

## Note on Transliteration

Most Arabic words, even those which occur in written, classical Arabic, are transliterated as they are pronounced in the spoken Arabic of the region in which I worked. The text would have been unnecessarily complicated had I followed separate conventions for the spoken and written variants. For example, Boujad, the town in which I worked, is spoken as *Bja'd*, written as *Abū l-Ja'd*. The word for "marabout" is *mrabet* in western Morocco, *murābit* in classical Arabic. In any case, specialists will easily be able to reconstitute the classical forms. There are exceptions to strict transliteration, primarily of words and place names that have fairly conventional European forms. Also, I have represented most words only in the singular, with plurals indicated by *-s*. The exceptions to this convention, like the others, are meant to make my text read as smoothly as possible. Plurals that commonly occur in Islamic literature in western languages (e.g., '*ulama*') have been kept intact. Similarly, descendants of the marabout Sidi Mḥammed Sherqi, who figure largely in my discussion, are called Sherqawi in the masculine singular, Sherqawa in the plural. I have also found it easier to call a resident of Boujad a Boujadi, as he is called in Arabic, than to resort to awkward circumlocutions.

I have preferred Richard S. Harrell's system for transliterating Moroccan Arabic vowels (Harrell, ed. 1966:xiii–xix) for two reasons. First, it is more accurate than the system of the International Congress of Orientalists (ICO), designed primarily for classical Arabic. Second, Harrell's system contains the publishing advantage of eliminating the macron for long vowels. There are six vowels: *e*, very short but like the *e* in English *masses*; *o*, very short but like the *u* of *put*; *a*, usually like the *a* of *mad*; *ā*, a shorter version of *a*; *i*, exactly as in French *vite*; *u*, like the *ou* in French *fou*. The ICO system has, however, been retained for consonants, since it is more widely known.

Fifteen out of thirty-one Moroccan Arabic consonants are almost identical with those which occur in English. The others are listed below:

- ʔ: a glottal stop, like the *tt* in Brooklynese *bottle*
- ḃ, ḏ, ḅ, ḥ, ḥ̣, ḥ̣̣, ḥ̣̣̣: emphatic consonants
- q: similar to *k* but pronounced farther back in the mouth
- kh: the same as the *ch* of German *Bach*
- gh: described by Harrell as “similar to a light gargle accompanied by a musical buzz from the adam’s apple” (Harrell, ed. 1966:xvii)
- h: “similar to an English ‘h’ pronounced in a loud stage whisper” (ibid.)
- ħ: the Arabic *‘ayn*, technically a pharyngeal fricative, with no equivalent in a European language
- l: like the *l* in French *louche*
- r: like the *r* in Spanish *para*