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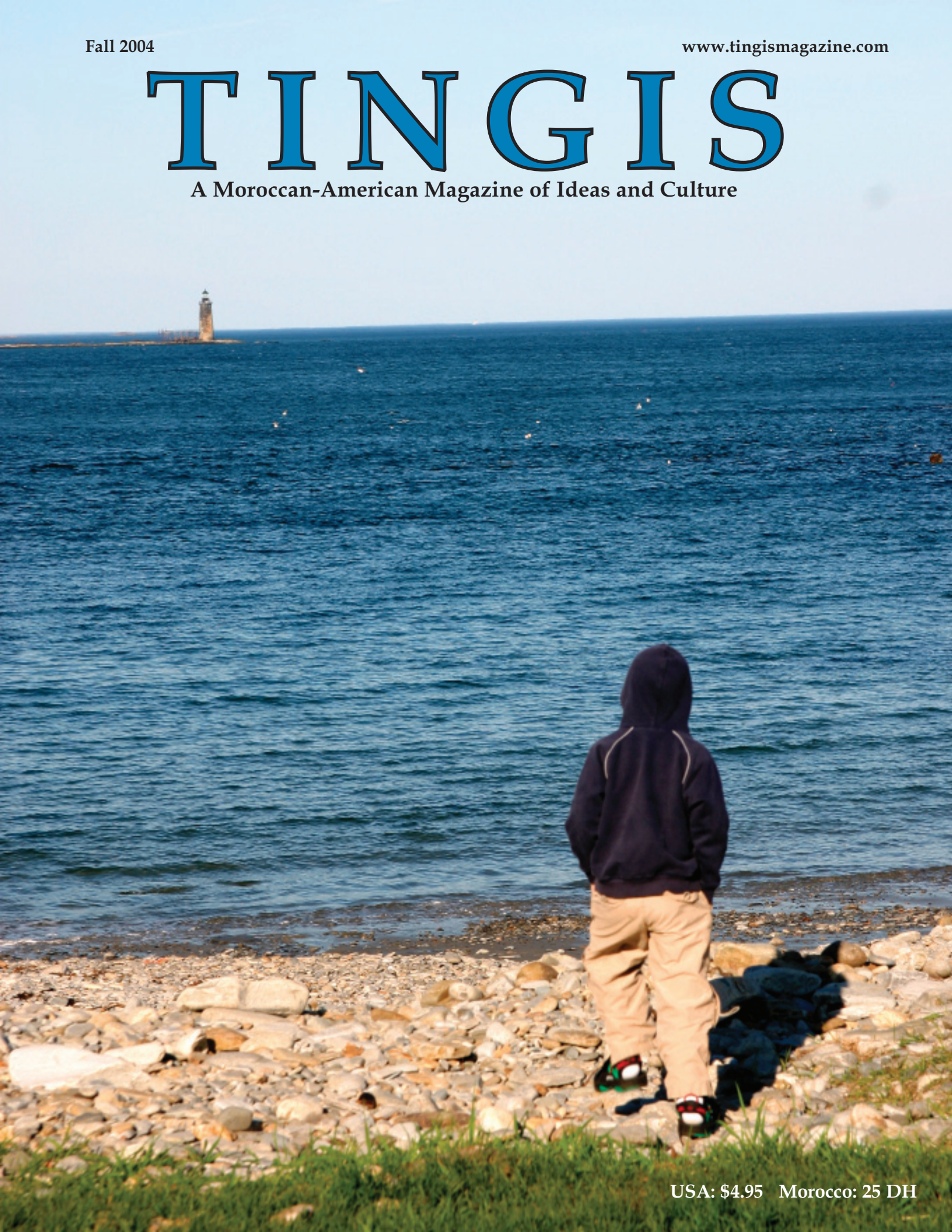

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Tingis is a quarterly magazine that highlights the cultural concerns, ideas, and issues of Moroccans, friends of Morocco, and all those who have some interest in Morocco or in the larger Arab, Muslim, and Mediterranean worlds. The focus could be on religion, culture, gender, Africa, the Berber heritage, the Jewish legacy, Moroccan art and literature, film, music, but also on the United States and the rest of the Americas, Western and Asian cultures, and, more generally, on all issues of interest to the Moroccan and world communities.

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TINGIS

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The Year of Living Dangerously

By
Anouar Majid

While we at *Tingis* are celebrating the conclusion of having completed and survived a full year of publication — all four issues came out more or less on time — and the growing recognition of the magazine in the United States, Morocco, and other parts of the world, I am doubly thankful for having been able to edit the magazine through the most unusual and challenging circumstances. The last three issues — including the one you are holding now — were edited while I was practically living in the hospital with my six-year-old son. In February of 2004, just when I was working on the second issue of *Tingis*, my son—who was five then—was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia (better known by its acronym, AML), a tough form of blood cancer, one that is relatively rare in children and has a lower prognosis for a cure than acute lymphoblastic leukemia (known as ALL). My family and I braced ourselves for a life-and-death battle and I am glad to report that after a long aggressive treatment, and after surviving a couple of life-threatening situations, my son's health is slowly getting back to normal. Only today, just before I started writing this, his doctor expressed optimism for his future.

I mention this episode in this space because this experience has made me think about all sorts of things, ranging from the role of medicine in bridging cultural gaps to the future of healthcare in both the United States and Morocco. For about seven months we were hospitalized in the Barbara Bush Children's Hospital, a unit of the Maine Medical Center in Portland, Maine. The children's unit is superb: the rooms are spacious and private; there is a playroom for young children; one for teenagers; a parents' lounge, complete with its own shower, kitchen and laundry room; a classroom for children who spend too much time in the hospital; and a glass-covered atrium that lets the sun in and brightens the atmosphere. All sorts of events are staged for the kids in the atrium—musical shows; the original munchkins from the show, *The Wizard of Oz*, come to visit; people bring pets; and, occasionally, the patron saint of the hospital, Mrs. Barbara Bush, wife of a president and mother to another, stops by to read to the patients.

We were in the oncology section and attended to by a team of accomplished physicians and a corps of well-trained and experienced nurses.

This four-section facility is staffed by very competent healthcare practitioners, all dedicated to the well being of their patients. We were in the oncology section and attended to by a team of accomplished physicians and a corps of well-trained and experienced nurses. As my son got treated for the illness with chemotherapy, he developed life-threatening infections (because chemotherapy wipes out fast-developing blood cells and leaves the patient with no immunity against infections) that needed to be treated aggressively with antibiotics and anti-fungal medications. Meanwhile, he needed constant red blood and platelet (the substance that helps clotting) transfusions. A major part of treating this illness is in managing the side effects of the medicine, and that, of course, includes a ready and abundant supply of blood products. Patients who do not do well may need a bone marrow transplant. This means that one has to annihilate the bone marrow (the spongy part inside the bone where blood is produced) of the patient and replace it with another healthy one that matches with her or his blood type. My son's siblings and his parents were tested to determine whether we matched in case my son needed a bone marrow transplant, but none of us did. So our community ran a bone marrow drive and about 380 people volunteered for him and another child with leukemia. Even if they don't match—and chances of matching outside the immediate family are quite slim—they make their blood type available to a bone marrow bank, so that if another person—say from California or Florida—finds one that matches in that bank, the donor could help that sick patient. It's a beautiful and most humane system.

Moroccans are not in the habit of donating blood, let alone volunteering to share their bone marrow; yet blood donations, when properly screened and stored, save lives.

During this ordeal, which lasted more than seven months, I realized that if someone were to get this disease in Morocco, it would be nearly impossible to find properly radiated and screened blood products in the quantities needed for optimal care. The patient may have to be sent to France, as one doctor friend told me. ALL is easier to treat but not AML. This led me to think about blood donations in Morocco. Moroccans are not in the habit of donating blood, let alone volunteering to share their bone marrow; yet blood donations, when properly screened and stored, save lives. As Morocco is paying

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Sooner or later, Moroccans must stop thinking of France as a solution to their toughest challenges; Moroccan physicians can do a lot, if they have what they need.

more attention to its healthcare system, the government and non-profit organizations should concentrate on not simply building hospitals, but also on educating the public on the non-medical aspects of health care. We could buy high-tech machines, but the most important thing is to forge a culture of solidarity with the sick. Sooner or later, Moroccans must stop thinking of France as a solution to their toughest challenges; Moroccan physicians can do a lot, if they have what they need.

Patient in CT scan machine.

If Morocco were to establish an advanced culture of health care, it could become a destination not only for tourists seeking the country's exoticism, sun, and beaches, but, as it now happens in Cuba, medical care as well. I know people who got treated for breast cancer in Morocco, in both private and public hospitals, for prices that would astound any American patient. While treatment in public facilities in Morocco is practically free, a state-of-the-art clinic in Rabat charges about $3000 for treating breast cancer, including reconstructive surgery. (This is what a friend paid in 2003 to take care of his sister.) That's quite a bargain.

The price tag of healthcare in the U.S. is, on the other hand, getting out of sight and one can see how the American health care system also needs urgent reform. Morocco needs to build a good infrastructure and educate its citizens, but the U.S. needs to stop the waste in the system and bring back the entire medical-industrial complex under the aegis of the Hippocratic oath. Healthcare facilities are charging too much to cover their costs and to protect against malpractice lawsuits. Those costs are then transferred to the worker or small-business owner whose insurance premiums keep going up every year at a galloping pace. Meanwhile, more than 40 million Americans (more than the entire population of Morocco) are, at any given time, without health insurance, and whose expensive treatment, in case of emergency, would also be transferred to taxpayers.

The price tag of health care in the U.S. is, on the other hand, getting out of sight and one can see how the American health care system also needs urgent reform.

There is too much insecurity and fear in an otherwise quite sophisticated and extensive medical system. I don't see how it could last forever if nothing happens. This is one area in which the state could assume control, since the lives of Americans, like the lives of Moroccans, are too precious to be left to private, self-serving interests. Public and private healthcare systems could exist together, as they do in Morocco, Spain, and other countries, allowing those with private health insurance to decide how and where to be treated.

Aside from reflecting on the promises and challenges facing the American and Moroccan healthcare systems, the experience that moved me the most during our trial is the love and care of our community. As I said before, hundreds of people volunteered to be tested for a bone marrow match with our son. For this to happen, my son's school personnel and nurse had to launch a campaign, students raised money to cover costs and give us gifts, next-door neighbors and those from the outer stretches of the community brought a steady supply of meals to our house, and quite a few people looked after our

Everyone prayed for us. Native American medicine men, Buddhists, Muslims, Christians of various denominations, and Jews prayed as devoutly and non-believers and atheists sent their good wishes. All the good energy went into our pot of hope. We were grateful for it all. We will never be able count our blessings.

Doctor and patient celebrating the end of treatment.

children and house when we had to be out on emergencies. Everyone prayed for us. Native American medicine men, Buddhists, Muslims, Christians of various denominations, and Jews prayed as devoutly and non-believers and atheists sent their good wishes. All the good energy went into our pot of hope. We were grateful for it all. We will never be able count our blessings.

Perhaps I am recounting this to remind us how absurd all this business of wars, religious dogma, nationalistic fervors, and just plain hubris—which were the main news during the episode of our son's illness—blind us to what is best in human beings and in all cultures. It makes you wonder whether the human species is just hopelessly flawed, with people going to bestial lengths (to paraphrase Pascal) to show how good and right they are. Acts of solidarity, in the face of our common humanity, abound; but they are relegated to the shadows, as if the businesses of hating and killing were our pre-ordained fate. Perhaps we have yet to evolve to a new level of consciousness, when the human spirit will simply reject the false and painful titillations of war and aggression.

There is hope—for as you are reading this, someone is saving a life, healing the wounded, or ministering to the aggrieved. Somewhere the darkness of sorrow and the lamentations of mourners are being replaced by songs of hope through the untiring devotion of a selfless soul. I shudder to think what might happen if the world were all business and war, without

Perhaps we have yet to evolve to a new level of consciousness, when the human spirit will simply reject the false and painful titillations of war and aggression.

mercy or a sense of the humanity that binds us. But we are not there— not yet. And perhaps, inspired by what I have seen this last year, I wouldn't be surprised if our children broke away from our dysfunctional ways to create a more loving world for their own.

The themes of war, colonial legacies, and cultural contact take up most of this issue. Jeff Corydon's experience in Morocco and his familiarity with Moroccan wisdom have given him a unique perspective on the situation in Muslim countries, particularly the one unfolding today in Iraq. Alec Hargreaves's essay details the new and complex role of the Moroccan community across Europe and, implicitly, much of the world. Because of its influence, the Moroccan diaspora is bound to affect the image of the mother country and will increasingly influence local affairs in Morocco. Athena Trakadas does a wonderful job reminding Moroccans of their precious, still undiscovered heritage, one that needs lots of tender and loving care. Ariel Yablon, an Argentine of Jewish heritage, now residing in the U.S., undertook the voyage to Morocco with his girlfriend, Nicole Mottier, in April 2004, and found much to compare to his native country. He offers a refreshing perspective to Moroccans accustomed to tourists from Europe and North America. Alexis Fabrikant's poem is a reminder that the young are still sallying forth in quest of knowledge and understanding. Finally, this writer adds his own reflections on the burning issue of Morocco's southern provinces, the so-called "Western Sahara," where a separatist movement has been battling Morocco for independence since the 1970s. Some perspective on this conflict might help us understand how the history of European colonialism in Africa created a tinderbox whose flames are still consuming societies that badly need all their resources to take care of themselves. Moroccans in the 21st century are still enduring the consequences of decisions made in 19th century Europe—proof that grand colonial schemes have handicapped many a nation and thrown entire societies into never-ending conflicts.

Moroccans in the 21st century are still enduring the consequences of decisions made in 19th century Europe—proof that grand colonial schemes have handicapped many a nation and thrown entire societies into never-ending conflicts.

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Iraqi War, Moroccan Wisdom

By
Jeff Corydon

Arriving in Rabat years ago as a rookie State Department officer, my first assignment was to immerse myself in studying Moroccan Arabic dialect. After a few months, colorful exchanges with Mohammed Q. Public offered me a new tool for probing what makes Moroccans tick.

At this point I embarked on a fascinating project with my Embassy language tutor, my private Mohammed: compiling a collection of popular Moroccan proverbs. Besides growing my fluency in the local Arabic dialect, I wanted fresh insights into the everyday life and attitudes of Moroccans and their fellow Muslims.

My duty tour in Morocco wound up being cut short by a family crisis, but this undertaking's value to my diplomatic career was long lasting. Those proverbs came in handy at other African posts where Islam influences ways of life and thinking, including Tunisia, Cameroon and Djibouti. When viewed against their backdrop, issues came into clearer focus. What's more, they still do—even though I've long since retired. For example, take this one:

"Leaving the bath is never the same as entering it."

Like most Americans these days, I'm frequently reflecting on and discussing our campaign to help Iraqis build a modern democratic government and economy in place of the dictatorship and underdevelopment they knew under Saddam Hussein. One recent conversation I had made me recall the above Moroccan proverb, and a perverse thought assailed me.

Let's suppose this nugget of a proverb had flitted across the minds of President Bush, Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell and Donald Rumsfeld as they pondered Iraq's invasion, rather than that catchy "shock and awe" idea. Might it have prompted a bit more brainstorming by the White House, Pentagon and State Department as to how best to deal with the aftermath of Saddam Hussein's and the Baath party's inevitable defeat.

"He's the size of a lima bean, but makes noise like an ogre."

As hinted by this further Moroccan proverb, Saddam's ultimate expulsion from power was indeed inevitable. The failed 1991 invasion of Kuwait and its consequences had clearly exposed his brutal, war-mongering regime's vulnerability. Regrettably, it was rescued in extremis by the vagaries of international politics. As the next decade brought nothing but half-hearted pressure on Saddam to disarm, but no enforcement, he managed to cling to the brink.

"Show him once, show him twice, and if he still can't see, forget it."

What was needed to end his long-standing defiance was the right catalyst. It came on September 11, 2001 when Al-Qaida's wanton assault in the U.S. drastically altered atmospherics between the Islamic world and the West and prodded President Bush to declare war on international terrorism. With the rapid overthrow of al-Qaida's Taliban fiefdom, Saddam's bellicose regime stood out as the Islamic state most likely to promote further large-scale terrorist aggression against America. Despite a lack of support from the United Nations and major European powers, the president concluded Saddam must be taken out. Predictions that coalition forces would quickly drive the Baathist rulers from Baghdad proved more accurate than many thought possible. However, some other challenges that would flow from the initial victory seem not to have been clearly foreseen.

"Come uninvited and you'll eat without washing your hands."

Opinions vary on how clear a notion the Bush government had of what it was getting into. *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman lauded Saddam's ouster as enabling the creation of a showcase at the heart of the Islamic world, which might nudge both Egypt and Iran toward further democratic reforms. In contrast, Pulitzer prize author Norman Mailer, known for anti-Bush views, called it "the height of folly to think we can go in there with a hypodermic and inject another country with democracy."

Who was more correct remains to be seen, but one thing is certain. A key factor in determining the eventual outcome will be the extent of occupation authorities' flexibility and readiness to accommodate traditional Islamic socio-cultural realities. Had U.S. planners done more pre-invasion research into the Iraqi population's psyche and the Muslim mentality in general, they would probably have been more adept in addressing the task of modernizing and democratizing a society so deeply rooted in traditionalist, authoritarian concepts.

"The fish is in the frying pan, but it still scowls."

Military planners of Iraq's invasion anticipated bitter resistance from Saddam's vaunted military forces, possibly including the use of WMD. On the other hand, they were expecting to receive grateful cooperation from the country's long oppressed general population. Both these assumptions were flawed. Instead of defending Baghdad to the last man, elements of Saddam's army and Republican Guard abandoned their posts and uniforms, but not their arms, and, taking cover in major cities and the capital's hinterland, proceeded to foment insurgency. As uninvited guests, Ambassador Paul Bremer's Baghdad mission and coalition forces countrywide soon came under deadly attack. Heavily armed Saddam backers were able to stir up wide support among people who feared Saddam might regain power and punish any disloyalty.

Had U.S. planners done more pre-invasion research into the Iraqi population's psyche and the Muslim mentality in general, they would probably have been more adept in addressing the task of modernizing and democratizing a society so deeply rooted in traditionalist, authoritarian concepts.

"The donkey's mine, and I have to ride in back."

Progress toward restoring Iraqi security and stability—especially in the Sunni triangle—has been slow and costly, owing partly to an initial failure to understand Iraqis' mindset. Though grateful for liberation from dictatorship, they were bound to resent prolonged military and civilian control by a horde of "infidels" seemingly unable to suppress violence, lawlessness and corruption.

The majority Shiites' frustration at being powerless to influence negative aspects of everyday life was a key factor in their insistence on holding elections vs. the transitional arrangements originally agreed on by Ambassador Bremer and the first Iraqi governing council. Equally responsible was the centuries-old conflict of interests among Iraq's separate Islamic communities—the Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds.

"Even if the Buregrag turns to milk and its sand to grapes, the Slaoui and Rbati will never be friends."

Saddam's Baathist dictatorship aggravated Iraq's traditional societal divisions by virtually excluding Shiites from leading roles and treating them as second-class citizens. While the Kurds were given a measure of autonomy in their northern homeland, any

Whether the interim Iraqi government which regained sovereignty last July will be able organize national elections, even with extensive backing from the U.S.-led coalition and the United Nations, remains a question.

sign of anti-government resistance was dealt with ruthlessly. Saddam's genocidal suppression of both Shiite and Kurdish uprisings left a legacy of fear, distrust and hostility toward the Sunnis. Both Kurds and Shiites have been at pains to block any transitional or permanent plans for a future government that does not preclude renewed Sunni and Baathist domination.

"The camel doesn't see his own hump, only his cousin's."

Achieving consensus even among the original, handpicked governing council's 25 members proved unusually tough. The three main communities promptly circled their caravans to protect vested interests, and blamed one another for blocking agreements. Sunnis accused Shiites of wanting to enshrine their majority position in law and political power, in retribution for decades of Sunni repression. The Kurds accused both other groups of wanting to nullify their traditional autonomous status, and were condemned in return for insisting on veto power over permanent constitutional arrangements. There were even deep divisions within the Shiite community, notably between respective supporters of clerics Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani and Muqtada al-Sadr. None of the religious communities or sects ever seems to view its own recalcitrance as holding up progress.

"New things have their novelty, but don't neglect the old."

For its part, the U.S. at first devised a complicated and, to Iraqis, somewhat esoteric plan for a series of caucuses for choosing an interim government to organize elections and write a constitution. Not surpris-

No one knows how long the pacification of pro-Saddam and pro-Sadr insurgents and the neutralization of subversive foreign elements may require. Nor is it certain that rival Iraqi political and religious factions can reach the compromises needed for a popularly elected government to survive.

ingly, its extreme novelty failed to satisfy the rival constituencies. Protests and lobbying against it spearheaded by the majority Shiites ultimately forced Ambassador Bremer to scratch the caucus idea and schedule open elections much earlier than originally envisaged.

"He who leaves behind his right hand man seems not to have died."

The insurgency of battle-trained Saddam loyalists has created enormous postwar problems for both the U.S.-led occupation and Iraqi authorities. Following the Baathist regime's collapse, the American military gave high priority to capturing or taking out the former dictator, believing it would diminish rebel resistance.

Rocket and mortar attacks, roadside assaults and suicide bombings did subside briefly after Saddam's capture last December, but then became heavier than before. The past several months have seen the deadliest series of anti-government and anti-coalition attacks to date. Ex-Vice President and close Saddam confidant Izzat Ibrahim, who remains at large, has been regarded as main Iraqi organizer of ongoing violence against coalition targets, Iraqi security trainees and the public. Jordanian al-Qaida cadre Abu Musaab al-Zarqawi, who started operating in Iraq under Saddam, has lent further momentum to a terrorist campaign that now seriously threatens interim President Ayad Allawi's authority.

"It takes a year to prepare an evening's wedding."

One thing the U.S. understood from the start was that any new democratic system created with undue haste would likely founder. However, the gradual intensification of terrorist attacks, increasingly violent intransigence among majority Shiites and political pressures back in the U.S. finally persuaded Ambassador Bremer to accept elections earlier than he had thought wise. Rather than being held late in 2005, they are now slated for next

January—a timing which many observers regard as too soon for comfort.

"A river is formed drop by drop."

The military and technical assistance forces deployed under direction of Ambassadors Bremer and Negroponte successively have worked feverishly to expedite educational reform, build homegrown security forces purged of Baathist extremists and create communications infrastructure needed for credible national elections. Were it not for daily violence by pro-Saddam and other renegade elements, aided by Zarqawi's foreign terrorists, their efforts could have had much greater success. Whether the interim Iraqi government which regained sovereignty last July will be able organize national elections, even with extensive backing from the U.S.-led coalition and the United Nations, remains a question.

"If the servant takes the veil and the mule the reins say goodbye to the present era."

Awad Allawi's interim Iraqi regime is expected to organize general elections to produce a successor legislative body and executive and a new permanent constitution, supposedly by late 2005. Until then, the world's largest U.S. Embassy, seconded by American and coalition armed forces and civilian aid personnel, will go on exercising ultimate control over this fledgling Iraqi government.

The U.S. cannot in good conscience withdraw its forces and give way to a new era of total sovereignty and self-rule until Iraq's eventual elected government becomes strong enough to assure national security and stability. No one knows how long the pacification of pro-Saddam and pro-Sadr insurgents and the neutralization of subversive foreign elements may require. Nor is it certain that rival Iraqi political and religious factions can reach the compromises needed for a popularly elected government to survive. As the struggle to birth a new democratic era in Iraq goes forward in critical months ahead, President Bush and American-led coalition authorities might heed this final word to the wise from Morocco's trove of proverbs:

"Whoever has only one door, God will shut it on him."

Jeff Corydon, III, for many years a diplomat in the U.S. State Department, writes on a broad range of issues. His work has appeared in many publications, including the Washington Post, North American Review, TriQuarterly, Cricket, *and* Florida Living.

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Perceptions of the Moroccan Diaspora in Europe

By
Alec G. Hargreaves

When people in Europe, especially France, think of North Africans there is a widespread tendency to think first and foremost of Algerians. There are some understandable reasons for this. Historically, large-scale migration from Algeria began much earlier than from Morocco or Tunisia and until fairly recently Algerians were numerically dominant among North Africans in Europe. And although Moroccans have recently been catching up and indeed surpassing Algerians, they have been doing so at a time when events in Algeria—most notably the state of quasi-civil war which erupted in 1992—have aroused much more international attention than have developments in neighboring Morocco or Tunisia. This was of course also true half a century ago at the time of decolonization, when the agony of the Algerian war attracted far more attention than the relatively peaceful accession to independence of Morocco and Tunisia. For these and other reasons, the presence of Algerians in Europe is generally better known or more recognized than that of Europe's "other" North Africans—Moroccans and, in smaller numbers, Tunisians. By the same token, popular perceptions of Moroccans have been characterized by all sorts of approximations, simplifications and sometimes downright errors.

Initially, North Africans (including Moroccans) settled primarily in French-speaking countries, above all France, the former colonial power. Not surprisingly, the most common words applied to Moroccans in Europe were coined in France. These have included *Nord-Africains* (North Africans), widely used during the colonial period; *Maghrébins* (*Maghrebis*), its post-colonial equivalent; *Arabes* (Arabs), in common usage both before and after decolonization; and *Beurs* (second-generation North Africans born of immigrant parents), which entered circulation in the early 1980s. None of these is a national appellation. To the extent that North Africans are seen nationals, the most common assumption—certainly in France—is that they are Algerians. Thus in popular thinking Maghrebis, Arabs and Algerians are regarded as more or less as synonymous. This equation elides not only national differences, with Moroccans and Tunisians airbrushed out of the picture, but also ethnic differences among North Africans, notably those between Arabs, Berbers and Jews. Similar elisions are present in the word *Beur*, a backslang expression derived from the word *Arabe* which is applied as freely to second-generation North Africans of Berber origin as to those of Arab heritage and without regard for differences of national origin.

By 2003, an opinion poll rated him the most popular person in France among the 18-24 year-old age group, a position previously occupied by World Cup soccer hero Zineddine Zidane, a second-generation Algerian.

These kinds of elisions have often been reinforced by the roles assigned to actors of Moroccan origin by the French film industry. Actor Gad Elmaleh has featured in some of the most successful French movies of recent years. He is Moroccan-born and of Jewish heritage, but few would imagine this from the roles he has played. In *Salut Cousin!* (1996) he plays an Algerian Muslim sent to France to take care of some business problems on behalf of his employer in Algiers. In *La Vérité si je mens 2* (2001) he plays a Sephardic Jew but again of Algerian origin. In *Chouchou* (2003) he is cast once again as an Algerian Muslim in France, this time with the added twist of being a transvestite.

The roles which have made Jamel Debbouze France's best paid actor are also anything other than Moroccan. Brought up by Moroccan immigrant parents in a working-class suburb of Paris, in the early stages of his career Debbouze went under the single name of Jamel, earning his living as a stand-up comic and DJ whose core image was that of a *Beur*, with all the national and ethnic elisions implicit in that label. He shot to national and international stardom in *Le Fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* (2001), where he played Lucien, the French assistant of a Montmartre greengrocer, sparking off a huge controversy over claims that the movie engaged in a form of ethnic cleansing by representing Paris as a city without any ethnic minorities. In another box-office blockbuster, *Astérix et Obélix: Mission Cléopâtre* (2002), he was cast as an Egyptian ally of the ancient Gauls, led by Gérard Dépardieu, in their struggle against the Roman Empire. By 2003, an opinion poll rated him the most popular person in France among the 18-24 year-old age group, a position previously occupied by World Cup soccer hero Zineddine Zidane, a second-generation Algerian. While his stage and screen roles have glossed over his Moroccan origins, Debbouze has tried to counteract the neglect from Morocco often suffers by using the media attention

Even in France, where Algerians are heavily concentrated, the latest census shows that Moroccans are now almost as numerous as Algerians. Moroccans outnumber Algerians in Belgium and they constitute the largest immigrant group of all in countries such as Spain, Italy and the Netherlands.

attracted by his star status to publicize the country from which his parents migrated when he was a small child. During Morocco's unsuccessful bid to host the 2006 World Soccer Cup, he turned up for TV interviews wearing a baseball cap vaunting Morocco's candidature. More recently, he has invested some of his earnings in the Moroccan film industry.

Despite the popularity enjoyed by successful sportsmen and entertainers such as Zidane and Debbouze, there is a huge amount of evidence to show that North Africans in general suffer from exceptionally high levels of antipathy and discrimination on the part of the majority ethnic population in France. Data collected by the French police show that during the last twenty years although North Africans account for only about 40 per cent of the foreign population, they have been the victims of more than 80 per cent of attacks officially classified as racist. Opinion polls consistently rank North Africans as the most disliked immigrant group in France, with much more negative ratings than sub-Saharan Africans, West Indians or Asians. Pollsters seldom break down the "North African" category into separate national groups but when they do, Moroccans are judged by respondents to be far less antipathetic than Algerians. In everyday life, however, people do not wear their passports on their faces and there can be little doubt that the popular equation of a North African face with that of an Algerian means that Moroccans suffer to the same extent as Algerians from what has become

In countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark there are now growing numbers of city councilors and parliamentarians of Moroccan origin. While members of the Algerian minority have been politically active in France, where their numbers are most concentrated, none has yet been elected to the French Parliament.

known as as *le délit de faciès* (the "crime" of having the wrong skin color).

Behind this curtain of ignorance and confusion, Moroccans in Europe are distinguished by a number of significant features. Three in particular stand out: they are now more dispersed and indeed more numerous than Algerians; in certain countries they appear to be more politically mobilized; and there is substantial evidence to suggest that they have higher rates of religious observance.

With a total of around three million living in Europe, Moroccans now outnumber Algerians as the largest minority of North African origin. Even in France, where Algerians are heavily concentrated, the latest census shows that Moroccans are now almost as numerous as Algerians. Moroccans outnumber Algerians in Belgium and they constitute the largest immigrant group of all in countries such as Spain, Italy and the Netherlands. While Moroccan writers of French expression continue to gravitate towards the publishing houses of Paris, they now live and work in many other parts of Europe. Leïla Houari, for example, began her writing career in Brussels, while Fouad Laroui lives in Amsterdam and writes and publishes in Dutch as well as in French.

Willingly or unwittingly, immigrant minorities often raise politically sensitive questions. Should they continue to participate in the political life of the country from which they migrated or should they have a political role in the countries in which they have settled? These questions are made complex by the intricacies of citizenship laws (governing access to voting rights) and the dynamics of national and indeed local political environments, all of which vary from country to another. In 1983, the Moroccan National Assembly adopted a new law giving Moroccans abroad the right to participate for first time in Moroccan elections by electing their own representatives in the Moroccan parliament. In 1984, five such députés were elected. The best know of these was Akha Gazzi, a trade union activist elected under the colors of the Union Socialistes des Forces Populaires (USFP) to represent northern France. These voting arrangements for Moroccan expatriates were discontinued in the 1990s. This may be one reason why Moroccans in Europe have been turning their attention increasingly to political participation within the countries where they have settled. Another reason has been the emergence of a second generation of Moroccans, born in Europe of immigrant parents, who generally have easier access to citizenship rights than the older generation. In countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark there are now growing numbers of city councilors and parliamentarians of Moroccan origin. While members of the Algerian minority have been politically active in France, where their numbers are most concentrated, none has yet been elected to the French Parliament.

North African migration has helped to turn Islam into a religion of growing importance in western Europe. There are many signs that rates of religious belief and observance and significantly higher among Moroccans in Europe than among Algerians. In a major survey conducted in France during the 1990s, Michèle Tribalat found that only a quarter of male Algerian immigrants practiced their religion regularly, compared with almost 40 per cent of Moroccans. Similarly, only a third of female migrants from Algeria practiced their religion regularly, compared with 42 per cent of Moroccans. Almost two-thirds of male Berber migrants from Algeria said they did not practice their religion or had no religious beliefs at all. This was true of only a third of Moroccan Berber migrants. There is also evidence to suggest that second-generation Moroccans are more religiously-minded than second-generation Algerians.

Although those of Algerian origin far outnumber Moroccans among second-generation North Africans, it was two Moroccan girls, together with a Tunisian, who sparked off the first Islamic headscarf affair in 1989 by insisting on wearing headscarves at school, leading their headteacher to bar them from school premises. And while the oldest mosque in France, the Grande Mosquée de Paris, is firmly under Algerian control, Moroccan Muslims now appear to outstrip Algerians in terms of religious infrastructure. An Interior Ministry survey recently reported that 40 per cent of all the imams (Muslim prayer leaders) in France are of Moroccan nationality. Algerians, more numerous in France than Moroccans, account for only 25 per cent of France's imams. In last year's elections to the newly created Conseil national du culte musulman, established at the instigation of the Interior Ministry as a nationally representative body for Muslims in France, the poll was topped by candidates of the Moroccan-dominated Fédération nationale des musulmans de France.

Islam is without doubt the feature associated with North African migrants that most worries Europeans. The reasons for this are complex. A key element among them is a tendency to confuse Islam in general with fanatical brands of it to which only a small minority of Muslims adhere. This tendency has been exacerbated since the attacks of September 11, 2001 in the United States. Until then, Islamic terrorism in Europe was associated principally with Algerians rather than with Moroccans, above all because of the spillover into France from the conflict raging within Algeria since 1992 between the military-backed government and Islamist insurgents. Since September 11, Moroccans have become more prominent figures in

The popular cultural forms through which actors and humorists such as Jamel Debbouze and Gad Elmaleh have risen to stardom owe at least as much to Hollywood and/or African American counter-culture as they do to French or Moroccan influences.

known or suspected terrorist networks. Zaccarias Moussaoui, born in France of Moroccan parents, was the first person to be charged in the United States with involvement in the September 11 attacks. The only person so far convicted in any court in connection with those attacks is another Moroccan, Mounir el Motassadeq, who was found by a court in Hamburg to have been an accessory. Days after a German appeals court quashed the conviction and ordered a retrial, Europe was shaken by its own September 11: the March 11, 2004 train bombings in Madrid, in the investigation of which a group of Moroccans rapidly emerged as the prime suspects.

It is important to underscore that the terrorist elements associated with certain forms of Islamic fundamentalism have the support of no more than a tiny fraction of Moroccans or of Muslims in general. In one respect, however, these terrorist networks do reflect a more general tendency among Moroccan migrants and other diasporic groups in Europe. The days when post-colonial migration, an essentially bi-polar affair between the former colony turned country of emigration and the former colonial power turned country of immigration, are now long gone. While Algerian migration, still relatively concentrated in France, continues to display elements of that model, the dispersal of Moroccan migrants across Europe is one among many signs of the growing importance of multi-polar transnational networks among Moroccan and other diasporic groups. This transnationalism has been exploited for sinister purposes by terrorist groups for whom the nationalist agenda dominant during the struggle for decolonization has been replaced a global struggle between Islam and its perceived enemies, above all the United States. Many of the September 11 terrorists lived in parts of Europe other than those of the former colonial powers with which their countries of origin were most directly connected. Their alleged co-conspirator, Zaccarias Moussasoui, received much of his education in Britain, rather than in France, the former "protecting" power in Morocco, and it is widely believed that the planning center for the September 11 attacks was in Germany, which had little experience as a colonial power in Islamic or other countries outside Europe. The networks into which these terrorists have plugged have been conceived and financed primarily from the Middle East and their primary target has been the United States, rather than Europe.

In much more constructive ways ways, Moroccans, like other North Africans in Europe, are increasingly caught up in transnational flows that cut across the old binary model linking former colonies and former colonial powers. The popular cultural forms through which actors and humorists such as Jamel Debbouze and Gad Elmaleh have risen to stardom owe at least as much to Hollywood and/or African American counter-culture as they do to French or Moroccan influences. In mediating those globally circulating cultural influences, writers and other artists of Moroccan origin have been willing to adopt a range of European languages—Dutch, Spanish, Italian, etc., as well as French—reflecting the widening of their settlement patterns across Europe. In these ways, Moroccans are contributing to the growing transnationalism of European culture.

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Morocco: Past and Present

By
Athena Trakadas

One of my favorite journeys to Morocco is arriving by air into Tangier. Onboard a usually small plane, it bumps and rattles through turbulence heading south over the Iberian Peninsula to the northwest tip of the African continent; striking is the contrast between burnt-yellow land masses and dark, ink-blue oceans below. The plane then drops just below the cloud layer, and I discover myself suspended between the Rock of Gibraltar, on the right, and towering Jebel Musa, on the left. The plane heads westward between those monolithic Pillars of Hercules, through the Straits of Gibraltar, over wide, semi-circular Tangier Bay and the white-grey sprawl of Tangier. Continuing westwards just above the lighthouse at Cap Spartel, the plane folds back to the southeast and drops above the rolling waves of the Atlantic. Past the wide, sandy beach, past green fields dotted with unperturbed grazing goats; with a few more bumps, we arrive on the landing strip at Ibn Batutta airport.

This now-familiar arrival to Morocco was a journey I first undertook in 1999, and have repeated many times since. This passage is dear to me, perhaps because the visual images it presents provide a fantastically clear reminder of why I am so strongly attracted to Morocco. From the air, I am offered a remarkable view of the fortified walls of Tangier's medina, torn down, rebuilt and modified for over a millennium but still prominent and living among the modern sprawl. I can almost envision ancient ships traversing westwards past Jebel Musa through the Straits, in search of trade goods yet into the unknown of the Elysian Fields, as now do the large and sure modern freighters. Gazing out the small plane's window, I cannot help but to think of the tapestry of paths that criss-cross the landscape and seascape of this haunting and haunted place. The history of the land, sea, and the peoples who affected them are still "visible" to me within the urban infrastructure of the present; such a mixture of images is often repeated in my mind's eye as I travel throughout the landscapes and cityscapes of the country. But it is perhaps easier for me, as an archaeologist, to seek out and envision the details of this place's elapsed narrative; it is an exercise more difficult to broach in Morocco.

In conversation with many of the Moroccans I have met on my travels, from university students to fellow passengers on trains, I am amazed that although aware of the general themes, they profess a profound lack of concern about or even knowledge of their own past. To them, the history of their country is generally obscure, perhaps in their minds divided at the beginning of the eighth century AD into the "pre-Islamic" and "Islamic" periods. Otherwise, dates or broad temporal terms serve as uncontextualized points or phases through a history of conversions, dynasties, conflicts and occupations.

I think many Moroccans understand that they are heirs of a rich and culturally diverse heritage, an important acknowledgement. But defining, knowing, and perhaps understanding what actually happened during their country's history is a more difficult and lengthy challenge.

Some of the people I talk to even point out that tourists are more likely to be knowledgeable of the country's history and its significant monuments and sites than "average" Moroccans. This is probably true; after all, living historical monuments such as the Imperial cities of Fes and Meknes and the Red City of Marrakech figure prominently in advertisements and tourism brochures to attract foreigners to Morocco. Armed with their Blue Guides and Fodor's books, tourists are presented an array of dates, historical anecdotes and directed through ancient sites of interest. The Moroccans that a visitor encounters might reiterate the brochures or guidebooks and proudly list off a number of similarly interesting "old" sites to see, although most have never been there themselves or have little personal interest in the story of a crumbling building that they might pass everyday.

I feel that for such Moroccans, the connection between the past and the present is not consciously apparent or meaningful. They do recognize, however, the advantage that these "old" sites and monuments present in attracting foreigners and their money, and what this means to the country's economy (in 1998, tourism made up 7% of Morocco's GNP). With this motivated attitude, some Moroccans I have encountered can be well-versed at promoting their *heritage*, but, as the British geographer David Lowenthal cautions in his book, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, "heritage is not an inquiry into the past [nor] an effort to know what actually happened but a profession of faith in the past tailored to present-day purposes." I think many Moroccans understand that they are heirs of a rich and culturally diverse heritage, an important acknowledgement. But defining, knowing, and perhaps understanding what actually happened during their country's *history* is a more difficult and lengthy challenge. History, as illuminated through its contemporary writings and physical remains can tell us where we have been, how we have been effected, and reveals to us who and why we are, and where we are going. To me, the narrative of the past is inexorable, linked to the present and the future.

The study of and reflection upon history, its writings, and the revealing of its tangible remains through archaeological excavation is a luxury that few western and developing countries can afford, or choose to place importance on. Throughout many countries today, if monetary value cannot be placed on the physical remains of the past, they are not perceived as being significant in themselves. I believe that generally, most people feel that learning the stories of the past from its texts or physical remains does not serve any immediately real or measurable purpose; why should one strive to preserve their existence or memory? This attitude is all too understandable, considering that the developmental, infrastructural, or even basic human needs of the present are of paramount importance. Unfortunately, in Morocco (and throughout the world), physical remains of the past are routinely destroyed or irretrievably altered because the needs of the immediate present are deemed more demanding and necessary. Whether rooted in economics, politics, religion and/or culture, the destruction or modification sometimes occurs in ignorance, and at other times, with malice.

With small fragments of the past physically disappearing, however, a very real psychological space is created between present and past, and only a vague "faith in the past" remains; the new replaces the old in the simple and marked steps of 'progress.' Progress in a developing country such as Morocco, however, is inevitable and for the most part, desirable. But progress caused portions of the crumbling twelfth-century Almohad walls of Marrakech to be razed during the early years of the protectorate, so that roads could be built to accommodate an increasing number of cars. This is also how a historical cemetery outside the walls of the medina of Essaouira recently became a parking lot for tourist buses and taxis. And as the modern toll road from Casablanca to Tangier nears completion (which likely covers some archaeologically significant if not environmentally sensitive areas), trucks are now able to travel more quickly and safely between factories and points of delivery, and a network of efficiency is created. More business and profits for the present and immediate future will be the result of this efficiency.

Along with the economic and developmental progress that Morocco has made throughout the last century, some progress has fortunately been made in preserving the very real links that bind the country's past to its present. Although the progress of the latter efforts is certainly happening at a much slower pace than the former, steps are being taken to access, research, and document the narrative of Morocco's story and make its lessons and anecdotes available and relevant. Initially, these steps have been taken to attract more tourists to Morocco, but I hope that this path will include and consider that the Moroccans themselves are the major heirs to the country's past. Happily in the past few decades, some Moroccans are making this cause their own.

First to arrive were the Phoenicians from the eastern Mediterranean in the eighth century BC, then the monument-building and law-making Romans, and afterwards the successive waves of Arab tribes arriving on horseback from the North African deserts and spreading the word of the Prophet.

Since prehistory, the first peoples who forged their existence in the northwestern-most part of the African continent were visited upon by curious and appraising outsiders, eager to reap the natural bounty of the land and sea. First to arrive were the Phoenicians from the eastern Mediterranean in the eighth century BC, then the monument-building and law-making Romans, and afterwards the successive waves of Arab tribes arriving on horseback from the North African deserts and spreading the word of the Prophet. Among other European nations' attempts to control the region, the Portuguese, British, Spanish and French each had their hand at trying to shape the economic, political and social countenance of Morocco's more modern history.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the focus of European historians, archaeologists and philologists began to shift slowly from the established northern Mediterranean haunts of the Graeco-Roman world and Holy Land to more peripheral spheres. In North Africa, the focus of ancient studies expanded outwards from Egypt, to include the examination of the history of the Maghreb. This European scholarly interest was certainly assisted by the establishment of the French and Spanish protectorates in Morocco in the second decade of the past century. Two countries with strong historical and archaeological traditions now had jurisdiction over a seemingly virgin land to explore. At a steady pace for the next few decades, the ancient sites of Morocco were investigated and documented by a small army of archaeologists. The seat of the Roman province *Mauretania Tingitana*, Volubilis, was excavated by French archaeologists,

and the Roman legionary fortress of Tamuda (near Tetouan) and the Phoenician/Punico-Mauretanian/Roman walled city of Lixus were excavated by Spanish archaeologists. These excavations revealed much about Morocco's pre-Islamic past and the role that this corner of the African continent played in the greater economic, social, and environmental history of Europe and the Mediterranean basin.

During the protectorate period, many sites and monuments smaller in scale than the walled cities of monumental architecture were also documented before they were lost to aggressive farming techniques or construction. These sites create an even broader understanding of daily life, rural organization, and infrastructure in antiquity. Analyses and documentation of the sites and finds of the region are very detailed and thorough, and specialized journals were founded to publish the reports. These include *Archives Marocaines* (which started publication in the late nineteenth century but ended in the 1940s), and *Bulletin d'Archéologie Marocaine* (founded in the late 1950s and published now on an irregular basis).

After independence in 1956, many French and Spanish archaeologists continued to work in Morocco, and served to guide the recently-established Department of Antiquities in the Ministry of Culture, Institut National des Sciences d'Archéologie et du Patrimoine (INSAP), based on a French model. A national archaeological museum was also established in Rabat to house the growing number of unique finds from excavations. Today, a wide array of artifacts is on display, spanning from Morocco's pre-history (lithic tools from ca. 4,000 BC) to modern times (regional Berber jewelry from the nineteenth century). Central to the displays are the bronze statues and tools from the Roman sites of Morocco. Ethnographic, archaeological and thematic museums also rapidly began to be established in Rabat (in Kasbah des Ouidayas), Larache, Tetouan, Fes, Essaouira, Chefchaouen, Meknes, and Tangier, among others. Almost all of these museums are housed in historically- and architecturally-significant buildings or palaces, making them unique destinations in themselves.

By the late 1970s, archaeology and historical studies were disciplines integrated into the curriculum of Mohammed V University in Rabat. Some Moroccan students furthered their studies abroad, almost exclusively at universities in France or Spain. Armed with doctorates, many of these archaeologists have returned to Morocco to continue their research, particularly expanding the field of Islamic studies and prehistory. Some now teach at INSAP or work in the regional museums or for the regional cultural delegations. Since the 1990s,

INSAP also began to graduate MAs and PhDs, not only in the fields of archaeology and history, but in conservation, museum science and anthropology. As a result, a generation of Moroccan-educated scholars is producing thorough, necessary and relevant investigations into their own past. These achievements are made all the more admirable because of what little resources they have available to them: INSAP is housed in drafty old military barracks in the Souissi neighborhood, library hours are limited, and computers are a rarity, even for faculty. However, the "brain-drain" experienced by other academic disciplines in Morocco is also happening to many INSAP students, who leave the country to find work abroad. Many of those who do choose to stay are faced with the very real prospects of not finding related employment.

INSAP is housed in drafty old military barracks in the Souissi neighborhood, library hours are limited, and computers are a rarity, even for faculty.

Foreign research interest in Morocco still exists, too, which helps to provide investment in projects that might not otherwise happen for lack of funds and expertise. Collaborative projects are conducted throughout the country in prehistory, and studies of the Punico-Mauretanian, Roman, and Islamic periods. Architectural studies are also numerous, and focus on documenting and repairing the unique regional constructions of historical minarets, mosques, and city and fortress walls. A few of these projects include a joint Moroccan-French team examining early hominid landscapes around Casablanca. Prehistoric rock art has also been documented near Oukaimeden and at the Grotte du Chameau near Oujda. Moroccan-Spanish teams have led excavations and surveys at Lixus. A Moroccan-British team has only recently renewed excavations at Volubilis, which also include excavating the Islamic occupation layers from the early Idrissid period (ninth century AD). Moroccan-American teams have excavated Islamic fortresses at Ksar-es-Seghir, al-Basra, and Sijilmassa, and conducted underwater surveys in the Tangier region. A Moroccan-German team is recording the Islamic-period architecture at Madinat az-Zahra. A joint Moroccan-Qatari project is also documenting and repairing the late twelfth-century walls of the Kasbah of the Ouidayas in Rabat, built by Yacoub al Mansour.

The corpus of work carried out by archaeologists and historians who work in Morocco has revealed a rich tapestry of complicated and multi-faceted stories of the past. As a result of much of these efforts, some of the significant and unique monuments of Morocco have been afforded special recognition. In 1981, the medina of Fes was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which means that it is has been proven to be of "outstanding *universal* value" to not just Morocco, but the world. In 1985, the medina of Marrakech was also bestowed this title. The ksar of Ait-Ben-Haddou (1987), the city of Meknes (1996), the site of Volubilis (1997), and the medinas of Tetouan (1997) and Essaouira (2001) have since been added to the prestigious list. What is more, this designation means that these sites will and must be protected and preserved for posterity.

The corpus of work carried out by archaeologists and historians who work in Morocco has revealed a rich tapestry of complicated and multi-faceted stories of the past.

As steps are being slowly taken to reveal Morocco's history, the transition has to be made in telling this story. At times this telling has been limited to publication by specialists in very limited-circulation journals, where archaeologists and historians allow ourselves to be trapped into minute observation of facts. By doing so, we run the risk of losing the larger perspective, as well as our ability to convey it to the public, whose story it is. We run the risk of no longer asking ourselves general questions or construct global perspectives. The story of a desert ksar, a prehistoric cave site, or a Roman villa needs to be made relevant to the people who are being told. Without this relevance, there is no line drawn to connect Moroccans to their past, and no importance is placed on history and its remains, which are then threatened. With such losses occurring periodically in Morocco in the name of progress, the country's citizens also risk falling into an almost national lassitude, living an existence from which important traces of the past have dramatically retreated; a place occupied by perhaps a wealthier, but disconnected, people.

The future of preserving and telling Morocco's past is constantly improving, although there are still many bureaucratic, social, economic and logistical setbacks. However, many of the museums that are historic buildings are being painstakingly, if not slowly restored, and modern, more descriptive and interactive exhibits are beginning to replace the old display cases in dusty and stale rooms. Archaeological sites are slightly better protected than before due to periodical visits by cultural delegation staff. In some instances, fences have been installed to protect the sites from vandalism, which sporadically still occurs.

The maintenance of the physical remains of the past must be made part of managing change in order to maintain Morocco's cultural diversity, and sense of place in the world. The maintenance of these resources is paramount to Morocco's social, economic, and political stability.

Multi-lingual signs that guide and describe sites and museums for visitors have also been occasionally installed as well, and attempts are being made to standardize these. A website has also been recently developed by the Ministry of Culture, http://www.minculture.gov.ma, which includes pages on the museums of Morocco, architectural restoration projects, archaeological projects and cultural events. A new ethnographic and archaeological museum is also planned to open in Rabat in the next few years, and a maritime museum will open in Casablanca.

As Morocco enters into the global market economy, I hope that profits reaped by economic progress are invested in preserving the country's past for its future generations. The maintenance of the physical remains of the past must be made part of managing change in order to maintain Morocco's cultural diversity, and sense of place in the world. The proper management of these resources is paramount to Morocco's social, economic, and political stability. I hope that the people of Morocco will understand, question, and preserve what is uniquely theirs. A perhaps silly wish of mine is that in the near future, it will be possible for Moroccans to envision the landscapes and cityscapes of past and present intertwined, as I sometimes do traveling throughout the country. I feel that the most important goal is to have "average" Moroccans, from those fellow passengers on trains to university students, tell their stories themselves and be aware of their role in them. A certain pride comes from seeing that the present overwhelms our forgotten selves; but we are what we were, with only a frosting of changes.

Athena Trakadas is a maritime archaeologist and a Research Associate of the Institute of Nautical Archaeology. She is director of the Morocco Maritime Survey and co-editor of the volume Hjortspring: A Pre-Roman Iron-Age Warship in Context. *Photographs in this article by Athena Trakadas.*

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Geometric Imperfections

by
Alexis Fabrikant

walking on armadillo-backed pavement,
feet burning, melting into every
nook and cranny on
Cordoba's narrow streets fading into
desert land,
women's position

descending...

harems, concubines, red lanterns—
symbols resembling the fate of a woman,
yes it is a period,
just
sweat, trickling down
curves and crimps,
a body of lotion,

arab rugs of reds and golds,
the perfection in geometry,
musulman influence,
paying Allah due respect,
the very essence of flawlessness,
in human imperfections,

we can't look back with colored vision,
history was and is black and white,

latente manifiesto
not of stagnation

kind to the eye of the oppressor,
feigning benign to the oppressed,
just
ways to group
the signifier
and signified.

Alexis Fabrikant recently graduated from the University of Michigan with a double major in Cultural Anthropology and Spanish, with a minor in Creative Writing. She spent her junior year in Spain where she developed a deep interest in Islamic and Sephardic influences on the Iberian Peninsula. In 2004 to 2005, Alexis will be in Budapest teaching English as a Second Language, and pursuing her interest in cultural and religious studies.

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An Argentine in Morocco

By
Ariel Yablon

Casablanca, March 13, 2004

My plane has finally arrived at Casablanca after leaving Portland Maine, many hours ago. Casablanca. . . The first time I heard this name was not through Hollywood, but from my mom. The horrors of war took her and my grandma—both survivors of the Nazi persecution in southern France—to leave Europe as soon as they could. So, they decided to move to Buenos Aires, where some relatives offered them a place to live. When I told my mother that I have planned to go to Casablanca this March, she once again brought the only story we know about her troubled childhood: "Oh, yes, Casablanca. . . We traveled to that place on our way to Argentina. . . Everything was so dirty. . . I got really sick. . . It was not even a city, but a big tent camp. . . " As every time I heard this story from her, this time again she surprises me with this disparaging commentary.

The train is taking me from the airport to the city in the early morning. It is clear out there. It is not cold. Everything seems calm. I see the white and gray houses and the green trails. The landscape has a familiar rawness for anyone who knows the way between the Ezeiza International Airport and the city of Buenos Aires: open spaces mixed with buildings that have not been completely finished or that have been not taken care of properly; thousands of satellite antennas; clothes hanging in the windows and balconies; a lot of people walking on the side of the roads; humble, very humble people. Their *djellabas*, how-

The city, obviously, has nothing to do with the precarious village my mother described to me. It is instead enormous and full of life. People, cars, buses are all over the place. Tall buildings and large avenues resemble Buenos Aires in its gigantic proportions and decay.

ever, remind me I am in a different country. I arrive to the train station that, as they had indicated me with great patience in the airport, would take me closer to the hotel in downtown Casablanca. I am a little bit paranoid because I cannot communicate with anybody—my broken French does not help much—and I cannot read the city map. After a policeman explains to me that I am still far away from my hotel, I decide to venture into one of the small red urban taxis. Its driver is a young, funny man, dressed in a *djellaba*. His name is Mohammed. We immediately engage in some sort of conversation, as much as my French allowed.

I look through the window while we chat. The city, obviously, has nothing to do with the precarious village my mother described to me. It is instead enormous and full of life. People, cars, buses are all over the place. Tall buildings and large avenues resemble Buenos Aires in its gigantic proportions and decay. Another thing calls my attention immediately. Moroccans drive even worse than Argentines, if that is even possible (Argentina has one of the highest records of car accidents in the world). Small motorcycles cross the avenues against the traffic; drivers maneuver without much consideration of other vehicles or pedestrians. It is crazy. There is something that distinguishes them from our wacky drivers, though: people in Casablanca seem to be much more tolerant to this absence of rules. Mohammed does not get mad. It is part of the routine. In Buenos Aires, instead, everybody breaks the rules while, at the same time, vociferously jumps to accuse others of their madness. Just take any taxicab down there and you will hear all sorts of insults and complaints against fellow drivers (especially when they are women). The difference is notable. How is that possible? Maybe Argentines have some kind of nostalgia for rules that they believe existed in the past. Maybe Moroccans never had that illusion.

Casablanca, March 13, 2004 Afternoon

After I leave my stuff in the hotel, I walk through downtown Casablanca. I do not find anything particularly interesting to look at. I start having a negative feeling in my guts. I then realize how impatient I am. How much does a sort of "accidental" tourist know about a place after a random and quick walk? Actually, if I were a tourist in Buenos Aires who has arrived to some horrible hotel in the Avenida de Mayo, for example, I would believe that Buenos Aires is the least interesting city in the world. I relax (a little) and look around again, especially to the coffee shops that populate the area. I find them very similar to those in the areas nearby the suburban train stations of Buenos Aires. They are as well filled with smoke and people. Suddenly, I see one coffee shop that calls my attention. Its name is "Les Deux Magots," the same name of a famous Parisian coffee house where among others, Leon Trotski, Vladimir Lenin, Charles Maurras, and later, Simone de Bouvoir and Jean Paul Sartre used to hang out. Both places have another similarity: Just like in the Parisian cafés, people do not sit looking at each other across the table—as in Buenos Aires, another place famous for their café culture—but against the window, watching the world pass by. The similarities seem to end there: "Les Deux Magots" in Casablanca is far from attracting the posh clientele that has replaced the more interesting customers of the previous century in the Parisian coffee house. Moreover, women—as in almost the rest of the coffee places I observed in Casablanca—are nowhere to be found.

Fez, March 15, 2004

All Morocco is inundated with government flyers promoting the country as the candidate for the soccer world cup. Everybody I talk with, taxi-drivers, people in restaurants and bars—are anxious to be the first African country to host the event.

There are some, however, who look upon this popular excitement with a certain disdain. The Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges, for example, allegedly said, "soccer is popular because stupidity is popular." Borges, along with many others, also thought these types of events were just excellent means for a few corrupt officers to make money on people's behalf.

Moroccans drive even worse than Argentines, if that is even possible.

Even though I sympathize with this last argument, I take a more favorable view on the Moroccans' feelings. I remember my own experience when Argentina was the seat of the World Cup in 1978. The military dictatorship that had been ruling the country for two years clearly used the tournament to cover its crimes and enrich its leaders. The government at that time insisted that denunciations of human right abuses were just part of an "anti-Argentina press campaign" orchestrated by "terrorists" in exile. My parents, whose leftist ideas and sentiments made them very aware of the situation, could not at that time tell me what really was going on. They feared I might innocently say something at school. In those days that could mean getting yourself onto the list of " los desaparecidos" (the disappeared). Thus, in that rainy winter of 1978, intoxicated by the governmental propaganda, I became just another kid who wanted the government to succeed and my country to be the soccer champion. During the tournament, after each triumph of the Argentine team, people celebrated in the streets, throwing white confetti from the windows, creating this snowy effect that I enjoyed watching from my window so much. My dad did not want to take me to the streets. For one thing, he was never a big soccer fan. But more importantly, he did not want to support the celebrations that the military used to show to the world to hide its human rights violations. After my persistence, my dad acceded. He bought me a plastic Argentine flag and walked me to the streets to celebrate the victory against the Peruvian team for 6 to 0. Apparently, that score was obtained after the Argentine government offered two shipments of wheat to the Peruvian government. . .

Still, I recall those celebrations as the only moment that I saw people genuinely happy in the streets of Buenos Aires during those terrible years. All differences aside, I wonder how much happiness this could bring to Moroccans.

Marrakech, March 17, 2004

My girlfriend and I stop at a craft shop in the outskirts of Marrakech to buy carpets. In order to make us feel welcome, the Berber merchant offers us a cup—actually several—of "Berber whiskey" as people jokingly call their exquisite and sugary mint tea. Drinking mint tea here is really a social event. It reminds me of my gatherings in Argentina with friends to drink *yerba maté* tea. There people get together and drink maté tea while chatting and socializing. The bonding act of drinking maté is reinforced by all the participants taking turns to drink from the same container and straw. Cleaning the straw with a napkin before you sip in is considered to be a very bad thing there. It means you really are not able to genuinely share with the other drinkers.

Buying a carpet was never in my plans before I arrived to Morocco. But after seeing the beautiful pieces in this shop, I have decided not to leave without one. After deciding on the ones we want, negotiation starts. For that, the sympathetic Berber merchant laughs loudly and tells us he will write a price on a piece of paper. We will do the same at the same time, and compare notes. He tells us, jokingly, that Berbers love to bargain on absolutely everything, and that they expect us to do the same.

The Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges, for example, allegedly said, "soccer is popular because stupidity is popular."

People we trusted have told us already that a tourist should feel satisfied if he can get 50% of the original tag price (there are not tag prices in these markets; that price is actually known after the bargaining process begins). After more than an hour of tough negotiating, mixed with gallons of tea, and after being very serious about leaving the place if there was not a better offer for us, we establish the final price. My girlfriend is such a good negotiator that the merchant asked us if she could give him her plastic pen as a compensation for the supposed losses he was taking. He also offers me hundreds of camels in exchange

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Although I am sure some good historian could explain to me the economic logic behind the history of bargaining, I am mostly interested in its cultural role today, at times when many think it is just a waste of time. Is not this possibility of communicating interesting in itself?

for her: "She is a Berber merchant; she is very good." Outside, we tell our driver how many camels the merchant was willing to pay me for Nicole. He offers me one thousand more.

This negotiation was tough, but very interesting for me. Even though it was between tourists with dollars and merchants in good need of them, it was also more than a mercantile act as we are used to practice regularly. It was also a game of sociability and communication.

Please, do not misunderstand me. I am not so innocent as to think that our friend was not anxious to make his deal and to get as much as possible from us. What I am trying to say is that this maximization of benefits should not be separated so easily from the ritual aspect of our exchange. As I mentioned before, the Berber merchant was expecting us to ask for a counter offer from our side.

Although I am sure some good historian could explain to me the economic logic behind the history of bargaining, I am mostly interested in its cultural role today, at times when many think it is just a waste of time. Is not this possibility of communicating interesting in itself? Max Weber said it already. Individuals are increasingly acting as rational calculators of benefits. This, for Weber, creates an "iron cage" that disenchants the world we live in. Doesn't that rationalization suspend our capacity for contemplating that part of reality that is impossible to measure, grasp, and retain?

I finally feel at ease in Marrakech. I remember my first impressions of Casablanca, and my early compulsion to compare it with Buenos Aires. I also remember now my early frustration when being unable to suspend judgment. Now, finally, I have some glimpses about what makes me feel close to Morocco. I think it relates to being surrounded by people who relate to each other in ways very similar to those I was accustomed when I lived in Argentina.

Take for example the hordes of people circulating until fairly late this night in the streets of Marrakech. They are just standing in the street, or busily getting in and out of all sorts of shops, or listening to the storytellers of the incredible Place Jamaa el-Fna. This movement of people has the same vital intensity I feel at any night in the streets of Buenos Aires. This is not a "night scene" as we conventionally read in the tourist guides. No, these are people just coming and going everywhere, even touching each other when trying to walk their ways.

For some aseptic people, this is somewhat unbearable. For me, instead, is a signal of a community that is alive. In contrast, I remember what a friend told me recently when I was trying to explain how little I felt that in the U.S: "To live in the first world has many advantages, no doubt. But, remember this: Loneliness is the price of freedom." I recall the thought Graham Greene put in one of his characters in his novel *The Heart of the Matter*. That man, an English officer stuck in Liberia during the Second World War, stated he loved that place because it constantly reminded him that there was no paradise on earth. Suffering and contemplating suffering were unavoidable. "Why. . . do I love this place so much? Is it because here human nature hasn't had time to disguise itself? Nobody here could ever talk about a heaven on earth."

Although I am not Catholic, I somewhat agree with Greene's idea. However, I am more inclined to feel at home in a place like Morocco for other reasons. This country (like Argentina, Mexico, or Brazil, just

Now, finally, I have some glimpses about what makes me feel close to Morocco. I think it relates to being surrounded by people who relate to each other in ways very similar to those I was accustomed when I lived in Argentina.

Author's girlfriend, Nicole Mottier, in Marrakech.

"To live in the first world has many advantages, no doubt. But, remember this: Loneliness is the price of freedom."

to mention few of the places that provoke me similar feelings) are very far from being a "land of mystery" uncontaminated by modernity, as the tourist agencies and even some progressive intellectuals might want us to think. No, it is obvious that modernity is well established in these countries. You can see it in their highways, cities, and slums. With all that, though, they are places that offer to some the possibility to recognize that, as Paul Eluard said, "there is another world, but it is in this one." I suppose it must be left to every traveler willing to explore to find out what "other world" he or she might be allowed to discover.

This country (like Argentina, Mexico, or Brazil, just to mention few of the places that provoke me similar feelings) are very far from being a "land of mystery" uncontaminated by modernity, as the tourist agencies and even some progressive intellectuals might want us to think.

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The Sahara Question

By
Anouar Majid

In the ongoing dispute between Morocco and the Polisario over the future of the so-called "Western Sahara," many progressive intellectuals and leaders—both Western and African—treat the Polisario as an underdog maltreated by land-grabbing Morocco. They cite international law and depict Morocco as an illegitimate invader supported by its all-powerful allies, the U.S. and France.

Last year, an article published in the *Middle East Report*, a magazine that is generally progressive on Middle Eastern affairs, took just this position. Quoting a variety of Algerian newspapers and relying on a number Security Council reports, the two authors of the article depict Morocco as an occupier that is nevertheless losing ground to a shifting U.S. policy in the *Maghreb* and the growing rapprochement of France and Algeria. This view is often echoed in the *Economist* or in the occasional article in *History Today*. Such articles almost invariably portray Morocco as somehow manipulating the UN Security Council or refusing to cooperate with UN mandates. Never do they bother to probe deeper into the historical context to find out if Morocco has any legitimate claims over the Sahara. For Morocco's critics, the history of the conflict begins in 1975. It was at that time that the Green March was launched by the late Hassan II, Morocco's southern provinces were christened the "Western Sahara" by the UN, and the Polisario was created. Yet if these writers expanded their lenses and went further back in time, they'd find out that 1975 was merely the culmination of decades of Moroccan resistance to French and Spanish encroachments on Moroccan sovereignty and the Moroccan people's tireless struggle to reclaim their territories.

The problem of Morocco began precisely when the *modus vivendi* in North Africa was disrupted by the French occupation of Algiers in 1830

For the problem of Morocco began precisely when the *modus vivendi* in North Africa was disrupted by the French occupation of Algiers in 1830. For supporting Algeria's anti-colonialist leader, Amir Abdelkader (who proclaimed his allegiance to the Moroccan sultan, Moulay Abderrahmane), Morocco found itself fighting a much stronger French army at Isly and was forced to ratify the infamous Treaty of Lalla Maghnia in 1845, thereby ceding a lot of land to French Algeria. Through forced negotiations and under the

It is no wonder when Morocco got its independence in 1956, it refused to accept the so-called Cairo Declaration in 1964 (binding nations to accept the borders they inherited from colonial regimes), for that would have meant relinquishing the struggle for independence.

coercive power of the gun, the French gradually annexed more territory that had been, culturally and ethnically, an integral part of Morocco. The Sahrawis who fought Spanish occupation in what some call the Western Sahara were tied by bonds of allegiance (*bay'a*) to the sultan. And so it is no wonder when Morocco got its independence in 1956, it refused to accept the so-called Cairo Declaration in 1964 (binding nations to accept the borders they inherited from colonial regimes), for that would have meant relinquishing the struggle for independence. Algeria, meanwhile, quickly seized this opportunity to keep its newly created country, bequeathed to it by the French at the expense of other Sahrawi people and Morocco. (Ironically, it was no other than Algeria's actual president, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, then foreign minister, who defended this Organization of African Unity's principle based the old Roman law concept of *uti posseditis*.)

But Morocco had existed as a sovereign state for centuries. Most of its dynasties originated from the Sahara—the Almoravids, who founded Marrakech and made it the capital of their far—flung empire, were from that disputed region, most likely from Mauritania. The ties with the Sahara, all the way to the Senegal, rose and ebbed with events in history; but, by the time the French and Spaniards started their expansionist designs on the region, most people north of Senegal and the Algerian Sahara paid allegiance to the Moroccan sultan and conducted Friday prayers in his name. These were the markers of sovereignty in pre-colonial Muslim societies, not the precise territorial boundaries that European states had to establish to sort out their own feuds.

These were the markers of sovereignty in pre-colonial Muslim societies, not the precise territorial boundaries that European states had to establish to sort out their own feuds.

European concepts of sovereignty and Islamic ones were quite different, which is why I call those who champion a simplistic

Self-determination is a beautiful U.S.-inspired concept whose goal was to give a voice to non-Western people slaving under European colonialism; it wasn't meant to liberate such countries into fragmented, mutilated entities. To do so would be to add more trouble to a region that needs peace and development.

approach to international law Eurocentric. They show no interest in Morocco's pre-colonial past. It's as if that history doesn't count for them. If Morocco refused to accept a European juridical principle at the basis of the Organization of African Unity's Charter, it was because, unlike most signatories at the table, Morocco had long existed as a sovereign state, one that had dealt with European powers, such as England and France, on equal terms in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Pick up any historical atlas of Africa and you could see this for yourself: Unlike the rest of the continent, Morocco has always lived within geographical boundaries that set the country apart. True, such boundaries at times reached eastward into present-day Libya—let alone Algeria—northward into Spain, and southward beyond Mauritania; but Morocco is not claiming such countries back—it only seeks to reunite people who had expressed their attachment to Moroccan sultans in the immediate pre-colonial period. It is part of the modern process of decolonization—no more, no less.

Even international law, as the scholar George Joffé noted in an article that is yet to be surpassed in its historical depth and probity, doesn't condone the dismemberment of a people or nation. And for good reason. If every region were to seek its independence through a concocted process of self-determination, then the world would disintegrate into utter chaos. Spain has refused to let go of the Basque region or Catalonia, even though these two autonomous regions have stronger claims to independence than the Polisario (wasn't their Secretary General, Mohammed Abdelaziz, born in Marrakech?) could ever claim. So why this sympathy for a "Western Sahara" that never existed, a vast stretch of desert the size of Colorado with no arable land at all, and whose borders were delineated by a Franco-Spanish team between 1956 and 1958? For some, it may seem the "progressive" thing to do, and for others, it's part of a strategic ploy to maintain a precarious balance of power in the region. Either way, Morocco's adversaries rely on flimsy historical justifications and a lot of colonialist philosophy (Roman law, ambiguous or contradictory provisions in international law, as Joffé indicated).

The solution that Morocco now proposes—autonomy within Morocco—is not a device to circumvent the UN-sponsored resolution; it is, in my opinion, merely the modern version of the old *bay'a* principle that bonded the Sahrawis with the rest of the country. Because the sultan and his army couldn't be everywhere at once, substantial autonomy was the *de facto* solution to government in pre-colonial times. As long as people paid taxes and recognized the sultan in their prayers, they were left to manage their affairs as they

saw fit. History has recorded many instances in which French and Spanish colonial administrators attest to Morocco's right to lands that have since been expropriated. After independence, Morocco ceded most of them, including Tindouf (which has, ironically, become the headquarters of the Polisario movement), to Algeria. Yet that was not enough for Morocco's detractors. They want more. Spain even invaded a rock in the Mediterranean in 2002 to prove the point.

Few countries can match Morocco's record in seeking a peaceful solution to a problem that should not have existed in the first place. But the Sahara is simply hard to give up. The Sahrawis, like the Riffis, Shluh, or Arabs, are part of a mosaic of cultures and traditions that have always been united under the leadership and prestige of the sultan. Morocco has been a multicultural society from its very inception, but it has never surrendered to colonialism, whether it appeared in the form of a gun or wrapped itself in legal language designed to deceive and erase historical realities. For history is, above all, memory, and the memory of Moroccans is stronger than a few lines drawn in the sand by pumped up colonialists.

To insist that the Sahara is Moroccan is, contrary to many so-called liberal and leftist claims, to correct an historical injustice and roll back the legacy of colonialism. Self-determination is a beautiful U.S.-inspired concept whose goal was to give a voice to non-Western people slaving under European colonialism; it wasn't meant to liberate such countries into fragmented, mutilated entities. To do so would be to add more trouble to a region that needs peace and development.

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