

THE SECRET JEWS OF MALLORCA

Some Catholics on the Spanish island of Mallorca have been discriminated against for centuries because their surnames have a connection to a Jewish heritage. They not only endured stigma and humiliation: they were also deprived of fundamental rights as citizens.

While a few have been inspired to return to the faith of their ancestors, their recent entry into the leadership of the local Jewish community has caused an unforeseen controversy among its members. Are they the best suited to lead Mallorquin Judaism despite not having practiced their faith for centuries?

SYNOPSIS

When the Inquisition decreed the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, there were no Jews officially left on this Mediterranean island. In 1435, the entire Jewish community underwent a massive baptism in order to save them from further persecution. But many converts - or "crypto Jews" - preserved the law of Moses. They lived secretly until 1691, when the "Autos de Fe" saw them publicly burned at the stake in front of the larger Mallorquin society.

Their descendants, the chuetas, are bearers of 15 surnames harshly stigmatized by the Church due to their Jewish past. Marginalized and subjugated, they were forced to marry between their same families for centuries - a dangerous breeding ground for the transmission of hereditary diseases, such as the "Mediterranean fever." The trauma they suffered was silenced by an ironclad social taboo, fostered even by themselves, eager to permanently forget the dark past.

Despite the deep rejection, the traces of Jewish gastronomy can be seen in popular Mallorquin food, and it is even believed that world-famous exported products such as the "ensaimada" may have Jewish roots. The chueta used lard or sobrasada (pork sausage) in their preparation, to signify their fervent Catholicism and show that they had left behind the customs of their ancestors.

Dani Rotstein, an American Jew and producer by profession, landed in Mallorca and discovered a robust legacy not yet widely known by the rest of the world. Fascinated by his continuous discoveries, he began to offer guided tours through the alleys of the Jewish quarters of Palma.



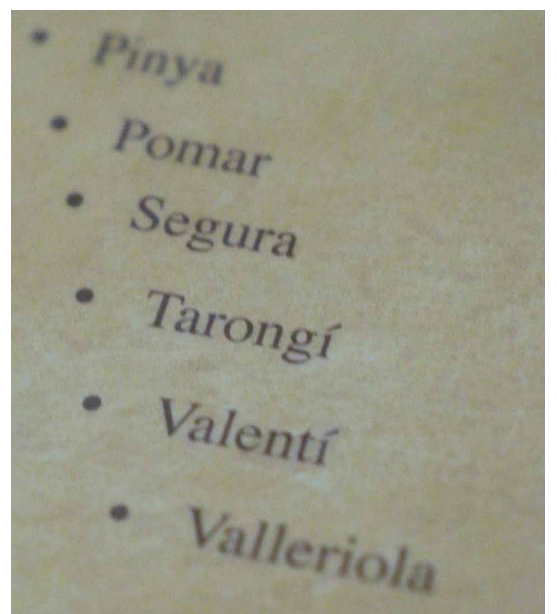


Rotstein understood that this was not only about legends of the past: it is a story in current development. He met chuetas like the writer Miquel Segura or the chef Toni Pinya, direct bearers of the stigma who undertook the complex path of returning to the Jewish faith; or the young historian Laura Miró, motivated to recover history to pass it on to new generations who completely ignored it to date.

In the only synagogue on the island, there are already discrepancies due to the different degrees of religious observation, the absence of a rabbi, and the diverse ethnicities of its members. The arrival of the chuetas to community leadership opens new dilemmas. Their children are not Jews according to halacha (religious law), many still do not know how to speak and read Hebrew, and there are those who consider their presence on the front line as an act of performative visibility.

This documentary interrogates fundamental questions of human nature such as historical memory; identity and belonging; generational clashes; and the preservation of tradition.

Despite the unquestionable weight of the past, the documentary explains the history and the present based mainly on first-person stories. It includes fragments of interviews and follow-ups to the subjects; dynamic footage of events that took place during the "Week of Jewish culture" in Palma; aerial drone shots that explore the geography of the island; and animations to help understand and visualize historical events, to give an updated touch to the story.



CAST



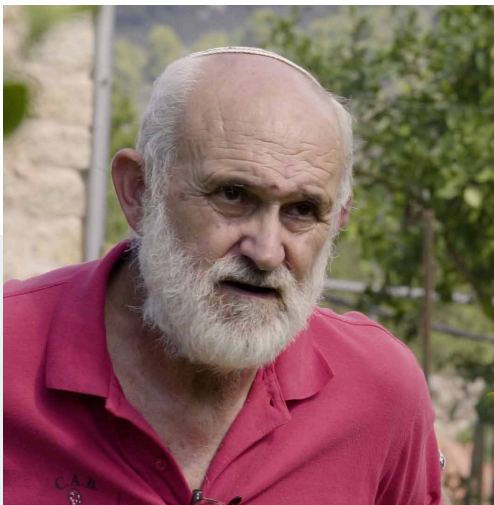
DANI ROTSTEIN

Producer and founder of "Jewish Majorca" (historical tours). Member of the board of directors of the Jewish Community of the Balearic Islands, and activist in Limud Mallorca.



MIQUEL SEGURA

Chueta journalist and writer. Returned to Judaism. Member of the board of directors of the Jewish Community of the Balearic Islands.



TONI PINYA

Chueta cook. Converted to Judaism. Member of the board of directors of the Jewish Community of the Balearic Islands.



LAURA MIRÓ

Chueta historian, writer and historical tour guide.



ABRAHAM BARCHILÓN

Former president of the Jewish Community of the Balearic Islands and lawyer.



ARI MOLINA

Current president of the Jewish Community of the Balearic Islands and chief of police of Andratx.



ITZHAK BARUJ Y YAEL RIVKA

Resident couple in Biniamar, Orthodox Jews on the island of Mallorca. Itzhak is a doctor in Inca.



JUAN MANUEL SEGURA (JOTA)

*Chueta teacher of philosophy.
Activist in Limud Mallorca.*



TOMEU ARBONA

Mallorquin pastry chef, specialized in local gastronomy and its Jewish roots.



FERRAN TARONGÍ

Chueta Mallorquin archaeologist.



ROBERT LÓPEZ

Restorer of old buildings, owner of Can Monroig in the Mallorquin town of Inca where there is a potential synagogue and mikveh discovery.



MANUEL RIPOLL

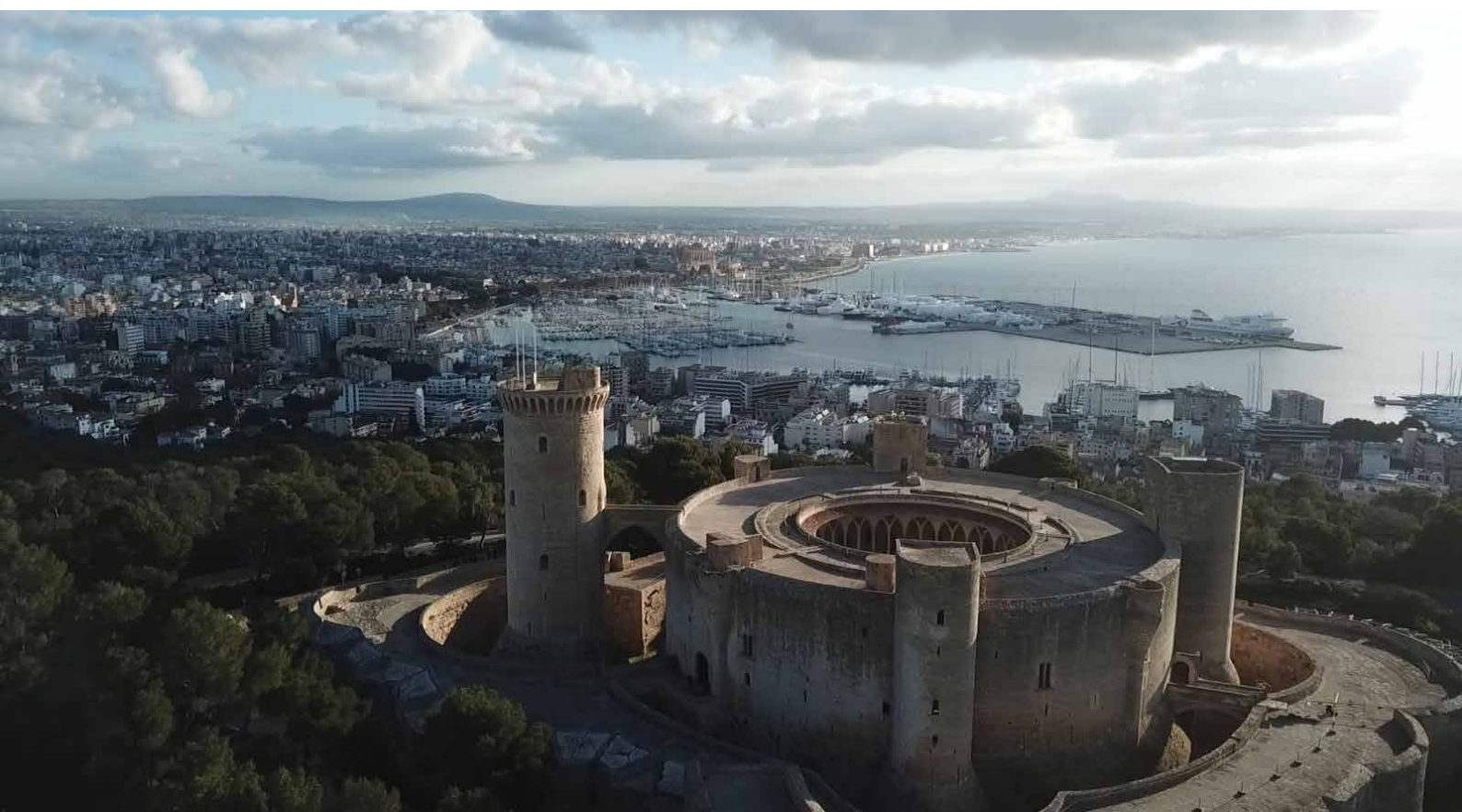
Mallorquin antiquarian bookseller. He has the 1st edition of the book "La Fe Triunfante" (Chronicle of the Autos de Fe) from 1691.

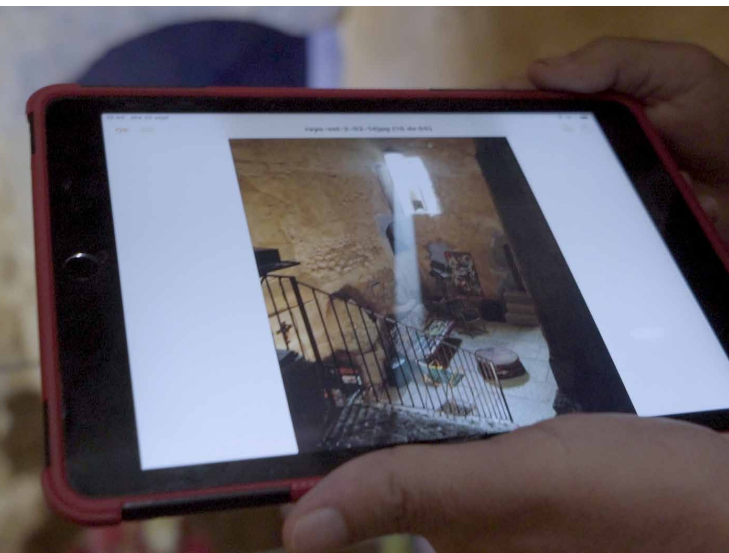


XISCA VALLS

Chueta returned to Judaism, wife of Toni Pinya and descendant of Rabbi Rafael Valls who was burned alive in 1691.

LOCATIONS







CREW

FELIPE WOLOKITA | CO-DIRECTOR, DOP, AND EDITOR

Graduated in Film and Television from Tel Aviv University, he has been working since 2012 in production and the filming of documentaries, as well as content for the media and international agencies. His film, "The Prince and the Frog", was shown on Channel 8 in Israel and was shown at film festivals around the world, including the "Mostra de Tiradentes" in Brazil. He is currently working as a freelancer for the main Brazilian media (Red Globo, Sportv and Band), and is a cameraman and editor for the SIC channel in Portugal. He produced and filmed dozens of television programs, documentaries, and special themes in Israel, the Palestinian Territories, the Balkans, Spain, Brazil, Turkey and Greece.

OFER LASZEWICKI | CO-DIRECTOR, JOURNALIST, AND ADDITIONAL CAMERA

A multimedia journalist, with a master's degree in International Politics from the Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona. Based in Tel Aviv, he collaborated for years as a freelancer for a multitude of media in Spain and Latin America. He is currently editor and announcer in the program "Kan in Spanish" of the national radio of Israel, correspondent from the newspaper "La Razón" (Madrid), and he films and edits videos for social networks and international press agencies. In 2017 he published the book "Israel out of focus: portraits of society beyond the conflict" (UOC editorial), a selection of reports that explores the diversity of Israeli society. He worked in production and script writing for documentaries published on the Israeli channels Kan11 and i24news.

DANI ROTSTEIN | PRODUCER & PROTAGONIST

Content producer, entrepreneur and storyteller, he settled in Mallorca in 2014, and for years he traveled the world producing advertisements for large commercial firms. He founded "Jewish Majorca" with his partner Carla Sainz Rozas Ciscar, an initiative that offers historical tours of the old town of Palma and organizes constant social events to promote Jewish activities on the island. The reality of Covid-19 prompted them to design virtual tours with VR / 360 and Zoom technology, which offer a comprehensive virtual vision of the local Jewish quarter. In addition, he produces and supervises the editing of video content and designs content strategies for social networks of different clients. Rotstein is also active in Limud Mallorca, a cultural association that he founded together with Carla in 2018.



MARTA HIERRO | JOURNALIST AND SCRIPTWRITER

She has a degree in Journalism from the Complutense University of Madrid. The desire to tell in-depth stories leads her into the world of documentaries, specializing in social, environmental, scientific and health issues. She has been the director and scriptwriter of documentaries for channels such as TVE, Arte, TV3 or IB3. Among them "Dorothea y el Myotragus", "La batlessa", "Espías en la arena" (audience award at the Reus Film Festival), "Memorimage", (Award for best feature film at the Som Cinema Festival in Lleida, Award for best documentary at the Festival Cinema Ciutadà Compromés de València, Special Mention at the Extrema'Doc Festival), "Agent Sicre. The American friend", "El viatge definitiu", "Vacances a Txernòbil", "The monsters of my house" (award for best documentary on Human Rights at the Independent Film and Video Festival of New York, Award for best documentary film in the Festival Inquiet), "Está d'Exili", "Baix en Carboni", "Chemical risk" and "Mallorca trotting".

JOAN BONET | SOUND MIXER

Music designer and technician, specialized in audio post-production. Extensive professional career as a sound technician on the RTVE Balears and IB3 TV channels; sound and lighting technician at the Palma Auditorium; sound and production technician in various record and soundtrack recording studios; and director and editor of reports and documentaries. He was in charge of the audio post-production of documentaries such as "The Inhabited House", "Money and Words", "The subway, the size of the world" or "Burnt Earth" (published in IB3); and is currently the director of "William Waldren, The Alchemist's Footprint" and "Brian Jones Tribute".

ALBERT ANDREU SÁNCHEZ | ANIMATION AND GRAPHICS

Editor and motion graphics artist with more than 15 years of experience in the audiovisual sector. He has developed his career as an editor of series, advertising spots, documentaries, shorts and feature films, which has allowed him to develop a variety of skills and talents to suit each medium. Albert is a versatile technician with extensive knowledge in photography, video and audio post-production and a special interest in graphic design and animation. He has worked in advertising spots with athletes of the stature of Rafa Nadal, or Radamel Falcao, he has participated in shorts with Hollywood stars such as Rhys Ifans and in documentaries with athletes such as Sir. Ben Ainslie.

