THE JEWS Of Kurdistan

,

ERICH BRAUER

COMPLETED AND EDITED BY

•

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS DETROIT

CONTENTS

| Illustrations | 13 |
|--|----------------|
| Preface | 15 |
| Preface to the Hebrew Edition | 23 |
| Publications by Erich Brauer | 31 |
| Abbreviations . | 33 |
| Part One: Introduction | |
| 1. Ethnological Research | 37 |
| Benjamin of Tudela and Petahya of Ratisbonne | 38 |
| Al-Harizi | 39 |
| Yiḥya al-Zāhiri | 40 |
| The Sh'lihim (Emissaries) | 40 |
| R. David d'Bet Hillel | 41 |
| The Nestorian Mission | 43 |
| Missionary Work among Jews | 45 |
| Joseph Israel Benjamin (Benjamin II) | 4 6 |
| Alliance Israelite Universelle | 48 |
| Recent Journeys | 48 |
| Beginning of the Scientific Study of the Country | 49 |
| 2. The Land | 50 |
| 3. HISTORY OF THE KURDISH JEWS | 56 |
| Twelfth Century: David Alroy | 57 |
| Thirteenth Century: Al-Harizi | 60 |
| Hazan David and Hazan Yosef | 62 |

CONTENTS

| Sixteenth Century: Yihya al-Zāhiri and | |
|---|-----|
| Documents (Letters) | 64 |
| Nineteenth-Century Uprisings | 67 |
| Kurdistan in the Iraqi State (up to 1939) | 69 |
| Part Two: The Material Culture | |
| 4. The Dwelling | 75 |
| Houses of the Jews | 76 |
| Construction of the House | 77 |
| Furnishing the House | 79 |
| Initiation Ceremony | 80 |
| Amulets for the House | 80 |
| 5. Clothing | 82 |
| Costume of the Kurds | 83 |
| Costume of the Nestorians | 83 |
| Costume of the Kurdish Women | 84 |
| The Nestorians | 85 |
| Costume of the Jews of Amadiya | 85 |
| Costume of Jewish Women | 88 |
| Costumes in Sinne: Men | 90 |
| Sinne: Costume of the Women | 90 |
| 6. Food | 92 |
| Bread | 93 |
| Meat Dishes | 95 |
| Preserved Meat | 96 |
| Dairy Products | 97 |
| Vegetables (Yirke) | 99 |
| Burgul and Rice | 99 |
| Dumplings | 100 |
| Fish | 101 |
| Maza | 101 |
| Sweets | 102 |
| Beverages | 103 |
| Narcotics | 104 |
| Meals | 105 |
| Part Three: The Family | |
| 7. Marriage | 109 |
| Marriageable Age | 109 |
| The Niqda (Bride-Price) | 110 |
| Lēl Kethētha, "Night of the Chickens" | 113 |
| 6 | |

.

'n

Contents

| Shabbat Ma'arafe | 115 |
|---|-----|
| The Betrothal (Qadōshe) | 115 |
| The Interim | 116 |
| Preparations for the Wedding | 117 |
| The Dyeing with Henna | 119 |
| The Invitation to the Aga | 120 |
| The Henna Night in Amadiya | 122 |
| The Bride's Bath | 124 |
| The Bridegroom's Bath (Khiyăpit Khitna) | 125 |
| The Bridegroom's Bath in Amadiya | 126 |
| Dressing the Bride | 127 |
| The Bride's Costume | 127 |
| The Bridegroom's Costume | 128 |
| The Procession to the Bride's House | 129 |
| Arrival of the Procession; Berakhta | 130 |
| Dangers of the Seven Benedictions | 132 |
| Taking the Bride to the Bridegroom's Home: | |
| Shenōyit Kālo | 134 |
| The Bridal Chamber | 137 |
| The Wedding Feast | 138 |
| The Yihud | 139 |
| The Seven Feast Days | 140 |
| Subahiya Dekhitna (Breakfast of the Bridegroom) | 142 |
| Marriage among the Village Jews | 146 |
| Birth and Childhood | 149 |
| Dangers to Pregnant Women and | |
| Protection against Them | 150 |
| The Delivery | 153 |
| Position during Delivery | 154 |
| Difficult Labor | 155 |
| Care and Treatment of the Mother after Delivery | 156 |
| Care and Treatment of the Child after Delivery | 157 |
| The Taboo on Women after Delivery | 158 |
| The Week before the Circumcision | 160 |
| Shabbat Avī Haben | 162 |
| <i>Lēl Sheshe</i> (Sixth Night) | 163 |
| The Night before the Circumcision: Wachnacht | 164 |
| The Circumcision | 166 |
| Magic | 167 |
| | |

8.

CONTENTS

| The Circumcision Feast | 168 |
|--|-----|
| Care of the Child; the Cradle | 169 |
| Feeding of the Infant | 169 |
| Childhood; the First Tooth | 170 |
| Growth of the Child | 171 |
| Learning to Walk | 171 |
| Children Who Are Thought to Be in Danger | 172 |
| 9. The Kurdish Jewess | 175 |
| Polygamy | 178 |
| Treatment of Women | 179 |
| Daily Work | 180 |
| Handicraft and Needlework | 181 |
| Laws of Purity | 181 |
| The Mique | 182 |
| Adultery and Divorce | 183 |
| Levirate Marriage | 188 |
| 10. Death and Burial | 190 |
| The Havrāye | 191 |
| Marriage of the Dead | 194 |
| Washing the Body | 195 |
| The Grave | 197 |
| The Funeral Procession | 198 |
| Mourning Customs | 199 |
| The Cemetery and Visits to the Cemetery | 202 |
| Part Four: Economic Conditions | |
| 11. Agriculture | 205 |
| Decline of the Peasantry | 206 |
| The Jew as Peasant | 207 |
| Rice Culture | 208 |
| Community Work | 208 |
| Viticulture | 209 |
| 12. Trade | 212 |
| 13. Handicraft | 217 |
| Weavers | 218 |
| Tailors | 219 |
| Raftsmen | 219 |
| PART FIVE: SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND EDUCATION | |
| 14. He Aga and His Jews | 223 |
| 15. The Jewish Community | 228 |

| The Gabbai | 228 |
|---|-----|
| The Hazan | 231 |
| The Shammash | 232 |
| The Shohet | 233 |
| 16. The Education of Boys | 236 |
| Teachers and Schools | 237 |
| Instruction | 239 |
| Studying the Bible | 242 |
| Punishments | 244 |
| Student Excursions | 247 |
| 17. The Synagogue | 249 |
| Age of the Synagogues—Their Names | 249 |
| Site of the Synagogue | 251 |
| Floor Plan | 252 |
| The Courtyard | 252 |
| The <i>Hēkbal</i> (Sanctuary) | 254 |
| The Torah Scrolls | 255 |
| The Women's Section | 257 |
| Genīza | 257 |
| 18. The Sabbath | 259 |
| The Day of Preparation | 264 |
| Friday Evening | 266 |
| Sabbath Morning | 267 |
| PART SIX: HOLIDAYS | |
| 19. Pesach | 275 |
| Shabbat Hagadol | 276 |
| Preparing the Matzot—Procuring the Grain | 277 |
| Grinding the Grain | 278 |
| The Baking of the Matzot | 279 |
| Purifying the Kitchenware; the Search for Hames | 280 |
| Blood Libel | 283 |
| The Seder Dish | 283 |
| The Seder Evening | 284 |
| Afikoman | 285 |
| Ma Nishtanneh | 286 |
| The Ten Plagues | 287 |
| Dayyênu | 288 |
| The Passover Meal | 290 |
| Burlesque Plays; Shelona | 290 |
| 1 2 7 | |

| Felling the Trees | 292 |
|---|-----|
| Stealing the Afikoman | 293 |
| The Feast Days | 294 |
| 20. Shavu'ot | 296 |
| 21. 9TH Av | 300 |
| The Reading of <i>Ekba</i> | 301 |
| The Morning Service | 303 |
| Children's Games Played on 9th Av | 304 |
| Kappara | 305 |
| 22. The Days of Awe | 306 |
| The Penitential Days—Selihot | 306 |
| The New Year | 308 |
| The Day of Atonement | 310 |
| 23. Sukkot—Tabernacles | 315 |
| The Booth | 315 |
| Lulav (the Sukkot Bouquet) | 316 |
| Hoshana Rabba | 317 |
| Examining the Shadow | 318 |
| Beating the Willows | 318 |
| Simhat Tora | 319 |
| Circumambulations | 320 |
| 24. The "Control of Rain" | 323 |
| Visitation of Tombs | 323 |
| The Rain-Bride | 327 |
| Robbing the Flocks | 330 |
| The Skull Custom | 332 |
| 25. Hanukka | 336 |
| 26. 15th Shevat | 341 |
| 27. PURIM | 344 |
| Customs of Adar | 344 |
| Shabbat of the Girls | 345 |
| Khiyāpit Kalewātha (The Brides' Bath) | 347 |
| Collection of Wood by the Boys | 348 |
| The Girls' Second Bath | 348 |
| Purim or Megalla | 349 |
| Reading of the Megilla | 349 |
| Popular Customs at the Reading | 351 |
| Evening Games and Amusements of the Young | 353 |
| Masquerades | 356 |
| | |

•

Contents

| Fire Games | 357 |
|--|-----|
| Burning of the Haman Effigy | 357 |
| 14th Adar | 359 |
| Purim Presents | 360 |
| 28. Shabbat Beshallah and Shabbat Nahamu | 363 |
| Notes | 367 |
| Bibliography | 401 |
| Glossary | 407 |

•

•