Afonso III ordered the Moors and Jews to file charges against the perpetrators to the mayor or to the alvazis (a ruler or a judge appointed by the King) of Monsaraz for assaults and beatings.

In 1382, and for a period of two years, Abraão Alfáreme, a resident in Monsaraz, was in charge of collecting the rent of the fiscal administrative division of Monsaraz and Mourão and their geographical area. For this contract, made with D. Fernando I, this Hebrew would receive the Royal rights of these lands, «assii do pam comme do vinho, comme das aduanas e portages, comme do relego e dos terços das dizemias da eglise de Mouram, comme das armas e das coymas dellas, e d'alcaydaria e açougagem e çalayo e moordomado, comme de todollos outros direitos que de direito devemos d'aver em os dictos logares e outrossi os dinheiros da deffessa de Mouram», by the large sum of five thousand pounds annually. This contract didn't include the tithe for textiles and goods, as well as

goods from people without heirs and the service from Jews that were reserved to the Crown. The Jewish presence in Monsaraz, an agricultural and mercantile village rich in cereals, wine and livestock, dates back to earlier times. Throughout the 15th century, especially at the end of that particular century, with the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, the Jewish community of Monsaraz grew, with the Hebrews moving into houses located between Rua de Santiago, Travessa da Cisterna and Rua Direita.

In 1502, D. Manuel grants D. Jaime, Duke of Braganza, a pension (tença) regarding the rent of several Jewish quarters, which he failed to receive as a result of the prohibition of Jews and Moors in Portugal, in which rose Monsaraz, with an income of 5,000 reais annually.

According to a document of Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Monsaraz, dated from 1601, we know that the Jewish quarter of the village was located within the city walls, along the alleyways of Porta de Évora to Rua de Santiago.

MONUMENTS

- 1 Chapel of St. Joseph
- 2 House of the Inquisition
- 3 Castle
- 4 Cistern
- 5 Church of Misericórdia
- 6 Church of Santiago
- 7 Church of Our Lady of the Lagoon
- 8 Mezuzah
- 9 Fresco Museum
- 10 New City Council - Casa Monsaraz
- 11 Pillory
- 12 Alcoba Door
- 13 Buraco Door
- 14 Évora Door

Probable boundaries of the Jewish quarter



THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INQUISITION

On October 22, 1536, the Inquisition's creation papal bull was proclaimed in Évora, in the pulpit of the Cathedral, before the court. And so begins, for the Portuguese Jews, a new era of misery and weeping. In Portugal, Évora was the region where the court of the Holy Office aroused more panic and exerted more cold and intense purification activity against the Hebrew blood. Of the three courts installed in Portugal - Lisbon, Coimbra and Évora - it was the one in Évora, the most active and the one that carried out the most exhausting task of purification. Its jurisdiction covered all Alentejo and Algarve and therefore included the territory of Monsaraz.



Inquisition court/prison building in Évora.



Polé torture, frequently used in Portuguese inquisition.