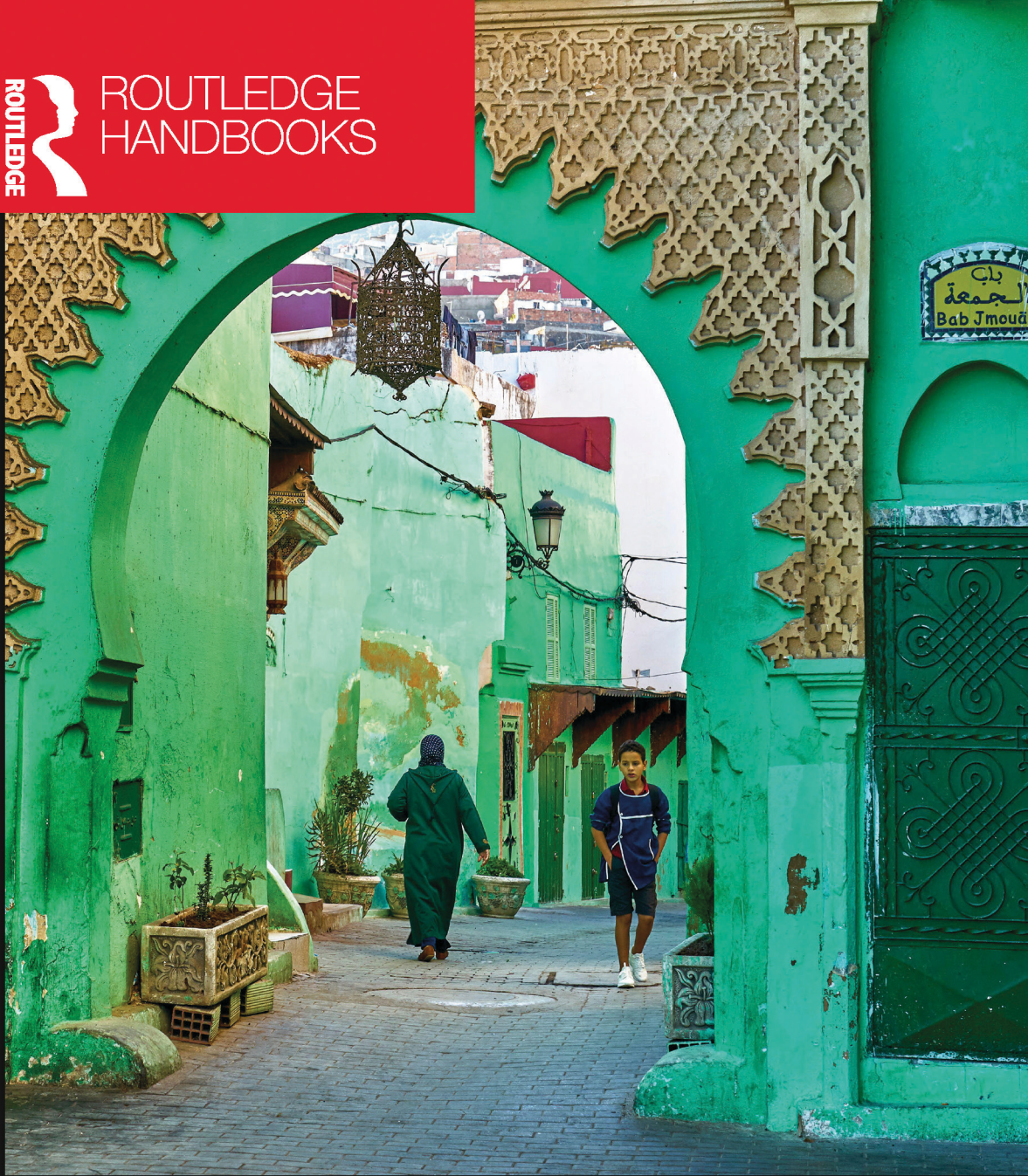


ROUTLEDGE



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HANDBOOKS



# Routledge Handbook on the Modern Maghrib

Edited by George Joffé

# ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK ON THE MODERN MAGHRIB

This comprehensive *Routledge Handbook on the Modern Maghrib* introduces and analyses the region in its full complexity, focussing on the countries of Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Libya, as well as the regions of the northern and western Sahara.

In addition to country studies that provide historical and geopolitical background, a series of thematic explorations engage with a range of social, linguistic, cultural and economic aspects, providing a rich mosaic of current scholarship on the region. Addressing important debates such as the volatile international relations among constituent states, the role of women in society and the environmental impact of climate change, the book considers natural resources, music, media and language, and revisits the history of borders and social tribal structures. What emerges is not only a variegated picture of the Maghrib as a complex and rapidly changing region, but one marked by stark contrasts and divergences among its constituent states based on their Ottoman and colonial experiences, their relationships with their Saharan and Mediterranean neighbours and their own political trajectories.

This *Handbook* fills an important gap in knowledge on a region increasingly significant in European and American affairs, and will appeal to anyone interested in the history, economies and societies of North Africa.

**George Joffé** was a Fellow at the Department of Politics and International Studies (POLIS) at the University of Cambridge and Visiting Professor at King's College London. He was the founding editor of the *Journal of North African Studies* and founder of the Centre of North African Studies in the UK. He served on the Board of the *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, and of *The Middle East in London* magazine at SOAS University of London. He published prolifically and widely on the geopolitics of North Africa and the Middle East, climate change, energy security, extremism and regional economics.



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# ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK ON THE MODERN MAGHRIB

*Edited by George Joffé*

Designed cover image: David Milsen/Alamy Stock Photo. Image is of Ouezzane, Morocco, where George Joffé conducted his PhD fieldwork

First published 2024  
by Routledge

4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge  
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

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*British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-138-58529-4 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-032-49023-6 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-0-429-50535-5 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9780429505355

Typeset in Sabon  
by Newgen Publishing UK

# CONTENTS

<i>Maps</i>	<i>viii</i>
<i>Tables</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Contributors</i>	<i>x</i>
In memoriam	<i>xiv</i>
Introduction	1
<i>George Joffé</i>	
<b>PART I</b>	
<b>Country studies</b>	<b>3</b>
1 The Maghrib before colonialism	5
<i>C. R. Pennell</i>	
2 Libya since 1835 and the Second Ottoman Occupation	27
<i>Ronald Bruce St John</i>	
3 Tunisia from 1830 and Ahmad Bey's modernisation	44
<i>Zoe Petkanas</i>	
4 Algeria from the French invasion in 1830	63
<i>Phillip C. Naylor</i>	
5 Morocco under the Alawites from the 1600s	82
<i>David Stenner</i>	

Contents

6	The Western Sahara <i>Jeremy Keenan</i>	103
7	Regional borders and the modern state in North Africa <i>George Joffé</i>	125
<b>PART II</b>		
	<b>Thematic studies</b>	<b>161</b>
8	The geography of the Maghrib: Resources, Demographics and Climate Change <i>George Joffé</i>	163
9	Economy and society in the Maghrib after the Arab Spring <i>Shana Cohen</i>	175
10	Women in the Maghrib: Legal, Political, and Social Context <i>Habiba Chafai</i>	190
11	<i>Amazighité</i> versus <i>'uruba</i> : Ethnicity in the Maghrib <i>Bruce Maddy-Weitzman</i>	208
12	Peoples of the Sahara <i>Jeremy Keenan</i>	225
13	Language policy and polyglottism in the Maghrib <i>George Joffé</i>	254
14	The Maghrib musical scene <i>Christopher Witulski</i>	272
15	The Maghribi multilingual novel <i>Karima Laachir and Irene Fernández Ramos</i>	286
16	Soccer: Moulding the Middle East and North Africa <i>James M. Dorsey</i>	303
17	Judaism in the Maghrib <i>Norman A. Stillman</i>	320
18	Christianity in the Maghrib <i>Patrick J. S. Brittenden</i>	340

Contents

19	The role of Islam in the Maghrib: Salafism, Islamism and Sufism <i>Azzedine Layachi</i>	358
20	Political Islam and the challenge of participation in North Africa <i>Alison Pargeter</i>	392
21	Terrorism, chaos and conflagration in the Sahara and Sahel (2003-2021) <i>Jeremy Keenan</i>	407
22	The 2011 uprisings in North Africa: Causes and Consequences <i>Francesco Cavatorta</i>	430
23	Traditions of governance in North Africa <i>George Joffé</i>	446
24	The Tunisian experience post-2011: The Crisis of Democratization <i>Larbi Sadiki and Layla Saleh</i>	461
25	Media in the Maghrib <i>Roxane Farmanfarmaian</i>	481
26	Political parties in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia <i>Valeria Resta and Francesco Cavatorta</i>	515
27	Between the Mediterranean and the Sahel: Inter- and Intra-Regional Affairs <i>George Joffé</i>	529
28	Foreign affairs of the Maghrib: Europe, the United States, Russia, the GCC and Türkiye <i>Yahia H. Zoubir and Emilie Tran</i>	546
29	The Maghrib economies: A Perpetual Search for Relevance and Reform <i>Jon Marks</i>	568
30	The role of oil and gas in the Maghrib <i>John Hamilton</i>	598
	<i>Index</i>	613

# MAPS

7.1	French and Spanish North Africa 1943	130
7.2	Algeria-Libya border demarcation before and after 1956	133
7.3	Libya's southern border	135
7.4	Libya-Chad Aouzou Strip border dispute	136
7.5	Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco 1900	140
7.6	Algeria-Mali border demarcation	142
7.7	Morocco-Algeria borders: The Treaty of Lalla Marghnia and the Trinquet and Varnier Lines	144
7.8	Spanish-Moroccan colonial borders	149
8.1	The Atlas mountain range	164

# TABLES

8.1	Oil and Gas Production and Reserves	169
13.1	Language Speakers in North Africa	255
25.1	Indexes of Media Freedom across the Maghrib	492
26.1	Confidence towards Political Parties (1999–2020)	524
29.1	Maghrib Economic Output and Employment, 1990–2019	570
29.2	Algerian Key Data	573
29.3	Moroccan Key Data	578
29.4	Tunisian Key Data	583

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## Contributors

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# IN MEMORIAM

George Joffé, the editor and muse of this collected volume, died on May 18, 2022, just before the book's completion. Mentor, teacher and intellectual guide to so many who have pursued Maghrib studies in Britain, Europe, the US, Australia and North Africa, including the contributors to this volume, his passing registered as a shock. Not only did it deeply affect the discipline for which he served as such a central intellectual pillar, but also the tradition of the Gentleman Scholar, which he epitomised, his insatiable curiosity ranging widely and productively across the field, while his impact on the lives he touched was always personal and often transformative.

As the last project of George Joffé's richly faceted academic life, this collection reflects his individual choices and unique character. It combines studies in music, polyglottism, borders, politics, natural resources, women, religion, tribes, democracy and fiction into an eclectic but deeply important look at North Africa, a region he loved more than any other and to which he dedicated his life.

Two of the five chapters he contributed to this volume were written in his last year. They mark a final addition to his opus of more than 250 articles and chapters – produced over his lifetime in his quest to raise the rigour in scholarship addressing the region, and expand student demand upon the universities to include the Maghrib in their curricula and their departments. It was a quest that earned him the moniker of being the Father of North African Studies. The Centre of North African Studies, and the *Journal of North African Studies* (JNAS), both of which he founded and helmed for more than 30 years (serving throughout as editor-in-chief for JNAS), put the discipline on the map, nurturing each new generation of young scholars and providing the necessary heft to anchor the field solidly inside the academic establishment.

This project was particularly close to his heart. As a *Handbook*, it gave him the opportunity to cast his eye upon corners and topics he knew were fruitful and interesting, but often ignored, and yet critical to understanding the underlying fabric of the region. It also enabled him to lasso in a broad range of scholars rarely brought together, each recognised for doing critical work in their specific fields, but not all necessarily engaged in mainstream

In memoriam

academia. The result is an unusual harmony of voices that provides significant examination into many under-explored subjects which, taken together, fills many gaps in the literature.

George Joffé has left us a true gift in this collection. It is a testament to his vision, and for anyone who knew him, to his humility, for he was always cognisant that there was so much more to discover, and that despite his own prodigious knowledge, he too always was the student.

Roxane Farmanfarmaian  
Editor *addendum*

With special thanks to Dr Zoe Petkanas, who as a previous PhD supervisee of George Joffé, generously gave her time and organisational skills to help bring together the many strands of this complex work so it could be successfully published.



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# INTRODUCTION

*George Joffé*

The Maghrib – the countries of Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania – is a region little known to the Anglophone world. Yet it plays an increasingly significant role in European, American and British affairs. Not only are Morocco and Tunisia major tourist destinations but Libya has been a major source of sub-Saharan migrants seeking to enter Europe and, given its current chaos, a significant factor, together with Mauritania and Mali, in the extremism and violence that threaten European society. Nor is the latter issue simply a recent phenomenon. Violence from Algeria, for example, has seeped into France, first during the Algerian war of independence in the 1950s and early 1960s and then again during the Algerian civil war in the second half of the 1990s.

Regional affairs have also had wider implications. Tunisia is, after all, the country where the Arab Spring began and is today the only country in the region to have successfully managed a brief transition from autocracy to democratic governance, although it has now entered a crisis of direct presidential rule. Libya, on the other hand, after its four decades of the idiosyncratic Qadhafi regime, has relapsed into chaos to which there appears to be no obvious solution, even though the United Nations (UN) has intervened. Now foreign powers – Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and (indirectly) Russia in Cyrenaica and Turkey and Qatar in Tripolitania – have taken an interest in an initiative that might split the country apart. Algeria, having survived its civil war, now finds itself at odds with Morocco over the future of the Western Sahara which Morocco claims and has occupied since 1975, much to Algeria's irritation, not least because it has led to Morocco and Israel engaging in formal diplomatic relations. The two countries of Morocco and Algeria both have ambitions to dominate the region, ambitions which are reflected in part in their confrontation over the Western Sahara. Algeria, meanwhile, underwent its own political crisis which has yet to produce a genuinely democratic outcome, and instead, promises only to be a repetition of the past.

The region is also dependent economically on Europe which is its major trade partner. Up to 50 per cent of the external trade of Morocco and Tunisia is with Europe, whilst Algeria and, to a lesser extent, Libya, supply oil and gas, providing 8 per cent of Europe's oil imports and 9 per cent of its gas. Morocco supplies the outside world with phosphate,

being the world's largest exporter and third-largest producer of this feedstock for fertiliser production. The European Union (EU) has applied its common foreign and security policy to the region since 1995, ostensibly to help modernise and integrate the regional economy and to promote good governance there, despite its growing concerns over migration from sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. At the same time, large segments of Europe's minority communities originate from the Maghrib, particularly from Algeria and Morocco and to a lesser extent from Tunisia, although today these countries are becoming countries-of-transit rather than countries-of-origin for migrants, whether economic or not.

Historically, too, the region has played a significant role in Europe. Portugal and Spain formed part of the empires based in Morocco up to the *Reconquista* in the fifteenth century, an experience that is etched into the urban landscape of the Iberian peninsula. Malta, too, underwent a similar lengthy integration in the South Mediterranean Muslim world before it became the outpost of the Knights of St John. Sicily under the Angevins from the eleventh to the thirteenth century developed a rich and complex civilisation profoundly marked by Islam. More recently, the Spanish civil war began in Morocco, and Tunisia and Libya were decisive battlegrounds during the Second World War. Yet, although today the region appears to be dominated by the aftermath of its colonial experiences – France in Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, Spain in Northern Morocco and the Western Sahara, and Italy, France and Britain in Libya – the reality is that for most of its precolonial history the region looked southwards, across the Sahara and, after the seventh century and the advent of Islam, eastwards too.

Indeed, for 1,000 years, except for Moroccan penetration into Iberia, the Mediterranean itself was the 'forgotten frontier' between Christendom and the antagonistic world of Islam, eventually formalised by corsairing until European powers suppressed the practice in the eighteenth century before dominating the region after the French Revolution. It is, as a result, a region marked by social complexity, often misrepresented as predominantly part of the Arab world. Now, however, its true indigenous linguistic and cultural intricacy is beginning to emerge through the rediscovery of *Amazighté*, particularly in Morocco and Algeria. Yet the Maghrib is also a society in transition as its populations urbanise and modernise away from the precolonial, essentially agricultural, worlds towards the differentiated demands of modern societies increasingly involved with their European neighbours.

For a region which is so enmeshed with Europe but so little known, particularly in Britain and America, a comprehensive *Handbook* on its complex history, economies and societies will fill the gap in the literature and counter this lack of knowledge about a region which for so long has been an essentially French *chasse-gardée*. This book, in 30 chapters, seeks to provide a comprehensive view of all major aspects of Maghribi society. It begins with a series of seven country studies providing an historical background to the region and its constituent countries, and then comprises a further 23 studies of thematic aspects of the region overall. These range from geographic to geopolitical and political considerations but also include a range of social, linguistic and cultural concerns. Of course, in such a complex political, economic, social and cultural world, there are bound to be omissions, but we feel that we have managed to provide a balanced view of the contemporary Maghrib. Indeed, should there be further editions of the *Handbook*, we shall, no doubt be able to compensate for obvious lacunae, but that remains to be seen!

PART I

Country studies



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# 1

## THE MAGHRIB BEFORE COLONIALISM

*C. R. Pennell*

The Maghrib, historically, is a region of complex and contested identities. For Arabs, rooted in a culture from the East, the Maghrib is the ‘land of the setting sun’. For Europeans, Northwest Africa is based on the Roman culture that conquered it from the north. Both called an indigenous population that had preceded their discovery of the region ‘Berbers’, a name introduced by outsiders that in effect politicised linguistic identities. For Greeks and Romans, *barbaroi/barbari* or ‘barbarians’ were those who did not speak their language. Arab-speakers adopted the term, and so did the subsequent European colonisers of the region, as a means of defining socio-political distinction, often in pejorative terms. The ‘Berber’ language family was spread over northern Africa and today it is strongest in Morocco and Algeria, with smaller groups in Tunisia, Libya, western Egypt and among the Tuareg of the Sahara (Peyron 2021; Chapter 1).

The descendants of the indigenous people use variations of ‘Imazighen’ (sing. ‘Amazigh’), meaning ‘free’ or ‘noble’, to describe themselves. They had an ancient culture that used alphabetical scripts as far back as the third century BCE (Before the Common Era) and the *Tifinagh* alphabet of the Sahara that modern Amazigh nationalists have adopted is a descendant of these early alphabetical scripts. There were even earlier cultures during the warm temperate and semitropical era before the last ice age, but what they called themselves is quite unknown to us. The only substantial archaeological evidence they have left is the drawings on the stone walls of caves and stones across the Sahara (Pennell 2003; 2–3, Raven 1993; 31–32)

The physical environment of the region has also profoundly changed. Once, the Maghrib was a much better-watered region, but around 5,000 BCE it began to get drier and subsequently evolved into three regions. States developed very early on the Atlantic coast and the fertile plains behind it and on the plains and in the hills along the Sicilian channel, the seaway linking the western and eastern Mediterranean. In between was a narrow plain along the Mediterranean coast, with mountains behind, then the semi-desert and the Sahara. Yet, on its periphery, in geographic terms, the Maghrib was partly isolated, bounded by sea on two sides and the desert on the third.

Indeed, for much of Maghribi history, the Atlantic was as much a final frontier for its inhabitants as it was for Europeans, until the Spanish and Portuguese conquered their ‘New World’. The other sea, the Mediterranean, was a centre of trade and civilisation in the second millennium BCE. Around the end of the eighth century BCE, Phoenicians moved through the Mediterranean towards the Iberian peninsula, searching for silver and tin. Phoenician settlements lined the coasts between Cyrene in the east and the Strait of Gibraltar and followed the Atlantic coast southwards to modern Essaouira. The Phoenicians were maritime traders, who made no effort to control the hinterland, except around Carthage, which they had founded in the ninth century BCE. Carthage spread settled agriculture into its hinterland, which was one of the most fertile corners of North Africa, and built a great agricultural and trading economy (Raven 1993; 33–34).

A great city such as Carthage needed defending. Local semi-nomadic pastoralists attacked the settled farms and the Carthaginians could not control tribal confederations like the Massyli and the Masaesyli in northern Algeria, the Gaetules in southern Tunisia and the Garamantes in the oases and deserts of the Fezzan. There was, however, an even more potent threat on the northern shore of the Mediterranean. In the mid-third century BCE, Rome began fighting Carthage for control of Sicily and three successive Punic wars all ended in the defeat of the Phoenician city. After the Second Punic War ended in 202 BCE, a powerful Numidian kingdom under Masinissa ate away at settled Carthaginian territory. In the Third Punic War (149–146 BCE), the Romans defeated Carthage for a third and final time and laid waste to it (Raven 1993; 49, 51–59).

After their victory, the Romans left power in the hands of local rulers of the towns of the hinterland and the native kingdoms. Typically, as so often happens in such systems of indirect control, those rulers then tried to seize more power than the Romans wanted to grant, thus provoking a series of local wars. The Romans took six years (112–106 BCE) to crush Jugurtha in Numidia, while Julius Caesar abolished other native kingdoms when their rulers backed Pompey in the civil war. After Caesar’s murder in 44 BCE, the Romans tried ruling Mauritania directly but soon returned to relying on local surrogates. Volubilis, near modern Fez in Morocco, became an important city and remained loyally pro-Roman, but peace did not last. In the end, the whole of Mauritania was annexed to the Empire and divided first into two provinces, and later three (Raven 1993, 63–65).

The Roman provinces along the North African coast did not extend far inland. Military camps and, in places, ditches, ramparts and watchtowers ringed areas of Roman occupation. These North African limits of the Empire (the *limes*) stretched from the Atlantic coast to the deserts south of Tripoli. They separated the areas the Romans ruled directly from the interior by regulating movements and trade between settled agriculturalists, nomads and transhumants. The settled agriculture generated by these regions varied in output; the eastern provinces of Africa (modern Tunisia) or Numidia (contemporary Algeria) supplied Rome with huge quantities of olives and grain but the far west (now Morocco) was never as rich – Volubilis was a backwater compared with the great cities of El Djem or Leptis Magna (Peyron 2021; Chapter 2).

The details of how it actually occurred are unclear, but the Roman Empire, despite its panoply of gods, helped spread monotheism in northwestern Africa. Judaism probably arrived from the east via Egypt and Cyrenaica and spread to Carthage in the second century CE, but it is hard to pin down. There are only scattered Jewish inscriptions to help because Judaism spread among illiterate indigenous tribes. Christianity may also have arrived from the east, or from Rome itself and it quickly took root. By the third century CE, what is now

Tunisia had a flourishing Christian community, which the Romans tried to destroy. The persecutions under the emperors Septimius Severus (193–211), Valerian (253–260) and Diocletian (284–305) were vicious failures that did not silence but radicalised the Christians subjugated to them (Raven 1993; 148–161). After Constantine, who succeeded Diocletian in 306 CE, converted to Christianity, some Christians did compromise with Rome. But Donatus, the Bishop of Carthage, led the radicals to split away and reject both the state and their less-determined brethren. The Donatist schism, or rebellions, lasted nearly a century until St Augustine of Hippo (in modern Algeria) and Emperor Honorius combined to crush it in 411 CE. Thereafter, Catholic Christianity prevailed (Raven 1993; 167–189).

Another schism, affecting both Church and Empire, had only slight effects on North Africa. In the late fourth century, the Vandals, a Germanic people on the Danube frontier, rebelled when the Catholic Empire considered their interpretation of Christianity, Arianism, to be heretical. Arians moved quickly through Europe, conquered Spain and in 429 CE crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and invaded North Africa. The far northwest was not rich enough to attract them, so they moved eastwards into the Roman provinces of Numidia and Africa (today's northern Algeria, Tunisia and eastern Libya). In 442 CE the Romans ceded North Africa to them, from Tripolitania to eastern Numidia. The Vandals persecuted Catholics but otherwise quickly adopted Roman ways and took over the Roman economy. Yet Vandal rule did not last long, for surrounding Amazigh kingdoms began invading their territory, until the Emperor Justinian, who succeeded to the throne in Byzantium in 527 CE, rebuilt the Empire (Raven 1993; 196–208).

### **The arrival of Islam**

The Islamic conquest of North Africa that began in the late seventh century was a peripheral experience, compared to the early struggles faced by the new religion as it emerged from Arabia. Persia and the Syrian and Egyptian provinces of the Byzantine Empire were more valuable prizes that gave the Muslims control of great cities. North Africa, on the other hand, was on the frontier of the Islamic Caliphates in the east and soon broke away. Even so, the Maghrib reverberated to the strains and processes of the Islamic heartland. Like the Arabian peninsula, much of Northwest Africa was arid, crossed by vital trade routes and had regions of settled agriculture along the coast. Its society was also organised along tribal lines, defined by agnatic descent, with local kingdoms that dominated the borderlands. And its population was basically polytheistic, notwithstanding a long Jewish and Christian presence. North African Christians spoke Latin (or perhaps Greek), as did the townsfolk of Syria and Palestine, and the people of the countryside spoke Amazigh languages rather than Semitic ones. The Muslim Arab armies, on the other hand, spread belief in a single god, as the inspiration of a new and triumphant state that had already destroyed the Sassanians in Persia and the Byzantines in Syria.

Yet, although Muhammad, a political leader as well as a religious prophet, had led a holy war against the polytheists of Mecca, he made no demand that Christians and Jews should convert to Islam. Provided they recognised Muslim rule and paid extra taxes, they were tolerated. However, Muhammad had no male heir and named no successor, and he came from a less powerful part of the great Quraysh tribe that had ruled Mecca before Islam. When he died, the Meccan elite split over who should lead the community as the caliph (*khalifa* – successor or deputy, to the Prophet). It was a split that was ultimately to have profound implications for the Maghrib.

Under the first three caliphs, the boundaries of Islam had expanded to include Syria and Iraq and Egypt. But new converts soon resented the fact that the Meccan elite garnered power for itself. Muslims split three ways over who should lead Islam. The old elite backed a Qurayshi successor and formed the mainstream; they were to become the Sunni faction in Islam. Another group declared that his successor should be a man in the direct line of descent of the Prophet, through his daughter Fatima and her husband Ali. Ali himself briefly became caliph, but the Meccan elite struck back and ousted him, and Ali's party, the Shia't Ali (the 'party of Ali') or Shi'is, were to become a focus of permanent dissent. The line of Shi'i imams continued until the ninth century when the twelfth imam disappeared. His followers believed he had gone into 'occultation', disappearing from human awareness, and would only re-emerge to lead a revolutionary period of justice and truth that would finally prevail over the Muslim world. The Isma'ilis, supporters of an alternative vision, believing that it was the seventh Shi'i imam who ended the legitimate line-of-descent from Ali, held a similar view of his occultation. The third group rejected the argument of endowment as caliph by descent altogether: the leader of the community should only be chosen according to his piety and probity. They opposed both Sunnis and Shi'is and were described as Kharijis, 'those who go out' (leave). Typically, they sought refuge in the desert, from where they fought for a society based on equality and justice.

The Shi'is and Kharijis plagued the mainstream Sunnis in the early eighth century, but in the east the Sunni Umayyad dynasty prevailed. From Damascus, its original capital, the Umayyad caliphate spread westwards into North Africa and Spain and eastwards to India. It was not a stable regime and by the mid-eighth century, succession disputes had so undermined it that another branch of the Quraysh, the Abbasids, overthrew it. The Abbasids founded a new dynasty, whose capital was Baghdad and it survived in various forms until 1258 CE, when it was destroyed in the Mongol invasions of the Middle East. It was to prove the longest-lasting Arabic caliphate, but it never included the whole of the Islamic world and the Maghrib and Spain soon broke away. Alexandria in Egypt was occupied in 643 CE, and Cyrenaica in 644 CE, but when the second caliph, Umar, died in 644 CE, there followed half a generation of factional fighting between Sunnis, Shi'is and Kharijis. In 647 CE, Muslim armies routed Byzantine forces at Sbeitla (in modern Tunisia), but no permanent occupation of the region followed the victory, so Byzantine rule struggled on in the coastal plains of North Africa and the Amazigh tribes blocked the Muslim-Arab path to the hinterlands.

The conquest of Northwest Africa restarted under the Umayyad dynasty. In 674 CE, Uqba ibn Nafi' had founded a new base at Kairouan, in what is now southern Tunisia, even though the Muslim victory at Sbeitla was not further exploited. This, the first new Islamic city in Northwest Africa, began as a military camp, but soon became a great centre of learning. In 682 CE, Uqba resumed the campaign, moving westwards towards the Atlantic. The details are vague, but he apparently struck inland from Kairouan, outflanking the coastal garrisons of the Byzantines. According to legend, on reaching the Atlantic coast, he charged his horse into the surf, crying, "Oh God! If the sea had not prevented me, I would have coursed on forever like Alexander the Great, upholding your face and fighting all who disbelieved!"

The legend symbolised his belief that the Arabs were a chosen people that only nature, not any human force, could withstand (Pennell 2003; 24). Yet Uqba's triumph ended disastrously. Led by a Christian Amazigh king named Kusayla, the tribes rose against Uqba. For a while, the Muslims were even forced to abandon Kairouan. Kusayla was succeeded

by a legendary warrior-queen known as al-Kahina (the priestess). The Muslims eventually defeated her after retaking Kairouan in 691 CE. The city then became the headquarters of the province of Ifriqiya, recreating the old Roman province of Africa. Musa bin Nusayr, its first governor, set about extending effective Arab rule over the whole of the Maghrib north of the old Roman *limes* and sent reconnoitring armies southwards into the desert (Perkins 1986; 28).

The Arab-Muslim objective was trade and settlement, booty and the proclamation of a new divine revelation, yet they did not force the Jews and Christians of the coast to convert. Some of the Amazigh tribes were Jewish and a few were Christian, and only those who followed animist religions could be forced to submit to the new religion, although the Muslims did not find it easy to break Amazigh resistance. The details are cloudy because Arab sources generally date from a much later period. However, tribal structures on both sides seem to have been similar enough to allow local leaders to become clients of Arab tribes; otherwise the Arabs held the sons of powerful chiefs hostage until their families submitted. Other tribesmen simply joined the Muslim army willingly as it advanced across North Africa and eventually into southern Spain. Tariq bin Ziyad, an important Amazigh convert, became governor of Tangier and in 715 CE led a largely Amazigh army across the Strait of Gibraltar to Spain. Gibraltar was named after him (Jabal-Tariq, the ‘mountain of Tariq’) (Pennell 2003; 27).

The Muslims’ Amazigh allies, however, were unreliable because the Maghrib was remote from the Umayyad Empire. From Kairouan, Musa bin Nusayr’s local Arab commanders could call on small Arab contingents, but, more generally, had to rely on Amazigh soldiers who often resented how their Arab rulers behaved. Islam proclaimed the equality of all believers, but Amazigh converts paid higher taxes and saw their womenfolk lost to the harems of the east. So Kharijism, with its doctrine of legitimacy based on religious commitment rather than birth or racial origin, became attractive to them. And the far-off Maghrib also attracted other Kharijis from the east, once the Umayyads had defeated them there. In 739 CE or 740 CE a tax revolt in Tangier became a Khariji insurrection. Its Amazigh leader declared himself caliph and his followers justified themselves in the religious language that their oppressors had taught them. The rebellion was put down, but the Umayyads and their successors had more important rebels to deal with much closer to Damascus, and, when the Abbasids replaced them, the authority of the east ebbed away from the Muslim west (Pennell 2003; 28). Al-Andalus separated completely from the Arab heartland in the east, ruled by the only Umayyad prince who had escaped the Abbasids’ slaughter of his family in the wake of their victory.

In Ifriqiya (modern Tunisia) a local hereditary principality, the Aghlabids, developed under Ibrahim ibn al-Aghlab (184-197 Anno Hegirae [AH]/800-812 CE). He proclaimed formal allegiance to Baghdad and paid tribute to the Abbasid caliph, but otherwise he was left to his own devices. With the elaborate court structure and powerful army that it then developed, Ifriqiya remained stable well into the ninth century. Agriculture and trade flourished and the infrastructure of Kairouan is still impressive today – there is the Great Mosque that the Aghlabids rebuilt in the mid-ninth century and the huge water cisterns that the modern Ben Ali regime restored in concrete in the late twentieth century. With its robust minaret, its external wall and its tower bastions and massive buttresses, the Great Mosque of Kairouan resembles a fortress, but it was to become one of the most prestigious places of worship for Muslims in the Islamic world. Along the coast of Ifriqiya the Aghlabids also built *ribats* (the term is sometimes translated as ‘fortified monasteries’) that combined

military and religious functions. The *ribat* in Sousse was a little fortress next door to the great mosque that also had guard posts on its corners. It took almost a century to build the Great Ribat at Monastir, begun in 796 CE.

The Aghlabids also came to control Sicily and Malta, and had influence in southern Italy as well. Their high point came in the mid-ninth century during the reign of Abu Ibrahim Ahmad, who personified the ideal ruler as described in the mediaeval ‘Mirror of Princes’ literature of the principles of statecraft. But in 875 CE, Ibrahim II took power and he embodied the opposite qualities from those recommended: he was a tyrant, an aesthete of murder who enjoyed torturing his victims to death. After spending a fortune on a new palace at Rakkada outside Kairouan, he was forced to abdicate. As a result of his depredations, however, the dynasty collapsed at the beginning of the tenth century (Perkins 1986; 30–34).

No matter how distant Andalusia and Ifriqiya were from Baghdad and relatively isolated from Abbasid influence, they were still part of the Sunni mainstream, but the far west of the Maghrib was the land of the heterodox. After their defeat in Tangier, the Kharijis moved down into the desert, latching on to trade in gold and slaves across the Sahara. They built a new town at Sijilmassa and constructed a prosperous kingdom that lasted for two centuries. From Awdaghust, on the southern side of the desert, it imported gold and slaves. In return, Sijilmassa sent it wool, copper from the nearby mines in the Sous and, above all, salt from the abundant salt mines at Taghaza, 20 days’ travel into the Sahara. Islam spread along the trading routes, but central Morocco and the Atlantic plains, areas of agriculture and pasture, produced in the mid-eighth century a state so heterodox it might hardly be called Muslim at all. The Barghawata seem to have mixed elements of Christianity, Judaism and animism, but they were based mainly in Shi’i Islam. They were so heterodox that the details were hardly recorded by pious Muslims. Statelets like these, clustered around the edges of the desert and the seas, were an Amazigh rather than an Arab expression of Islam, for religion spread more quickly than language and the Amazigh populations were Islamised before they were Arabised (Pennell 2003; 29, Peyron 2021; Chapter 3).

Idris bin Abdullah founded the most important state of all these new creations, near the ruins of Volubilis in modern-day Morocco. He claimed descent from Ali and Fatima and had fled to the Maghrib when the rest of his family was massacred at the end of the eighth century. So by ancestry he was a Shi’i, although the Amazighs around Volubilis may also have been exposed to Khariji influence. But they made him welcome and, after taking a local woman as concubine, he established yet another petty state. In 789 CE he built a base a little to the east of the old Roman city, on the banks of the River Fez, controlling the main road. The Abbasid caliph, Harun al-Rashid, then sent an assassin to poison him. Idris died, but his unborn son survived and received his father’s name. In 803 CE, when he was 11, the Amazigh people of the area proclaimed him sovereign. In 809 CE, Idris II moved his capital to a site beside his father’s old settlement on the Fez River and, from there, Idrisid rule spread along the main roads to Andalusia and the Arab east. By the time he died in 829 CE, it extended from the Rif mountains in the north, across the Middle Atlas and the central plateau towards the valley of the Sous. Trade made Fez rich and these obscure events in the early ninth century are claimed by some modern Moroccan nationalists as the origins both of Fez and the Moroccan state (Pennell 2003; 30–32).

Quite apart from that claim, Fez, given its founding history, was the enemy of the Abbasids and their Aghlabid vassals in the east and of the Umayyad amirs of Andalusia to the north. So it became an asylum from both. Religious scholars fled there after a rising in Córdoba in 814 CE; and in 824 CE, refugees from Kairouan joined them after a brief civil

war in Ifriqiya. These were more sophisticated places than Fez, and the refugees brought mercantile skills and religious knowledge with them so that the city prospered from trade, and scholarship flourished. In both communities, religious women endowed great mosques in their new residence: the Andalusiyyin was begun in 857 CE and the Qarawiyyin in 859/60 CE. This premium on learning and scholarship made the Idrisid capital a great centre of Sunni Islam. The Qarawiyyin, now the main university of Fez, claims to be the oldest continuously functioning university in the world (Pennell 2003; 32–33).

Idris II's numerous children divided the state between themselves when he died. The Idrisid state slowly wound down but it survived until a new challenge emerged to Sunni orthodoxy in the early tenth century. As usual, this originated in the Arab east, in Syria, headed by Ubaydallah, a self-proclaimed descendant of the vanished seventh Shi'i imam, Isma'il. He sent propagandists out across the Islamic world and one of them, Abu Abdullah, reached the Maghrib in 893 CE. He defeated the last Aghlabid ruler and occupied Raqqada in 909 CE. After the main revolt in Syria collapsed, Ubaydallah joined him there, and declared himself caliph and the head of a new dynasty, the Fatimids, named after its supposed origins through the marriage of Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, and Ali, his short-lived caliphal successor. The Fatimids were to be the only important Shi'i caliphate in the history of Islam, and their eventual aim was to conquer the Arab east, so they built their Tunisian capital, Mahdiyya, on a peninsula facing eastwards into the Mediterranean. Eventually, in 972 CE, they did conquer Egypt and moved the seat of the caliphate to Cairo.

The Fatimids had two important enemies – the Abbasids in Baghdad and the Umayyads in al-Andalus. Both were Sunni, and the Umayyad ruler, Abderrahman III, declared himself caliph in 929 CE. There were now three caliphates in the Islamic world and the Maghrib was the battleground between them, although the battle was usually fought by local surrogates and Fez changed hands several times in the subsequent struggles. At stake was control of the Saharan trade and, although the Umayyads won the battle for economic control, Fez prospered as traders and artisans poured in from outside. Its great mosques flourished and scholars, Muslim and Jewish, came too, so that the city became an important intellectual centre. Then, in the mid-eleventh century, the Umayyad caliphate in Córdoba fell apart. Amazigh troops sacked the palace in 1031 CE and al-Andalus disintegrated into petty principalities, thus beginning the era of the *taifa* ('party') sultans. Once again, outside events brought about a political change in northwestern Africa.

### **Empires in the Maghrib**

In the eleventh century the patchwork of statelets and fortress-principalities, many founded in religious heterodoxy or Shi'ism, was transformed. Successively, two imperial systems, the Almoravids and the Almohads, united the territories once settled by the Romans with lands on the other side of the Sahara, a development that ultimately brought about the triumph of Sunnism in the region of northwestern Africa. The al-Murabitun (Almoravids) and al-Muwahiddun (Almohads) were Imaghzen, not Arabs, but *jihad* united them to spread Islam to the black populations of the western Sudan, and the trans-Saharan trade made them rich.

In the beginning, trading rivalries led the Amazigh Sanhaja confederation, Sunnis following the Maliki tradition of the theo-legal interpretation of Islam, to attack the Khariji Maghrawa tribe of the Zanata confederation. When members of the Sanhajan elite began making pilgrimages to the east, these theological differences stood out. One such pilgrim,

Yahya bin Ibrahim, returned to the Maghrib sometime between the 1030s and the early 1050s, accompanied by a Sunni scholar named Abdullah ibn Yasin who agreed to help him reform Islam. Ibn Yasin's Islam was egalitarian, austere and rigorous, which excited opposition, so, in about 1053 CE, he set up a *ribat*, a fortified post or religious centre on the edge of the desert, whose exact location is unknown. His followers became known as al-Murabitun, those who dwell in a *ribat*. Rigorous and pure in spirit, they determined to create a just society by "condemning evil and proclaiming good" – a classic Qur'anic prescription. They relied on force, and their *jihad* unified the Sahara and increased their wealth (Pennell 2003; 38–40, Bennison 2016; 26–28).

Early rebellions encouraged the al-Murabitun to conquer greater territories still. Around 1058 CE, after Ibn Yasin was killed, Abu Bakr bin Umar led them over the High Atlas to take the little kingdom of Aghmat, near modern Marrakesh. Abu Bakr himself built Marrakesh as a military base, probably in 1072 CE, and then returned to the Sahara. His *jihad* brought Ghana and much of the western Sudan under Almoravid rule. He left Marrakesh in the care of his cousin, Yusuf ibn Tashfin, who was the real founder of the al-Murabitun empire. By 1082 CE he controlled the Maghrib as far as Algiers. Then the al-Murabitun crossed the Strait into al-Andalus, where the small Islamic *taifa* kingdoms were falling before the Castilian advance. In 1085 CE their armies routed the combined army of Castile and Aragon and stopped the Christian advance for a generation. In 1190 CE, impatient with the local Muslim rulers who he considered irreligious traitors, ibn Tashfin armed himself with a *fatwa* (a religious opinion) from the scholars of Fez, empowering him to overthrow them and to incorporate their lands into his own empire. By 1100, the al-Murabitun ruled from Spain to Algiers. Both shores of the western Mediterranean were now under one ruler, as they had been under the Romans, although the political centre of gravity was now on the edges of the Sahara, in Marrakesh. The religion and culture now derived from the Islamic east and, more locally from Kairouan, with an uncompromising emphasis on the letter of the Quran (Pennell 2003; 41–45, Bennison 2016; 31–35, 38–48).

Ibn Tashfin won support by reducing taxes to only those allowed by the Quran, which greatly improved the economy. The Almoravids funnelled the wealth of lands south of the Sahara northwards, and sent grain from the Atlantic plains southwards, so their empire became wealthy. They surrounded Marrakesh with elaborate underground irrigation channels (*khattara*) to water gardens outside the defensive walls they had built around the city (see Joffé 1992).

Their capital attracted scholars, scientists and philosophers, as had the Qarawiyyin in Fez, and they built great mosques in Tlemcen and Algiers. The court of ibn Tashfin's son, Ali, was very splendid, but the family was beset by rivalries, and it cost manpower and money to control both the lands south of the Sahara and al-Andalus, where the Christian kingdoms had restarted their advance southwards. The costs of war increased the need for taxes and by the mid-twelfth century there was to be a new challenge to the Al-Murabitun (Pennell 2003; 46–47, Bennison 2016; 55–61).

This was led by Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Tumart, who was born between 1075 CE and 1080 CE, on the northern side of the Anti-Atlas, in a land of sedentary Amazigh farmers. He had a good religious education and went east to continue it. Although he did not complete his *hajj*, he studied in the great centres of Islam there. Then he went home, fired with the idea of reforming religion and morals. He first settled at Bejaïa in Algeria in 1117 CE and preached against corrupted morals, music and luxury, talking of a *mahdi* who

would come to bring reform. This made him unpopular, so he moved on to Marrakesh in 1121 CE, accompanied by a mystic from near Tlemcen named Abd Al-Mu'min. Their criticism of the morals of the Almoravid rulers and the theology of the court scholars caused such rage that they fled to Tinmal, an isolated retreat in the High Atlas. Ibn Tumart's message was that God was a pure, absolute, and undivided spirit, so his followers called themselves Al-Muwahhidun (Unitarians, or Almohads). He demanded the complete separation of the sexes, no music and an end to luxury. In 1121 CE, drawing on Shi'i ideas of the hidden imam, Ibn Tumart announced that he himself was the *mahdi*. He surrounded himself with rings of close advisers, of tribal leaders and a phalanx of propagandists to spread the word (Bennison 2016; 68). Because Tinmal was too remote he moved down onto the plains, but could not capture Marrakesh. When Ibn Tumart died in 1130 CE, Abd Al-Mu'min conquered most of Morocco and eastern Algeria. Only in 1147 CE was he able to capture Marrakesh, after a long siege. A massacre of the Al-Murabitun followed, with palaces torn down and mosques replaced, allegedly because they were incorrectly aligned with Mecca (Pennell 2003; 48–49, Bennison 2016; 62–69).

Making Marrakesh their capital, the Al-Muwahhidun began building an empire, although even before taking it they had been sucked into fighting the advancing Christian armies in Al-Andalus. In 1145 CE, Abd Al-Mu'min sent an army, and despite losing several Muslim cities, the Al-Muwahhidun rescued Córdoba (in 1146 CE) and very slowly took control of most of Islamic Iberia through a mixture of menace and alliance (Bennison 2016; 74–78). But Christians were not the only foes. In 972 CE, the Fatimids had moved to Cairo, leaving Ifriqiya to a dynasty of governors, the Zirids, who struck out on their own and briefly controlled all the central Maghrib. In the early eleventh century, the family split, and the Hammadid branch took over Algeria. The Zirids remained in control of Ifriqiya from Kairouan and set about destroying Shi'ism. In 1049 CE they transferred their nominal allegiance to the Abbasids. Then the Banu Hilal, an Arab tribal confederation encouraged by the Fatimids in Cairo, moved into Ifriqiya and sacked Kairouan in 1057 CE. The Zirids moved their capital back to the old Fatimid base at Mahdiya. Later Arab historians claimed the Fatimids had sent these nomads from Egypt to punish the Zirids for rebelling, and they wrecked the countryside, but it is likely that these warrior nomads were part of a general population movement (Perkins 1986; 39–42, Laroui 1977; 144–156). Abd Al-Mu'min encouraged the Banu Hilal to settle on the Atlantic plains to provide him with military contingents. Amidst the confusion, the Norman rulers of Sicily occupied parts of southern Ifriqiya. Abd Al-Mu'min responded by sending his own forces eastward. They occupied Algiers, Constantine and Bejaïa in 1152 CE, Tunis in 1159 CE and then Tripoli. When he died in 1163 CE, Abd Al-Mu'min's empire stretched from Spain to Libya (Pennell 2003; 52–53, Bennison 2016; 79).

Abd Al-Mu'min named his son, Muhammad, as his successor, legitimising him by dynastic authority rather than religious virtue. This alienated some of the religious elite and the dynasty itself suffered from familial rivalry (Bennison 2016; 82–85). Abd Al-Mu'min's immediate successors put down rebellions in southern Ifriqiya, and in 1195 CE, Abu Yusuf Ya'qub won a great victory at Alarcos in Spain, stopping the *Reconquista* in its tracks (Bennison 2016; 95–108, Pennell 2003; 53–54). In this triumphal period, Marrakesh attracted scholars of world renown including Muhammad Ibn Rushd (known in Europe as Averroes), whose commentary on Aristotle was translated into European languages. At the same time, Sufism took hold in the Maghrib. Sufis sought a personal knowledge of God through asceticism and devotional practices, and some early masters attracted a wide public

following. Their disciples formed the first religious brotherhoods (*tariqas*) that would have enormous influence on the politics and religion of North Africa. The descendants of great Sufi masters were often greatly revered, and their tombs became holy sites with many pilgrims. But religious toleration had its limits. The regime burned the books of Ibn Rushd, and persecuted Jews. The great citadels (*qasbas*) at Marrakesh and Rabat emphasised the dynasty's authority, and so did the mosques, with their huge minarets, such as the Kutubiyya in Marrakesh, and the Giralda in Seville. Abu Yusuf Ya'qub started a huge mosque at Rabat to commemorate the great victory at Alarcos. It was never completed, but its minaret still towers over the modern city. This building programme was expensive, but the al-Muwahhidun were rich; their efficient administration collected taxes, which they spent on irrigation and agriculture. The trans-Saharan trade and manufacturing in the cities both flourished whilst their gold coinage was used on both sides of the Mediterranean (Pennell 2003; 54–57).

Then, in the early thirteenth century, the dynasty's dominion began to break down. Christian forces in Iberia inflicted a stinging defeat at Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212 CE. The army could no longer collect taxes and internal rivalries divided the family. The religious arm of the movement resented the autocracy, and new tribal confederations arose, including the Banu Marin, in northern Morocco. The petty *taifa* rulers, who now ruled Iberia, crumbled before the advancing Christians. Córdoba fell in 1236 CE and other major towns soon followed (Pennell 2003; 114–117).

Three competing dynasties now emerged from former clients and supporters of the Al-Muwahhidun. In Ifriqiya, the Hafsids, descendants of a companion of Ibn Tumart, took control of Bejaïa, Constantine and Tunis. In 1244 CE, Abu Zakariyya al-Hafs declared himself caliph, and extended his domain as far west as Tlemcen. The Hafsids weakened in the fourteenth century, because of the Black Death and because of the uncertain allegiance of the Banu Sulaym – Arab Bedouins who, like the earlier Banu Hillal, migrated from Egypt. In the later fourteenth century, strong Hafsid rulers re-established stability and trade made Tunis powerful; Algiers, Tlemcen and even Fez sometimes acknowledged Hafsid supremacy (Perkins 1986; 49–50). Even so, indigenous tribes owing only nominal allegiance to central authority controlled the hinterland, and the coastal city of Tripoli in what would become Libya functioned as an independent enclave (St John 2008; 26).

In Tlemcen, Yaghmurasan Ibn Abd Al-Wadid (1236–1283), whose family had supplied governors to the Al-Muwahhidun, ruled a separate Zayyanid state. Its economy was powered by the trade route between Andalusia and Timbuktu via Tlemcen and Sijilmasa. But in the late fourteenth century the regime succumbed to internecine violence. In the far west (Morocco), the Marinids replaced the Al-Muwahhidun. They were warriors and pious Muslims, but it is not clear whether they were also a movement of religious reform, as they claimed to be. Abd Al-Haqq, who established Marinid power, emphasised his own piety, respect for the sharia and scholarship and justified the initial rebellion by the irreligion of the Al-Muwahhidun. They fought fiercely to keep Al-Andalus out of Christian hands. Abu Yusuf Ya'qub (1268–1286), one of the greatest of the Marinids, took the title of Amir al-Muslimin (Commander of the Faithful), one of the honorific titles of the caliphate, and called for *jihad*. He also set up the first *madrasas*, residential colleges where students lived and studied law and theology.

The later Marinids became famous for building *madrasas*. They also sought religious support from the *ulama*, the religious scholars, from the *sharifs* who claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad, and from the Sufi religious brotherhoods, the *tariqas* (Bennison

2016; 154, 227, Pennell 2003; 60–62). Religious legitimacy was urgently needed because the Strait of Gibraltar had become the boundary between the Maghrib and Europe. Repeated Christian victories had sucked the Marinids into an Andalusian morass. The Nasrid rulers of Granada did not want to become Marinid vassals and in 1292 CE they had allied with Yaghmurasan's son against the Marinids. After Algeciras finally fell to the Christian armies in 1344 CE, the Marinids abandoned Spain and turned their attention to Ifriqiya. In 1347 CE, the year after the Hafsids ruler died, the Marinid ruler, Abu Hasan, invaded and managed to capture Tripoli but the regime fell apart the following year when the Black Death ravaged North Africa.

At its height, the Marinid dynasty had been a glittering regime, but dependent on external support; the massive walls and gateways of Fez and Sale, for example, were defended by outsiders: a Christian mercenary militia, and a corps of Syrian archers. Jews were employed as administrators. But the Marinids could well afford it because they encouraged trade, favouring Fez rather than Marrakesh because the gold routes had shifted eastwards (Bennison 2016; 328). Yet power and riches were not enough and when the economy faltered, political power began slipping away. The *wazir* (minister-delegate) of Sultan Abu Inan (1348–1358) strangled his master, but was then killed by a survivor of the massacre he had planned. Forty years of violent coups followed, often organised by *wazirs* supported by tribal groups in the mountains and deserts, or by foreigners such as the ruler of Granada or the king of Castile or of Portugal. The Castilians raided the coasts, and the Portuguese occupied territory along the coasts. They took Ceuta at the mouth of the Strait in 1415 CE and then other beachheads along the Atlantic coast: Asila, Tangier, Al Ksar Al-Saghrir and Arguin, far to the south in what is now Mauritania. More sophisticated firearms helped the Portuguese to advance and impose themselves on local forces (Pennell 2003; 63, 69–70).

The Marinids could not contain the collapse and after the Banu Wattas, who had long supported them, took over the vizirate in 1472 CE, a Wattassi declared himself sultan. Militant *sharifs* joined them in the battles around Tangier. Central power in the far west collapsed and the Portuguese occupied more enclaves along the Atlantic coast: Agadir (1505), Safi (1507), Azemmour (1513) and Mazagan and Anfa (modern Casablanca) in 1515 CE. Towns that did not fall became centres of resistance to the Christians, peopled by refugees from al-Andalus. When Granada fell in 1492 CE, more refugees flooded out and some, who wanted to continue the fight, settled in Salé. In the far south, *sharifs* and leaders of Sufi *tariqas* led the opposition to the Portuguese (Pennell 2003; 72). Other refugees, largely from Al-Andalus, who wanted to continue their old trades, settled in the towns along the Mediterranean coast: Oran, Algiers and Tunis. The many local regimes there all needed a scholarly workforce, so educated men moved quite easily between their capitals, finding employment as administrators and scholars in different courts.

The experiences of one itinerant scholar, Abd Ar-Rahmān Ibn Muhammad Ibn Khaldūn, inspired him to write a book to explain this political disarray. He came from a family of Andalusian refugees who had been court officials in Tunis in the thirteenth century. After studying law and philosophy, he entered government service himself, moving from Fez to Granada, and then Bejaia, finding each place wracked by violence and feuding. So he retired to a village in western Algeria, to think and write about the political conditions through which he lived. He began his history of the world, the *Kitab al-Ibar*, with an introduction, the '*Muqadimma*' ('The Prolegomena'), that was a methodological study of history, a search for truth within it and its deeper meaning, and an effort to discern the fundamental

rules of human society. Making the state his subject, Ibn Khaldun gave a cyclical explanation of the rise and fall of dynasties.

Dynastic states, he wrote, began in an extended family, sharing agnatic descent and bound together by agnatic solidarity (*'assabiya*), economic interests and territory. A tribe had greater political solidarity than the inhabitants of the cities, but towns were industrious and rich and could mobilise huge resources, so only through a wider unity could tribes overcome them. Religion provided that unity, motivating tribesmen to fight for God as well as themselves. From this nucleus of a state, the tribe could grow and capture the cities, or found its own. But cities undermined political and religious solidarity, and became the main props of the state, providing luxury, pleasure and rest. State power declined in consequence, so new forces grew up on its periphery and replaced it. A system of government that was dynastic and elitist in constitution but populist in message was, in short, thoroughly unstable. Ibn Khaldun's own experience inspired this pessimistic vision of the Maghrib. His grim vision of a ruinous political cycle was a systematic effort to understand the deep currents of political society, one that has a deep relevance even to the modern study of the development of political power (Alatas 2014; 107–108, Alatas 2006; 782–795).

### Early modern empires

While the Maghrib disintegrated politically, the Portuguese sailed round the Cape of Good Hope and the Spanish began conquering the Americas and fought to hold off the Ottomans in eastern Europe. In the Maghrib new political and economic structures emerged. The stumbling Wattasi sultanate in Fez could not cope with the Portuguese Atlantic outposts and in the late fifteenth century, the Sufi movement and the *zawiyas* joined the struggle, although its leadership was too fragmented to be really effective. Nevertheless, sharifianism provided an alternative to the tribally-based Wattasids and it halted the Ottoman advance along the Mediterranean coast, laying down the bases for the future legitimisation and the boundaries of the states in modern North Africa.

Sharifian dynasties have ruled Morocco ever since, but there were many sharifian lineages. A resounding question was how a ruler should behave and whether his subjects could remove him. Indeed, Ibn Khaldun might have written the scenario for the first sharifian dynasty, the Sa'dis and their trajectory from rise to collapse in three generations. They came from the Drâa valley on the northern Saharan edge and claimed to be descendants of the Prophet, although their enemies denied it. Muhammad al-Qaim Bi-Amr Allah, the first Sa'di ruler, bolstered his authority by allying himself with the leaders of the *jihad* against the Portuguese at Agadir. His sons continued the alliance and in 1524 CE they took Marrakesh and from there attacked what remained of the Wattasids. They had some success: Muhammad Al-Shaykh occupied Fez in 1549 CE, and in 1550 CE, the Portuguese evacuated Al-Ksar As-Saghrir and Asila on the coast, in effect making way for more powerful competitors (Pennell 2003; 79–81).

The Habsburgs and the Ottoman Turks were much more powerful than the Portuguese. The Habsburgs controlled the Iberian peninsula, parts of Italy and Sicily and swathes of central Europe. They dominated the Strait of Gibraltar, the chokepoint on passage between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, and the treasure of South America made them rich. At the eastern end of the Mediterranean, the Ottomans controlled two other chokepoints: the Dardanelles, leading into the Black Sea, and the Greek archipelago that was close to the

entrance of the Adriatic and the route to Venice. That left the Sicilian channel, the narrows at the midpoint of the Mediterranean, as a great strategic prize. Both empires wanted to control it. Their strategy was to occupy ports and outposts along the North African coast rather than conquer the interior.

In what is now Morocco, the Spanish took Melilla in 1497 CE and then moved eastwards into the territory of modern Algeria, taking Mers el-Kebir in 1505 CE and Oran in 1509 CE. In the following year the Spanish fortified a tiny islet (Peñon) off Algiers and blockaded the city's anchorage and, in that same year, occupied Tripoli, before assigning it to the Knights of St John. In 1534 CE, Spanish forces took Tunis and installed a vassal Muslim regime. The Ottomans moved in from the east in the same fashion. The Ottoman Empire, to give it its Europeanised name, had originated with an Anatolian warlord named Osman, who died in 1326 CE. His descendants, Murad (1362-1389) and Bayezit (1389-1402), extended it into southern Europe. In 1402 CE the Mongols virtually wiped the Ottomans out in Anatolia, but within a generation, Mehmet I (1413-1421) and his son Murat II (1421-1444) reconstituted the Ottoman slave army (the Janissaries), reorganised the administration and rebuilt the dynasty.

In 1453 CE, Murat II's son, Mehmet II (1451-1481), took Constantinople and his son, Bayezit II (1481-1512), and grandson Selim (1512-1520), spread the empire eastwards towards Persia and southwards into Syria. Selim took Egypt in 1517 CE and absorbed the remnants of the Abbasid caliphate. The Ottoman sultan could now claim to be caliph as well as sultan. Both in southeastern Europe and in Cairo, the Ottomans extirpated existing rulers if they could not incorporate them: this was not a holy war but one driven by the needs of a multi-ethnic empire. Under Suleiman (1520-1566), whom Europeans called 'The Magnificent' and his subjects called 'The Lawgiver', the Ottoman Empire reached almost its maximum extent: from the walls of Vienna to Baghdad and south to Egypt.

From Egypt, it leapfrogged along the North African coast. In 1516 the Amir Selim of Algiers invited two corsairing brothers, Aruj and Khayr Al-Din Barbarossa, to help him expel the Spanish from the Peñon at Algiers. The Barbarossa brothers then took control of the city but found it hard to hold, so in 1529 CE, Khayr Al-Din asked Sultan Suleiman to assume sovereignty. In 1551 CE, an Ottoman commander, Turgut Rais, took Tripoli. In 1569 CE, Tunis fell into the hands of the Bey of Algiers (McDougall 2017; 10-11). These cities were strategic outposts in the Habsburg-Ottoman struggle at sea for control of the Mediterranean. In 1560 CE, at Djerba, the Ottoman fleet overwhelmed a huge joint Christian fleet, and then tried to take Malta from the Knights of St John five years later. However, the siege of Malta, one of the pivotal battles of the early modern Mediterranean, failed and in 1571 CE, a Catholic alliance of European states and principalities destroyed the Ottoman fleet at Lepanto. That same year the Ottomans lost Tunis too, but they rebounded quickly, retaking Tunis, permanently this time, in 1574 CE (Perkins 1986; 51-52).

In all these manoeuvres, the struggle to control Morocco was a side-show. The Sa'dis were a dynastic regime with quite extensive dominions and for both the Spanish Habsburgs and the Ottomans it was more valuable to occupy outposts along the coast than to control large swathes of territory. In 1553 CE the Ottomans occupied the islet of Badis in the western end of the Rif. In 1554 CE they did briefly take Fez, but Muhammad Al-Shaykh expelled them, although he died in the battle. His son, Abdallah al-Ghalib (1557-1574) secured his succession by killing several of his relatives, and others fled to the Ottomans in Algiers, who promptly invaded Sa'di territory once again. Again the Sa'dis stopped them, but could not recover Badis. In 1559 CE, during a brief alliance with Spain against the Ottomans, the

Sa'di ceded the islet of Alhucemas, halfway along the Rif coast, although Spanish troops did not actually garrison it for a further 114 years. In 1564 CE, the Spanish captured Badis from the Ottomans and renamed it Peñón de Vélez. Both islets have remained in Spanish hands ever since (Pennell 2003; 81).

Al-Ghalib tried to put the Sa'di dynasty on a firm footing. He gave his army guns and set up a small corsairing fleet, but when he died, in 1574 CE, it all fell apart. His son, Muhammad Al-Mutawakkil, was no warrior, yet war was lapping at Morocco's borders. Al-Ghalib's exiled brothers, Abd Al-Malik and Ahmad, allied themselves with the Ottomans and, on the margins, King Philip II of Spain and his great rival, Queen Elizabeth of England, manoeuvred to outflank each other; Elizabeth was particularly interested in Moroccan trade. The Portuguese king, Dom Sebastião, horrified by the Ottoman advance, sent an army to support Al-Mutawakkil when the latter's domains were invaded from the east in 1578 CE. The three armies met in a battle on the banks of the Oued Al-Makhazin, near Ksar Al-Kabir, in which thousands died, including Dom Sebastião, Muhammad Al-Mutawakkil and Abd Al-Malik. It became known as the Battle of the Three Kings: a dynastic squabble became one of the epic battles of the early modern world. Ahmad, Muhammad al-Mutawakkil's brother, emerged as the winner, named himself al-Mansur, the Victorious, and re-founded the dynasty. He made peace with both Spain and the Ottomans and negotiated friendly relations with Elizabeth, bringing a great expansion in trade. Trade underpinned the Sa'di state and al-Mansur created a huge sugar industry in southern Morocco. When, in 1591 CE, he conquered the southern side of the Sahara desert as well, his control of the trans-Saharan trade gave him access to gold, and slaves to work his sugar factories (Pennell 2003; 83–87).

Yet Al-Mansur's regime depended on him alone, so that when he died in 1603 CE, apparently of the plague, three of his sons plunged the Sa'di state into civil war. That, combined with the plague epidemic, destroyed what their father had built. The Iberian powers occupied more outposts on the Moroccan coast, notably Tangier, which the Portuguese took in 1643 CE. They passed it to England 19 years later, in 1662 CE, as part of the dowry of King Charles II's wife, Catherine of Braganza. The rest of the far west disintegrated into fiefs, ruled by whoever could win enough local support. The contenders included members of the Sa'di family, various religious figures and leaders of local Sufi movements. Muhammad Bin Ahmad Al-Maliki Al-Zayyani Al-Ayyashi led the attack on the Portuguese in Mazagan and launched a *jihad* against the Spaniards around Larache. Abu Al-Mahalli, who originated from Sijilmassa, tried to seize Marrakesh, but failed. Two powerful *zawiyas*, Igh in the Sous valley and Dila in the Middle Atlas, controlled huge territories, preaching both religious reform and the need to fight the Spanish. Al-Khidr Ghaylan built up a proto-state in northern Morocco which he tried to secure by alliances with the English in Tangier and the Spanish. And at the mouth of the Bu Regreg River on the Atlantic coast, the twin cities of Rabat and Salé went their own way.

In 1609 CE the Spanish king expelled the remaining Muslims from the Iberian peninsula. Morisco communities settled in all the cities of the Maghrib as craftsmen and professionals. One group settled in Rabat and its sister city of Salé, and engaged, not in commerce, but in revenge on the Spanish. Their settlement was a foreign colony, perhaps 3,000 or 4,000 strong, oriented towards the sea and corsairing. A *jihad* at sea, conducted with their corsairing fleet, supported a fragile autonomy. At its height in 1637 CE, Rabat had between 40 and 50 ships, mostly quite small, but able to range far into the Atlantic. At first they attacked Spanish ships and later, all Christian shipping. Other Andalusian exiles settled in

Tetuan and especially in Mamora, some 30 kilometres to the north of Rabat, where a heterogeneous group of pirates from all over the Atlantic world joined them: Englishmen, Irish and Dutch in particular. They ranged as far as Wales (1626), Iceland (1627) and Ireland (1631) (Pennell 2003; 88–90).

The absence of central authority inspired ideological arguments about just rule that echo down to the twentieth century. Some stressed a duty to respect established authority, no matter how badly rulers acted, while others said that only a just sultan, ruling according to the sharia, was legitimate. With no overall leader, the responsibility for *jihad* devolved onto local warlords and the various claimants to power sought support from foreigners, both Christian and Muslim (Pennell 2003; 90–93).

Central authority in Ottoman North Africa was even more diffuse. After taking Tunis, Ottoman rule soon evolved towards local autonomy in the main cities. In 1587 CE, Tripoli, Tunisia and Algeria became formal provinces, each under its own pasha. The sultan in Istanbul was still the caliph with overarching political and religious authority, but the reality was that in the Maghrib, power was now exercised by the local armies of occupation. Algiers was the biggest Ottoman in the Maghrib city and early seventeenth-century pictures show the port where large ships could anchor and the walls rising in a pyramidal shape from the water's edge up the hill on which the city had been built. They cut the city off from the countryside and the agricultural gardens adjacent to the city walls.

They also isolated the city from the distant mountains that were the territory of the local Amazigh population, who were troublesome tax-evaders. The military elite in Algiers was determined to keep them out of power and denied them and the *kulughlis* – the children of licit and illicit relationships between Turkish men and local women – any influence in political affairs. The city was well-organised and orderly, for criminal behaviour was punished promptly and severely. It was multi-ethnic and in the early seventeenth century, the population was believed to be over 100,000, in an estimated 13,000 households (2,500 Muslim households, 700 Amazigh households, 200 Morisco households) plus another 1,600 *kulughlis* together with 16,000 Christians – slaves captured by the corsairs and held for ransom – and 12,000 Jews.

Tunis was smaller, with a population of perhaps 25,000 people in the seventeenth century. There too, the division between the city and the countryside was sharp. Inside the walls were some 3,000 to 4,000 Turks armed with guns who provided the only organised military force, together with a large number of *kulughlis*. The interior tribes had only lances as weapons and the urban forces compelled them to pay taxes, supposedly to fight Christians and defend the Ottoman Empire against Spain. Otherwise, the rulers ignored the interior, apart from the fertile plains on the coast. Real power soon fell into the hands of the *diwan*, or council, controlled by the commanders of the janissary troops. As early as 1580 CE, the military refused to send tribute to Istanbul and in 1590 CE, after a severe famine, the Janissaries revolted. The *diwan* elected the leader of the janissaries as dey and their most potent rivals were not the Ottoman Empire pashas, but the increasingly powerful corsair captains, or *raises*, who provided much of the wealth. Many of these captains were European converts, or 'renegades'. By the late seventeenth century, they numbered maybe 3,000–4,000 men. Then, in 1594 CE, Uthman Dey seized personal power. He ruled until 1610/11 CE and could be called the creator of the Tunisian state. Even outsiders noted that Uthman maintained strict order with very little crime. The finances increasingly came from corsairing, but in 1636, the last effective Ottoman pasha of Tunis, Yussuf, left, taking all the finances of the state with him.

Tripoli was smaller and poorer. After 1551 CE, the city was ruled by the local militia, headed by the dey with a nominal Ottoman pasha. These deys were unstable – the *diwan* was riven by disputes and rivalries, particularly between the Turkish and *kulughli* military, on the one hand, and the *raises*, on the other. Thomas Baker, the English consul in Tripoli between 1679 and 1685 CE, describes an unstable political structure where the ruler, the dey, was repeatedly replaced by the *diwan*, and where the *raises*, the corsair captains – many of them converts from Christianity – objected to diplomatic agreements with European powers that limited their earnings from sea-raiding (Baker and Pennell 1989).

Corsairing so damaged the trade of European powers like England, France and Spain, however, that in the seventeenth century they began making treaties with the major corsairing states to limit the damage. This began with Algiers (the English and Dutch in 1622 CE, followed by the French in 1628 CE). These treaties were generally drawn up on Algerian terms and were a formal recognition that Algiers was quasi-independent. But in 1653 CE, Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector of England during the Commonwealth, sent a fleet to burn Tunisian corsairs in their base at Ghar Al-Milh. Nine years later, after Charles II had regained his throne, he signed a treaty that put an end to corsairing against English shipping. But even this treaty recognised Tunisian autonomy, for the Ottomans now had no role in Maghribi affairs. However, such treaties that limited the activities of North African corsairs also made it clear that an economy based on Mediterranean corsairing was no longer viable. Algerian corsairs moved into the Atlantic and raided the fisheries in Newfoundland and the coasts of Iceland, Ireland and Wales instead. A more legitimate trade grew up too: French merchants began exporting grain from Algiers and the English and French competed to set up a trading post on the Tunisian coast at Cape Bon. The consuls of the more powerful European powers became, instead, the overseers and interlocutors with the local authorities for foreign trading communities that emerged in the North African ports.

### The origins of the North African state system

The political turmoil of the seventeenth century was now increasingly unsustainable and, over the succeeding century, a more permanent political structure for Northwest Africa began to emerge. There was greater political cohesion as more stable states cemented territorial identities. Except for Algiers, these were founded on local dynasties. The local economies integrated into the diplomatic and trading networks of the Mediterranean and Europe and, both for economic and political reasons, corsairing ceased. All this paved the way for European colonisation in the nineteenth century.

However, only the Alawi dynasty in Morocco has lasted from that era to the present day. It arose from the fragmented remnants of the Sa'dis, as another sharifian regime that would rule the lopsided triangle that stretched westwards between the environs of Tlemcen, in modern Algeria, the coast and the desert. Rule by *sharifs*, descendants of the Prophet, had become the basis of political legitimacy and, from their origins near Sijilmasa, the Alawis had joined the war against the Portuguese and then, during the seventeenth-century civil war in what was to become Morocco, spread their control over *zawiyas* and warlords competing for power in the remnants of the Sa'di state. The first Alawis reopened the trade route between Sijilmasa and the Mediterranean by taking control of Fez in 1666 CE and of Marrakesh three years later. Then the real founder of Alawi Morocco, Mawlay Ismail, seized control in 1672 CE and remained sultan for more than half a century.

Ismail imposed himself by force. He crushed local warlords, recalcitrant Amazigh tribes and rebellious members of his family. He made alliances with major tribes and, trading on his sharifian ancestry, with other powerful *sharifs*, including Sufi *shaykhs* and their powerful *tariqas*. He rebuilt the tomb of Moulay Idris II in Fez and obliged the *tariqas* to move their motherhouses into the city to ensure his control of them. His instrument was an army of black soldiers, the Abid al-Bukhari. Unlike the Ottoman Janissaries, however, this was not really a slave army, but like the Janissaries, it was kept apart from the rest of society. Its soldiers swore allegiance to the sultan on the *Sahib al-Bukhari*, the great collection of traditions about the Prophet; hence the army's name (Pennell 2003; 100).

Mawlay Ismail was a builder. His new capital at Meknès, surrounded by rich farmlands in the north of Morocco, was remote from Iberian or Turkish attack, and had none of the political attachments of Fez. He fortified Fez and Rabat, and constructed *mellahs*, where the Jewish population lived close to the royal palace, under his protection and control. His policies were, however, expensive in terms of money, labour and the cruelty required to extort the resources that such initiatives required.

Mawlay Ismail punished his enemies severely. Some ulama protested that his taxes went beyond what Islam permitted and one brave scholar, Hasan al-Yusi, warned him that “oppression, and violence and haughtiness and tyranny and iniquity” invalidated his right to rule. He took the precaution, of then going into exile to avoid the sultan's anger (Pennell 2003; 107). After the sultan died in 1727 CE, waves of rebellion surged across Morocco as his repressive regime relaxed its grip. Although he had many sons (one of whom, Abdallah, was removed four times from power but then proclaimed again five times), the legitimacy of the Alawi family as the ruling elite was not challenged. When Abdallah died in 1757 CE, his son, Sidi Mohammed III (1757-1790), was determined to rebuild the state on commerce, not on force.

Sidi Mohammed broke up the black slave army and relied on tribal contingents instead, whose loyalty he secured by tax exemptions. Finance was so crucial to the survival of the state that the word for ‘treasury’ – *makhzan* – came to apply to the government structure as a whole. Taxes on producers in the countryside were replaced by a gate tax (*maks*) imposed on goods when they were brought into the cities, and by developing international trade. Yet once again, when he died, the country disintegrated. His successor, Yazid (1787-1792), dismantled much of his father's system, and Mawlay Sulayman, Yazid's brother, took many years to bring his various opponents – from within the Alawi family, from rebellious *qabilas* in the mountains and from some *tariqas* – into line. Nonetheless, when he died, the Alawi sharifian dynasty still dominated the political structure. Unlike previous dynasties, it had not collapsed after a few generations. The most potent danger that faced his successor, Mawlay Abd al-Rahman, came from European powers that were not confined to isolated coastal outposts, but threatened the fabric of the North African state system itself instead (Pennell 2003; 108–113).

While the Alawis used sharifian legitimacy to create what would become Morocco, and backed it with military force, soldiers in the Ottoman provinces used military force to impose their will, deriving their religious legitimacy from the Ottoman sultan, although they had little truck with the sultan-caliph's temporal authority. In doing this, they established two dynastic systems, first in Tunis, in 1705, and then in Tripoli, in 1711 CE, that fixed those state structures in place. The Qaramanlis in Tripoli collapsed at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but the Husaynid dynasty in Tunis lasted through to independence in 1956 CE.

Both the Qaramanlis and the Husaynids emerged out of civil wars that left a legend of nightmarish violence. Ibn Abi al-Diyaf, the famous nineteenth-century chronicler of Tunis, and Ibn Ghalbun, his less-well-known equivalent in eighteenth-century Tripoli, both recorded stories of soldiers who ate the bodies of their enemies as acts of ritual triumphalism. These stories are impossible to credit as being truthful, but they were symptoms of a politically malign society (Pennell 1991; 159–180). Both these crises ended when military officers seized power. In 1705 CE, Husayn bin Ali, a cavalry officer of Greek descent, declared himself Bey, thus founding the Husaynid dynasty in Tunis which was to last until 1956 (Perkins 1986; 61). In 1711 CE, Ahmad Qaramanli, a *kulughli* officer, seized power in Tripoli, proclaimed the triumph of the sharia, imposed order and appointed himself pasha (St John 2008; 34). Both dynasties declared their allegiance to the Ottoman sultan, yet both were, in reality, completely autonomous.

Algiers did not join this trend towards autonomous dynasticism. Europeans used terms such as “this nest of wasps, this den of thieves” to describe it, but things were more complicated than that. Certainly, the Ottoman state in Algiers did not indigenise itself in the same way as Tunis and Tripoli. The social groups and territories over which the state sought to exercise control were very complicated and the sources of available revenue were more disparate than in Tunis or Tripoli. They formed an overwhelmingly rural society in which agriculture produced most of the wealth, and over most of that society Algiers and the other coastal cities such as Oran and Constantine only had nominal control (McDougall 2017; 13). Some parts, on the edges of the desert, were always extremely arid or at best semi-arid. Such regions produced food only through very intensive management of the environment that relied on lineage relationships and servile or semi-servile labour to maintain its viability. Other areas were arid only on some occasions, whilst at other times, when the annual rainfall was good, they supported extensive wheat cultivation on the plains and pastoralism in the mountains. In addition, locust swarms frequently destroyed harvests. Agriculture, in short, only provided a fragile existence and the rulers in the cities had only partial control of either the land or the people on it. The inhabitants of Kabylia, packed into mountain villages, spoke Berber not Arabic or, still less, Turkish; although they supplied the plains and cities with workers, their own family and tribal-based structures controlled their mountain redoubts, not the authorities in Algiers, Constantine or Oran (McDougall 2017; 15–19).

Some of the urban elite were themselves very big landowners in the Mitidja, the immensely fertile plain around Algiers whose gardens and estates supplied the capital with food, and they also controlled access to much of the state-owned land. Thus, the governing elite, in one way or another, dominated the distributive powers of the state in the environs of Algiers. Further afield, the state worked through local intermediaries – *qajids* and *shaykhs* – to keep control, using tribal contingents to collect taxes (McDougall 2017; 2, 23). In the cities themselves, power and wealth lay with a political and economic class that had originated either in Islamic Iberia or with Christian converts to Islam – the *ulujs* – and the Turkish or semi-Turkish *kulughli* community. Andalusis and *ulujs* could amass enormous personal wealth, from corsairing and commerce, but nothing was stable because, although this ruling class was linked by ties of patronage, its members suffered frequent changes of fortune. It was easy for an individual to lose even the highest office (McDougall 2017; 35).

Power was inherently unstable. In the late seventeenth century, the Algerian corsair *raises* in the *diwan* had made one of their number dey, and from then on, the *diwan* was the

forum of political competition. The sultan in Istanbul confirmed the deys whom the *diwan* approved, coins were struck inscribed with the sultan's name and the sermons in mosques mentioned the caliph in Istanbul (McDougall 2017; 38). All these practices legitimised the dey's authority locally, but internationally it was his ability to make treaties with foreign governments that legitimised the dey's military and economic authority. Algiers negotiated 40 international treaties between 1661 and 1772 CE, thus underlining the state's international legitimacy.

In fact, all the North African rulers made their own treaties with European states. Sometimes the objectives were political. Mawlay Ismail was anxious to remove all the foreign enclaves from Morocco and was able, in the late seventeenth century, to chase away the Spanish from their enclaves on Morocco's Atlantic coast, but not those on the Mediterranean. So, instead, he sought an alliance with the Bourbon French king, but Louis XIV would not endanger his own relations with the Ottomans, and when a member of the Borbón family took over the Spanish throne in 1700, family loyalties predominated. The alternative was the English and, after they evacuated Tangier in 1684, Mawlay Ismail made a series of commercial treaties with them in the first half of the eighteenth century (and none with any other European power). England became Morocco's largest trading partner, and trade was the lifeblood of the Ismaili state. Morocco exported wax, wool, copper, tin, lead, dates, almonds, ostrich feathers and hides. And it imported silk, cotton and spices from the Levant via Livorno, alum and sulphur from Italy, and cloth, arms and gunpowder from France and Britain. Ismail sold monopolies in different commodities to his close protégés, binding them ever closer to him, but he used his army to retake control of the trans-Saharan trade routes. Two hundred and fifty years later, that would become the basis for Moroccan claims to the Western Sahara (Pennell 2003; 98–102).

After Sidi Mohammed III (1757–1790) rebuilt Alawi power following a generation of civil war, he took commerce to a higher stage. He signed treaties with most of the European powers and in 1765 CE started building a new port at Mogador (Essaouira), giving it a monopoly of all trade in the south of the country. The new city boomed, in partnership with mercantile agents of the sultan (the *tujjar al-sultan*), many of them Jews with commercial links across the Mediterranean. Having failed to retake Ceuta and Melilla, Sidi Mohammed even made peace with Spain, with a treaty in 1780 CE (Pennell 2003; 109).

Tunis had started signing treaties with European countries in the second half of the seventeenth century (11 between 1662 CE and 1700 CE and 32 in the eighteenth century). Tunis also became a cash-crop economy in the eighteenth century, exporting huge quantities of olive oil, as well as cloth and felt hats, across the Ottoman Mediterranean. Caravans brought slaves and gold from the Sahara, and sponges and coral were harvested off the Tunisian coast. In the 1790s half of all ships offloading at Marseilles came from Tunis (Boubaker 2020; 149, Gallagher 1983; 33).

One sixteenth-century pasha had told King Charles II of England that Tripoli was a "Sterill Country" (Pennell 1985; 101–112), and Tripoli made nine treaties, mainly with Britain or France between 1662 and 1711 CE. When Ahmad Qaramanli came to power, he tried to stimulate the economy. His efforts to encourage agriculture on the coast were fairly futile – in 1767 the British consul in Tripoli talked of the soil being nothing but sand even in the gardens outside the city walls (Pennell 1982). A more important part of his plan was to extend control over the eastern trade routes through the Sahara, by incorporating the Fezzan in the heart of the desert into his realm. This began to define the shape of Libya under colonial rule and, subsequently, as an independent state. Ahmad made treaties with

France, Britain and the Netherlands, sometimes more than once. Even after he died in 1745, plunging Tripoli into political turmoil made worse by plague, famine and economic stagnation for most of the rest of the century (St John 2008; 35), the floundering regime continued to sign treaties with European states.

North African agreements with European powers were commonly called “treaties of peace and commerce”, but the Algerian ones dealt far more with questions of corsairing than those of the other states. In Algiers, corsairing still provided approximately one third to one half of the revenue of the state in the mid-eighteenth century. Even in 1822 CE, tributes paid by Naples, Sweden, Denmark and Portugal to exempt their ships from capture totalled \$96,000 while taxes on Algiers and the surrounding countryside brought in revenues of \$268,000. In Tunis, the commercial environment became more profitable than corsairing in the late seventeenth century and corsairing activity quickly decreased as investors sought higher returns through trade. But the Tunisian rulers did not formally abandon the practice and corsairing rebounded as an important part of the Tunisian economy in the mid-eighteenth century. Hammuda Pasha (1782–1812) took advantage of the Napoleonic wars to rebuild the fleet, which then captured several European ships. The British consul warned that Hammuda might be able to close the Mediterranean. In 1798 CE, Tunisian ships made 100 corsairing trips and brought back more than 1,000 slaves. This was a state fleet – it was used against Algeria in a war in 1813 CE. In the early nineteenth century trade again became more profitable, and in 1806 CE the war fleet simply transformed into a merchant fleet in a matter of months (Perkins 1986; 64, Boubaker 2020; 149–150). Similarly, in Morocco, Sidi Mohammed II briefly revived corsairing until he reached the same conclusions about profitability.

The most successful attempt to recommence corsairing was in Tripoli. Yusuf Karamanli made himself pasha in 1795 CE after a civil war that caused a general collapse of authority and great hunger in the city, so he revived corsairing on a large scale. In 1795 CE he had only three ships, but by 1805 he had 24. The threat was enough to force Spain, Venice, Austria, Ragusa, Sardinia and Sweden to pay large annual subsidies to exempt their shipping from attack. This tactic carried the seeds of disaster, for in 1796 CE, Tripoli corsairs took ships from the newly independent United States which then made a treaty agreeing to an indemnity payment. When the American government did not pay up, Tripoli ships captured more American vessels and in 1801/02 CE the new American navy blockaded Tripoli. In 1804 CE American warships bombarded Tripoli and then invaded the far east of Yusuf’s domains by taking the town of Derna in 1805 CE and marching on his capital. Although the invasion did not get far towards its destination, Yusuf quickly made peace (St John 2008; 41–43).

The Tripoli war, the young United States’ first foreign war, gave the North African states notice that corsairing was on the way out. In 1814/15 CE, when the Napoleonic wars were over, the Congress of Vienna abolished corsairing. Early in the following year, the British admiral, Lord Exmouth, took a joint Anglo-Dutch naval force to each of the capitals to demand an end to corsairing and the release of Christian prisoners. First in Tunis and then in Tripoli, the authorities crumbled in front of the threat (Brown 1974; 60, Folayan 1979; 71–72). The dey of Algiers did not, so Exmouth bombarded the city and destroyed its navy. The Algerians swiftly rebuilt their fleet, but in 1830 CE the French finally brought the Algerians to heel by invading the country, heralding a colonial occupation which was to last for 132 years. The excuse for invading lay in the French government’s refusal to pay a longstanding debt to Algerian merchants who were closely connected to the dey, and during an audience he gave to the French consul, the dey smacked him across the face with a

ceremonial fly-whisk. This, the French government announced, was so grave an insult that they declared war and despatched an army of 37,000 men to begin the conquest of Algeria (Thomson 1994; 111–113). In reality, it was no more than a cover for French imperialism and a domestic distraction from the future of the post-Napoleonic monarchy.

Algeria's agricultural riches, and the more ephemeral hubris of the French monarchy, were more important objectives, but the establishment of European control did bring an end to the corsairing within the Ottoman regencies. By agreeing to abandon corsairing, Tunis and Tripoli managed to escape occupation for another 50 and 80 years respectively, although Ottoman troops that landed in Tripoli in 1835 did away with the Qaramanlis and Tripolitan autonomy forever. Morocco remained outside imperialist clutches for almost another century, and it abandoned corsairing the year before the French army occupied Algiers. It was not the British or the French or even the Americans who forced it to stop; indeed, with a treaty in 1786 CE, Morocco had become the first state in the world to recognise the United States as an independent state in its own right. Muley Abderrahman (1822–1859), stricken by debt, briefly flirted with corsairing once more, but when his ships took an Austrian vessel, that country's warships bombarded Larache, an event that decided him to end corsairing (Pennell 2003; 105). The end of corsairing marked, but did not cause, the opening of a new relationship with Europe and the western powers that ran on political and economic concerns – control of territory and resources – that underpinned a new imperial age.

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## 2

# LIBYA SINCE 1835 AND THE SECOND OTTOMAN OCCUPATION

*Ronald Bruce St John*

The political economy of modern-day Libya reflects a long history of subjugation to external powers. Over the centuries, Libya was a colony, state, or province of empires ruled from Africa, Asia, or Europe. Throughout this prolonged period of subjugation, foreign rule was mostly confined to the coastlands with the interior populated by independent Amazigh (Berber) communities who recognized the authority of their own leaders. History left the countryside pockmarked with the remnants of past invaders, including Phoenicians, Greeks, and Romans; however, successive waves of Arab invaders left the most lasting imprint on the Libyan people. Beginning with Arab incursions in the seventh century and followed by the Hilalian migration in the eleventh century, Islam penetrated the region, marking Libyan society with a distinct Arab-Islamic character.

### **Second Ottoman Occupation, 1835-1911**

In the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire controlled the regions east of Morocco which the Sublime Porte formally divided into the regencies of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. In 1711, Ahmad Karamanli, a local cavalry officer, seized power in the regency of Tripoli and founded the Karamanli dynasty which ruled Libya for the next 124 years. Ahmad Karamanli brought economic prosperity and political stability to Libya, but his successors proved less adept at governance. The decline of the Karamanli dynasty began immediately after Ahmad's death in 1745, and in 1835, the Sublime Porte restored direct control over the formerly autonomous province of Tripoli (Folayan 1979, 1–31). Ottoman administrators appointed after the overthrow of the Karamanli dynasty attacked the power of Libyan tribes in the belief that the traditional reliance on local notables for provincial administration was outmoded. In its place, reformers tried to create a more efficient administrative system capable of sustaining Ottoman power in the face of European colonialism. The implementation of more direct Ottoman control alienated tribal leaders who had enjoyed autonomous status and socioeconomic privilege under the Karamanlis (Cachia 1945, 29–63).

By the mid-1850s, Libya had become fertile ground for the reforms which blossomed during the *tanzimat* (reorganization) period. Over the next 25 years, Ottoman officials

implemented administrative, economic, and educational reforms as agriculture slowly replaced the dying caravan trade. Following the introduction of private ownership to the urban areas of Cyrenaica and the settled areas of Tripolitania, tribal lands were divided with land ownership assigned to individuals who paid a small registration fee. By encouraging settlement and loosening kinship ties, land reform and agricultural development undermined the tribal organization of nomadic pastoralism. Ottoman officials also introduced administrative and political reforms in the early 1860s, including the creation of administrative and village councils and a court system. The postal system was reorganized and new methods of tax collection were introduced. As a result of these changes, Ottoman rule was more centralized, and Libya was increasingly integrated within the authority of the Sublime Porte (Anderson 1984, 325–6).

Among the groups granted substantial autonomy by the Ottoman authorities was a religious order, the *Sanusiyya*. The teachings of Sayyid Muhammad Bin Ali al-Sanusi, who established the Sanusi Order in Cyrenaica in 1842, were a combination of orthodoxy and Sufism, a synthesis that proved well suited to the Bedouins of the region. Following a remarkable expansion in power and influence in the second half of the nineteenth century, the fortunes of the Sanusi Order declined as European colonial powers challenged its position in north-central Africa. After the Italian occupation of Cyrenaica in 1932, the Sanusi Order largely ceased to exist as a social, religious, or political body in French and Italian colonial territories (Ahmida 1994, 73-102).

In 1908, the Young Turk movement revolted against the arbitrary rule of the Ottoman sultan with the intent to restore constitutional rule suspended by the sultan in 1876. Subjects in Ottoman provinces like Libya welcomed the change promised by the Young Turks in the hope that the new spirit of equality would increase autonomy in the provinces. Issues like increased local autonomy, the neglect of Arabic in schools, and religious reform were as important to Libyans as they were to other inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire. That said, there was little evidence of separatist sentiment in Libya at the turn of the century. While opposition to Ottoman policies clearly existed, there was little or no support for a complete break with the Ottoman Empire (Baldinetti 2010, 30; Simon 1987, 1–8, 22–31, 40–4).

Ottoman policies, especially during the Second Ottoman Occupation, restored order, reorganized administration, and increased education. Agriculture and pastoralism slowly replaced trade as primary sources of income, moving from subsistence to revenue-generating activities. The political consequences of this socioeconomic transformation were soon evident in the successful Ottoman mobilization of Libyan public opinion in opposition to Italian colonialism. The Ottoman administration also succeeded in preserving the territorial unity of Cyrenaica, Fezzan, and Tripolitania, but it was less successful in generating a sense of national unity among Libyans. The people of Libya entered the twentieth century with local and tribal identities largely dominating the political landscape. The failure to nourish a sense of national unity would have important long-term consequences, first in challenging the Italian occupation and later in creating an independent state.

### From colony to independence, 1911-51

At the outset of the Second Ottoman Occupation, the boundaries of Cyrenaica, Fezzan, and Tripolitania were undefined, and the Sublime Porte would dispute their location with the European powers for the remainder of the century. Throughout this period, the Ottoman Empire remained concerned with French activities in Algeria and Tunisia and British

interests in Egypt; however, by the mid-1880s, it had concluded that Italy represented the most serious threat to its position in Africa. In response, the Sublime Porte pursued a policy in which it hoped to mollify British and French interests elsewhere in order to gain their support against Italian designs in Libya. The limits of this policy of appeasement were evident by the turn of the century when the European powers concluded agreements which divided Africa into spheres of interests with little or no consideration for Ottoman claims (Simon 1987, 44–7).

In late September 1911, Italy declared war on the Sublime Porte, occupying Tripoli in October of that year. In November 1911, the Italian government announced it was annexing the province, and the war for Libya began. It took Italy more than two decades to subdue Libya, and over that time, the consequences of the Italian occupation for the local populace cannot be overstated. Italian colonial policies, which included concentration camps, forced labor, deliberate starvation, and mass executions, bordered on genocide, devastating the Libyan people (Ashiurakis 1976).

By the mid-1930s, the indigenous population of Libya was almost halved by famine, war, and emigration, and it did not return to the level it enjoyed at the outset of the Italian occupation until 1950. According to one reckoning, the native population dropped from 1.4 million in 1907 to 1.2 million in 1912 to 825,000 in 1933. While some of the decline was due to internecine fighting and migration to bordering states, a population drop of this magnitude suggests that Italian colonial rule was anything but benign. The loss of virtually the entire educated elite and the entrepreneurial merchant class was particularly important. The net result of slightly more than 30 years of Italian colonial rule was a Libya at independence in 1951 with an annual per capita income of around \$35, a dearth of post-primary school graduates, and an illiteracy rate of around 90 percent (St John 2015, 19–20).

After the Axis forces in Tunisia surrendered in May 1943, the British government created a British Military Administration to administer Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, and the French government established a French Military Administration to administer Fezzan. The British occupation of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, preceded by British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden's 8 January 1942 statement to the House of Commons that the *Sanusiyya* would not again fall under Italian domination, raised the question of the future disposition of the former Italian colonies (Khadduri 1963, 28–52). When it came to Libya, American and British concerns centered on maintaining it as a Western base area while keeping it out of Soviet hands. The French worried that any decisions taken on Libya could increase nationalist sentiment and unrest in neighboring French territories. The Soviets saw a postwar presence in Libya as the fulfillment of their long-time goal of a presence on the Mediterranean shore. Related concerns included Italian sensitivities, Eden's pledge not to return the *Sanusiyya* to Italian rule, and Arab anxieties over the future of the Muslim populations of Libya. Finally, there were the expressed desires of the Libyan people, wishes which took on added weight as the Four Power dialogue progressed (Bills 1995, 26–62, 87–107, 133–54).

After years of discussion, the British and Italian foreign ministers in May 1949 proposed a compromise plan, known as the Bevin-Sforza plan, which gave trusteeships to Britain in Cyrenaica, Italy in Tripolitania, and France in Fezzan for a period of 10 years. The defeat of this trusteeship proposal marked a turning-point in the debate with all sides reluctantly and belatedly declaring themselves in favor of independence. Within Libya, the makeup of the political groups in favor of independence differed from Cyrenaica to Tripolitania to Fezzan; but in all three regions, support for independence centered on local, provincial interests.

At the time, most Libyans continued to draw their identity from family, tribe, or region, or in the larger sense, from membership in the broader Islamic community. Given the Libyan experience under the Second Ottoman and Italian occupations, this was understandable; however, this largely provincial view inhibited the formation of a more nationalist ideology which could be harnessed in support of broader socioeconomic and political goals in the post-independence era. Following the establishment of the state of Israel in May 1948, a growing number of younger Libyans also were attracted to the nascent forces of Arab nationalism (Baldinetti 2010, 90–137).

Once the issue of Libya was before the United Nations (UN), the road to independence was clear if not without its challenges. Eventually, a national constituent assembly was established, meeting for the first time in November 1950. The assembly authorized a federal system of government with a monarchy as head of state, designating the head of the Sanusi Order, Sayyid Muhammad Idris al-Mahdi al-Sanusi, as king. A draft constitution was adopted in October 1951, and King Idris I proclaimed the United Kingdom of Libya as a sovereign and independent state on 24 December 1951. Libya was the first African state to achieve independence from European rule and the first and only state created by the UN General Assembly (Khadduri 1963, 127–79).

### **United Kingdom of Libya, 1951-69**

At independence, the United Kingdom of Libya faced seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Eighty percent of the population was engaged in an agriculture sector that yielded pitifully small returns due to poor rainfall, tired soil, destructive winds, primitive farming methods, and occasional locust swarms. At the same time, Libya lacked the raw materials, capital, and skilled manpower required for a successful industrial base. The formal economy in the early years of independence centered on the export of castor seeds, esparto grass (used in making paper), and scrap metal scavenged from disabled World War II vehicles, together with financial assistance from friendly countries and international bodies. Scarce human resources compounded other economic constraints. Italian colonial policies left a small, unskilled population of slightly more than 1 million people with a high illiteracy rate. Educational opportunities began to improve under the British Military Administration; nevertheless, the United Nations in 1950 estimated that only 20 percent of those eligible for schooling were in school (Ghanem 1982, 148–59).

The 1951 constitution established a hereditary monarchy based on Sayyid Muhammad Idris al-Mahdi al-Sanusi and his male successors, descendants of a distinguished North African family that traced its ancestry from the Prophet Muhammad through the Prophet's daughter, Fatima. During parliamentary elections in February 1952, allegations of electoral fraud by the opposition National Congress Party led to the elimination of legitimate political opposition just as a democratic parliamentary system was emerging. Following the dissolution of the National Congress Party, the monarchy banned all political parties in Libya, and responsible opposition to the government ended. For the next 17 years, politics in Libya was largely a contest of family, tribal, and parochial interests with networks of kinship and clan providing the structure for political competition (Khadduri 1963, 217–20).

Emerging as a federal state in 1951, the United Kingdom of Libya was based on a series of bargains and compromises that papered over differences instead of resolving them. After the shortcomings of the federal system became obvious, it was abandoned in 1962-63 in

favor of a unitary state. In December 1962, provincial administrators were subordinated to the federal government, and in April 1963, both federal and provincial administrations were abolished with their powers combined into one central government. Reflecting the change to a unitary state, the United Kingdom of Libya was renamed the Kingdom of Libya. In theory, the move to a unitary state promised a vast improvement in governance, but in practice, it simply increased the power in the hands of the king and his advisers. Thereafter, a small group of people made all important decisions, and selection and advancement in public service depended largely on background and connections as opposed to talent, skill, or training (Vandewalle 2006, 65–7, 73–4).

Throughout the first decade of independence, the monarchy maintained a largely Western orientation; and Libya was considered one of the more conservative, traditional states of the Arab world. In July 1953, the United Kingdom concluded a treaty of friendship and alliance with Libya in which the former received extensive extraterritorial and jurisdictional rights in return for financial aid and military training. One year later, the United States in September 1954 concluded a treaty of friendship and mutual support with Libya. By the end of the decade, the United States had extended over \$100 million in financial assistance to Libya, making it the largest per capita recipient of US aid in the world. France hoped to negotiate a base agreement with Libya; however, events in Algeria frustrated its desires in this regard. A bilateral agreement reached in August 1955 called for the evacuation of French forces from Fezzan by late 1956. In exchange for air and ground transit rights, together with minor modifications to the Libyan border with French territories, France promised some \$1 million in development aid to Libya (Ben-Halim 1998, 147–76; Khadduri 1963, 258–61, 363–97).

Dependent on the West, the Idris regime was never as pro-Western as many observers thought. To survive, the monarchy believed it had to maintain a cordial relationship with the West; however, its approach was not grounded in a widespread commitment to Western ideals, traditions, and policy. On the contrary, it rested on the monarchy's belief that the Western powers were in the best position to guarantee Libyan security. Reflecting this ambivalent position of dependence, the monarchy minimized the impact of Western socio-economic and political values and structures on the Libyan people and stressed its political nonalignment in regional and international bodies.

Oil exploration began in 1955, and deposits in commercially viable quantities were discovered in 1959. Within eight years of its first shipments, Libya had become the world's fourth largest exporter of crude oil, a rate of expansion unparalleled in history. In the process, government revenues increased from \$40 million in 1962 to \$625 million in 1967 (Gurney 1996, 1–55). As per capita income increased from \$35 in 1951 to \$1,000 in 1967, a revolution in rising expectations occurred in which the populace expected the newly discovered oil wealth to result in markedly improved personal circumstances. Mounting oil revenues also increased interest in a coherent ideology that would satisfy new, albeit poorly understood, spiritual and political yearnings. The monarchy attempted to respond to these demands, but failed to understand and accommodate them just as it failed to respond to the rising tide of Arab nationalism (Vandewalle 2006, 69–72).

The successful exploitation of oil deposits freed Libya from one form of dependence but replaced it with another. To develop this newfound resource, the monarchy had to remain on good terms with the West in order to attract needed technicians and technology from Western oil companies. The importance of the oil companies to the development of oil reserves was obvious as early as 1957 when foreign oil companies spent \$43.4 million

in Libya compared to total foreign aid of \$38.32 million in the 1957-58 fiscal year. While mounting oil production and increasing oil revenues increased public interest in being freer from the West, it did not free Libya from longstanding Western ties. On the contrary, it tied Libya more closely to the West because the monarchy, mistrusting the Soviet Union and its allies, could only obtain the necessary assistance to develop this natural resource from the West (Waddams 1980, 73-82).

When Libya achieved independence in 1951, it had not developed an overarching ideology to guide a diverse population. It did not have a set of common traditions or political identity to unite the tribespeople of Cyrenaica, the town dwellers of Tripolitania, and the nomads of Fezzan. It also lacked a self-sustaining economy as well as educated technicians, experienced administrators, and politicians knowledgeable in the art of modern government. Given its limited socioeconomic and political inheritance, the survival for almost 18 years of an absolutist political system isolated from society at large was surprising, and in the end, due largely to the fragmented nature of Libyan society. Where the Libyan elite exhibited official agreement on most important issues, the general public seldom reached consensus. With political parties banned and the masses not mobilized, the body politic also lacked the structure and organization to voice dissent in a collective manner. In addition, the threat of coercion on the part of the security forces was a permanent part of the political background. While the Idris regime was able to control the resources of influence and power, it proved incapable of competing with the ideology of Arab nationalism once oil revenues began to course through the economy. The rapid transformation of the Libyan economy led to widespread changes in the social fabric of Libya and mounting cries for socioeconomic and political change, demands the monarchy could not accommodate.

### One September Revolution, 1969-2011

On the first of September 1969, a small group of Libyan army officers, known as the Free Unionist Officers, executed a successful *coup d'état* against a bankrupt monarchy and began a radical reorientation of domestic and foreign policy. The movement was led by a 12-man central committee which designated itself the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). The composition and leadership of the RCC remained anonymous until it issued a short statement, announcing the promotion of Captain Muammar al-Qaddafi to the rank of colonel and his appointment as commander-in-chief of the Libyan armed forces. Thereafter, the RCC remained a generally closed organization; nevertheless, it was readily apparent that Qaddafi was the chairman and *de facto* head of state. The RCC appeared to be a collegial decision-making body, but Qaddafi was first among equals, the dominant figure among the Free Unionist Officers and the chief ideological innovator on the RCC (First 1974, 99-118).

Qaddafi was a long-time admirer of President Gamal Abdel Nasser, and the One September Revolution adopted the same revolutionary trinity, Freedom, Socialism, Unity, that the 1952 Egyptian revolution had championed. Early domestic and foreign policies also reflected Qaddafi's deep Islamist roots and his strong support for Arab nationalism (Vandewalle 2006, 79-80). Reflecting a commitment to freedom, Qaddafi pressed for an early end to the base agreements the monarchy had concluded with the United Kingdom and the United States, and once the agreements were terminated, the dates on which the bases were evacuated were celebrated as national holidays. For Qaddafi, Arab nationalism and Arab unity were two sides of the same coin, and he pursued both ideals with unabashed

enthusiasm (First 1974, 119–40, 213–57). He promoted a variety of practical attempts at Arab unity, and when all of them failed, he shifted his focus to Africa with limited success (Ronen 2008, 105–200). In so doing, his policies and actions betrayed a leader in search of a stage larger than the Libyan playhouse.

Recognizing the power of tribal leaders and fearful they would oppose his radical reform agenda, Qaddafi moved quickly to reduce their role and influence. When early efforts failed, he reversed field and turned to them for political support. Beginning in the late 1970s, Qaddafi began to appoint members of his own tribe, the Qadhadhfa, and affiliated tribes, like the Maqarha and Warfalla, to powerful military, political, and security posts. In so doing, tribal identities were strengthened and tribal affiliation became increasingly important, reflecting the celebration of the tribe in *The Green Book*, Qaddafi's ideological manifesto (Qaddafi 1979, 13–17). In 1993, Qaddafi formed a nationwide system of People's Social Leadership Committees (PSLCs), made up of tribal leaders, heads of important families, and other influential persons. In 1996, he pulled the PSLCs together in a national organization with local committees sending representatives to the national PSLC. While the Qaddafi regime had been tribal-based for some time, the creation of the PSLC system marked the first time it officially recognized the political role of the tribes. It also marked the first time in the history of Libya that its 130 tribes had been organized into even a quasi-national structure (St John 2015, 53–4, 71–2).

Overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim, the Libyan people generally are conservative in outlook and religious in nature, but they have never shown any real appetite for the radical Islam advocated by Al-Qaeda, or its North African affiliate, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), or the Islamic State (ISIS). In the beginning, Qaddafi took a reformist approach to Islam, articulating a *de facto* secularism which challenged the traditional role of the religious elite. When members of the orthodox religious establishment questioned his innovations and interpretations, he purged them (Joffé 1995, 151–2). In the second half of the 1980s, opposition to the Qaddafi regime increased, much of it led by Islamist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood, and in the mid-1990s, the regime defeated a strong challenge from a number of separate Islamist groups. In subduing these fundamentalist groups, the Qaddafi regime steered a middle course between hardline religious opponents and a citizenry largely opposed to militant Islam (St John 2015, 55–6, 67).

In the guise of political reform, Qaddafi divided the government into two parallel components. The people's sector was a unique form of direct democracy based on a system of congresses and committees at all levels of government. Outlined in the first part of *The Green Book*, the people's congress and committee system was largely in place by the end of the 1970s (Qaddafi 1976, 55–66). The organization and operation of the congresses and committees making up the people's sector were governed by statutes passed by the General People's Congress, a body whose membership was closely controlled by the Qaddafi regime (Mattes 2008, 68–9, 71, 76–7).

Parallel to the people's sector, Qaddafi created a revolutionary sector consisting of himself, the remaining members of the RCC, the Free Unionist Officers (also known as Members of the Historical Leadership), and Revolutionary Committees, zealots organized at the end of the 1970s to ensure revolutionary control of the people's sector. For counsel and advice, Qaddafi also relied on an informal network of advisers and trusted confidantes, known as the Men of the Tent or Forum of Companions, together with blood relatives and members of the Qadhadhfa and affiliated tribes. The Men of the Tent were a civilian counterpart to the Free Unionist Officers and included long-time friends and supporters, many

of whom had known Qaddafi since childhood. In contrast to the people's sector, the activities of the revolutionary sector were not governed by legal statutes but were closely controlled by Qaddafi and his associates. After 1979, some modifications were made both to the revolutionary and people's sectors; however, the duality of the political system remained unchanged until 2011 (Pargeter 2006, 227–9).

In support of this dual political system, Qaddafi put in place a highly opaque decision-making process which made it difficult, if not impossible, for the average citizen to determine how, when, or where decisions were made. In so doing, he was able to control the country from behind the scenes by blurring lines of authority, responsibility, and accountability. At the same time, power was concentrated in the hands of a small circle of individuals around Qaddafi who ran the country in an informal, nontransparent manner. According to one study, only 112 persons served on the General People's Committee in the three decades after 1969, and many of them served for no more than two years. As a result, the operative political system suffered from considerable deficits both in rule of law and legitimacy (St John 2015, 73; Werenfelds 2008, 10).

The Qaddafi regime banned political parties, independent trade unions, and civic groups, like Kiwanis clubs and parent-teacher organizations. Afraid that such organizations could become centers of opposition to the regime, Qaddafi systematically destroyed civil society with the exception of a few groups; for example, the Boy Scouts and Red Crescent, sanctioned by the government. The Qaddafi International Foundation for Charity Associations, later known as the Qaddafi International Charity and Development Foundation, was the last civic organization to be approved by the regime. It was founded by Saif al-Islam al-Qaddafi, Qaddafi's first son by his second wife. Denied civic organizations, Libyans mostly turned to family and tribe for individual and group support. The reluctance of the Qaddafi regime to build an active, engaged, and participant citizenry was one of its most notable shortcomings. In post-Qaddafi Libya, the failure to prepare the citizenry for a role in political participation proved a major impediment to the development of the consensus-building and pluralistic politics necessary to build a working democracy (St John 2015, 177–8).

At the outset of the One September Revolution, the Qaddafi regime began to introduce social reforms, notably in education, health care, housing, and to a lesser degree, in women's rights. Over time, the quantity of education improved markedly even if the quality of education left much to be desired. Guaranteed health care at little or no cost to the patient was regime policy from the start. The health care network expanded and the medical workforce increased; however, poor service quality continued to challenge the health care system. Progress also was made in replacing substandard housing and addressing the overall housing shortage; unfortunately, a rapidly increasing population made the provision of housing a moving target. Later, housing complaints were at the center of the initial protests which eventually led to the overthrow of the regime in 2011. The regime also promoted a more open, expansive, and inclusive role for women. While the regime's record on gender issues was decidedly mixed, the status of women improved in areas like educational opportunities, marriage rights, employment prospects, and overall gender equality (Obeidi 2001, 168–97; St John 2017, 889–91).

Europe in general, and select European states in particular, notably France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Spain, and the United Kingdom, often pursued divergent policies in Libya that reflected their own historical involvement and current interests in the country. At the same time, Europe remained the principal market for Libyan hydrocarbons, and the European

Union (EU) member states remained well placed to take advantage of investment and trade opportunities there. Given their substantial commercial interests in Libya, a policy thread throughout much of the period was a European preference for dialogue with the Qaddafi regime as opposed to the US preference for sanctions and isolation. In addition to investment and trade, common European policy concerns, especially in the final years of the Qaddafi era, included economic integration, human rights, regional stability, illicit immigration, and terrorism (Joffé 2001; Van Genugten 2016, 81–146).

Bilateral relations between Libya and the United States were not good at any time after 1969, and they were especially bad after 1979 when the Qaddafi regime failed to protect the US embassy when mobs stormed it in the early days of the Iranian hostage crisis. The US government tightened sanctions on Libya throughout the 1980s, and in 1986, the United States launched air attacks on Benghazi and Tripoli. Bilateral relations did not improve until the early years of the new millennium. In August 2003, Libya agreed to pay compensation to the families of the victims of the December 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, and in December 2003, it agreed to dismantle its unconventional weapons programs. In response, Washington lifted the travel ban on Libya and announced a gradual lifting of sanctions. By 2006, Libya and the United States had achieved full commercial and diplomatic relations for the first time in 25 years (St John 2015, 153–5).

Graft and corruption were pervasive throughout the Qaddafi era, especially in the final decade of Qaddafi's rule when the lifting of UN and US sanctions opened new business opportunities. In the first decade of the new millennium, the Qaddafi family dominated the most lucrative commercial and financial sectors. If there was a new business opportunity in Libya, chances are that one or more Qaddafi offspring were involved. The average Libyan citizen suspected what was going on, but it took the release in late 2010 of Wikileaks cables originating in the US embassy in Tripoli for everyone to see the horrific extent of nepotism. In 2006, Transparency International ranked Libya 105 out of 163 countries for corruption, but by 2010, it had dropped to 146 out of 175 countries. Taking into account private holdings and public funds to which the regime had ready access, like the Central Bank of Libya and the Libyan Investment Authority, Qaddafi alone was estimated to be worth \$200 billion at his death (Pargeter 2012, 211; Werenfels 2008, 17–18).

### **Post-Qaddafi Libya**

In January 2011, revolutions erupted in Tunisia and Egypt, and civil unrest broke out in Libya later in the month, descending into civil war. As the fighting spread, the rebels found themselves unable to combat the better-armed and better-organized forces of the government. As concern grew that Qaddafi would take ruthless measures to crush the rebellion, the UN Security Council in late February 2011 adopted Resolution 1970, imposing sanctions on Qaddafi and his inner circle and calling on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate government attacks on civilians. In mid-March, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1973, imposing an air exclusion zone over Libya and authorizing its members to take “all necessary measures” to protect civilians. One week later, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) agreed to enforce the UN-mandated air exclusion zone. As the conflict expanded, NATO transgressed its initial mission to protect Libyan civilians and began to target Qaddafi himself. By late spring 2011, European officials were openly admitting that unstated Western policy in Libya was regime change (St John 2015, 81; Wehrey 2018, 45).

On the political front, Mustafa Muhammad Abd al-Jalil, a former Secretary for Justice under Qaddafi, announced in late February 2011 the establishment of the National Transitional Council (NTC). The new body immediately announced its intention to draft a new constitution, allowing for a free, democratic Libya. In late June, the NTC proclaimed itself the sole legitimate representative of the Libyan people, and by the end of September, it had been accorded official recognition by 94 countries. While the NTC billed itself as the acting government of Libya, this was something of an illusion as real power rested with the local councils and militias formed to oust the Qaddafi regime. After breaking the siege of Misurata, rebel forces in early August consolidated their hold on Zlitan, and later in the month, they captured Tripoli. Qaddafi was killed on 20 October 2011 and buried in a secret desert location (Chorin 2012, 187–266; Pargeter 2012, 213–47).

At the beginning of August 2011, the NTC released a Draft Constitutional Charter for the Transitional Stage, outlining a political process leading to elections for a General National Congress (GNC) in June 2012. As the process unfolded, local leaders in Benghazi called for the adoption of a federal system similar to the one in place in 1951–63. Bowing to federalist pressure, the NTC in mid-March amended the Draft Constitutional Charter to call for the GNC to choose a 60-member constitutional committee with 20 representatives each from Cyrenaica, Fezzan, and Tripolitania. To reduce conflict and social cleavages, the NTC in late April 2012 banned ethnic, tribal, and religious parties from participation in the GNC election; however, the ban was quickly rescinded after Islamist groups protested. Two days before the GNC election, the NTC announced yet another change to the Draft Constitutional Charter, delegating to the GNC responsibility for overseeing a separate general election for a constitutional committee. Successive Libyan governments later continued the appeasement policies followed by the NTC in the spring of 2012, bedevilling efforts at socioeconomic and political reform (Pack and Cook 2015; Wehrey 2018, 74–81).

In early July 2012, a general election was held to elect a General National Congress whose primary responsibilities included appointment of a new interim government, overseeing the draft of a new constitution, and supervision of elections based on the new constitution. The National Forces Alliance (NFA), a coalition of political parties and civil society groups, won 39 of the 80 party seats. Headed by former Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril, the NFA presented itself to voters as a moderate Islamist movement. The Justice and Construction Party (JCP), the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, secured the second largest representation with 17 seats. Collectively, moderate parties, which included the NFA, won over 60 percent of the party seats in the GNC. Election results for the 120 independent seats were not as clear-cut, with many candidates elected on the basis of local connections, tribal affiliation, or social standing (St John 2012).

In early August 2012, former Chairman al-Jalil announced the dissolution of the NTC, and in October, the GNC elected Ali Zidan as prime minister. Throughout the coming year, militant Islamist elements challenged the commitments to democratic institutions, popular sovereignty, and civil rights found in the Draft Constitutional Charter. In February 2012, the NTC had named Sheikh Sadiq al-Ghariani to the post of Grand Mufti or top religious authority. Almost immediately, al-Ghariani began to make controversial statements which often challenged the legitimacy of both the Draft Constitutional Charter and the interim government. In early May 2013, the GNC, under pressure from armed Islamist militants, approved a political isolation law which barred broad categories of officials who had served in the Qaddafi regime from holding public office for a period of 10 years. Passage of the

new law destroyed the NFA with former Prime Minister Jibril estimating that the political isolation law excluded upwards of 500,000 Libyans from state jobs and public life (Wehrey 2018, 146–50). Over the next 18 months, the Zidan government struggled unsuccessfully to restore peace and security to Libya. Following a vote of no confidence, Prime Minister Zidan stepped down in March 2014, and Abdullah al-Thani, minister of defense, was appointed acting prime minister (St John 2015, 89–91).

In post-Qaddafi Libya, federalism remained a minority movement, with only limited support in the eastern and southern regions of Libya; however, a May 2013 public opinion survey found that 57 percent of respondents favoured decentralization of some sort in the new constitution. A related poll found that only 8 percent of Libyans nationwide and 15 percent of those in the east favoured a federal state, but 47 percent supported at least limited local legislative and executive powers (St John 2015, 91–2). Public opinion surveys conducted in late 2013 indicated that Libyans continued to favour a new constitution that expressed the democratic values outlined in the Draft Constitutional Charter. An overwhelming majority of respondents believed that legal experts and civil society representatives should be included in the constitutional committee, and a solid majority opposed the inclusion of tribal leaders and political parties. In addition, the vast majority of Libyans believed that basic civil, economic, and political rights should be enshrined in the constitution, including the right to education, employment, health and medical care, and housing. Finally, 70 percent of the Libyans polled viewed equal rights for women as very important (National Democratic Institute and JMW Consulting 2014).

Election results in the February 2014 constitutional committee election confirmed that the Libyan people opposed Islamists dominating the constitutional drafting process. Two months later, acting Prime Minister al-Thani classified Ansar al-Sharia and other unnamed radical Islamist groups in eastern Libya as terrorist organizations. In mid-May, General Khalifa Haftar, a retired army officer who broke with Qaddafi in the 1980s and joined the February 17 Revolution in 2011, launched Operation Dignity, attacking Ansar al-Sharia and associated militias in Benghazi with the goal of ridding the city of extremist groups (Wehrey 2018, 171–83). As Haftar's self-styled army engaged Islamist militias in eastern Libya, a new round of political infighting broke out in Tripoli. Prime Minister al-Thani refused to hand over power to Ahmad Maetig, recently elected by the GNC, until the Supreme Court ruled on the legitimacy of the latter's contested election. The political crisis reflected the growing divide between Islamist elements and more moderate forces, together with regional and tribal divisions. The crisis finally ended in June when the Supreme Court ruled that Maetig's election was unconstitutional, and he resigned, leaving al-Thani for a time the undisputed prime minister (Daragahi 2015, 44–9).

In late June 2014, Libyans again went to the polls, electing an interim parliament to replace the GNC. Due to ongoing political uncertainty in both Benghazi and Tripoli, the newly-elected House of Representatives was inaugurated in August in the eastern city of Tobruk. In the interim, the Muslim Brotherhood and allied Islamist elements in Tripoli united with local and regional interests to form Libya Dawn, a counterpart to Haftar's Operation Dignity. By August, Libya Dawn, which recognized the GNC as the only legitimate legislature, had assumed control of most of Tripoli. The competition between Libya Dawn and Operation Dignity further polarized the country along communal, ideological, and regional lines (Daragahi 2015, 50–2). Later in August, a few members of the former GNC convened in Tripoli and appointed Omar al-Hassi as a rival prime minister, directing him to form a Government of National Salvation (GNS). With Libya Dawn in control of

most of Tripoli, al-Hassi occupied the offices of the prime minister in mid-September 2014. Later in the month, Prime Minister al-Thani announced that his newly-constituted administration would operate from al-Bayda until it could return to Tripoli. The GNC dismissed rival Prime Minister al-Hassi in late March 2015, replacing him with his deputy, Khalifa al-Ghweil (Wehrey 2018, 187–95).

In September 2014, UN-brokered talks opened in Ghadames in an effort to find a political solution to the Libyan conflict. UN efforts led to a power-sharing agreement, the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA), in mid-December 2015. Under the terms of this compromise agreement, the House of Representatives became the sole legislative authority in Libya, and the General National Congress, representing the remainder of Libya Dawn, became the High Council of State. A Presidency Council consisting of nine representatives of various political factions exercised the functions of head of state. After naming a Government of National Accord (GNA) in early 2016, Fayez al-Sarraj, head of the Presidency Council and prime minister, arrived in Tripoli in late March, establishing his headquarters at the Bu Setta naval base. One of the main challenges facing the newly-constituted GNA was the failure of the process birthing the LPA to recognize and take advantage of the political culture that traditionally served as a source of state legitimacy in Libya. The extended family, village, clan, and tribe remain the core elements of contemporary Libyan society, and any agreement not grounded in them threatened to increase, not reduce, factional violence, and divide, not unite, Libya. Billed as a peace accord, the top-down power-sharing agreement brokered by the UN was based on the groups, factions, and individuals that mismanaged the country after 2011 (St John 2016a; Wehrey 2018, 251–3).

The Constitutional Assembly, elected in February 2014 with a mandate to write the country's first constitution since 1951, released a second draft in early February 2016 that was intended to reconcile conflicting views and clashing interests, including the place of decentralization, ethnic minorities, federalism, regionalism, *shari'a* law, and women in post-Qaddafi Libya. Widespread agreement existed that *shari'a* law should be a reference for future legislation; however, there was no consensus as to whether it should be the single source, a principal source, or one source among many. The issues of regionalism, federalism, and decentralization were intermixed and central to the related question of how to distribute Libya's hydrocarbon resources. Women struggled to retain, if not expand, the rights and responsibilities they had earned before and during the revolution. The revised draft of the constitution also attempted to address the demands of the Amazigh, Tebu, and Tuareg minorities. In the end, the second draft constitution proved to be a masterpiece of compromise that risked pleasing almost no one (St John 2016b).

By the end of 2016, Prime Minister al-Sarraj, the Presidency Council, and the GNA had proved unable to extend their authority and legitimacy much beyond their base in Tripoli. Libya remained divided by power blocs in the east and the west that were unable to find common ground (Wehrey 2018, 270–5). In Tripoli, one group of militias supported the GNA and another supported the rump GNS. In turn, the al-Thani government in al-Bayda, the House of Representatives in Tobruk, and newly-promoted Field Marshal Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) controlled most of eastern Libya. Officially, the international community, focused on illicit migration and the threat posed by ISIS and other terrorist groups, supported the GNA. Unofficially, international stakeholders added to the confusion by supporting different factions in the east and west. Turkey and Qatar supported the Presidency Council, and Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE supported Haftar. With

migration the core issue in its relations with Libya, Italy worked to maintain its relevance in ongoing talks, and France and Russia played a double game, officially supporting the GNA while also providing military assistance to the LNA. After US Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other Americans were killed in September 2012, the United States reduced its involvement in Libya, focusing on ISIS and other terrorist groups (Ramani 2019).

In early 2019, Field Marshal Haftar launched a military operation to occupy southern and western Libya with the announced goal of securing petroleum facilities, stopping migrant flows, and eliminating jihadists and criminal gangs. Drawing on a mix of diplomacy, ethnic and tribal ties, and largess, Haftar expanded his influence south and west, and by early April, the LNA was threatening Tripoli. Over the next year, peace-making initiatives in Berlin, Cairo, Moscow, and elsewhere produced little in the way of positive results with Prime Minister Sarraj and Field Marshal Haftar unwilling to compromise. At the same time, both sides continued to violate the UN-mandated arms embargo with Turkey and Qatar supporting the GNA and Egypt, Russia, and the UAE supporting the LNA. In June 2020, GNA forces, supported by Turkish-backed mercenaries, pushed the LNA, supported by Russian-backed mercenaries, from Tripoli and other bases in western Libya, threatening the strategically important town of Sirte (Joffé 2020, 685).

With a military solution to the conflict increasingly unlikely, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), operating under the umbrella of the January 2020 Berlin Conference, proposed a three-track process to resolve the civil war in Libya. The political track called for the drafting of a new constitution followed by parliamentary and presidential elections. The economic track encouraged a compromise solution to the political crisis which also addressed the deteriorating economic situation. The military track hoped to implement a ceasefire, restore security to civilian areas, and incorporate all armed bodies into a national army and police force. After more than six months of relative inactivity, the Joint Military Commission (JMC) established under the military track signed a country-wide, permanent ceasefire agreement on 23 October 2020 (Zaptia 2020). The agreement began the process required to unify the security forces and to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate all armed Libyan factions. The agreement also called for all foreign fighters to leave Libya within 90 days (UNSMIL 2020c).

Three weeks later, UNSMIL launched the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF), a 75-member body that the UN claimed was representative of “the full social and political spectrum of Libyan society ... especially youth, women and municipalities” (UNSMIL 2020b, n.p.). In actuality, almost half of the members of the LPDF were members of the GNC or House of Representatives and the remainder were selected by UNSMIL to ensure that certain powerbrokers or constituencies were represented or to satisfy the interests of the foreign governments involved in Libya (International Crisis Group 2020). In November 2020, the LPDF agreed on a roadmap leading to national elections on 24 December 2021, 70 years to the day after Libya declared independence in 1951 (UNSMIL 2020a). In February 2021, the LPDF appointed Abdul Hamid Mohammed Dbeibah as prime minister, together with a three-person Presidential Council, headed by Mohammad Younes Menfi (Reuters Staff 2021a), and in March, the House of Representatives approved the Government of National Unity (GNU) nominated by Dbeibah to replace the GNA. The composition of the GNU represented something of a power-sharing formula in that cabinet positions were distributed among a variety of interests and groups, notably the three regions of Cyrenaica, Fezzan, and Tripolitania (Saleh 2021).

In June 2021, the governments and organizations that met in Berlin in January 2020 reconvened in the Berlin II Conference to reaffirm their commitment to elections on 24 December 2021 and to renew their demand that all foreign forces depart Libya (UNSMIL 2021). Thereafter, progress slowed with Russia and Turkey refusing to withdraw their armed forces and the December 2021 elections postponed due to disputes over the governing rules (Reuters Staff 2021b). In early 2022, the House of Representatives voted to replace the GNU, arguing that its tenure ended with the postponement of national elections, and in early February, it replaced Prime Minister Dbeibah with Fathi Bashagha, minister of the interior in the GNA. Prime Minister Dbeibah refused to step down, arguing that his tenure did not end until national elections were held (Zaptia 2022). On 1 March 2022, the House of Representatives approved the cabinet list of the newly-formed Government of National Stability (GNS), most of whom were either relatives or allies of members of the House of Representatives to the detriment of the High State Council and other political elites (Musa and Magdy 2022). The manner in which the GNS was formed and the makeup of its cabinet were controversial from the start. On 2 March 2022, the UN issued a statement attributed to Secretary General António Guterres which said in part that the 1 March session of the House of Representatives which led to a vote of confidence in the appointment of the Bashagha government “fell short of expected standards of transparency and procedures and included acts of intimidation prior to the session” (UNSMIL 2022, n.p.).

The formation of the GNS returned Libya to the all-too-familiar position of parallel governments in the west and east competing for nationwide power and legitimacy. Strong militias in Tripoli and elsewhere in western Libya divided their loyalties between the GNU and GNS, and in the east and south, General Haftar and the LNA supported the GNS. The international community also was divided, with France, Germany, Italy, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States, among others, following the lead of UNSMIL and the GNU, while Russia declared its support for the GNS. As sporadic violence wracked Libya, UNSMIL continued its efforts to broker talks between the opposing sides in an effort to find a negotiated solution to the conflict.

### **Prospects**

The core elements of any agreement leading to peace, stability, and prosperity in Libya begin with enhanced security provisions. At best, only checkered success in both the political and economic tracks appears possible until foreign fighters leave Libya, arms shipments to Libya cease, and all Libyan militias and other armed groups are disbanded and incorporated into a national army and police force. As that process unfolds, the power elite in Libya must agree to a framework for free and fair parliamentary and presidential elections, including a new constitution approved by the Libyan people in a nationwide referendum. With the post-Qaddafi conflict being more about money than ideology, a solution to the decade-long civil war that includes elections and the formation of a new government remains the eventual albeit challenging goal. There is widespread evidence that the Libyan people want elections, but the existing power elite continues to block them because they know they will likely be voted out of power, if and when elections are held.

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### 3

# TUNISIA FROM 1830 AND AHMAD BEY'S MODERNISATION

*Zoe Petkanas*

When Ahmad Bey came to power in 1837, he inherited a changing world.<sup>1</sup> Tunisia had long been a Mediterranean crossroads, but a power struggle had been steadily mounting between the Ottoman Empire, France, and Britain that was playing out in North Africa. By the 1830s, the Ottoman Empire was in decline and facing increased challenges from European colonial powers. Just to the west of Tunisia, France defeated the Algerian Dey, wresting control from the Ottoman Empire, and set its sights on further North African expansion. To shore up its territories and stop the encroachment of European powers, the Ottoman Empire initiated a large-scale modernisation project throughout its territories, releasing an 1839 dictate to Ahmad Bey that enhanced the rights of Turks living in Tunisia. Ahmad viewed these reforms as a threat to the relatively autonomous status Tunisia enjoyed within the Ottoman Empire and refused to comply. Instead, he initiated his own ambitious top-down modernisation project, with the dual aim of enhancing Tunisia's international position and reputation. His navigation of these dynamics fundamentally changed Tunisia and set the foundation for the post-colonial state.

#### **Ahmad Bey's modernisation project**

The cornerstone of Ahmad's reforms took the form of wholesale modernisation of the military, modelled after the European standing army, a process nascently started by his father, Husayn Bey. To that end, Husayn authorised the creation of a few *Nizami* units—the Tunisian iteration of European armies—in 1836, named after the Ottoman's own Europeanised military. In 1840, Ahmad rapidly expanded the Nizami army and purchased a complete arsenal of up-to-date weaponry from France. For its part, France supported Tunisia's resistance to the Ottomans as a way to ease future French intervention, even if that meant arming a military they aimed eventually to defeat. Recognising that a European-style army required a European military education, Ahmad founded a military school to train an elite corps of officers in European warfare, strategies, and tactics. For the first time, non-Turkic Tunisians—drawn from the urban merchant class—were trained as officers and given positions of leadership within the military, previously made up only of those with Turkic origin. Ahmad also designed the first successful conscription of non-Turkic

Tunisians into the rank and file, relying on local notables to furnish recruits or bear punitive fines. Financing this standing army required an enormous expansion of administrative and tax collection apparatuses as well as industries to serve as the military's supply chain. Ahmad increased existing levies and garnered new taxes, which had a profound economic impact on rural pastoralists and farmers (see Brown 1974).

Most of Ahmad's reforms were rolled back after his death in 1855, as the enormous financial investment they required led Tunisia to near bankruptcy in the 1840s. However, Ahmad's legacy stretches far beyond the reforms themselves. Exposing an elite coterie of officers to European intellectual traditions at the Bardo military school produced European-oriented reformists. They went on to become early leaders of the Arab Enlightenment in Tunisia and provided the intellectual foundation for elements of the Tunisian nationalist movement—which eventually produced Tunisia's first president, Habib Bourguiba (Perkins 2004). The military modernisation project also functioned as a form of modern state-building. Ahmad pursued a governmental monopoly on the use of force and in doing so diminished the independent military capacity of tribes—a mechanism of state consolidation that would go on to characterise Bourguiba's regime. Further, the modernisation plan fundamentally changed the relationship between the Bey and rural Tunisians; 'as potential conscripts, the hitherto neglected agriculturalists and pastoralists of the countryside were transformed into "subjects" and the dynasty into a government' (Anderson 1986, 70). The recruitment of 'native sons of Tunisia' as subjects of the state challenged the existing political organisation, undermining an old order of political power based on ethnic or cultural distinction both between groups and ruler and ruled (Brown 1974, 270).

### Colonial rivalries

Ahmad's successor, Muhammed II, inherited an overextended treasury and a faltering economy, damaged by the flood of imported consumer goods that surged under Ahmed's tax reforms. Meanwhile the French and British rivalry for influence in Tunisia's political and economic affairs was heating up. As Muhammed came to power in 1855, consuls Richard Wood from Britain and Léon Roches from France arrived in Tunis to increase their influence on the reluctant Bey and further their respective countries' agendas. Under European pressure following the Crimean War, the Ottoman Sultan publicly recognised and affirmed the rights and status of Christians and Jews—a product of European calculation that increased domestic openness in the Ottoman territories would create opportunities for further European access. Recognising this and emulating Ahmad's assertion of Tunisian autonomy, Muhammed refused to comply (Perkins 2004, 22).

When a Tunisian Jew was sentenced to death for blaspheming Islam, international pressure ramped up for Muhammed to accept the reforms. When French warships appeared on the horizon, and with the support of Tunisian reformers who wanted to shore up the state, Muhammed II signed the '*Ahd al-Amān*, also known as the Fundamental Pact or the Security Covenant. The pact made all residents equal before taxation law—ending a series of taxes levied only on non-Muslims—and also forced changes to the commercial and criminal codes to make the legal system more favourable to Europeans. Muhammed II was also required to consult Roches and Wood on the implementation of the pact, ensuring continued and direct European influence (see March 2020). As a result, a flood of European speculators arrived in Tunisia. Attempting to capitalise on this influx, Roches and Wood competed fiercely for investment deals with the Bey. Feeling the pressure bearing down

on him from both sides, Muhammed agreed to a series of infrastructure and commercial ventures with private companies and European governments that the treasury was simply unable to support. As a result, Muhammed II's successor, Muhammed al-Sadiq (or Sadok Bey), came to power in 1859 hampered by devastating financial obligations to France and Britain.

Roches and Wood had been pressuring Muhammad II to shore up the *'Abd al-Amān* with a formal constitution. Knowing he had few options, the Bey created a number of commissions dedicated to the constitutional question. The *Ulema*—the class of Islamic scholars—opted out of participating. They had been negatively impacted by the influx of Europeans and were against any shifts away from Islam as the foundation of Tunisia's socio-political and legal framework. The commissions finished their work just as Muhammed al-Sadiq came to power. He was more favourable to the idea of a constitution than his predecessor, naïvely thinking that adopting a constitutional political model would alleviate the immense pressure Tunisia faced from European powers. Due to France's insistence on the constitution, Muhammed al-Sadiq sought Napoleon III's approval on the text before promulgating the new constitution in 1861 (March 2020, 7).

### The Tunisian constitution of 1861

The Tunisian constitution of 1861 was the first of its kind in the Muslim world. It established a constitutional monarchy and a 60-person appointed Grand Council that shared authority with the Bey and was made up of the country's notables and the Bey's inner circle. It established religiously mixed tribunals for disputes between non-Muslims and Muslims, extended equality between Tunisians for taxation and military service, and allowed foreigners to own property. The *Ulema* remained opposed, continuing to see the constitution as an unacceptable secularisation of Tunisia. Ostensibly meant to curb arbitrary rule by the central government, in practice, the constitution consolidated it. The new pathways of power were governed completely by patronage. Rural Tunisians no longer had a representative at court and were unable to access the advantages of the new system. Rural and tribal communities had also lost the ability to arbitrate their own conflicts in customary courts and were now subject to new tribunals out of their control. Opponents of the constitutional process felt that 'native Tunisians were little more than a source of financing for government—and private—projects' (Anderson 1986, 83). Tunisians were also upset at what they perceived to be unfair advantages granted to Europeans; meanwhile, Europeans were unhappy that certain privileges had been revoked in the matters of taxation and the judicial system.

Facing a major financial crisis, the Bey rolled back the remainder of Ahmad's military reforms and introduced a crushingly high personal tax (Anderson 1986, 84). The nomadic lifestyle of many in rural Tunisia, and their open defiance of tax collectors and the central government, made increasing revenue difficult. As a result, Muhammed al-Sadiq accepted a debilitating loan from Paris in 1863 under terms requiring annual repayments that made up half the state's yearly income. Unable to meet this obligation, the Bey decided to double the personal tax. In 1864, tribes in El Kef and Kairouan rose in revolt, which then spread to the Sahil. The rebels called for an end to the devastating taxes, rolling back the reforms that undermined local notables, and suspending the constitution. Once again, French and British warships appeared on the horizon and the Bey borrowed money from the Ottomans to bribe local leaders to stand down. As a result, the demands of the rebels were granted,

but at a devastating cost to the Sahil. As punishment, the Bey confiscated property, crops, levied indemnities, and increased conscription, expanding it to include the sons of notables. The region was decimated by the levied taxes, which forced its inhabitants into long-term debt, led to chronic underdevelopment in the region for years, and fostered long-standing and deep resentment of Tunis (Perkins 2004, 33–37).

By 1869, Tunisia had officially gone bankrupt. Britain, France, and Italy formed the International Finance Commission, giving Europeans the administrative power to allocate government resources to repay debts. In the face of this crisis, liberal reformer and constitutionalist Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi returned to Tunisia in 1873 and served as Grand Vizier of the Beylik. He was well-known for his belief in the importance of the relationship between ruler and ruled and sought to improve public confidence in the central government. As an early thinker of the Arab Enlightenment, who sought to synthesise ‘Western social and material frames of reference with Islamic norms and values’, Khayr al-Din sought to bring the *Ulema* back into the political fold (Ayish 2008, 104). Adapting religious institutions to suit contemporary needs, he modified religious curriculum at Zaitouna University, established the *habous* councils—landholding religious trusts that paid for mosques and social programmes—and founded Sadiqi College. To provide relief to the Tunisian people, he cancelled unpaid taxes, lowered the tax rate to stimulate agricultural production, decreased export duties, and increased tariffs. He also curtailed abuse in tax collection—a major source of resentment among the Tunisian people. Finally, Khayr al-Din vastly expanded administrative capacity, further incorporating outer regions into a centralised state apparatus.

### **The French Protectorate of 1881–1956**

At the Berlin Congress of 1878, during which European powers divvied up control of colonies, France negotiated unlimited influence in Tunisia and the establishment of the French Protectorate. On the pretext of intervening in skirmishes between tribes at the Algerian border, France invaded Tunisia in 1881, forcing Muhammed al-Sadiq to sign the Treaty of Bardo under threat of house arrest. The Treaty gave France control over certain regions of Tunisia, allowed for indefinite military occupation, control of Tunisia’s foreign policy, and the reorganisation of Tunisia’s finances. Eager to recoup some of its financial investment, but wary of replicating expensive direct rule as in Algeria, France opted for indirect surveillance by installing French resident ministries within the government (Anderson 1986, 144). Tunisian tribes, particularly in the south, launched a resistance campaign against the French military. The French were largely able to squash the rebellion by 1882 but southern tribes that had long challenged any kind of outside domination continued to resist until 1910. In 1883, the new Bey, ‘Ali Bey, signed the Marsa Convention, which expanded the Treaty of Bardo to include French control of the domestic affairs of Tunisia, including administrative, judicial, and financial realms (Perkins 2004, 67). By 1886, France had complete control of most of Tunisia and withdrew the military everywhere except where resistance to the occupation persisted, mainly in the south and pockets in the northwest. With the Protectorate established, France began reshaping the Tunisian state.

Pre-colonial Tunisia had already been highly bureaucratised before the arrival of the French compared to its neighbours Libya and Morocco (see Charrad 2001). The French Protectorate, rather than dismantling the existing system, built essentially parallel administrative structures, using the previous apparatus to enhance the state’s penetration into

Tunisian society. Rather than the violent military rule the French implemented in Algeria, they focused on bureaucratic expansion and increased penetration of the market economy, all of which served to weaken kin-based ties and tribal power (Charrad 2001, 119). The French also introduced individual titling of land to facilitate French settlement, which led to the dispossession of farmers and created an agricultural underclass of wage-labourers forced into the international market economy. This further eroded the independence and autonomy of the outer regions of Tunisia and proved that ‘the ties of kinship were no longer adequate defence against the demands of the state’ (Anderson 1986, 145).

### **The nationalist fight for independence**

At the beginning of the 20th century, political nationalism had begun to foment, picking up momentum by the 1930s. Habib Bourguiba, a relative latecomer to the nationalist movement, joined Shaykh al-Tha’albi’s Destour Party, whose name referenced the Tunisian Constitution, in the early 1930s. Eventually, schisms developed within the party, leading Bourguiba and other prominent figures to split and found the Neo-Destour party in 1934 (Perkins 2004, 105–129). Abandoning the ‘salon politics’ of the Destour, the party focused on engaging the masses. They created a vast network of Neo-Destourian cells across the country that allowed them to mobilise in large and diffuse numbers (Bellin 1995, 126).

There were two major camps in the Neo-Destour. Bourguiba favoured a gradual approach and using domestic pressure to catalyse gradual change while Salah Ben Youssef took a more militant and aggressive approach towards France and the settler population. While Bourguiba was intermittently jailed by the French and in exile during World War II, Ben Youssef ruled the party in his stead. Under Ben Youssef, the ranks of the Neo-Destour swelled dramatically and he amassed a cadre of supporters within the party ranks (Perkins 2004, 105–129). Youssefists were associated with more conservative forces; namely, the religious establishment, artisans and merchants from Tunis, and the rural notables made up of kinship communities outside the capital (Charrad 1997, 294). Bourguiba’s base included the petit-bourgeois landowners, merchants of the Sahil, and eventually the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT), the country’s largest syndicate (Sadiki 2002, 499–500; Zartman 1998, 1–5). More than a difference of interest groups, the divergence within the movement was between fundamental constituencies. Bourguibists and Youssefists held vastly different visions of an independent Tunisia; Bourguiba’s secular liberalism contrasted sharply with Ben Youssef’s Arab nationalism. Ultimately, Bourguiba successfully negotiated the end of the Protectorate and Tunisia became independent in 1956. Ben Youssef fled into exile and Bourguiba became the first president of Tunisia.

### **The Bourguibist state**

Bourguiba immediately embarked on a path of social and political engineering, consolidating the state, and securing his position while undermining his rivals. The goal was to ‘set up a Destourian feudal system which would dictate its wishes to the central and local authorities’ (Rossi 1967, 43–44). He began consolidating a far-reaching central apparatus, which was made up of a single party, subordinate organisations, embedded within a unified bureaucracy. This required disassembling any potential nodes of oppositional power and controlling any space for contestation. Bourguiba had always represented the modernising faction of the nationalist movement, but he also recognised the power of legal

reform as a way to establish and maintain control and stability (see Hermassi 1991). Given the highly bureaucratic nature of the state at independence, Bourguiba was able to utilise top-down legislative initiatives as tools of social transformation, mechanisms to undermine his rivals, and ways to neutralise dissent or oppositional power. Ultimately, the goal was for all avenues of civic and political life to be co-opted and managed by the state, as illustrated by the women's movement, the Islamist establishment, and the UGTT.

### *The women's movement*

Among those early reforms, Bourguiba is best known for his promulgation of the Code of Personal Status (CSP) in 1956. Within months of taking power, Bourguiba largely discarded the *shari'a*-based code, representing the last hold of Islamic influence over Tunisia's legal sources. The CSP abolished polygyny, repudiation, and matrimonial guardianship, gave women equal rights in respect to the marriage contract and divorce proceedings, and set a minimum age of marriage for girls. Bourguiba also expanded the franchise and education to women, encouraged labour force participation, and called for women to eschew the traditional Tunisian head-covering. This 'instigation from above ... transformed gender into a political instrument' (Goulding 2009, 71). While his reforms did expand women's access to individual rights by a substantial degree, they also increased women's dependence on the state for their rights. This, in turn, decreased the chance that they would rely on alternative structures of power, such as kinship communities. These communities relied on rights embedded within patrilineal kin structures and used marriage as a way to maintain group cohesion (Charrad 2001, 18).

As a way to ensure that these reforms did not mobilise women as an interest group and into their own nodes of oppositional power, the state headed off the development of a grassroots and autonomous women's movement by creating the National Union of Tunisian Women (UNFT) (Brand 1998, p. 181). Ostensibly a non-state actor, the UNFT actually acted as a mouthpiece of the state, tasked with socialising women to their new role in an independent Tunisia. Rather than serving as a platform for women to exercise political agency, the UNFT was the vehicle through which the state was able to subsume the women's movement into one of its subordinate bodies.

### *The Islamic establishment*

While the CSP did adhere to several Islamic traditions, including unequal inheritance, it was the most secular code of personal status in the Muslim world and undermined the Youssefist religious establishment (McCarthy 2014). The CSP's shift away from *shari'a* dealt a blow to the final arena of Islamic legal influence, but it was also part of a broader series of modernising reforms aimed at weakening Islamic institutions. Bourguiba absorbed the 'decaying' (Bourguiba 1974, 154) Maliki and Hanafi *shari'a* courts, creating a civil court system for the arbitration of family law (Voorhoeve 2014, 32). In 1956, Bourguiba appointed Mohamed Tahar Ben Achour, a moderate reformist, to head Zaitouna University, one of the oldest Muslim universities in the world. Zaitouna was divested of its independence and placed under the control of the Ministry of Education until 1961, when it was allowed to operate a small school of theology under the auspices of the University of Tunis. Bourguiba also nationalised the *habous* (religious endowments) by instituting agrarian reform that expropriated this 'unused' land, which happened to constitute roughly a quarter

of the arable land in the country. Without the material base of support that the *babous* had provided, private Qur'anic schools virtually disappeared (Tessler 1980, 10). He also limited religious study to one hour per week in public schools and required that educators be able to teach in French in addition to Arabic, causing the large number of Arabic-speaking imams who were also public-school teachers to lose their jobs (Stepan 2012, 99).

Bourguiba, and the modernist faction of the nationalist leadership, had appealed to Islamic identities, frames, and sentiments during the fight for independence, but the modernisation project was based purely on 'exclusive humanism', in that 'faith and spiritual values are effective only to the extent that they are based on reason' (Tessler 2015, ix). However, Bourguiba was careful to situate his reforms in an Islamic language, in an effort to subordinate religion and claim the unique right of the state to interpret Islam for the public and the people. While marginalising Islamic power structures, Bourguiba framed these reforms as a new phase of innovative Islamic thinking (*ijtihad*) and the next in an historical series of Islamic legal thought (McCarthy 2014, 735). His appropriation of Islamic language and symbols as a mechanism by which to control religion in Tunisia illustrates Bourguiba's broader strategy of corporatism.

### *The UGTT*

The UGTT had played a critical mobilising role in the struggle for independence, utilising its wide membership to choreograph unrest. By 1956, it rivalled Neo-Destour in terms of ability to mobilise, with its large membership, broad base, nationalist legitimacy, and dynamic leadership. The UGTT was incorporated into the first national assembly and given ministerial appointments in the first government. However, when the union attempted to assert its power beyond what Bourguiba found palatable, he undertook his 'paradigmatic response' to co-opt, manage, and neutralise the UGTT (Bellin 1995, 128). By manipulating internal rivalries, Bourguiba engineered defections from the UGTT and the founding of a new, competing union. He was then able to orchestrate a reconciliation, reconstituting the union in entirely favourable terms. The UGTT leadership was dismissed, the union's direct representation in government was prohibited, and the independent political and economic agenda abandoned. Bourguiba promoted the ousted union leader, Ahmed Ben Salah, ensuring that a dynamic and popular figure was kept inside the party fold. The overall structure of the UGTT remained intact, but neutralised, space was freed for Bourguiba's allies in the union to gain power and influence, while avoiding complete alienation and outrage from the rank-and-file (Alexander 2016, 35–37). Throughout the rest of Bourguiba's rule, he would routinely interfere with the internal national politics of the UGTT to co-opt the national leadership, although he was less successful at ensuring complete subordination at a local level. This would prove crucial during the uprisings of 2011.

### **The fall of the corporatist state**

Bourguiba's political authoritarianism deepened in the 1960s. By 1963, he had banned all rival political parties, transforming Tunisia into a single-party state both on paper and in practice. This collapsed any distinction between party and state, which had extended itself into every corner of public and civil affairs (Alexander 2016, 39). Facing an economic crisis, Bourguiba initiated a socialist experiment, the main architect of which was Ben Salah, changing the party name to the Socialist Destourian Party (PSD). An era of collective and