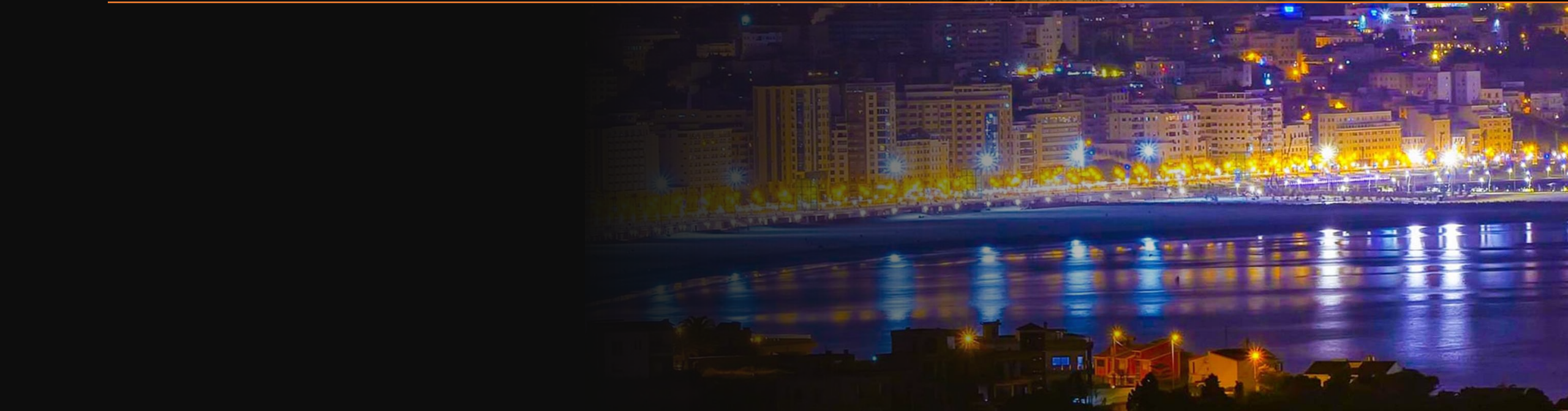




Origins and functions of the **Hawəssəš**

A cryptolect from
northwestern Morocco



The languages of gender/sexuality minorities of North Africa

- ❖ 10 cryptolects identified in **Morocco, Algeria** and **Tunisia**
- ❖ All have Maghrebian Arabic as a **matrix**
- ❖ They range from the **lexical register** to more **matrix-independent systems** with their own grammar
- ❖ Some are very geographically localised, others are more widespread
- ❖ Some are used by a specific community, others may be practiced by communities that do not belong to gender/sexuality minorities



The investigation

- I was contacted in 2022 by the queer-feminist Moroccan association (based in the Netherlands): **Taanit**
- We created a collaboration with the community members to create an archive
- We conducted a few **interviews** with the friends/contacts of the member of the association who practiced these cryptolects and are interested in the project of archiving **their knowledge, cultures, struggles and history**



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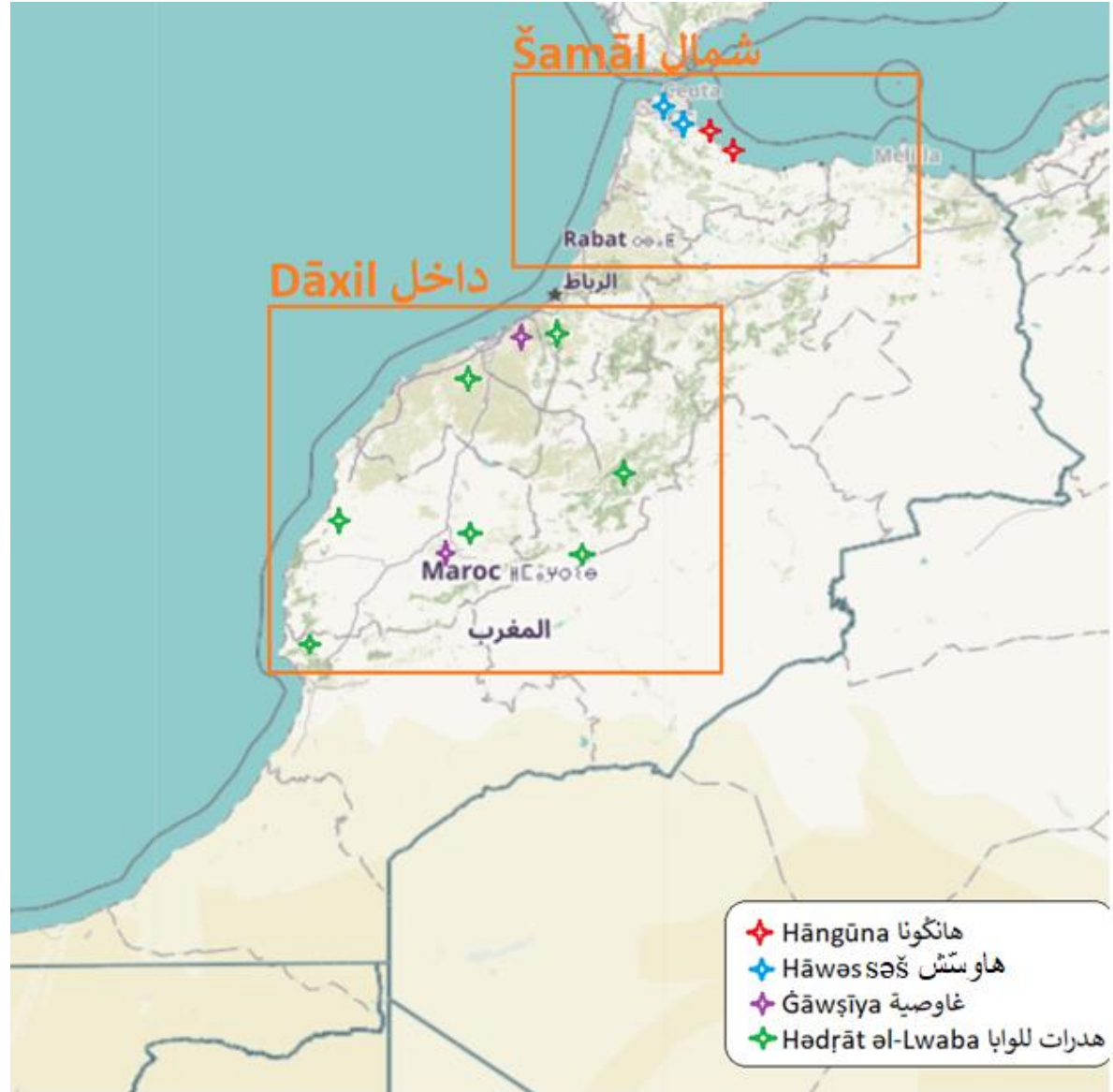
العربية

Let's write our history together

Tarikhona Hona project is focussed on archiving the struggle of women and the LGBTQI+ community



The Hawəssəš : distribution





Hawəssəš : Tangier & Tetouan



Hanguna(s) : Tetouan



Tihatiradira



The Hawəssəš : history




- ❖ Distinctive old slang of **Tangiers inhabitants of urban extraction**, the « Puros »
- First half of the 20th c. = spanish tutelage + francoism, the slang becomes specific to the local gender/sexuality minorities
- Second half of the 20th c. : it is exported to Tetouan where it is now mainly used by cisgender women sexworkers



The hawəssəš : today's status

- Cryptolect used by **gender/sexuality minorities and sexworkers**
 - The majority of ice-speakers are transfeminine sexworkers
- Matrix : Arabic varieties of northeastern Morocco (*al-hadra š-šamaliya*)
- Comparative characteristics : morpho-phonetic encoding system, specific prosodic, grammatical and lexical elements
- Distribution: Tangier and Tetouan cities
 - There is a **dialectal divide** between the two cities



- English : This boy is cute
- Northern Moroccan Arabic (Taha) : **Dik əl-ʕayəl mziwən** 
- Tetouan's Hawəssəš (Marouan) : **Dik əl-ʕayəššəl lamzaššiwən** 
- Tangier's Hawəssəš (Tima) : **Lašuššək əl-ʕayəššəl lazyəššən** 

- English : On se voit au parc
- Northern Moroccan Arabic (Taha) : Netlaqaw f əž-žərda
- Tetouan's Hawəssəš (Marwan) : Lətləšqla f lajwəššda
- Tangier's Hawəssəš (Tima) : Lašuššək f lažəššda



- English : Listen what I have to tell you
- Northern Moroccan Arabic (Taha) : Sməf-ni šnu ġa nqul-lek
- Tetouan's Hawəssəš (Marwan) : Lasməššaf-ni š ġa nlaqušəl-lek
- Tangier's Hawəssəš (Tima) : Lašməššaf-ni š laqunšəl-lek



The **hawəssəš** : functions & transmissions

- In **public space**
 - Not being understood by *outsiders*, especially agressors, the police & the clients
- In **private spaces**
 - Mostly by transfeminine ppl in Tangier, who are known for practice the slang daily
 - It has been described as a technique to learn to speak it quickly while remaining completely incomprehensible in every circumstances
- ❖ Some speakers are proud to practice it and pass it on because it is a **self protection tool** but also an **identity marker**: only the members of the community well integrated into it can practice it properly



Perspectives de documentation/recherche

- ❖ Article to be published on some sociolinguistic aspects of this slang: Garaoun 2023
- For the speakers it is not possible to explain the functioning of slang (lexicon & encoding system) which they still use daily to protect themselves against danger
 - That could be a solution to create a **non-mixed computer archive** which could contain other information on the language, recordings, etc. but we do not yet know how to go about ensuring this non-mixedness, how to define it, etc.
 - There would be more possibility of working on the neighbouring cryptolect called **Hanguna(s)**, which is used much less in situations of danger than to mark group membership and which is not specific to gender/sexuality communities

- *Ka tabqa luġa d-aš-šawāriġ w luġa lli hiyya privée* « it is at least a **street language**, a language that is **private** ».
- *Waxxa ka n?ivītīw šwiyya nhadru b-əl-hawəs wālākīn ka nhadru, tħəss balli hiyya ma yəmkən š, ħīt hiyya wallāt dyālt-na, təxlət l turāt dyāl-na* « although we avoid speaking in Hawəs you feel that it is not possible, **because it became ours**, it became a part of **our heritage** »
- *Luġāt əl-hawəs txāl-līna l-wəšwəš fi-ha* « The language hawəssəš **became like an obsession for us.** »



Many thanks to our consultants Tima & Marwan & to our main investigator Taha