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## The Year of Morocco: An Introduction

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# The Year of Morocco:

## An Introduction

Dan Paracka

Marking the 35th anniversary of Kennesaw State University's award-winning Annual Country Study Program, the 2018-19 academic year focused on Morocco and consisted of 22 distinct educational events, with over 1,700 people in attendance. It also featured an interdisciplinary team-taught Year of Morocco (YoM) course that included a study abroad experience to Morocco (March 28-April 7, 2019), an academic conference on "Gender, Identity, and Youth Empowerment in Morocco" (March 15-16, 2019), and this dedicated special issue of the *Journal of Global Initiatives*. Most events were organized through six different College Spotlights titled: The Taste of Morocco; Experiencing Moroccan Visual Arts; Multiple Literacies in Morocco; Conflict Management, Peacebuilding, and Development Challenges in Morocco, Moroccan Cultural Festival; and Moroccan Solar Tree. There were also five YoM Learning Modules developed for use in 12 different classes across three colleges, and directly involving 375 students. As in the past, a semester-long senior-level graphic design class developed the Year of Morocco logo.

The breadth and depth of these programs provided a strong basis for understanding Morocco in its historical and contemporary contexts. Participating faculty integrated these programs within existing coursework thus allowing for further investigation and analysis. For example, one faculty member worked with KSU students to offer curricular modules focused on Morocco at local area schools. A graduate art student assisted in creating an interactive Arts of Morocco timeline game which was delivered at Renaissance Elementary in Fulton County. In addition, undergraduate art students learned traditional Moroccan designs and *zellij* clay-making processes which they taught to 30 middle school students at Pine Mountain Middle School in Cobb County.

The Morocco Solar Tree project involved students enrolled (Fall 2018) in the courses Solar Power (EE4405), and Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Senior Project (EE4800, ME4201, ME4202) courses. These students formed multidisciplinary teams and competed to design a Year of Morocco Solar Tree. Students from the winning team built and installed the tree on the Marietta campus (Spring 2019). The solar tree is a permanent mechanical structure mimicking a real tree with small solar modules attached to its branches to harvest solar energy. Electrical energy produced by the tree now illuminates a KSU logo at night, showcasing KSU's commitment to sustainability and highlighting Morocco's major efforts at developing alternative energy sources. Indeed, Morocco's Noor-Ouarzazate Solar Power Complex will be the world's largest solar plant (580MW) when completed in 2020.

Students in these classes and many others developed a nuanced appreciation of Morocco and its diversity, strengths, and challenges. This appreciation was demonstrated in course projects, research papers, conference presentations, and Model Arab League and Model African Union simulations. For example, two presentations on literacy in Morocco were delivered by KSU students at the Year of Morocco Conference in March 2019, with one team also presenting their research at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research conference in April 2019. As a faculty advisor commented, “these students’ future career goals and trajectories of scholarship have been significantly impacted through their involvement.” The Multiple Literacies project provided the Bagwell College of Education Literacy Center with new acquisitions of children’s books and scholarly books related to Morocco, Islam, and literacy in the MENA region. Through the Morocco Library Project lecture, KSU faculty, staff, and students along with the Fulton County Public Library at Ocee were inspired to donate more than 12 boxes of English language children’s books to the Children’s Medina Library in Fez, Morocco. In addition to the donated books from the Ocee Library, advanced French students wrote and illustrated their own children’s books about Moroccan culture which also were donated to the Children’s Medina Library in Fez.

As one of the major culminating events, the YoM Conference brought in a leading expert on women and youth in Morocco who delivered what one attendee described as an “incredibly powerful” keynote address. There were just over 90 KSU faculty and students at the conference as well as 30 off-campus guests. The conference was also attended by seven visiting scholars from Hassan II University Casablanca (H2UC), and featured an ecstatically well-received concert by Innov Gnawa, a Grammy-nominated music group originally from Morocco and currently based in New York City. The concert was co-sponsored with the Center for African and African Diaspora Studies and was attended by over 230 people, many from the local Moroccan-American community. Gnawan ritual trance music has its roots with enslaved soldiers brought to Morocco from sub-Saharan West Africa, their trauma of displacement, worship of ancestral spirits, tradition of praise songs, and sufi mysticism (el Hamel, 2008, pp. 247-256). A highly regarded five-star Atlanta restaurant, Imperial Fez, catered the conference and helped promote the concert. Formal and informal evaluation feedback from the YoM conference showed that the conference was a resounding success, especially for junior scholars from outside KSU for the networking that occurred. Collaborative partners that helped promote the conference and attract the participation of scholars by posting announcements in their newsletters, websites, and listservs included the Friends of Morocco, Fulbright, and the American Institute for Maghreb Studies.

As in previous years, the YoM resulted in new courses and curriculum, research projects, education abroad programs, grant writing, publications, and global partnerships. These initiatives directly contributed to student learning, academic scholarship, and community engagement. As one of the faculty members in the YoM learning community reflected, “to grasp the full complexity of the Year of Morocco one must appreciate that in actuality it takes at least three years to propose, develop, manage, and execute, to say nothing of the follow up, the consequences, and the efforts put toward sustainability and future growth.” The “Year of” program

is a strategic investment made by the university and its faculty that provides long-lasting and diverse learning experience for our students. It involves broad outreach and engaged collaborations with important community partners. In this regard, the program benefitted through its established international partnership with H2UC.

KSU's partnership with H2UC began in January 2005, when KSU President Dr. Betty Siegel (1981-2006) visited Morocco to meet H2UC President Dr. Rahma Bourquia. The partnership was codified with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding by both institutions in 2007. More than 100 KSU faculty, students, administrators, and staff have visited Morocco and about 30 faculty, students, and administrators from Hassan II have been hosted by KSU. Past KSU collaborative projects in Morocco have included the following:

- The creation of a master's degree program in American studies at Hassan II University and involvement in the establishment of the Morocco American Studies Association.
- A compilation of oral histories, production of a documentary video, and creation of the Ben M'sik Community Museum (BMCM) in Casablanca.
- A 2011 grant awarded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs and the American Association of Museums to fund the creation of an online exhibit titled "Identities: Understanding Islam in a Cross Cultural Context" ([www.marb.kennesaw.edu/identities](http://www.marb.kennesaw.edu/identities)). This intercultural exchange and collaborative partnership continues, currently developing additional exhibits on "Morocco in World War II" and "Morocco, the United States and the Slave Trade."
- Participation in Morocco's Annual International University Theater Festival in Casablanca (FITUC) including an award-winning production of an adaptation of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* performed by KSU's students both at KSU and H2UC.
- Work with low-income Artisan groups in Morocco who are designing new art products that preserve indigenous arts and crafts traditions. In Marrakesh, this project included work with Anarouz, a social enterprise cooperative engaging more than 2,000 local artisans and their families and communities.
- Funding of a KSU Strategic Internationalization Grant to interview and conduct research on women leaders in Morocco.

These projects provided a strong basis for the designation of the 2018-2019 academic year as the "Year of Morocco" at KSU and led to H2UC being named the 2019 KSU Distinguished International Community Partner.

In addition to the seven H2UC faculty who visited KSU for the YoM conference, 23 KSU students and seven faculty visited the Ben M'sik campus in Casablanca as part of the team-taught spring-break study abroad experience. The study abroad program visited four cities: Marrakech, Casablanca, Fez, and Tangier. This itinerary helped participants experience Morocco's cultural diversity. Highlights of the experience included planting trees with the High Atlas

Foundation, visiting the Amal Women's cooperative, donating books to the Medina Children's Library, visiting the Tangier American Legation Museum (TALIM), and interacting with Hassan II faculty and students. While abroad, our students and faculty were interviewed by and appeared on Morocco National Television.

These projects all helped to advance campus internationalization and a more nuanced and scholarly understanding of Morocco—especially as it relates to important issues that impact both Morocco and the United States. As Clifford Geertz, who has written extensively about Morocco, argues in *The Interpretation of Cultures* understanding cultures necessarily involves the craft of interpretation, a constantly changing, relational process. The following introductory essay on Morocco was developed to help undergraduate students appreciate Morocco's rich cultural heritage and complex place in a global society.

### **Introductory Essay on Morocco**

Amazigh, Arab, Sub-Saharan African, and European identities are among the many influences on Moroccan identity. A geographic and cultural crossroads, it is a country continuously negotiating its place in today's changing world. It is both a constitutional monarchy and an Islamic state that protects the rights of other religious communities to exist and to practice. Its history is one of extensive diplomatic relations with the enduring influence of the monarchy being one of its most salient characteristics.

A sustained history of intercultural and commercial interactions in what is now Morocco has taken place among diverse civilizations such as Amazigh, Phoenician, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Andalusian, Egyptian, and Ottoman. Morocco has also had long-lasting and substantial trade with sub-Saharan African empires such as the Ghana, Mali, Songhai, and Sosso. From 1912 to 1956, it was a colony of France and Spain, with Tangier as an International Zone administered by several European powers.

The Amazigh (meaning freeborn in Tamazight) or Berbers (connoting uncivilized non-speakers of Greek/Latin), are the indigenous early inhabitants of Morocco.<sup>1</sup> At present, approximately 40-45% of Moroccans speak one of three Amazigh languages: Tamazight, Tashlheit, or Tarifit (Maddy-Weitzman, 2011, p. 1). According to Phillip Naylor (2009), the Amazigh have “evinced an ability to adapt to and to absorb other cultures. Their transcultural receptivity has distinguished their culture” (p. 4). On the other hand, they have been a major force of resistance against foreign invaders, and the Romans, Arabs, French, and Spanish all lauded the Amazigh's desire for freedom and independence (Maddy-Weitzman, 2011, pp. 177-178). Retaining their culture and language amidst relentless pressure to change has been a constant struggle.

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<sup>1</sup> I will use Amazigh rather than Berber throughout this essay except when quoting other works.

## The Spread of Arabic and Islam across the Maghreb

Islamic states have generally controlled Moroccan territory since the Arab invasions of the 7th century. Arab influence has been significant, with Arabic and Islam permeating North African societies. Arabic became the language of learning, diplomacy, and trade throughout the region, which came to be known as *al-Maghrib* or “west.” The relationship between trade and Islam was especially close (Brett, 1999, p. 62). Notably, as Dunn (1986) observed, “one of the strengths of an expanding Islam was its successful adaptability to local patterns of culture” (p. xix). Its focus on ensuring successful business relationships contributed to its emphasis on cultural adaptability.

It was the Umayyad caliphate (661-750), which was based in Damascus, that initially conquered North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula (al-Andalus). The Umayyads did not force Jews and Christians (*dhimmi*, or “peoples of the book”) to convert but required them to pay a tax (*jizya*) that Muslims did not have to pay. In the Maghreb, as Bennison (2014) highlights,

[t]he Islamic conquest itself was a long drawn-out process that involved ongoing interactions between two tribal peoples, the Arab invaders and the indigenous Maghribis, the latter of whom came to be lumped together in Arabic writing as the Berbers although they did not see themselves as a single ethnos. Indigenous tribes fought the newcomers, allied with them and rebelled against them. Such high levels of conflict slowed the pace of conquest but also generated intimacy through recruitment and the capture of Berber prisoners, male and female, who entered Arab Muslim ranks in a way that sedentary peasant populations, many of whom were Christian and thus inscribed in the new order as tax-paying *ahl al-dhimmi*, did not. (p. 139)

Across the Maghreb, the Amazigh’s desire to preserve their autonomy and select their own leaders contributed to ever-changing alliances, for example, between Sunni Umayyads, Khariji, Ibadi, Sufi, Sunni Abbasids, Fatimids, and Umayyad Andalusian Islamic groups. As Bennison (2016) notes, the Khariji message “that the caliph should be selected for his qualities as a Muslim and a leader rather than because of ancestry was appealing to Berber troops who resented their inferior status to the Arabs” (p. 12). It was the Umayyad rulers’ excessive demands for extraordinary taxes and slave tributes from Amazigh Muslim converts that was the primary reason for the “Great Berber Revolt” or “Kharijite Revolt” of 739-743, the first successful secession from the Umayyad caliphate. Having broken away, the more moderate forms of Sufri Kharijites and Ibadi Kharijites in their Amazigh interior strongholds of the Atlas Mountains did not continue to pursue warfare against Muslims of other sects and maintained a tolerant attitude toward both Christian and Jewish communities (Bennison, 2016, p. 232).

Writes Brett (1999), “The overthrow of the Umayyads by the Abbasids in 750, however, was not a victory for the doctrine of Kharijism . . . but a triumph of the call for a member of Muhammad’s family” (p. 59). After the overthrow of the Umayyads by the Abbasids (750-1258), who were based in Baghdad, North Africa

became a decentralized network of largely independent Islamic states. The Abbasids emphasized their religious authority but did not exercise as much direct political authority over these states. One such state, the Idrisids (789-920) of Morocco promoted widespread commercial and cultural exchange, especially with Umayyad al-Andalus, a region which had long been an important trading center. The establishment of the Moroccan monarchy (one of the oldest in the world) dates to Idriss, a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad (Sater, 2010, p. 3).

Idriss I and Abd al-Rahman I had fled Abbasid rule to Morocco and al-Andalus respectively, claiming *sharifian* status (descent from the Prophet) and establishing new states. Abd al-Rahman I was the son of an Amazigh mother as was Idris's son Idriss II. Being the proclaimed royal offspring of Arab rulers and conquered peoples aided in establishing local legitimacy. As Menocal (2002) points out, "Umayyad princes descended from the caliphs of Arabia and Syria were also visibly their mothers' sons" (p. 67). The practice of intermarriage with conquered peoples was also evidenced during the reign of Ali ibn Yusuf, an Amazigh ruler of Almoravid Andalusia descent whose mother was a Christian (Rosser-Owen, 2014, p. 169). Generally, racial and ethnic distinctions were less emphasized under Arab patrilineal ideas as compared to those of Europe (Bennison, 2016, p. 180). Genealogy and kinship have been critical concerns for establishing the authority of Muslim leaders in the Arab world. As Rosser-Owen (2014) notes, "Berber regimes . . . deliberately constructed Arab genealogies to legitimize their rule in the Islamic West" (p. 155).

After being overthrown, the Umayyads fled their capital of Damascus to settle in al-Andalus. They brought with them invaluable knowledge and attracted a retinue of experts that helped the region connect with a wide array of trading centers and led to a period of great economic prosperity where Muslims, Christians, and Jews lived together in relative peace known in Spanish as the *convivencia*.

Describing how the Great Mosque of Cordoba was modeled after the Great Mosque of Damascus, Menocal (2002) considers its orientation south instead of east to face Mecca, as though it was located in Damascus, as "a conscious continuation of what had been destroyed in Syria," and a symbolic expression of "the Umayyad's care not to destroy a multiethnic and religiously pluralistic state" (pp. 58-59). Ironically, there had first been a Roman temple on the Cordoba site; the temple was converted into a church by invading Visigoths in 572, and the church was demolished and completely rebuilt into the Great Mosque in 784, and then converted into a Catholic church in 1236 leading up to the *Reconquista*.

The spiritual ideas of Islam were appealing to North Africans but were also used for political purposes as throughout the empire. North African Amazigh groups proved themselves adept at making scholarly arguments of jurisprudence based on Islamic law to assert their rights, a practice that resulted in a rich Islamic competition of ideas as well as a struggle for supremacy.

### **The Amazigh Imperial Age: The Almoravids and Almohads**

Throughout the 10th century, Umayyad Andalusian ideas and practices diffused across the Maghreb, especially in Morocco (Naylor, 2009, p. 76). The success of Umayyad Andalusia gave rise to the Amazigh Almoravids (1053-1147)

and Almohads (1147-1269), “two of the most powerful states in the history of Western civilization’s Middle Ages” (Naylor, 2009, p. 7). These two Amazigh Muslim empires united North Africa with al-Andalus, Tamazight becoming the language of the palace in the Almohad period and being used for explaining the Qur’an and *hadiths* (Maddy-Weitzman, 2011, p. 168). As Bennison (2016) stresses, while frequently “lumped together under the rubric ‘Berber,’ the Almoravids and Almohads drew their support from opposed and linguistically distinct groups of tribes in North Africa”; and at the same time, both dynasties represented “the maturing of an Islamic society in the Maghrib” (pp. 4-5).

The Almoravids and Almohads left an impressive array of architecture across their empires. This included creating symbols of power through monumental architecture and relocating, rebuilding, and repurposing as a means for legitimizing their authority (Rosser-Owen, 2014, p. 152). Contrary to historiography that has tended to vilify Amazigh African tribes for destroying a more “civilized” Europe or simply mimicking their art and architecture, the extensive and intensive cultural exchange between al-Andalus and North Africa went in both directions (Carillo, 2014, p. 68).

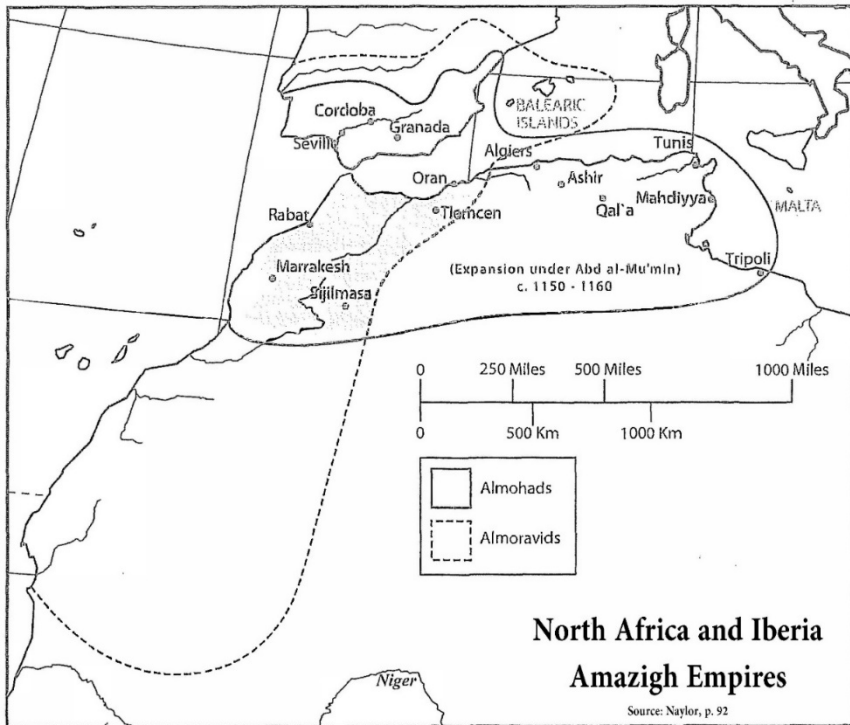
The Almoravids, a confederation of Sanhaja Amazigh tribes, first consolidated their power and wealth by controlling the Saharan trade and in military excursions against the Soninke kingdom of Ghana (Naylor, 2009, pp. 89-90). The Almoravid rulers recognized the Abbasids as the spiritual leaders of Islam, but they looked to Umayyad civilization and the Maliki school of jurisprudence for political and cultural exemplars. They made Marrakech their capital in 1070, developed the water supply, and created a unique layout where the ruler’s residence was not placed adjacent to the great Mosque as had been the Umayyad tradition in Damascus and Cordoba, an indication that their empire represented something new and perhaps more egalitarian. The still-standing Qubbat al-Ba’diyyin is an exceptional example of the ingenious and original style of the Almoravid period (Bennison, 2016, p. 294).

In asserting their power and expanding their rule, the rival Almoravids and Almohads each claimed to be more religiously faithful than the other, but each also went to great effort to deliberately evoke symbols of their predecessor’s accomplishments (Bennison, 2014, p. 143). For example, the Almoravids remodeled the *mihṛāb* of the Qarawiyyin mosque in Fez after the one in Cordoba, and both the Almoravids and the Almohads transported numerous columns over 800 kilometers from the famous Madinat al-Zahra ruins in Cordoba to Marrakesh (Rosser-Owen, 2014, p. 157, 174). The Almohads were extremely ambitious builders, expanding cities, installing new hydraulic water systems, irrigating orchard plantations, establishing hospitals, and building imperial fortresses, gateways, and mosques with distinctively large square minarets. They destroyed and rebuilt many Almoravid mosques claiming that they were incorrectly oriented towards Mecca, further asserting their righteousness and power (Rosser-Owen, 2014, p. 182). Still, many of their designs also evoked Cordoba’s influences. For Amira Bennison (2016), the Almohad period demonstrated a true artistic cultural synthesis, as Andalusí and Maghrebi craftsmen worked together on projects on both sides of the straits, setting a tone for the art and architecture of both regions for



centuries to come (pp. 320, 328). The imperial cities of the Almoravid and Almohad dynasties were impressive, and many of the Almohad structures are still in use today.

Both empires used religion as a mechanism for extending their control and asserting the ruler's religious authority, a process that elicited a strong grassroots response in the form of Sufism. Sufi practice emphasized ritual retreat, fasting, and meditation to commune with God. It was "Maliki juridical cliques whose receipt of state patronage and exercise of religious power . . . often seemed self-serving rather



than righteous" that led to the increased appeal of Sufi mysticism and asceticism, including the Sufi notion of the divinely inspired guide or charismatic holy man (Bennison, 2016, pp. 238-39). The Almohads were fervent critics of the Almoravids and are noteworthy for their ideological zealotry for instance in recognizing their messianic leader Ibn Tumart as the *mahdī*, or the one sent to restore true Islam. Bennison (2014) writes, "The Almohads viewed their message not simply as revived and restored Islam, but as pure Abrahamic monotheism (*tawhid*) which all Muslims, Christians and Jews should accept" (p. 148). Thus, in violation of the *dhimma*, they prohibited Jews and Christians from practicing their religion (Gottreich & Schroeter, 2011, p. 13). Ironically, the rising power and attraction of Sufi charismatic leaders may have contributed to Ibn Tumart's assertion of infallibility as *mahdī*, as well as to the Almohad emphasis on a source-based approach to law rather than the commentary-based Maliki approach (Bennison,

2016, pp. 253, 257-58, 274). This Islamic competition of ideas encompassed different notions of religious practice, legal schools, and leadership styles.

One of the leading philosophical protagonists within these debates was Ibn Rushd al-Hafid (1126-1198), also known as Averroes, who served as a judge and court physician. The “quintessential Almohad intellectual,” he wrote extensively about many subjects including philosophy, theology, medicine, astronomy, physics, law, and linguistics. His philosophical works include commentaries on Aristotle that were very influential among Jewish and Christian scholars including his contemporary, Moses ben Maimon, also known as Musa ibn Maymun or Maimonides (1138-1204), who lived and worked in Morocco before migrating to Egypt (Bennison, 2016, pp. 261-62).

The Amazigh were not simple rebel nomads, but intellectual rulers of a vast empire. As Bennison (2014) describes the change, “by the end of the Almohad rule, the idea of normative urban-based Islamic rule had become generalized throughout the Maghreb and the sectarian tribal landscape of preceding centuries had changed dramatically and permanently” (p. 154). Conflict increased as urban-based centers attempted to expand their power and control. Unfortunately, increased military conflict between Castilian Christians and the Almoravid and Almohad Islamic empires in Iberia/Andalusia saw the rise of a crusade-based and jihad-based political paradigm (Bennison, 2016, p. 19). More and more, “politicized Islam and Christianity narrowed perspectives and produced ‘misreceptions’ and misperceptions of others” (Naylor, 2009, p. 106). Thus, religious intolerance increasingly became a weapon for empire building among competing Christian and Islamic states.

After the Almohads were defeated and pushed out of al-Andalus, they faced rising competition in the Maghreb, and were eventually defeated and succeeded by the Marinids (1269-1465). Unlike their predecessors, the Marinids were not a *sharifian* dynasty that claimed ancestry from the Prophet (Naylor, 2009, p. 98). They were, however, actively involved in the gold trade with Sub-Saharan Africa, and provided support to the last remaining Islamic kingdom in Andalusia, the Nasrids of Granada. Granada did not surrender until 1492, ending nearly 800 years of Islamic rule in al-Andalus. The Marinids re-established the Maliki school in their capital of Fez and were known for building large madrasas, including one that featured an extraordinary mechanical water-clock (Blair & Bloom, 1994, p. 122). Thus, carrying on Fez’s tradition as a seat of learning—the oldest existing and continually operating educational institution in the world being the University of al-Qarawiyyin, founded in 859 AD by a Muslim woman, Fatima al-Fihri.

### **A Cosmopolitan Era**

It was during the period of Marinid rule that two very influential North African luminaries left their mark: Ibn Battuta and Ibn Khaldun. Born into a family of legal scholars in Tangier during the Marinid dynasty, Ibn Battuta (1304-1368) is the greatest traveler of premodern times. Far exceeding Marco Polo, he traveled approximately 73,000 miles and visited more than 40 different lands, including Spain, China, Kazakhstan, Tanzania, and Mali. His narrative story of this grand

tour, or *rihla*, reports on a wide variety of political events, human geography, and social and economic conditions in great detail (Dunn, 1986, pp. 1-5).

Ibn Battuta studied in the Maliki school of jurisprudence and was also influenced and interested in Sufism, which recognizes the possibility of achieving a direct personal communion with God. Sufi saints, known as *marabouts* in the Maghreb, attracted many followers. Today, their tombs dot the rural and urban landscape of the Maghreb and are major pilgrimage sites (Zillinger, 2014, p. 41). In many ways, his traveling career represented a grand world tour of the lodges and tombs of famous Sufi mystics and saints (Dunn, 1986, pp. 22-24).

The scholarly class of the Islamic world was an extraordinarily mobile group, connecting Islamic centers of study and worship with its distant outposts (Dunn, 1986, p. 24). Ibn Battuta, who spent eight years in India serving as a judge in the Sultanate of Delhi, exemplified this practice. According to Ross Dunn (1986),

[m]embers of this cultural elite who were living and traveling in the further regions consistently maintained close ties with the great cities of the central Islamic lands, thereby creating not merely a scattering of literate and skilled Muslims across the hemisphere, but an integrated, growing, self-replenishing network of cultural communication . . . Islam tended to encourage a higher degree of social mobility and freer movement of individuals from one city and region to another than was the case in the other civilizations of that time. Islamic culture put great stress on egalitarian behavior in social relations based on the ideal of a community of believers (the *umma*) having a common allegiance to one God and his Sacred Law. To be sure, a great gulf separated the rich and powerful from the poor and weak, as was the case in all civilized societies until very recent times. But Islam mightily resisted the institutionalizing of ascribed statuses, ethnic exclusivities, or purely territorial loyalties. (p. 10)

Originally from the area of Tunisia, Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), author of the *Kitab al-'Ibar*, a history of Amazigh North Africa under Islamic rule, put forth in the *Muqaddima* (introduction) an influential theory of political world history. According to Bennisson (2016), Ibn Khaldun argued in this work that “government preserved humankind from savagery,” but civilization “fostered an effete, decadent and morally questionable lifestyle in comparison with the simple, virtuous and hardy ways of the tribes” (pp. 6-7). In some ways, this theory asserted the necessity for ruling groups to be replenished by incorporating new or previously disenfranchised groups into society. Ibn Khaldun, considering the specific case of the Almoravids and Almohads, believed that tribal differences were surmounted “by a charismatic leader with a particular religious message,” as was certainly the case of Ibn Tumart (Bennisson, 2016, p. 7).

### **European Imperialism and Colonial Rule**

As Islamic rule ended in the Iberian Peninsula, Portugal and Spain embarked on an Age of Discovery that entailed establishing control of the high seas. Sanctioned by Papal Bulls (decrees) such as the *Dum diversas* of 1452, the Catholic

Church encouraged an aggressive approach that would “vanquish and subdue all Saracens (Muslims) and pagans and other enemies of Christ, to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to convert to Christianity” (Ghazanfar, 2016, p. 43). As Lambert (2005) explains, “When Spain expelled Muslims from Iberia, that Christian power confiscated their property, denied the Barbary powers favorable trading terms, raided their territory, and enslaved their people” (p. 109). The 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas fixed a boundary between the competing Portuguese and Spanish empires that, in part, allowed Spain and Portugal to fight together against the Ottomans and Arabs in the Mediterranean and Arabian Seas in order to monopolize the Atlantic and Indian Ocean trade routes to Asia and Africa. Figuring prominently in this effort, the Strait of Gibraltar was always a disorderly and highly contested space (Pennell, 2001, p. 55).

The Portuguese exploited the intense rivalry between Morocco’s closely related Zanata Marinids and Zanata Wattasids (1465-1554) to seize control of Ceuta, the entrance to the Mediterranean, in 1415. In 1437, an expedition commanded by Prince Henry of Portugal was surrounded by Moroccan forces at Tangier and allowed to return to their ships only upon the promise to surrender Ceuta. Prince Henry’s younger brother Dom Ferdinand was held hostage and died in prison in Fez, since the promise to surrender Ceuta was never fulfilled (Boxer, 1975, p. 26). The Portuguese later took al-Qasr al-Saghir, Tangier, and Arzila but were expelled from Agadir in 1541 by Morocco’s Sa’adi (1549-1654) sharifian dynasty. The Sa’adi forced the Portuguese to abandon the cities of Safi and Azenmour, thereby reopening the Atlantic coasts to Moroccan commerce (Naylor, 2009, p. 124). The Wattasids, allied with the Ottomans, briefly occupied Fez, but were also defeated by the Sa’adi. Ottoman incursions in Morocco led the Sa’adi to pursue a strategic alliance with Spain. At the same time, the Sa’adi extended their control over the Saharan trade routes. They also continued the emphasis of incorporating water features within their urban architecture, adding many public fountains (Blair & Bloom, 1994a, p. 260).

The Battle of the Three Kings (1578) resulted in the death of the childless King Sebastian of Portugal, his ally the deposed Moroccan sultan, al-Mutawakkil, and the Sa’adi Sultan Abd al-Malik. The Sa’adi victory resulted in Abd al-Malik’s brother Ahmad al-Mansur becoming the next ruler of Morocco. The rule of Sultan al-Mansur “protected Morocco from the predations and ambitions of Spain and the Ottoman Empire” (Naylor, 2009, p. 26). He created the *makhzan*, a term connoting the central organization of government administration. Contrary to the colonial and post-colonial discourse of decline often used to characterize non-Western responses to the onslaught of European imperialism, Moroccan responses demonstrated a resiliency distinguished by cautious strategic thinking and selective appropriation of new ideas and technologies, with the Sultans often taking the lead in initiating modernizing reforms (Miller, 2013, p. 29). At the same time, European alliances grew in the face of such ambitions. For example, in 1662, the cities of Tangier and Mumbai became dowry gifts from Katherine of Braganza in her marriage to Charles II providing a critical link between the Portuguese and British empires.

The Sa’adi and Alawi (1654-present) *sharifian* dynasties implemented numerous reforms and generally managed to protect Morocco from incursions by

the Ottomans, Portuguese, and Spanish. One of the most famous Alawi Sultans, Mawlay Isma‘il, whose mother was from sub-Saharan Africa, raised a large professional army known as the “Black Guard” with an elite cavalry unit, constructed a corsair fleet to assert Moroccan power in the Atlantic and Mediterranean, moved the capital to Meknes, and made an offer of marriage to Louis XIV’s daughter (Bennison, 2002, pp. 27-28; Blair & Bloom, 1994a, p. 260). During his reign, the Alawi pushed back Portuguese and Spanish positions on the African continent (El Jadida, Sebta, Melilla, Peñón de Alhucemas) (Sater, 2010, p. 4).

<b>Moroccan Dynasties</b>	
Idrisid	789-920
Fatimid Rule	922-974
Umayyad Andalus Rule	974-1040
Almoravid	1040-1147
Almohad	1124-1269
Marinid	1248-1465
Idrisid interlude	1465-1471
Wattasid	1471-1554
Saadi	1549-1659
Dila'i interlude	1659-1663
Alawi	1666-present

The death of Sultan Isma‘il was followed by prolonged civil war (his son was deposed five times during his 30-year reign) which led to other endemic problems that greatly weakened the state and resulted in the navy being disbanded. Isma‘il’s grandson, Muhammed III (reigned 1757-1790), however, was a great reformer who sent numerous emissaries to learn from the Ottoman court in Istanbul. Believing that peaceful commerce with Europe was wiser than continuous warfare, he implemented new duties on overseas trade and rebuilt the port of Essaouira on the Atlantic coast to promote trade (Miller, 2013, pp. 8-10).

Muhammed III was the first head of state to recognize the United States as an independent nation. Morocco was also the first nation in the world to recognize the new U.S. Constitution of 1787 and to address George Washington as the first elected president. It can therefore be said that Morocco has the oldest, unbroken, perpetual treaty of friendship and peace with the United States (Tise, 2005). This relationship was brought about, in part, due to the activities of the Barbary corsairs (Lambert, 2005, pp. 50-59).

In the Mediterranean, Barbary corsairs, the majority of whom were European exiles from the Iberian Peninsula, operated primarily out of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli as regencies of the Ottoman Empire. Historically, European corsairs were also active throughout the Mediterranean and attacked North African shipping interests. Both groups engaged in seizing cargo and enslaving and ransoming captives. In Morocco, the port of Salé (Rabat) also had active groups of corsairs. In the early 17th century, 70 to 80 European ships were being captured annually (Weiss, 2011, pp. 7-11). As shipping raids increased, European powers began paying tribute to North African rulers, negotiating individual treaties with the Sultan of Morocco and Ottoman regencies, in order to ensure safe passage. Similarly, what came to be known as privateers, not unlike corsairs, became an institutionalized form of piracy licensed by governments to disrupt as well as carry out military and commercial activities. European states recognized the corsairs as privateers and even financed some Barbary corsair expeditions. The American colonies relied heavily on privateers during the War of Independence, with 2,500 mercenary ships deployed against British shipping (Silverstein, 2005, pp. 184-187). Military competition over trade routes at sea was at its height in the period.

Ratified by the U.S. Congress in 1787, the Treaty with Morocco established free trade without tribute between the two nations. It was hoped that this treaty would be a model that the United States could take to the other Barbary powers (Lambert, 2005, p. 59). But this was not to be. Between 1785 and 1796, Algerian corsairs captured thirteen American ships and held more than 100 Americans ransom. The United States eventually agreed to pay \$600,000 in ransom for the captives and in tribute, to buy peace. The new nation soon negotiated other treaties, bringing the total cost to \$1.25 million or 20% of the U.S. federal government's annual budget (Lambert, 2005, p. 93). This eventually led to the Tripolitan War (1801-1805), as the United States decided to fight rather than continue paying tribute (Silverstein, 2005, p. 181). Significantly, it also contributed to deeper questioning of slavery in America, for in 1800 there were 750,000 Africans and people of African descent enslaved in America, compared to a few hundred Americans enslaved in North Africa (Lambert, 2005, pp. 120-121).

Muhammed III's extensive reforms challenged the status and privileges of the elite religious classes, who eventually enlisted the Sultan's son, Yazid, to lead their opposition. Following Yazid's short rule, Muhammed III's second son, Sulayman, continued reversing his father's policies, attempting to close the doors on trade and interaction with Europe (Miller, 2013, p. 11). A distinguishing characteristic of hereditary monarchies is generational with a distinct and unpredictable rhythm of change. How and which issues each ruler addresses is based on their unique experiences, skills, and interests. They do not always follow their predecessor's footsteps, but they often learn lessons from their missteps.

Sulayman's successor, his nephew Abd al-Rahman (reigned 1822-1859), suffered significant military defeats and was forced to recognize that Morocco had fallen far behind Europe in terms of its military capability as well as in industrial technology and manufacturing. Abd al-Rahman's son, Muhammad IV (reigned 1859 to 1873), who commanded the Moroccan army defeated by the French at the Battle of Isly in August 1844, launched a series of military reforms establishing the

first European-styled regiment, building a munitions factory and setting up a military training school in Fez; however, tribal resistance to foreign intrusions remained the most effective line of defense (Sater, 2010, p. 13). Unfortunately, following raids by Anjera tribesmen on a Spanish garrison at Ceuta, Spain, declared war. The Spanish-Moroccan War (1859-1860) included naval bombardment of Tangier, Asilah, and Tetouan and resulted in widespread devastation. The British, concerned about Spanish occupation, brokered a treaty that imposed a crippling indemnity payment on Morocco and that was paid from custom tariffs collected by Spanish authorities stationed in the ports (Miller, 2013, pp. 24-25).

From the time of the French conquest of Algeria in 1830 until the establishment of the protectorate in 1912, Morocco was constantly under threat by European powers looking to establish a greater colonial presence. The severe and conclusive military defeats to France in Algeria in 1830 and 1844 and to the Spanish in Morocco in 1860 made clear the immense disparity in the military might of the Maghreb and its European neighbors pressuring the Alawi monarchy to accept preferential commercial treaties and eventually colonial rule. The first such treaty was with Britain in 1856, which the Sultan knew was keen to press any advantage in its rivalry with the French. One of the most problematic terms of the treaty provided the extension of legal protection to any foreigner involved in a dispute who could choose to have the case heard in a consular rather than a Moroccan court. The status of *protégé*, or protected person, grew quickly to include Moroccan citizens employed by foreign enterprises (Miller, 2013, p. 23). Most of the Moroccan *protégés* were successful merchants and entrepreneurs who operated within legal frameworks, but others operated illegally in exploitive and banned activities. Miller (2013) reports that notably, “while Jews figured disproportionately among the protégés, they were no means the majority. Most Jews who benefitted from the practice were bankers and wealthy merchants, while the mass of Jews—poor artisans, shopkeepers and laborers—were not affected at all” (pp. 43-44).

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 shortened the distance from Europe to India via the Mediterranean, further heightening tensions and rivalries throughout the region. The British went to war with Egyptian nationalists in 1882 to establish outright control of the canal and surrounding territory (Anderson, 2013, p. 55). The intense competition for world power led to the 1884 Berlin Conference and the “Scramble for Africa” during which the continent was divided into spheres of influence among the European powers. Miller (2013) further elucidates: “when British-French rivalry ceased due to Germany’s increased colonial ambitions under Wilhelm II (1888-1918), Morocco’s independence was far less secure, opening the way for French colonial ambitions in North-West Africa” (p. 15). The Entente Cordiale of 1904 between Britain and France gave Britain a free hand in Egypt, and France the right to “preserve order” and “provide assistance” in Morocco (Miller, 2013, p. 72).

Hassan I (reigned 1873-1894) continued Muhammed IV’s emphasis on military and administrative reforms, further organizing and modernizing a professional corps of ministerial and managerial roles. This included sending students abroad for training and building a cadre of professionals who could deal effectively with Europeans. Most famously, he organized regular annual tours of

the countryside to project his authority, during which he was accompanied by as many as 15,000 soldiers, court officials, traders, and staff. The impressive show of force and commercial benefits of these local diplomatic expeditions were aimed at reducing conflict within the empire (Miller, 2013, pp. 34-37). However, growing inequalities due to expanded contact with Europe and the inflationary pressure of foreign capital exacerbated rising tensions and competition within the empire (Miller, 2013, p. 53). As Miller (2013) highlights, “Morocco was [gradually] transformed into another subaltern state feeding European expansion by offering raw materials, cheap labor, and unprotected markets” (p. 27). Moreover, Europe’s “civilizing mission” sanctioned intervention on behalf of subjugated peoples everywhere and drove increased militancy in Morocco as elsewhere (Miller, 2013, p. 55). Morocco’s annual trade deficit reached 14 million francs annually by 1902, and a French loan of 62.5 million francs in 1904 was a clear sign of the Moroccan state’s financial crisis (Miller, 2013, pp. 61-63).

The Acts of Algeciras of 1906, brought on by European imperial ambitions and brokered unsuccessfully by Theodore Roosevelt, was signed by Sultan Moulay Abd al-Aziz (reigned 1894-1908) (Naylor, 2009, p. 162). It stipulated greater foreign economic presence and administrative authority in Morocco, especially in the port cities, and led to the overthrow of the sultan in 1908. In an unprecedented move, the *bay’a* (oath of allegiance) issued by the *ulama* (religious scholars) imposed terms on the new sultan, Moulay Abd al-Hafid, requiring him to abrogate the Algeciras Act, restore Morocco’s territorial integrity, and expel French troops from Casablanca and Ouja (Miller, 2013, p. 77; Naylor, 2009, p. 16). This proved an impossible task and only served to increase French pressure. On March 30, 1912, Abd al-Hafid signed the Treaty of Fez, making Morocco a French protectorate. The Fez Riots took place in the capital two weeks later. The Jewish quarter was leveled before order was restored, when French artillery shelled the centers of resistance in the city and forced insurrectionaries to surrender. In the end, 66 Europeans, 42 Jews, and some 600 Moroccans were killed, and Sultan Abd al-Hafid abdicated his throne (Gershovich, 2000, p. 57). French colonial rule in Morocco would last for the next 44 years.

Generally, French colonial practice in Morocco, especially under Resident-General Hubert Lyautey’s administration, aimed “to work with, not against, native socio-political elites and respect pre-colonial customs and traditions. . . . [Preserving the Sultanate] put the traditional sources of power and its administration at the disposal of the French. This [however] had the potential to seriously delegitimize the monarchy in the eyes of the [burgeoning] nationalist movement” (Sater, 2010, p. 5). The Resident-General signed all royal edicts in the name of the *sharifian* government (Laskier & Bashan, 2003, p. 473). In reality, there existed two systems: the sultan managing a simplified and stripped down, mainly religious, cultural affairs division; and the French governing a large technocratic state bureaucracy (Miller, 2013, p. 91). As exemplified in the 1930 “Berber Dahir (decree),” the French also pursued a divide-and-rule strategy that aimed at splitting traditional ties between Arab and Amazigh communities (Maddy-Weitzman, 2011, p. 166). In general, colonialism emphasized the physical segregation of ethnic, social, and cultural groups (King, 1976, p. 7). Special schools for Amazigh taught entirely in



French were established, and all legal matters occurring in Amazigh territory were placed under French jurisdiction rather than in *shari'a* courts (Naylor, 2009, pp. 19-20). Relatedly, language policy in schools has been a crucial on-going issue in the formation of national identity ever since this time.

The Spanish also acquired colonial rule over portions of northern Morocco in 1912, and it was here that some of the strongest resistance occurred with the establishment of the independent Rifian Republic in 1921. The Rif region had been a site of resistance for centuries, as highlighted by a 1799 treaty between Morocco and Spain that acknowledged the inability of the sultan to prevent local people from attacking the Spanish and therefore excluded the region from the treaty (Pennell, 2001, p. 58). Fighting lasted until 1926, when French forces entered the conflict. It took more than 150,000 colonial soldiers to defeat the 40,000 Rifian troops. Moreover, “the French unleashed a barrage of modern weaponry perfected during World War I with terrifying effect – aerial bombardment, poison gas and armored tanks and cars” (Miller, 2013, pp. 104-110). Ironically, during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), Francisco Franco used northern Morocco as a staging area and hired nearly 80,000 Moroccan mercenaries (Miller, 2013, p. 137). The Rif has been the site of uprisings and protests ever since. In 1959, Crown Prince Hassan commanded the newly formed Forces Armées Royales to try to crush a Rifian revolt that had begun in 1957.

Large numbers of French settlers began arriving in Morocco following World War I. They worked not only in construction but also in managerial and professional roles. Some became large landowners. They built the new port of Casablanca, a railroad system, major dams, a massive electric grid, and developed mining concessions (Miller, 2013, pp. 111-113). By the 1940s, the population of European settlers in Morocco reached 400,000 (Laskier & Bashan, 2003, p. 474). Ironically, colonial rule, imposed from outside, necessitated increased consultation and power sharing within Morocco. It opened up spaces for previous non-state actors to voice concerns and called for a deep questioning of Moroccan society and values.

### **The Jewish Experience in Morocco**

The Jewish community in Morocco is one of the oldest in the world dating as far back as the destruction of the first temple in 586 BCE, or perhaps even the time of Phoenician traders (7th century BCE) or the time of King Solomon (10th Century BCE). By the time of the Roman Empire, they were a well-established community, later known as the *toshavim*, or “original residents.” In addition to these ancient Jewish communities, large numbers of Sephardic Jews, known as *megorashim*, the expelled, arrived in Morocco from the Iberian Peninsula along with Muslim exiles escaping persecution during the 15th century. These two groups did not always get along well together (Kenbib, 2011, p. 27).

These Moroccan Jewish communities spoke Judeo-Arabic and Amazigh languages depending on which region of the country they lived. As dhimmi, they had a protected status that provided them with some rights (freedom of worship, property ownership) and a degree of administrative autonomy. Most lived in segregated walled city quarters with locked gates called *mellahs* and all were required to wear black clothing and a hairstyle different from Muslims. Their main

sources of livelihood were food production and farming (including making wine, forbidden by Islam), spice trading, butchering, tailoring, leatherwork, jewelry makers, blacksmithing, and woodworking. Most were poor or low income. The largest communities lived in Fez, Marrakesh, and Essaouira (Laskier & Bashan, 2003, pp. 476-480). Muslim-Jewish relations varied considerably by place and time depending on local circumstances and exigencies (Kenbib, 2011, p. 26).

The Jewish trading community had extensive ties throughout the Mediterranean and Islamic world extending all the way to India (Bennison, 2016, pp. 203-204). They thrived as partners with Arab traders (Nabhan, 2014, pp. 130-132). Because of these important commercial relations, many were incorporated into the *makhzan* as key advisors and occasionally sent on diplomatic missions to Europe. In the 19th century, affluent Moroccan Jewish traders became influential royal merchants who leased government monopolies and port customs on key agricultural and manufacturing sectors (Wrytzen, 2015, pp. 180-182). Enmity against Jews increased during the 19th century and throughout the colonial period as they were increasingly seen as a privileged and protected class (Laskier & Bashan, 2003, p. 486).

In 1860, French colonial administrators in Algeria allowed French language and culture schools for Jews operated by the Alliance Israelite Universelle (AIU). As Wrytzen (2015) relates, “the AIU encouraged the ‘moral progress’ and ‘emancipation’ of Jews living in the Islamic world” (p. 183). The first such school in Morocco opened in 1862 in Tetouan and expanded to most other cities over the next two decades. These schools were open to girls and provided vocational training. In 1863, in part in response to British aristocrat Sir Moses Haim Montefiore’s visit, Sultan Muhammed IV issued a royal *dahir* (decree) ensuring equal justice under the law for all Jews. In 1870, the entire Jewish population of Algeria was given legal status as citizens of France (Miller, 2013, pp. 45-46). According to Laskier and Bashan (2003), “the Jewish press chronicled the deterioration of Jewish-Muslim relations since the 1860s that was partly the result of the growing French and British interest in Moroccan domestic affairs – and the increasing intervention of European Jews on behalf of Moroccan Jewish communities” (p. 485). This included philanthropic assistance to impoverished Jewish communities in overcrowded *mellahs* (Kenbib, 2011, p. 27).

Rising nationalism and anti-Semitism in Europe prompted the Zionist movement of the late 1890s. Its idea spread to the colonies in the Middle East and North Africa gaining momentum after the 1917 Balfour Declaration (that promised to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine) and the divisions created by further partitioning of the region following World War I (see Fromkin, 1989). With the rise of Nazi-Germany, more than 300,000 Jews emigrated from Europe to Palestine between 1922 and 1936. During World War II, Mohammed V refused to sign the pro-Nazi Vichy regime’s plans to collect and deport Morocco’s quarter million Jews to the killing factories of Europe (Miller, 2013, p. 142). He is also purported to have responded to a Nazi commander demanding a list of Moroccan Jews that “We have no Jews in Morocco! Only Moroccan citizens” (Raoul Wallenberg Foundation, 2009).

The question of Jewish statehood remained unresolved until after World War II when Israel declared independence in 1948, launching a regional war and the defeat of Arab forces (Cleveland & Bunton, 2009, pp. 239-271). The rise and formation of the Jewish state coincided with the imposition and maintenance of colonial rule throughout the region. The impact for Morocco with its large Jewish community was highly disruptive. By 1948, the Jewish population in Morocco had risen to approximately 275,000 with the largest presence in Casablanca. Wrytzen (2015) reports, “while formally preserving the status of Moroccan Jews as subjects of the sultan, French administrators increasingly took direct control over them” (p. 179).

Amidst the complex circumstances of Zionism and looming Moroccan independence following World War II, a massive emigration ensued and deeply rooted Jewish communities vanished from the country (Kenbib, 2011, pp. 28-29). Laskier and Bashan (2003) estimate that between 1949-1956 90,000 Jews emigrated from Morocco to Israel under a semi-legal apparatus called Cadima, about 18,000 thousand Jews were smuggled out illegally following Moroccan independence between 1956-1961, and about 80,000 left legally between 1961-1964 by chartered planes and ships under Operation Yakhin (pp. 499-502). By 1970, 230,000 Moroccan Jews had settled in Israel (Laskier & Bashan, 2003, p. 502).

André Levy (2015), sums up the developments that led to the migration of Jews from Morocco thusly:

Modern historical processes, whose roots were in Europe, arrived in Morocco and created an irreversible disruption (in the daily life of the community) . . . first and foremost, from the Jews’ point of view, was the changes in the *dhimmi* status, even though it wasn’t abolished *de jure*, it ceased to be relevant *de facto*. This change was accompanied by a demographic process in which initially Jews moved around within Morocco; they left their villages and moved to the larger cities, situated mainly on the coast, with the intention to join the colonial project manifesting itself as inclusive and cosmopolitan. The Muslim majority saw this desire to join the colonial project as a betrayal of Moroccan nationalism . . . [as] Moroccan nationalism began shaping its collective identity as Arab and Muslim. Most of the Jews saw this move as an act of rejection. Zionist activity also contributed to the Jew’s disengagement from Morocco and to an even greater undermining of their sense of belonging, as Zionist activists encouraged Jews to emigrate. Israel’s chronic involvement in bloody conflicts with the Arab world also had its share of the effect on this outcome. (p. 178)

Today, there are under 3,000 Jews living in Morocco, mostly in Casablanca (Eickelman, 2018).

### **Independence Movement and the Monarchy**

Following World War II, the call for Moroccan independence (in concert with calls for decolonization around the world) increased significantly. In 1944, the

Istiqlal (independence) Party, led by Allal al-Fasi, called for an independent Morocco under the sultan and that the sultan should negotiate independence on Morocco's behalf. Sultan Mohammed V gave an important speech in Tangier in 1947 affirming the inalienable rights of the Moroccan people to self-rule and in 1952 wrote a letter to the French president calling for the end of the protectorate that was decisively rejected. Meanwhile, widespread strikes and demonstrations resulted in violence and many deaths. Writes Wyrzten (2015), "Between 1953-1956, the Resistance [various urban guerrilla organizations] engaged in 4,250 violent attacks in Morocco's cities, primarily Casablanca, targeting infrastructure" (p. 277). France, desiring to maintain control over Morocco and faced with a national movement inextricably linked to the monarch, orchestrated with the help of the Grand *Caid* of Marrakech, Thami al-Glaoui, a petition that called for the deposition of the sultan. Demonstrating the effectiveness of the divide and rule strategy, the petition was signed by many other Amazigh leaders, who either feared urban nationalists or like Abd al-Hayy Kettani opposed Alawi rule (Sater, 2010, pp. 21-23). Sultan Mohammed V was deposed and exiled first to Corsica and then to Madagascar in 1953. Exile served to heighten Mohammed V's standing and strengthen the nationalist cause. France faced with other colonial conflicts in Tunisia and Algeria and increased riots and violence in Morocco, allowed his return to Morocco in 1955. Morocco gained its independence in 1956 and established a constitutional monarchy. The challenges facing the country at independence were significant. For example, 90% of the population was illiterate and only 15% of school-aged children were in school at the time of independence (Miller, 2013, pp. 153-154).

King Mohammed V adeptly managed a complex array of factions vying for influence in Morocco, both internally and externally. With keen attention to specific interests, he translated traditional symbolic legitimacy and his stature as Commander of the Faithful (*Amir al-Mu'minin*) and defender of Moroccan nationalism into modern political alliances and popular support amidst often competing regional, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural differences. He worked with Amazigh leaders to create a post-independence alliance, suppressed Amazigh insurgents, integrated the Royal Armed Forces, reformed Sufi orders, controlled the most important ministries, and encouraged a multi-party system (Maddy-Weitzman, 2011, p. 166; Naylor, 2009, p. 229). He died unexpectedly in 1961 with his son Hassan II succeeding him.

Hassan II also navigated a complex and contested political landscape, including the rise of political Islam and an increasingly urbanized population. Most immediate, he had to build institutional capacity, and hence engaged in a process of decolonization that involved the nationalization of French-owned agricultural lands, Moroccanization of industry, and Arabization of education (Sater, 2010, pp. 39-40).

Over the course of five constitutions (1962, 1970, 1972, 1992, and 1996), Hassan II gradually succeeded by associating politics with the traditional Islamic idea of *shura* consultation (Sater, 2010, p. 30). However, his early years were extremely difficult, as he provoked the inconclusive War of the Sands with Algeria (1963-64), dissolved parliament in 1965, instituted a state of emergency that lasted

five years, saw the kidnapping and murder of opposition leader Mehdi Ben Barka in Paris, and survived two assassination attempts on his own life in 1971 and 1972 (Naylor, 2009, p. 229). The first attempt occurred on Hassan II's 42nd birthday party at his beachside palace and resulted in the death of 100 guests and 125 wounded as well as 150 rebels killed and 900 held in custody. The second attempt involved an attack on a Royal Air Maroc flight by Moroccan fighter jets. The king's bullet-riddled passenger jet miraculously landed safely. Both attempts were orchestrated by members of the Moroccan military (Miller, 2013, pp. 176-77).

His survival, perceived by some as *baraka* (divine blessing or fortune), coupled with the politically savvy Green March of 1975, when 350,000 Moroccans armed only with the Koran entered the Western Sahara, secured popular nationalist support for the King (Sater, 2010, pp. 125-126). In the Tripartite Agreement of 1975, Spain gave Morocco and Mauritania administrative control over Western Sahara. In 1976, the indigenous Saharawi people, led by the Polisario Front, declared itself the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). Mauritania withdrew from the agreement in 1979. Morocco withdrew from the Organization of African Unity when the OAU recognized the SADR in 1984. The 16-year insurgency ended with a UN-brokered truce in 1991 and the promise of a referendum on independence which has yet to take place (BBC, 2018).

Numerous strikes and bread riots occurred in the 1980s throughout Morocco, in part due to International Monetary Fund and World Bank imposed austerities, removal of subsidies, and debt restructuring. Structural adjustment programs mandated the privatization of government--controlled monopolies that were bought by wealthy Moroccan elites with foreign partners. This neoliberal approach aimed to improve efficiencies, curtail corruption, and reduce mismanagement issues, but it also led to a shrinking of the public sector and increased unemployment (Miller, 2013, pp. 185-186, 208-209).



Contemporary Algeria, Morocco, and Western Sahara  
Source: Naylor, p. 216.

## Politics of Reform:

### Human Rights, Amazigh Rights, and Women's Rights

Human rights, Amazigh rights, and Women's rights have been at the center of reforms since the 1990s. Organizational campaigns for change began as early as 1984, when Christine Daure, wife of imprisoned dissident Abraham Serfaty, founded the Association for the Defense of Human Rights in Morocco. In 1988, this was followed by the founding of two additional organizations, the Moroccan Organization of Human Rights and the Moroccan Association of Human Rights (Miller, 2013, p. 201). In 1990, Gilles Perrault published an exposé titled *Our Friend the King* about corruption and human rights abuses in Morocco. These efforts forced a reevaluation by the King that led to significant reforms.

Naylor (2009) states that, "after the 'leaden years' of the 1980s, which featured severe repression and infamous detention, King Hassan permitted a deliberate 'liberalization' through reforms and amnesties during the 1990s" (p. 233). This included closure of the infamous Tazmamart prison and government creation of the Advisory Council for Human Rights in 1990 and the Ministry of Human Rights in 1994. In May of 1994, seven members of the Teelli (Freedom) Cultural Association were arrested for unfurling banners promoting Amazigh language rights. Their harsh treatment provoked an avalanche of protest. In response, King Hassan II during his 1994 Throne Day speech broadcast on television recognized Amazigh language and culture as an authentic component of Moroccan identity. In 1995, he issued a royal decree calling for the teaching of Tamazight in public schools (Miller, 2013, p. 196). However, it took nine more years before Tamazight was actually taught, in fall 2003, to first grade pupils in 300 schools (Maddy-Weitzman, 2011, p. 171).

The new constitution of 1992 explicitly confirmed adherence to "human rights as they are universally recognized" and led to parliamentary elections the following year that were touted as the freest since independence (Sater, 2010, p. 61). The 1996 constitution created a bicameral parliament with the lower house directly elected, and where, during the following year, an Islamist party was allowed to put forth candidates for the first time. As Miller () stresses, "more important, however, was the unwritten understanding that the King would name a prime minister from the party having an electoral majority" (p. 205).

Following Hassan II's death in 1999 (he ruled for 38 years), his son, Mohammed VI, ascended to the throne and almost immediately accelerated political reforms with an emphasis on social welfare (Sater, 2010, p. 74). Within months, Mohammed VI fired the notorious Minister of the Interior Driss Basri and made a high-profile symbolic visit to the northern Rif Region where Amazigh protests and rebellions had been regular historical occurrences.

The issuance in 2000 of a Berber Manifesto, the 2001 royal *dahir* establishing the Royal Institute for Amazigh Culture, and Mohamed Chafik's appointment as its leader were groundbreaking developments in Moroccan history and demonstrated the King's commitment to ending Amazigh marginalization (Maddy-Weitzman, 2011, p. 166). These steps were backed up by generous budgetary allocations for the institute.

As the “Berber Manifesto” made evidently clear, there was a long history of neglect and abuse to address. The hard work of educational and cultural change laid ahead. One of the unmet major demands of the Manifesto, was the recognition of Tamazight as an official language in the Moroccan constitution. No doubt, addressing the issue of Amazigh rights was part of a larger movement advocating for human rights and broader participation in public life. In this regard, the government sponsored 2004-2005 Equity and Reconciliation Commission which collected testimonies from people who survived torture while imprisoned during Hassan II’s reign. While those responsible were immune from prosecution, it was an unprecedented acknowledgement of wrong-doing. Said Miller (2013), “Overall, nearly ten thousand victims of the ‘years of lead’ received indemnities totaling more than \$200 million” (p. 223). The process also showed that the majority of victims were Amazigh (Maddy-Weitzman, 2011, p. 155). In this effort and others, the Moroccan press also played a vibrant role providing an informative platform for public debate (Miller, 2013, p. 219).

### **Women’s Movement and the February 20th Movement**

Women’s lives in Morocco are shaped by numerous factors including social class, geography, ethnicity, religion, and education. For example, women’s experience varies greatly depending on whether they live in cosmopolitan urban centers like Casablanca, Rabat, and Tangiers or whether they live in traditional rural settings. Still, in general, “compared to men, women in Morocco are less represented in decision-making processes and in areas such as education, health, and employment” (Gender Profile Morocco, n.d., p. 3). The 2015 World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index (2015) ranked Morocco 139 out of 145 countries in overall gender equity, with ranks of 140 and 123 in economic opportunity and educational attainment. The illiteracy rate for women in 2012 was 47.6% and much higher in rural areas (Gender Profile Morocco, n.d., p. 6).

In the face of such changes, however, “the women’s movement not only advanced the cause of women; [but] it also had the electric effect of opening . . . new forms of debate associated with a more inclusive political culture” (Miller, 2013, p. 194). As Salime (2012) underscores, “for two decades the movement had launched a sustained mobilization to challenge women’s secondary status in family law” (p. 103). In 1992, a campaign collecting one million signatures called for reform of the 1957 *mudawwana*, or family law. This led to a 1993 reform of the law that permitted women to sign an employment contract and obtain a passport on their own without male consent (Sater, 2010, p. 68-71). In 2004, the *mudawwana* was renamed the Family Code and additional changes stipulated that women have the right to marry without consent of a male guardian as well as the right to divorce (Gender Profile Morocco, n.d., p. 4). Recognized for its relatively progressive position on women’s rights within the Islamic world, the Family Code reforms have provided women with greater rights; however, awareness and implementation of the reforms have been limited by the lack of training of judges as well as social and religious conservatism, particularly in rural areas of the country (Eisenberg, 2011, p. 693). The law has been an insufficient mechanism when it comes to changing people’s attitudes and behaviors as local customs often conflict with the law. In

addition, ambiguities within the law can be interpreted as reinforcing patriarchal perspectives and gendered division of labor. Most significantly, despite the 2011 constitutional reaffirmation of Morocco's commitment to human rights as they are universally recognized, the *sharia*-based Family Code remains above international law (Elliott, 2014, pp. 16-25).

Secular women's movements in Morocco have tended to focus on working within the system for political and legal changes to expand and improve women's rights and representation, whereas Islamist movements have tended to focus on social change at the grassroots level although at times opposing more feminist positions (Salime, 2012, pp. 107-109). No doubt, while legal codes that recognize women's rights are important guideposts, absent widespread social attitudes that support and affirm women's full participation in public life, systematic discrimination, and pervading attitudes prevent the implementation of greater equality. Therefore, Skalli (2011, p. 340) has emphasized that efforts to promote women's rights should not be siloed in ways that look only at women or that are sponsored solely by women's organizations, rather they must engage with an intersectionality of movements and issues. Nonetheless, it was women's organizations that took the lead disseminating the code in *darija* (spoken Moroccan Arabic) and Amazigh dialects (Miller, 2013, p. 228). Since the February 20th movement (Morocco's version of the Arab Spring), Salime (2012) asserts that "feminism has not only penetrated the social imaginary of a new generation of activists, but has also informed their practices" (p. 101). She sees "women and men working together as partners in the struggle for social and economic justice" (Salime, 2012, p. 105). Such joint efforts are especially prevalent in emerging forms of civic engagement through social media-based activism but are also increasingly prevalent in face-to-face interactions.

The February 20th movement represented broad societal concerns that seek greater political representation, economic reform, and government accountability. As Zerhouni (2017) described, "the movement asked for a democratic constitution, the independence of the judiciary and the media as well as the separation of wealth and power" (p. 6). Growing unemployment, poverty, and inequity fueled dissatisfaction. Despite successive parliamentary elections since 1993, there is significant discontent with political parties and elected officials (Sater, 2010, p. 85). Furthermore, these officials were largely regarded as ineffective in a system that invested so much power with the king. Young people were especially active in the movement as they are keen to see substantive change; however, they do not tend to participate in elections at very high percentages. In 2002, the voting age was lowered from 20 to 18 years old. One of the few political parties with an active youth section, the Justice and Development Party (Islamist Party) won a majority of seats in the 2011 parliamentary elections obliging the King to select a prime minister from the party (Zerhouni, 2017, pp. 9-10). The king was also applauded for his quick response to the movement by putting forth a new constitution (approved on July 1, 2011 by 98.5% of voters, with nearly 10 million votes cast, representing close to 75% of the eligible electorate). The new constitution included changes that enhanced legislative powers, increased the judiciary's independence, and limited the King's ability to intervene in day-to-day politics (Miller, 2013, p.



235). Since 2011, within the lower house of the Moroccan parliament, a minimum of 60 seats out of 395 are reserved for women.

### **Society and the Economy**

With a population of 35 million people, Morocco is rich with natural resources such as fish, phosphates, and fertile agricultural lands, but it struggles with rural poverty, urban unemployment, and illiteracy (Sater, 2010, p. 87-88). Primarily an agricultural economy, it also benefits from tourism and remittances. It has invested heavily in renewable energy. As entrepreneurship has grown and Morocco works to diversify its economy, there has also been increased attention given to fighting corruption (Sater, 2010, p. 104). Its annual gross domestic product is approximately \$110 billion with a 4% growth rate and \$8,600 per capita annual income. Unemployment is at 10%, the inflation rate is 1.6%, and 53% of the population is under 30 years of age.

While Morocco has a trade deficit with Europe, it has benefitted by securing European Union (EU) capital and through market integration with Europe (70% of all its exports go to the EU). The EU has also linked foreign aid to human rights and democracy promotion, and Morocco is the primary recipient of EU aid in North Africa (Sater, 2010, p. 133). Mohammed VI's doctoral thesis focused on the European Economic Commission and the Maghreb.

EU relations are also important in regard to issues of migration. Nearly 3 million Moroccans live in Europe (Miller, 2013, p. 232). Illegal Moroccan immigration results in tens of thousands of annual expulsions. In October 2005, thousands of Sub-Saharan migrants attempted to breach barbed wire fences at Melilla resulting in 13 deaths and hundreds wounded (Naylor, 2009, p. 236). For those interested in learning more about the personal circumstances of these migrants, Laila Lalami's 2005 novel *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* is insightful and engaging.

King Mohammed VI has been a force for social change in Morocco supporting the efforts to improve and expand human rights, Amazigh rights, and women's rights. Perhaps most important has been the king's efforts at alleviating poverty and extending social welfare as was evident in the National Initiative for Human Development which received a \$3.3 billion budget in 2007 and inaugurated 7,000 projects (Sater, 2010, p. 83). Still, as the February 20th movement demonstrated, people are concerned about the economic effects of globalization, the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few elites, and the increased securitization of the state in the wake of high-profile terrorist attacks.

### **U.S. Relations and the War on Terror**

Morocco's cooperative and close relationship with the United States dates back to Mohammed III's acknowledgement of the U.S. Declaration of Independence in 1777 and the 1787 trade agreement. It found continued relevance when Theodore Roosevelt participated in the Algeiras Conference of 1906 (Potter, 1922, pp. 577-583). Its importance was underscored again in the 1943 Casablanca Conference held in the Anfa hotel where Allied commanders met to coordinate the on-going war effort and discuss peace plans, including discussions related to decolonization

and Morocco's independence (Miller, 2013, p. 144). Morocco also firmly allied with the United States during the Cold War. In the 1950s and 1960s, the U.S. had several air bases, radar and communications installations, and a naval station in Morocco (Wyrzten, 2015, p. 292).

None of these examples are as straight forward as they appear. They all involved complex strategic calculations. More recently, as Miller (2013) has highlighted, "the U.S. steadily supplied arms to Morocco for its [Western] Saharan war, and in return, Morocco became a consistent supporter of U.S.-Middle East policies" (p. 209). Morocco also remained a staunch U.S. ally following invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. Mohammed VI has cooperated with America's "war on terror" and often faced criticism at home (Miller, 2013, pp. 224-225). However, high-profile terrorist attacks at or near home have informed this decision. Such attacks include a 1994 attack in Marrakesh that led to the closing of the Algerian border, a 2003 attack in Casablanca in which 45 people were killed (33 victims and 12 suicide bombers), and the lethal Madrid bombings in 2004 that killed 191 people and injured 1,800 followed by the conviction of Moroccan and Tunisian nationals for carrying out the attack. Moroccans have been unequivocal in their rejection of such extremism. This may be best characterized by the Marrakesh Declaration of 2016 that defends the rights and liberties of religious minorities in predominantly Muslim communities and rejects "the use of violence and armed struggle as a means for settling conflict and imposing one's point of view."

### **This Volume**

Tracing Morocco's diverse influences, powerful empires, cosmopolitan achievements, colonial resistance, and modern nation building efforts, the above essay provides a basis for further examination and understanding of these topics. Morocco is an active participant in today's global society, facing challenges that are confronting every country and community, and that demand thoughtful and innovative responses. The essays in this volume provide a more in-depth analysis of Morocco, its history, cultural diversity, and changing contexts.

This issue, then, begins with an article titled "Between the Line and the Circle: Ibn Khaldun's View of History and Change" by Allen Fromherz that contextualizes the 14th century scholar's views on historiography in ways that remain relevant today. It is followed by "The Ebbs and Flows of U.S.-Moroccan Relations in the Context of the Anfa Conference" by Karim Bejjit that meticulously reviews the conversations held between President Roosevelt and Sultan Mohamed V during WWII that helped set the stage for Moroccan Independence. The next two articles turn to the world of art. In "Moroccan Artistic Presence at the Centre Pompidou Collections," Tunisian scholar, Sirine Abdelhedi shares a fascinating analysis on the "decolonization of the gaze" and how best to represent Morocco on the world stage. This piece is complemented by Samir El Azhar's composition focused on "The Changing Roles of Female Visual Artists in Morocco" with its particular attention on how these artists have overcome prejudices, corrected misconceptions, and transgressed taboos. Next, two very different and powerful articles further question issues of changing identities in Morocco. The first, titled "Your Opportunity to Hear Your Voice": Akaliyat Magazine and the Creation of Queer

Community in Morocco" by Benjamin Ale-Ebrahim, looks specifically at an online journal's attempt to build a greater sense of community as well as emerging coalitions across communities. The second article, "A Study of the Vernacular Literacy Practices of a Newly Literate Moroccan Woman: An Ethnographic Perspective" by Reddad Erguig examines the central role of the family in literacy acquisition. Continuing with the theme of language acquisition, Taoufik Jaafari considers the contentious landscape of language education policy in Morocco and its implications for the future. Delving deeper into educational and cultural policy, Brahim El Guabli describes "Moroccan Society's Educational and Cultural Losses during The Years of Lead." While difficult to quantify, an analysis of influential journals such as *Lamalif* as well as official reports such as those issued by the Equity and Reconciliation Commission shed light on this important topic. Maintaining a focus on national politics in "Moroccan Islamists Debate the Causes of Violent Extremism," author Jack Kalpakian outlines the theological challenges posed by certain Wahhabi and Salafist views that reject mainstream Moroccan Islam and the implications for the government as it works to combat terrorism. Further examining the inner workings of Moroccan government, Zakaria Fatih, uses the prism of inclusive and extractive institutions to consider the makhzen's effectiveness in terms of national development. While in "Empowering Rural Participation and Partnerships in Morocco's Sustainable Development," Yossef Ben-Meir analyzes the implementation of specific government policies. His assessment is based on a long career of working closely with rural communities. The final article in this volume by Touria Khannous considers Morocco through the influence of film and the transnational, with special attention to the complex role of women in society. Given the breadth and depth of subjects addressed in this volume, readers will no doubt come away with a strong understanding of Moroccan society and its important place in the world today.

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