



A Few Notes on the History of Morocco prepared for our guests.

Prehistory: cave paintings and cut and polished stone tools show that Morocco has been inhabited since pre-historic and Bronze Age times. Rural berber tribes were present on the coasts, mountains, and oasis valleys.

Antiquity: pre-Roman and Roman Morocco, as the Carthaginians settled the Moroccan coast in the 5th century B.C, they discovered Phoenician trading posts. The Romans succeeded the Carthaginians in the 2nd century B.C., and united Morocco with eastern Mauritania. The colony was entrusted to the Romanized Berber prince Juba II in 25 B.C. In 42 A.D. Morocco became a Roman province called "Tingitane Mauritania". The Roman occupation lasted for five centuries.

The Vandals and the Byzantines: the decline of the Roman power around the 3rd century A.C. allowed first Vandals and then Byzantines to occupy the northern part of the country. Under the reign of Justinian, the Byzantine Empire controlled the Mediterranean coasts of Morocco.

The arrival of Islam: the arrival of Islam to Morocco was 647. The first major Arab expedition was led by Oqba Ben Nafi in 680. The second one was the work of Moussa Ben Nosair (703-711). The Morroccans began the conquest of Spain in 711.

The Idrissids (788-974) were Morocco's first muslim dynasty. Its sovereign was Idriss I, a political refugee from Arabia. He settled in Morocco and founded Fes in 789.

The Almoravids (1055-1147) were the first Berber dynasty. Its sovereign was Youssef Ben Tachfine who founded the city of Marrakech in 1062 and then took hold of the northern part of Morocco. He entered Spain and imposed his authority on the principalities of the muslim princes who were allied to the Spanish people.

The Almohads "The Unifying Dynasty" (1147-1268) were also Berbers. Ibn Toumert played the role of reformer of the morals and preached for war against the Almoravids. His successor, Abdel Moumen, founded the greatest moslem empire that ever existed in Western Africa. Yacoub El Mansour, Abdel Moumen's successor, proclaimed himself Sultan of Sevilla. We owe

Dar Les Cigognes

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him important architectural works such as the Koutoubia in Marrakech, the Hassan Tower in Rabat, and the Giralda in Sevilla. Many scholars consider the Almohad period as the greatest fluorescence of Moorish architecture and art. It was during their reign that so many great monuments were built on both sides of the straits of Gibraltar.

The Merinids (1269-1465) established the borders of Morocco. They conquered several Spanish cities, proclaimed themselves protectors of Letters and Arts and beautified all the main cities of their kingdom.

The Wattasids (1466-1548) were a short lived group.

The Saâdis (1549-1654) rose to power in the 15th and 16th centuries, the Islamic doctrine deeply affected their minds. Religious sentiment was getting stoked up from contact with the Christians who settled along the coasts of Morocco. The Saadians exploited this sentiment, heralding a new period of fundamentalist rule. The Sultan Ahmed El Mansour organized an expedition to Sudan and he brought back great wealths from Timbuktu: gold and slaves. His capital, Marrakech, was endowed with important constructions. Morocco knew an unprecedented prosperity.

The Alaoui Dynasty, from 1650 to the present. The Alaouis succeeded the Saadis towards the middle of the 17th century. The first Alaouite, Moulay Rachid, took hold of the north of Morocco and made Fes his capital. His successor, Moulay Ismail, a contemporary of Louis XVI, managed after a long reign to pacify and subdue Morocco. He extended his authority to the Berbers and successfully fought the Turks in Algeria. He managed to occupy Tangier which the English had just left and to take back Mehdia and Larache from Spain. He made Meknes his capital. Several Alaoui sovereigns succeeded Moulay Ismail. 1792-1822: Moulay Soulayman reinforced the dynasty. 1822-1859 : Moulay Abderrahman conquers Tlemcen and helps the Algerians fight the French. 1873-1894: Moulay Hassan reorganizes the artillery and thanks to the Mekhzen troupes, defends the areas which could provide an easy way inside his country. 1906: The sultan Abdelaziz signs the Algeciras Act which states economic equality of foreign countries in Morocco. 1912: Moulay Hafid signs the Protectorate Treaty with France, then with Spain. 1956: Mohammed V gives Morocco its independence. 1961 : The Royal Prince is enthroned under the name of Hassan II. 1975 : Morocco regains control of the Sahara which was under Spanish control. 1999: Mohammed VI is named King of Morocco.

1844: the defeat of Isly, the first major defeat against the French

1912: establishment of the French Protectorate

1953: exile of Mohammed V

1956: return of Mohammed V to throne and Moroccan Independence

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1961: death of Mohammed V, reign of Hassan II begins

1975: the Green March

1976: Spain cedes territorial claims on Western Sahara

1992: Morocco adopts constitution

1999: death of Hassan II, reign of Mohammed VI begins

2001: Dar Les Cigognes opens for business.

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