

## **Dutch Anthropologists in Morocco: From Exoticism to Islam at Home<sup>1</sup>**

**Léon Buskens**

NIMAR/Leiden University

**Abstract:** Anthropologists from the Netherlands have been studying Moroccan society since the 1950s. From the 1970s their number has grown gradually. At present we have a substantial body of publications on Morocco by Dutch anthropologists. This article gives an overview of the coming into being of this new tradition, with special attention to the social conditions of knowledge production. The beginnings were linked to the decolonisation of Dutch anthropology. The main boost for research stemmed from immigration of Moroccan “guest workers” and their families into the Netherlands. This went together with the rise of a Mediterranean anthropology. From the 1980s onwards “Islam” became a focus of interest, which took a new turn with the “war on terror” at the beginning of the new millennium. The article concludes with a reflection on the social embeddedness of this Dutch anthropology of Morocco, and with a plea for more dialogue and exchange.

**Keywords:** Anthropology, Morocco, Netherlands, Islam, Migration, History of Anthropology, Mediterranean.

To Anton Blok, teacher and totem.

### **Introduction**

Anthropologists from the Netherlands have been studying Moroccan society since the 1950s. From the 1970s, their number has grown gradually. At present we have a substantial body of publications on Morocco written by Dutch anthropologists. This article gives an overview of the coming into being of this new tradition, with special attention to the social conditions of knowledge production.

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1. Many thanks to François Pouillon and Saito Tsuyoshi, who invited me to present some ideas about Dutch anthropology in Morocco in a workshop at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris in 2017 and at Kobe University in 2019. I am also indebted to Ruud Strijp with whom I wrote a more general article about Dutch anthropology on the Middle East, Léon Buskens & Ruud Strijp, “Antropologische studies in het Midden-Oosten en van de Islam: Een overzicht van 25 jaar onderzoek in Nederland,” *Sharqiyât* 15, 1-2 (2003): 149-98. Koen De Cuyper, librarian at NIMAR in Rabat, provided some useful references. Marjo Buitelaar has been consistently encouraging me to pursue a study of anthropology in Morocco of which this article forms a part; I hope she does not mind that I have mentioned her in this part of the project. For more than three decades Jean Kommers has been extremely generous in exchanges on the history and practice of ethnography, including gifts of rare documents on Morocco. Finally, the author is grateful to the editors Aomar Boum and Rahma Bourqia for their invitation to contribute to this special issue and for their editing.

Despite the fact that contacts between scholars from Morocco and the Netherlands date back to the seventeenth century, as we will be briefly discuss in the first section, Morocco is a relatively new field for Dutch anthropologists. Dutch researchers started to look towards North Africa as a field of study in the 1950s upon the decolonisation of Indonesia which had been the primary field for Dutch anthropologists since the late nineteenth century (section 2). Dutch anthropologists went to Morocco in growing numbers since the 1970s with the coming of Moroccan families to the Netherlands (section 3). At about the same time Dutch anthropologists became more connected to international academia through the development of a Mediterranean perspective (section 4). From the 1980s Islam gradually became a main object of study, a trend reinforced by the events at the beginning of the new millennium (section 5). Although the focus on Muslims of Moroccan origin living in the Netherlands has become dominant, some scholars manage to do other work, for example on Amazigh culture (section 6).

In this article, I give an overview of anthropological research by Dutch scholars in Morocco. I have understood the category “Dutch” in a broad sense: scholars linked to Dutch academia, and Dutch citizens now working abroad. I hope that I did not offend anybody by in- or excluding them. I might also simply have forgotten some colleagues. My apologies for this as well. I will cross borders continuously: by occasionally using a broad definition of anthropology, to include the Amsterdam specialty of “sociography” for example. Despite my focus on Morocco, I will have to discuss some research on Moroccans and Islam in the Netherlands, since these fields are so intertwined. But this is not a study of the anthropology of Moroccans in the Netherlands. I will also occasionally refer to the work of some colleagues from Belgium, although this is again a different subject. The format of this article does not allow for a comprehensive bibliographical analysis. My intention is rather to construct an argument about the development of a field, in which I have been an actor myself since about 1984. Hence, it is a tale to be read with caution, like any ethnographic report, offering at best partial truths.

Despite the political and social importance of the ties between Morocco and the Netherlands, for many Dutch anthropologists Morocco is still rather marginal in the field. In the wake of the expansive growth of anthropology, research on Morocco was relegated to the subfield of studies related to migration and what used to be called “multiculturalism.” Inversely, Moroccan researchers are not too familiar with the work of their Dutch colleagues. In 2010, NIMAR, the then newly founded Netherlands Institute in Morocco, tried to remedy this by publishing a French translation of a volume of

anthropological essays edited by Marjo Buitelaar.<sup>2</sup> The cultural dominance of French and American models, due to political and linguistic reasons and the sheer power of numbers, almost completely obscures other, minor traditions, such as the Spanish, German, Scandinavian and Dutch publications.<sup>3</sup>

However, this mirrored marginality offers interesting opportunities to reflect upon the politics and poetics of anthropological research, looking as if it were from one “periphery” to another. What are the conditions for the coming into being of such a new tradition of anthropological research? How are the questions that Dutch anthropologists ask related to broader issues in the discipline (mainly developed elsewhere), to debates in Dutch, and in Moroccan society? How is the work of Dutch anthropologists made possible, and restricted by government policies in both countries? To what extent do they produce “useful knowledge,” linked to issues of governance formulated in terms of “development” in the past and security and migration nowadays?

For anthropologists, in Morocco, the Netherlands and elsewhere, the question is what Dutch anthropologists contribute to the development of anthropology and whether they manage to bring up the mileage on the dashboard of anthropology, to borrow an expression from the late Jeremy Boissevain. For ordinary citizens, Moroccans interviewed and observed by Dutch visitors, or Dutch tax-payers, the question might be rather what all this bothering people living their everyday lives has to offer to society, or maybe to individual self-understanding and to sociability.

### 1. Prelude: Erudite Exchange and Picturesque Orientalism

The beginnings of scholarly exchanges between Morocco and the Netherlands are intimately linked to the Dutch struggle for independence intertwined with foreign trade, imperialism, diplomacy and academic curiosity at the beginnings of the seventeenth century. The exchanges which the first scholars of Arabic had with literati from Morocco contributed considerably to their knowledge.<sup>4</sup> In the winter of 1609-1610, Jan Theunisz offered

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2. Some contributions have been included in Baudouin Dupret, Zakaria Rhani, Assia Boutaleb, and Jean-Noël Ferrié, eds., *Le Maroc au présent. D'une époque à l'autre, une société en mutation* (Casablanca: Fondation du Roi Abdul-Aziz Al Saoud pour les Etudes Islamiques et les Sciences Humaines/Rabat: Centre Jacques Berque pour les études en sciences humaines et sociales, 2015). The publication also presents ethnographic essays by Ellen van de Bovenkamp.

3. Hassan Rachik, *Le proche et le lointain. Un siècle d'anthropologie au Maroc* (Paris: Éditions Parenthèses/MMSH, 2012).

4. Herman Obdeijn & Abdelkader Benali, *Le Maroc vu par des voyageurs néerlandais (XVIIe – XXIe siècles). Un voyage à travers le temps*, traduction française de Michèle Boin (Casablanca: La Croisée des Chemins, 2019); Arnoud Vrolijk & Richard Van Leeuwen, *Arabic Studies in the Netherlands. A Short History in Portraits, 1580-1950*, trans. Alastair Hamilton (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2014).

hospitality to the young ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Ben Muḥammad, secretary to the Moroccan envoy to the Dutch Republic, in his inn in Amsterdam in exchange for Arabic teaching. His handwritten notes were proof of his interest in both literary and spoken Arabic. Theunisz would later briefly teach Arabic at the recently (1575) founded university in Leiden.

Thomas Erpenius, the first full professor of Arabic appointed in Leiden in 1613, met during his stay in France in 1611 with Ahmad bn Qasim al-Ḥajari who was there on a mission to further the interests of his fellow Andalusī refugees in Morocco.<sup>5</sup> In the summer of 1613, al-Ḥajari would stay at Erpenius’ house in Leiden. Erpenius strengthened his knowledge of Arabic in these exchanges and studied the Qur’an with him. In 1617, he published an edition of the famous text of the Moroccan grammarian of Amazigh descent Ibn Ajurrum, in succession to his *Grammatica Arabica* of 1613, with which al-Ḥajari seemed to have helped him during his stay in Leiden.

From 1622 until 1624 Jacobus Golius, a student of Erpenius, went to Morocco to advise the government on the construction of a harbour on the Atlantic coast near Safi. He was in contact with his teacher’s learned friend al-Ḥajari, at that time at the court in Marrakech, about the acquisition of Arabic manuscripts. Al-Ḥajari’s letters, and some of his manuscripts are kept at the library of Leiden University until today. Later on, after he had succeeded to the chair of his teacher and made further travels in the Levant, he also welcomed a visitor from Morocco in his Leiden home, who further contributed to his knowledge of Arabic. Golius included words of Maghribī provenance, presumably gathered during his stay in Morocco, in his Arabic-Latin dictionary (1653), which also was standard work for almost two centuries.

Both Erpenius and Golius acted as translators of the official correspondence between the Moroccan and Dutch government. The two countries shared a common enemy: Spain. The Dutch Republic had great interest in a safe conduct for their vessels on the way to the Indies for trade, whereas the Sherifian Empire could make good use of the Dutch canons. The two states entered into diplomatic relations in 1605, and concluded a first treaty in 1610. The two professors had a certain interest in religion, al-Ḥajari reports on his discussions with Erpenius on the Qur’an for example. In their meetings with Maghrebi visitors, and Golius even more so during his residence

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5. Ahmad b. Qasim Al-Ḥajari, *Kitāb nāṣir al-dīn ‘alā ‘l-qawm al-kāfirīn. (The Supporter of Religion against the Infidel). Historical Study, Critical Edition and Annotated Translation by P.S. van Koningsveld, Q. al-Samarrai and G.A. Wieggers* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Segunda edición, revisada y ampliada), 2015).

in Morocco, must have had ample material to ponder cultural differences. Unfortunately, unlike Michel de Montaigne, they did not write their musings down. Hence, we are not witnessing the birth of an anthropology of Morocco, but rather of Arabic philology, a study primarily aimed at texts in tune with the dominant way of understanding the world in Renaissance academia.

A century later, we encounter the rare voice of a female observer, Maria ter Meetelen, who was captured by Salé corsairs and enslaved in the service of Moulay Ismail in Meknes from 1731 until 1743. After her return to the Netherlands, she published the story of her adventures as a book (1648). Although it is a remarkable document of “participant observation,” it can hardly qualify as “proto-anthropology.” The historical interest of her report has led to translations into French, Arabic and English.<sup>6</sup>

At the end of the nineteenth century, another protagonist of the Leiden tradition of Arabic studies turned his interest to Morocco again: Reinhart Dozy (1820-1883). Like his seventeenth century predecessors he was mainly interested in texts as sources, in his case for the reconstruction of the history of al-Andalus and its relations with the Maghrib.<sup>7</sup> His successors were mainly interested in classical Arabic and Islamic studies, or in Islam in Arabia and Indonesia. Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936), the main character in this school, conducted ethnography in Arabia<sup>8</sup> and Indonesia in combination with a solid understanding of texts and field linguistics. His role as one of the founders of colonial Islamic studies brought him an advisorship position to the French Protectorate government in Morocco. In compliance with the imperial interests of their states, scholars at that time each had their *chasse gardée*.

Dutch travellers on their way to the Indies via the Suez Canal might stop in Tangiers for a first dose of the Orient, visualised in postcards sent home, while some artists went there on purpose for romantic exoticism, to transform into painting or prose. One of the first was the painter and writer Jacobus van Looy, who crossed the straits from Spain to Tangier in 1886. He was so enthusiastic that shortly after his marriage he took his wife to Morocco in 1901-1902. His trips resulted in beautiful drawings, paintings, books, and diaries full of impressions of daily life. Many writers and painters

6. Maria ter Meetelen, *Curious and Amazing Adventures of Maria ter Meetelen: Twelve Years a Slave (1731-43)*, trans. Caroline Stone (Kilkerran: Hardinge Simpole, 2010).

7. Gabriel Martinez-Gros, “Dozy, Reinhart,” in *Dictionnaire des orientalistes de langue française*, François Pouillon, ed. 333-5 (Paris: Karthala, 2012).

8. Christian Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: Daily Life, customs and learning. The Moslims of the East-Indian Archipelago* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

would follow. Their orientalism resulted in poetic travelogues and images, but alas none of them became a Westermarck.<sup>9</sup>

Dutch scholars had privileged access to Morocco at an early moment in history and used this opportunity to study mainly literary Arabic and to collect texts. Daily life and oral culture were no primary objects of research for them. Their interest in Morocco did however contribute to the building of a tradition of Arabic scholarship and to development of ties of trade and diplomacy. At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, Dutch travellers did not move beyond artistic orientalism with which they created a tradition of romantic images of an enchanted country of refined townsmen and fierce tribes. These two strands would somehow feed into the tradition that would slowly develop after the Second World War.

## **2. Looking for Another Paradise: Decolonisation and The Beginnings of Dutch Ethnographic Research in Morocco**

Around 1950, anthropology had a considerable tradition in the Netherlands, grounded in ethnography that mainly took place in the Dutch East Indies.<sup>10</sup> With the independence of Indonesia in 1945 and the painful war that followed, Dutch academics gradually lost their privileged access. The knowledge that they produced also became less in demand, less useful, as did the knowledge of Islam. In their quest for alternative fields, they turned to the remaining Dutch colonies in South America and New Guinea and to the new states of Africa. Many researchers had a preference for West- or East-Africa, but some opted for the Maghrib.

J.H. Jager Gerlings (1917-2010) and Douwe G. Jongmans (1922-2011) were among the first academics to do ethnographic fieldwork in Morocco in order to collect for the Museum of the Tropics in Amsterdam. Their travels in Morocco were part of a larger interest in rural areas of the Maghrib. Collecting ethnographic objects for their museum fitted with the objective to move beyond the traditional focus on Indonesia. The museum strived to expand its scope to present daily life outside Europe to a general audience. In cooperation with the French protectorate service headed by Jean Besancenot, the museum organised an exhibition on Morocco entitled “Craft and Country” in 1955 and 1956.<sup>11</sup> The book *Van bron tot bron* (“From Source to Source”)

9. Obdeijn & Benali, *Le Maroc vu par des voyageurs néerlandais (XVIIe-XXIe siècles)*.

10. Han Vermeulen & Jean Kommers, eds, *Tales from Academia. History of Anthropology in the Netherlands* (2 vols) (Saarbrücken: Verlag für Entwicklungspolitik Saarbrücken, 2002).

11. Mohamed Saadouni, “The Collection of Objects and Photo Archive from Morocco,” in *Josephine Powell (1919-2007). Traveller, Photographer, Collector in the Muslim World*, Judith Vos, ed., 49-65. (Amsterdam; Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), 2008), 49.



that Jager Gerlings and Jongmans published upon their return in 1955 is full of funny and adventurous stories about their travels “among the Berbers of the Moroccan Sahara” and lavishly illustrated with aesthetic photographs. They also published a more scholarly study on the sedentarisation of the Ait Atta, in line with general concerns in the literature about “culture change,” “modernisation” and “development.”<sup>12</sup> In the following years, the two would travel and collect in other parts of the Maghrib, especially in the Libyan desert, on which they would publish an article, and Jongmans also an illustrated monograph “Libya, Land of the Thirst” (1964). These travels and collections would lead to the central hall of the Tropenmuseum being completely covered in sand during the exhibition “Sahara” in 1961-1962.<sup>13</sup>

Jager Gerlings had a background in Indonesian studies and had a position at the former Colonial Institute in Amsterdam that had been transformed into an institute and museum for the tropics in 1950. In 1952, based on his research at the museum, he defended a thesis on Indonesian textiles at Utrecht University. Jongmans was a geographer by training and obtained his doctorate at the University of Amsterdam with a thesis on politics in Tahiti in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. From 1960 he would work for some years at the Africa department of the national museum of ethnology in Leiden, after returning to the anthropology department of his alma mater in 1964.

In 1953, cultural anthropology would acquire official recognition as an academic study. Until then it had been part of “Indology,” the study of Indonesian societies, cultures and languages which served as a training to become a colonial administrator and geography. In Amsterdam, the relations between ethnology and geography had given birth to the discipline of “sociography,” a brand of geography with a strong interest in ethnographic description.<sup>14</sup>

Willem Frederik Heinemeijer (1922-1999) had been educated in this sociographic approach when he went to Morocco at the eve of decolonisation to finally meet the daughter with a French postmaster with whom he had been corresponding for a while. The young lady did not respond to his affection, but the trip was nevertheless the beginning of a life-long love affair with Morocco, which would make Heinemeijer into the founding father of the

12. Douwe G. Jongmans & J.H. Jager Gerlings, *Vorstudie over de sedentarisation van de Ait Atta van de Sahara* (Amsterdam: Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, 1955b).

13. Saadouni, “The Collection of Objects and Photo Archive from Morocco,” 50.

14. Willem Frederik Heinemeijer, “A History of Anthropology in Amsterdam: Steinmetz and his Students,” in *Tales from Academia. History of Anthropology in the Netherlands* (2 vols), Han Vermeulen & Jean Kommers, eds, 227-43 (Saarbrücken: Verlag für Entwicklungspolitik Saarbrücken, 2002).

modern Morocco studies in the Netherlands. In 1960, he would publish “Morocco. In the Hot Shadow of Islam,” a monograph aimed at an audience of educated readers, especially teachers of geography, which featured a photograph of the author shaking hands with King Mohammed V.<sup>15</sup> The book appeared in a series which would later also include Jongmans’ monograph on Libya. Eight years later, Heinemeijer would defend his thesis “National Integration and Regional Diversity. A Sociographic Study of Morocco as a Developing Country,” in which he linked up with the “new nations” approach current in American social sciences.<sup>16</sup>

In 1947, the African Studies Centre was founded in Leiden, which was traditionally a center of Indonesian studies. Although the focus of research was mainly on politics, economics and business in Sub-Saharan Africa, the library also collected materials on North Africa. Lucien Adam (1890-1974) had started out as a specialist on Indonesian law, but transformed himself at the new centre into a specialist on politics and law in Africa, publishing on the legal statute of Tangier (of which the Netherlands was one of the administrators while it had the status of international zone), the nationalist movement in Morocco, and the independence of Maghribi states.<sup>17</sup>

In many cases, we may discern a similar pattern: scholars trained for research and administration of colonial Indonesia turned to Africa to look for new fields and a new career. The interest of Dutch scholars broadened to other parts of the world, and new questions linked to decolonisation, modernisation and cultural change came up. Museums catered to new audiences with these contemporary interests. For example, in the 1960s, the Tropenmuseum engaged the American photographer and traveller Josephine Powell to add urban material to the rural collections brought together by Jager Gerlings and Jongmans, together with photographs, films and sound recordings.<sup>18</sup> In 1969, these efforts resulted in an exhibition “Morocco. Craft and Trade in an Arab World.” At about the same time, Giljam Dusée travelled from Leiden to the Tafilalt oasis in order to collect objects and take photographs for an exhibition at the National Museum of Ethnology “Oas 70.”<sup>19</sup>

In 1964 four students of architecture at the Delft Technical University toured Morocco for more than three months in order to study “traditional

15. Willem Frederik Heinemeijer, *Marokko. In de hete schaduw van de Islam* (Meppel: J.A. Boom & Zoon, 1960).

16. Willem Frederik Heinemeijer, *Nationale integratie en regionale diversiteit. Een sociografische studie van Marokko als ontwikkelingsland* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1968).

17. For some biographical information, see: [https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucien\\_Adam](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucien_Adam).

18. Saadouni, “The Collection of Objects and Photo Archive from Morocco.”

19. Dusée, Giljam. *Oase 70's* (Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1970).



forms of habitation and types of settlement.”<sup>20</sup> Again, their work had a strong rural bias, with the final publication dedicating almost two thirds of its space to the countryside. Although the authors stressed that they were not specialists, their detailed drawings and photographs had considerable ethnographic value. They were part of a growing interest in Moroccan culture in the Netherlands.

Private travellers catered to the interest of general audiences for the exotic lands of the Maghrib and the Sahara, by publishing illustrated books and collecting ethnographic objects. The illustrator couple Bob Tadema-Sporry (1912-1987) and Auke Tadema (1913-1989) wrote a series of books and articles about contemporary North Africa and ancient Egypt, which put the spell on a generation of older and younger readers. I owe my own interest in anthropology and archaeology partly to the stories about the *khattāra* irrigation system in the pre-Sahara and their discoveries in Egypt which they published in *Taptoe*, a weekly publication for primary school children. The Tadema couple were also avid collectors; they were among the lenders of objects to the *Sahara* exhibition in Amsterdam in 1961-1962.

The two decades from 1950 until 1970 can be characterised by a growing interest in Morocco as an exotic country of poetry and mysterious beauty among academics and an educated audience. The happy few who travelled to Morocco brought back stories, pictures and objects that they transformed into beautiful books, written in Dutch, for a large audience and into museum exhibitions. The academic output was rather limited, and hardly internationally oriented. Only from the 1970s onwards Dutch anthropology would gradually connect more strongly to foreign debates. Until then the production of images of Morocco, and other parts of the Maghrib, was still connected to the Orientalism of artists and travellers from the first half of the twentieth century.

This link was quite revealingly embodied by an exhibition in the museum of ethnology in Rotterdam in 1969: “A View of North Africa. Dutch Painters and Graphic Artists.” The catalogue offered all the orientalist staple images, the cover presenting an etching by Kuno Brinks of young woman with naked breasts and adorned with ample jewellery entitled “Bijoux berbères.” The director of the museum got the idea for the exhibition from Rudolf Bonnet, a painter who had spent almost thirty years on Bali pursuing his quest for

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20. A.L.M.T Nijst, H. Priemus, H.L. Swets, & J.J. Van IJzeren, *Living on the Edge of the Sahara. A Study of Traditional Forms of Habitation and Types of Settlement in Morocco* (The Hague: Government Publishing Office, 1973).

beauty and sensuality.<sup>21</sup> Upon his return to the Netherlands, he started to look for paradise in Morocco and Tunisia. Thanks to the dedication of Fred Ros and his successor Charlotte Huygens, both Arabists from Leiden University, from 1968 the ethnology museum in Rotterdam would become the main centre for the study of Islamic art in the Netherlands, with important exhibitions, including several in cooperation with Morocco. Sadly, whimsical policy change of a later director of the museum made this expertise and part of the collections disappear.

### 3. Moroccan Migrants: Social Engagement and Useful Knowledge

In the 1970s two social developments came together which would considerably further the anthropological study of Morocco in the Netherlands. The cultural and social changes of the sixties resulted in a tremendous increase of university students, many of whom came from a lower middle or working-class background. A choice for the humanities and social sciences often went together with a leftist “critical” political orientation, which strived for social emancipation at home and in the rest of the world. At the same time, the number of immigrant labourers also increased substantially. Their numbers further augmented with the “oil crisis” of 1973, when Western European states started to close their borders to migrant workers. The young men from Southern Europe, the Maghrib and Turkey reacted by deciding to stay in Western Europe and bring in their spouses and children.

For young social scientists, these immigrants and their countries of origin constituted ideal subjects of research and social action. North Africa was relatively close and easily accessible compared to Indonesia or Sub-Saharan Africa. In their view, capitalism exploited the migrant workers who were in dire need of emancipation, as were their kinsmen in the countries of origin who suffered from repressive regimes. Marxist and Third World/Development perspectives dominated their analysis.

From 1965, Douwe Jongmans organised together with a local counterpart a training in fieldwork methods for anthropologists in Tunisia.<sup>22</sup> President Bourguiba had managed to create good relations with Western Europe, also because of his critical attitude toward Nasser. The Dutch government supported several development projects in Tunisia, one of the countries providing workers to the Netherlands. In the beginning of the 1970s the Free

21. A.F. Ros, *Kijk op Noord-Afrika. Nederlandse schilders en grafici* (Rotterdam: Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde, 1969).

22. Douwe G. Jongmans & K.W. Van der Veen, “Het leeronderzoek in Tunesië,” *Sociologische Gids* 16 (1968): 175-83.

University in Amsterdam would take over this field school, which would serve as an introduction to ethnographic fieldwork and to North Africa for many students.<sup>23</sup>

In 1974, the Ministry for Development Cooperation ordered studies in Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey about the effects of international labour migration on the socio-economic developments in the countries of origin. The research was intended as a preparation for government-funded development projects in these countries.<sup>24</sup> The research project in Morocco was headed by Willem Frederik Heinemeijer, professor of geography at the University of Amsterdam, and by then an old Morocco hand. His students would do the actual fieldwork. They were thus trained to become the promoters of social science research on Morocco for the generations to come; they included J.M.M. van Amersfoort, Herman van der Wusten, and Paolo De Mas. In the beginning this REMPLD project was quantitatively oriented. Later, researchers would turn more to qualitative methods in the tradition of “sociography;” the work of Mohamed Naciri and Paul Pascon would be of great influence. Herman van der Wusten, Paolo De Mas, and other young Dutch researchers participated in several of the fieldwork projects of Pascon and contributed to the seminal publications on the Rif and the Sous, two regions which most of the Moroccan migrant workers arrived to the Netherlands.<sup>25</sup>

In 1978, Paolo De Mas published a voluminous study of the possibilities for cooperation between the Netherlands and Morocco to contribute to the development of the Rif region. His monograph fitted within a socio-geographical approach with attention for questions of administration and policy making, founded on ample statistical data. The book was part of the REMPLD project with which the Dutch government wanted to actively contribute to socio-economic change in the countries of origin of the labour migrants. Policy advice was a major objective. Through his prolonged and multiple residences in Morocco and his participation in Pascon’s projects, De Mas acquired a feeling for daily life and an ethnographic approach. He would become one of the mentors of a generation of Moroccan ethnographers.

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23. Bernhard Venema, *Les Khroumirs. Changements politiques et religieux dans la période 1850-1987* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1990), 2.

24. W.F. Heinemeijer, J.M.M. Van Amersfoort, W. Ettema, P. De Mas, & H.H. Van der Wusten, *Partir pour rester. Incidences de l’émigration ouvrière à la campagne marocaine*, traduction de Raphaël den Haan (La Haye: REMPLD/NUFFIC, 1977), 5.

25. Paul Pascon & Herman Van der Wusten, *Les Beni Bou Frah. Essai d’écologie sociale d’une vallée rifaine (Maroc)* (Rabat: [no publisher], 1983); Paul Pascon et al. *La maison d’Ilich et l’histoire sociale du Tazerwalt* (Rabat: SMER, 1984).

The REMPLOD team stimulated an interest in rural Morocco, with a focus on migration and on transnational ties. Because of its orientation to policy-making and quantitative data, most of this work was closer to geography than to anthropology proper despite the use of qualitative methods to understand changes at grass roots level. The work of the geographer Wout Lentjes, who focused on issues of development, also fitted in this approach.<sup>26</sup> Through study tours, Lentjes initiated hundreds of students, among whom the present writer, to Morocco. Hein de Haas, who at present holds a chair for sociology at the University of Amsterdam, continues this tradition of research on migration. After a bachelor degree in anthropology, De Haas opted for a master and a doctorate in geography. He started his career with extensive fieldwork in Todgha region on the local effects of labour migration. Next to his doctoral thesis,<sup>27</sup> he published a detailed account of his fieldwork on the basis of his letters from the field home, in which he demonstrated his ethnographic sensitivity.<sup>28</sup> During his work in Oxford at the International Migration Institute, of which he was a founding member in 2006, De Haas directed his attention more to macro-level and comparative studies. Moroccan geographer Mohammed Berriane has also been an important influence on his work.<sup>29</sup>

At present, Hein de Haas works together with several colleagues on new forms of migration, from and into Morocco. While it has become increasingly difficult for Moroccan citizens to immigrate into Europe, Morocco is now welcoming migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa in its turn. Many of these migrants from West and Central Africa would like to continue to Europe, but they stay for shorter or longer periods in Morocco. Some even take up more or less permanent residency. The Moroccan government develops a relatively favourable policy, with which it strengthens its geopolitical position in Africa and its ties with Europe. The European governments take a strong interest in the role of Morocco as gatekeeper to Europe and sponsor research projects. Geographer Joris Schapendonk also spent some time doing fieldwork in Morocco in his quest to follow African migrants all the way to Europe.<sup>30</sup> Hein de Haas is involved in large scale research projects working together for

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26. Wout Lentjes, *Marokko als ontwikkelingsland* (Den Bosch: Malmberg, 1981).

27. Hein De Haas, "Migration and Development in Southern Morocco. The Disparate Socio-Economic Impacts of Out-Migration on the Todgha Oasis Valley," (Nijmegen: Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen [Ph.D. thesis], 2003).

28. Hein De Haas, *Aroemi, aroemi. Een vreemdeling in Marokko* (Amsterdam: Bulaaq, 2004).

29. Mohammed Berriane, Hein De Haas, Katharina Natter, eds., *Revisiting Moroccan Migrations* (London: Routledge, 2019).

30. Joris Schapendonk, *Finding Ways Through Eurospace. West African Movers Re-viewing Europe from the Inside* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2020).

example with political scientist Katharina Natter, who compared Moroccan and Tunisian migration policies.<sup>31</sup> Anthropologist Nadia Sonneveld obtained a grant to study legal aspects of African migrants' family life in Morocco. As migration of Moroccans to the Netherlands is increasingly becoming a phenomenon of the past, historian Nadia Bouras combines methods of oral history with archival research to preserve the memories of the generation of her parents as well as to understand new turns in the relations with the country of origin.<sup>32</sup> Gender plays a considerable role in her work as an analytical category.

The academic study of Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands and of Moroccan culture and society became increasingly guided by the perspective of social problems and governance and the counter-discourse of emancipation from the 1970s onwards. We can clearly discern a dialectical relationship between scholarly curiosity and societal needs. In a certain way these dynamics referred back to the colonial roots of anthropology in the Netherlands, as a discipline to gather knowledge about the others in order to administer them better, and also as a manner to defend their interests and to speak on their behalf. Older scholars, such as Jongmans and Köbben, had more or less direct knowledge of this colonial past. Köbben became personally involved in the governance of the communities of Moluccan immigrants, who had come to the Netherlands at the explicit orders of the dwindling colonial government and thereafter had been left to their own devices. The anthropology of Morocco developed in a context of an academic turn to the Mediterranean and Europe, and to migrants, a societal concern for humanitarian issues, a political movement for emancipation of the working class, and a restructuring of the universities to accommodate much more students and to acquire new funds for research.

The career of Douwe Jongmans epitomises the first stages of this movement. He started out as a sociographer in the era of decolonisation, travelling to the Maghrib at the end of colonial rule. For a while he worked in an ethnological museum taking care of the collections of Sub-Saharan Africa. Then, he started to organise a field school for students of anthropology in Tunisia. From the 1970s onwards he focused on the study of Maghribi migrants in the Netherlands, especially in the field of reproductive health for which he would obtain a chair at Utrecht University. Meanwhile, he had

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31. Katharina Natter, "Political regimes and immigration policymaking. The contrasting cases of Morocco and Tunisia," (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam [Ph.D. Thesis], 2019).

32. Nadia Bouras, *Het land van herkomst. Perspectieven op verbondenheid met Marokko, 1960-2010*. (Hilversum: Verloren, 2016).

moved again to the Royal Institute of the Tropics, the old colonial institute converted into a modern centre for applied research for development issues. In 1984, he edited a volume of “Moroccan Mothers: Pre-and Post-natal Care,” in which a younger generation of anthropologists and medical doctors published scholarly information, such as a study of Paolo De Mas on the Rif and of Lotty Eldering on Moroccan family structure, to contribute to the public health of Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands. It is revealing to see that in Jongmans’ work Islam still took a limited place.

#### 4. Mediterranean Anthropology

In the 1980s, Dutch anthropological research in Morocco became tightly connected to Anglo-American academia with the rise of an anthropology of the Mediterranean and Europe in Amsterdam and Nijmegen and guided by Jeremy Boissevain and Anton Blok.<sup>33</sup> The latter had started as a student of geography and sociography in Amsterdam and worked in Ann Arbor in the early 1970s. The two friends had done their own fieldwork in Malta and southern Italy, but encouraged their students to cross the Mediterranean. They were protagonists in the “part way home-coming” of anthropology.<sup>34</sup> Anton Blok admonished the freshmen arriving in Nijmegen in 1980 to consider working on the countries of origin of migrants, if they were eager to get a job later on. I was one of those young students who took his advice seriously. Morocco had many attractions: unlike many other countries in the Arab world it welcomed anthropologists, it was easy to travel to, even by train, and still “exotic.” It might serve as a stepping stone to further paradises later on, that were more difficult to reach in those days before cheap airfares. In the 1970s a trip to Morocco could also be part of the counter-culture and cultural critique, in which figured all kinds of cocktails of music, drugs, and orientalist eroticism. Some travellers would combine these personal preoccupations with more social concerns about international solidarity and political reform. In the earlier times of free travel this was to a certain degree a reciprocal exchange with young Moroccans also visiting Europe as part of their hippie experience.

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33. Dionigi Albera & Anton Blok, “The Mediterranean as a Field of Ethnological Study. A Retrospective,” in *L’anthropologie de la Méditerranée. Anthropology of the Mediterranean*, eds. Dionigi Albera, Anton Blok, and Christian Bromberger, 15-37 (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2001); Rob Van Ginkel, Alex Strating, and Jojada Verrips, “Trials and Tribulations of the Euromed Tribe: A History of Anthropology of Europe and the Mediterranean in Amsterdam,” in *Tales from Academia. History of Anthropology in the Netherlands. Part I*, Han Vermeulen, & Jean Kommers, eds, 341-363 (Saarbrücken: Verlag für Entwicklungspolitik Saarbrücken GmbH, 2002).

34. John Cole, “Anthropology Comes Part-way Home. Community Studies in Europe,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 6 (1977): 349-78.



Boissevain and Blok took American and British academia as a model for their work.<sup>35</sup> Their experience in the United States created a particular *habitus* of how to practice anthropology. Theory was very important, it was an instrument to understand social reality and actual research should connect to theoretical debates. Boissevain was an advocate of transactionalism and network analysis, whereas Blok looked for guidance in the work of Norbert Elias and Eric Wolf with state-formation as a fundamental concern. Blok moved more and more into the field of historical anthropology with an increasing interest in culture and *mentalités*. Also inspired by the work of his friend Carlo Ginzburg, he started to take structuralism seriously, especially as practiced by Edmund Leach. His seminal article “Rams and Billy-Goats. A Key to the Mediterranean Code of Honour” would profoundly influence a generation of Mediterraneanists educated in Nijmegen.<sup>36</sup>

Henk Driessen developed a strong interest for the Morocco from his work on Andalucía. His partner Willy Jansen did extensive fieldwork in Algeria about single women for her monograph *Women without Men*.<sup>37</sup> Later, she would do fieldwork in Jordan. Her work would be of great importance for development of a gender perspective on Muslim societies, for example in the work of Marjo Buitelaar, Karin van Nieuwkerk, Fenneke Reysoo, and Iris Sportel. Henk Driessen crossed the straits to do fieldwork and archival research in the port city of Melilla, which resulted in the monograph *On the Spanish-Moroccan Frontier. A Study in Ritual, Power and Ethnicity*.<sup>38</sup> Driessen would carry on Blok’s legacy to further develop an anthropology of the Western Mediterranean, with a historical dimension. He would focus in his work on ports, maritime connections and cosmopolitanism,<sup>39</sup> and on relations between the three major religious communities,<sup>40</sup> which went well with his interest in Spanish-Moroccan relations.

35. Anton Blok & Jeremy Boissevain, “Anthropology in the Netherlands: Puzzles and Paradoxes,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 13 (1984): 333-44.

36. Anton Blok, “Rams and Billy-Goats. A Key to the Mediterranean Code of Honour,” *Man* N.S. 16, 3 (1981): 427-40.

37. Willy Jansen, *Women Without Men. Gender and Marginality in an Algerian Town* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987).

38. Henk Driessen, *On the Spanish-Moroccan Frontier. A Study in Ritual, Power and Ethnicity* (New York & Oxford: Berg, 1992).

39. Henk Driessen, “Divisions in Mediterranean Ethnography. A Vision from Both Shores,” in *L’anthropologie de la Méditerranée. Anthropology of the Mediterranean*, Dionigi Albera, Anton Blok, Christian Bromberger, eds., 625-44 (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2001); Henk Driessen, *Mediterranean passages. Een zeewaartse visie op een overgangsgebied* (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 2002).

40. Henk Driessen, “A Jewish-Muslim shrine in North Morocco: Echos of an ambiguous past,” in *Sharing sacred spaces in the Mediterranean: Christians, Muslims and Jews at shrines sanctuaries*, Dionigi Albera, & Maria Couroucli, eds, 141-47 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012).

Henk Driessen and Willy Jansen, also collaborating with professors of Arabic studies Jan Peters and his successor Kees Versteegh, initiated a generation to fieldwork in Morocco. Fenneke Reysoo published a monograph on *moussems* in North-western Morocco.<sup>41</sup> Marjo Buitelaar published a thesis on fasting in Marrakech,<sup>42</sup> and later on also a book based on earlier fieldwork on the bathhouse in Sidi Slimane.<sup>43</sup> She would then move to research culture and Islam among the Dutch of Moroccan origin. Ruud Strijp had been introduced to the Maghrib through the field school organised by the Free University in Tunisia. He wrote his doctoral thesis on a Moroccan immigrant community in the Netherlands with ample attention to transnational ties.<sup>44</sup> He would also compile two bibliographic volumes of anthropological studies on the Middle East.<sup>45</sup>

The writer of the present survey also considers himself to be part of this Nijmegen school. As a graduate student at the Faculty of Law of Leiden University I conducted fieldwork in Salé and the Gharb to study Islamic law and family relations.<sup>46</sup> In later work I pursued my interests in history and the anthropology of texts by studying transformations in the Moroccan legal system and in literate culture.<sup>47</sup> Yvon Bartelink did fieldwork for her MA thesis in southern Tunisia, but then moved to the study of ideas about Islam of Moroccan female migrants in the southern Netherlands.<sup>48</sup> In 2016, Nina ter

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41. Fenneke Reysoo, *Pèlerinages au Maroc. Fête, politique et échange dans l'islam populaire* (Neuchâtel: Éditions de l'Institut d'ethnologie/Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1991).

42. Marjo Buitelaar, *Fasting and Feasting in Morocco. Women's Participation in Ramadan* (Oxford & Providence: Berg, 1993).

43. Marjo Buitelaar & Geert Jan Van Gelder, *Het badhuis tussen hemel en hel* (Amsterdam: Bulaaq, 1996).

44. Ruud Strijp, *Om de moskee. Het religieuze leven van Marokkaanse migranten in een Nederlandse provinciestad* (Amsterdam: Thesis Publishers, 1998b).

45. Ruud Strijp, *Cultural Anthropology of the Middle East. A Bibliography. Volume 1: 1965-1987* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992); Ruud Strijp, *Cultural Anthropology of the Middle East. A Bibliography. Volume 2: 1988-1992* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

46. Léon Buskens, *Islamitisch recht en familiebetrekkingen in Marokko* (Amsterdam: Bulaaq, 1999); Léon Buskens, "Tales according to the Book. Professional Witnesses ('*Udul*) as Cultural Brokers in Morocco," in *Narratives of Truth in Islamic Law*, Baudouin Dupret, Barbara Driessens, Annelies Moors, eds., 143-60 & p. 340 (Notes) (London & New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. 2008).

47. Léon Buskens, "Paper Worlds. A *Nesrani* Ethnographer Entering the Manuscript Trade in Morocco," in *Pratiquer les sciences sociales au Maghreb. Textes pour Driss Mansouri. Avec un choix de ses articles*, François Pouillon & Mohammed Almoubaker, eds., 239-65 (Casablanca: Fondation du Roi Abdul-Aziz Al Saoud pour les Etudes Islamiques et les Sciences Humaines, 2014); Léon Buskens, "Writers and Keepers. Notes on the Culture of Legal Documents in Morocco," in *The Vellum Contract Documents in Morocco in the Sixteenth to Nineteenth Centuries. Part II*, Toru Miura & Kentaro Sato, eds., 98-125 (Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 2020).

48. Yvon Bartelink, *Vrouwen over Islam. Geloofsvoorstellingen en -praktijken van Marokkaanse migranten in Nederland (Brabant)* (Nijmegen: Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen [Ph.D. thesis], 1994).

Laan, also a former student of Henk Driessen, defended a thesis on religious music in Morocco.<sup>49</sup> At present she does research on female Dutch converts to Islam who have moved to Morocco for religious reasons.<sup>50</sup>

Although the interest of anthropologists for the Mediterranean began earlier at the University of Amsterdam, not many opted to work in Morocco. Philip van der Meer and Andreas Eppink were among the first to go to Morocco. Van der Meer had been initiated to the Maghrib through Jongmans' field school in Tunisia. Both focused on psychology, health and cross-cultural communication among Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands. They understood the problems of these newcomers through the lens of Moroccan culture, which they became acquainted with by fieldwork in Morocco. Their approach was a mix of anthropology, psychology and public health studies.

At the same time, Lotty van den Berg-Eldering started her research on Moroccan families in the Netherlands for which she also visited Morocco. She defended her thesis much earlier than Van der Meer under the same supervisor André Köbben.<sup>51</sup> For Lotty Eldering her thesis was the starting point of a life dedicated to the study of family life, education and pedagogics; this would ultimately lead to a chair for "Intercultural pedagogics" at Leiden University and a handbook on the subject which saw several editions. Lotty Eldering would supervise many research projects on Moroccan family life, children and education in the Netherlands. One famous example is the thesis of Trees Pels on the cultural capital of young children of Moroccan origin living in the Netherlands.<sup>52</sup>

From the early 1970s anthropologists in Amsterdam started to study immigrants from Morocco in the Netherlands. Douwe Jongmans and André Köbben, who had done fieldwork in West-Africa and Suriname, encouraged this turn to practical issues such as physical and mental health, family life and education. Hans Werdmölder first practiced fieldwork in Mexico and in his native Venlo, a town in the South of the Netherlands. In 1982 he started a project on marginal youngsters of Moroccan descent in an old quarter of Amsterdam. His "deep hanging out" among young men, some of whom were turning to petty crime, first resulted in a thesis supervised by Lotty Eldering

49. Nina ter Laan, "Dissonant Voices. Islam-inspired Music in Morocco and the Politics of Religious Sentiments," (Nijmegen: Radboud Universiteit [Ph.D. Thesis], 2016).

50. Nina ter Laan & Merel Kahmann, "In search for a place to "just be a Muslim." Dutch Muslims (re)turning to Morocco," *Idee* 207 (2019): 63-67.

51. Lotty Van den Berg-Eldering, *Marokkaanse gezinnen in Nederland* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Samsom, 1978).

52. Trees Pels, *Marokkaanse kleuters en hun culturele kapitaal. Opvoeden en leren in het gezin en op school* (Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger, 1991).

and a professor of criminology.<sup>53</sup> It would be the beginning of a life dedicated to the study of deviant young Moroccan men, and their eventual turn to a regular family life or not, described in a series of monographs. It would also give rise to vivid polemics among anthropologists on how to understand this behaviour. Hans Werdmölder took a culturalist position, referring to “Moroccan culture” as an explanation of the ways in which the young men behaved in the Netherlands. Werdmölder regularly visited Morocco to strengthen his understanding of this culture. Several colleagues such as his senior Frank Bovenkerk, and the younger Frank van Gemert criticized these understandings.<sup>54</sup>

Other scholars, led by Nico Kielstra, who had done fieldwork in Iran, Algeria and Southern France preferred political subjects. This gave rise to a flourishing tradition in which Paul Aarts played an important role, and of which Farid Boussaid is currently the main representative. As a scholar with degrees in both political science and economics Boussaid defended his doctoral thesis in Oxford supervised by Michael Willis. Anthropologist Miriyam Aouragh specialised in online ethnography and anthropology of media; she also studies protests in Morocco, notably the February 20 movement and its Internet forms of expression.<sup>55</sup>

Only at a rather late stage in the development of Mediterranean anthropology in Amsterdam students did fieldwork in Morocco. Marina de Regt wrote a MA thesis on female carpet weavers in Salé, in which gender and economics were important issues studied through the collection of life-stories.<sup>56</sup> Remco Ensel, who had studied both history and anthropology in Amsterdam, was supervised by Anton Blok for his doctoral thesis on social hierarchies in the Dra valley in which he engaged with the work of Louis Dumont.<sup>57</sup>

In 1986, anthropologists at the Free University in Amsterdam decided to move their field school from Tunisia to the Middle Atlas in Morocco. They gave several reasons for their choice: the lack of knowledge about the region, the beautiful scenery and the welcoming attitude of some of the inhabitants at

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53. Hans Werdmölder, *A Generation Adrift. An Ethnography of a Criminal Moroccan Gang in the Netherlands* (London: Kluwer Law International, 1997).

54. Frank Van Gemert, *Ieder voor zich. Kansen, cultuur en criminaliteit van Marokkaanse jongeren* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1998).

55. Miriyam Aouragh, “*L-Makhzan al-'Akbari*: Resistance, Remembrance and Remediation in Morocco,” *Middle East Critique* (2017): 1-23.

56. Marina De Regt, *De ontrafeling van een vrouwenberoep. Tapijtknoopsters in Rabat-Salé (Marokko)* (Leiden: Centrum Vrouwen en Autonomie (VENA), 1992).

57. Remco Ensel, *Saints and Servants in Southern Morocco* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

their first visit.<sup>58</sup> Edien Bartels, another prominent faculty member engaged in long standing fieldwork in Tunisia since 1976, had already started to visit Morocco in 1981 and 1984.<sup>59</sup> Venema worked on power, Islam and political and religious change at a regional level; Jogien Bakker and other younger female researchers introduced a strong gender perspective. One of them, Julie-Anne Borm, would continue to work with Lotty Eldering on a number of research projects in the Netherlands, such as on handicapped children and single mothers of Moroccan descent. In 1993, Jogien Bakker defended a doctoral thesis on traditional healing in the Middle Atlas. A year later she edited together with Bernard Venema a collection of essays on women in the Middle Atlas.<sup>60</sup>

### 5. The Islamic Turn

When I started my studies in anthropology in 1980 in Nijmegen and soon turned to Arabic and Islamology as well, I came to realise that anthropologists had paid only scant attention to Islam, either in the Muslim world or among migrants in Western Europe. My bibliographical research to prepare fieldwork on the month of Ramadan in Larache (1984-1985) resulted in less than ten ethnographic studies worldwide on one of the most important moments in the religious life of Muslims. It seemed that many researchers considered the study of the “great tradition” of Islam to be uninteresting, assuming some kind of uniformity in the practicing of allegedly universalist rules. This view was, of course, entirely wrong as many anthropologists would soon start to argue. Among the first was John Bowen who based on detailed fieldwork in northern Sumatra started to do more comparative and theoretical work as well, for example on sacrifice both in Indonesia and in Morocco.<sup>61</sup>

Anthropologists and sociographers with field experience in northern or other parts of Africa and their students who turned to the study of immigrants in Dutch society in the 1970s understood these newcomers primarily through the lens of labour migration, development, class, inequality, and exploitation. Part of their research focused on practical issues such as health care and education. At about the same time Catholic and Protestant missionaries who had returned from the Muslim world to the Netherlands, such as Jan Slomp,

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58. Bernhard Venema & Jogien Bakker, eds., *Vrouwen van de Midden Atlas: vrij of vroom?* (Utrecht: Jan van Arkel, 1994), vii.

59. Edien Bartels, ‘Eén dochter is beter dan duizend zonen.’ *Arabische vrouwen, symbolen en machtsverhoudingen tussen de sexen* (Utrecht: Jan van Arkel, 1993), 33.

60. Venema & Bakker, *Vrouwen van de Midden Atlas*.

61. John R. Bowen, “On Scriptural Essentialism and Ritual Variation: Muslim Sacrifice in Sumatra and Morocco,” *American Ethnologist* 19, 4 (1992): 656-71.

Piet Reesink and Matthieu Geijbels, begun humanitarian projects to cater to the spiritual needs of the migrants.

These clergymen were among the first to take an interest in the Islam of the Moroccan, Tunisian and Turkish citizens. Their training in theology and missiology provided them with the notion of “interreligious dialogue” as a framework for their encounters. They called the periodical in which they discussed their work *Begrip* (“Understanding,” a notion which also includes “sympathy,” published from 1974 until 2017). The huge doctoral thesis of Sjef Theunis on Moroccan migrant labourers in the Netherlands, embodied the fusion of the two perspectives, labour migration and Islam.<sup>62</sup> Theunis had studied comparative religion and philosophy; he was active in development and education, and known for his leftist, “revolutionary” perspective. His thesis opened with a quote from Clifford Geertz’ *Islam Observed*, which he understood as an admonishment to let his Moroccan friends speak in his thesis. His perspective was engaged, he tried to do justice to marginal Muslims in the Netherlands. By far the largest part of the thesis discussed aspects of Islam.

Among the government and the administration, the interest in Islam also increased. Proper policy required sound knowledge of the languages, cultures, religion and law of the immigrants. For a long time, the official assumption was that the labour migrants were only temporarily residing in the Netherlands, and that later they would return to contribute to the development of their countries of origin. In addition, and out of respect for their cultural identity, rooted in Dutch “pillarised” politics, the government sponsored education and radio and television broadcasting in Arabic, Riffian and Turkish.

The young scholars of the new generation would make the transition from an anthropology of migration, minorities and ethnicity to an anthropology of Islam and Muslims in Europe. The intellectual trajectory of Marjo Buitelaar may serve as an illustration. In the 1980s, she did prolonged fieldwork in Morocco on the bathhouse in Sidi Slimane and later on fasting during the month of Ramadan in Berkane and Marrakech. She was among the first Dutch anthropologists in Morocco to make Islam into her main subject. In her book *Fasting and Feasting in Morocco*, she focused on gender as a central aspect of ritual practice, as the subtitle stresses: *Women’s Participation in Ramadan*.<sup>63</sup> As a student of Willy Jansen and Henk Driessen she was taking their lessons one step further. From the late 1990s she started her study of highly educated second generation migrant women of Moroccan descent in which Islam and

62. Sjef Theunis, *Ze zien liever mijn handen dan mijn gezicht. Buitenlandse arbeiders in ons land* (Baarn: Het Wereldvenster, 1979).

63. Buitelaar, *Fasting and Feasting in Morocco*.



gender were again important issues.<sup>64</sup> In 2006 Buitelaar published a collection of her essays in Dutch “Islam and Daily Life,” based on fieldwork both in Morocco and the Netherlands. In one of the chapters she explicitly discusses the view of Islamic heritage among women of Moroccan descent who had been raised in the Netherlands. In her work the understanding of Moroccan culture and heritage among Dutch-Moroccans would become increasingly important.

At Groningen University, Marjo Buitelaar would supervise a considerable body of research on identity and Islam among younger generations of Moroccan descent. She was involved in a project with Karin Vintges (University of Amsterdam) and with Fatima Sadiqi and Moha Ennaji (Fez) on women, activism and Islam.<sup>65</sup> In this project, Aziza Ouguir wrote a doctoral thesis on female saints in Morocco which she published recently.<sup>66</sup> At present Marjo Buitelaar does research on Muslim pilgrims to Mecca, while Kholoud al-Ajarma recently defended her doctoral thesis based on extensive fieldwork about Moroccan pilgrims at Groningen University.<sup>67</sup>

For several years the Belgian anthropologist and psychologist Philip Hermans was Marjo Buitelaar’s colleague in Groningen. He had been involved in long term research among Moroccan migrants in Brussels while working as a psychotherapist. He went to Morocco on a yearly basis to study traditional Moroccan healing in the region of Doukkala. He brought his knowledge in both countries together in a monograph on the world of the *jnun*, which had also considerably value for therapeutical practice.<sup>68</sup> Cor Hoffer identified himself as a sociologist. In his research on health matters among migrants in the Netherlands Islam played an even more prominent role. From the 1990s onwards he did extensive fieldwork on “Islamic healing” and popular religion among Muslims in the Netherlands, on male circumcision and on organ donation.<sup>69</sup>

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64. Marjo Buitelaar, *Van huis uit Marokkaans. Over verweven loyaliteiten van hoogopgeleide migratendochters* (Amsterdam: Bulaaq, 2009).

65. Moha Ennaji, Fatima Sadiqi, Karen Vintges, eds, *Moroccan Feminisms. New Perspectives* (London & Trenton NJ: Africa World Press, 2017); Marjo Buitelaar, Moha Ennaji, Fatima Sadiqi, Karen Vintges, eds, *Activisme, Feminisme en Islam. Stemmen van Marokkaanse en Marokkaans-Nederlandse Vrouwen* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018).

66. Aziza Ouguir, *Moroccan Female Religious Agents. Old Practices and New Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

67. Kholoud Al-Ajarma, “Mecca in Morocco. Articulations of the Muslim Pilgrimage (Hajj) in Moroccan Everyday Life,” (Groningen: Rijksuniversiteit Groningen [Ph.D. Thesis], 2020).

68. Philip Hermans, *De wereld van de djinn. Traditionele geneeswijzen in Marokko* (Amsterdam: Bulaaq, 2007).

69. Cor Hoffer, *Volksgeloof en religieuze geneeswijzen onder moslims in Nederland. Een historisch-sociologische analyse van religieus-medisch denken en handelen* (Amsterdam: Thela Thesis, 2000).

In Leiden, the Arabist Mariëtte van Beek turned to ethnographic fieldwork on oral traditions on the Seven Saints of Marrakech. In her doctoral thesis she combined her outstanding fieldwork skills with philological study of classical hagiographical texts, and the modern literary production of local intellectuals who revived Sufism in their quest for a modern, “liberal” spirituality.<sup>70</sup> Unfortunately, this gifted researcher decided to leave academia. She made her intimate knowledge of language and culture available to a general audience in a travel guide for Marrakech and in other travel reports, somewhat similar to the tourist guide to Morocco that Remco Ensel published in 2001.

While Dutch anthropologists had started to study Islam in Morocco from the 1980s, the focus became much stronger almost exclusively religious from the beginning of the new millennium. The so-called “war on terror” that the 9/11 attacks in New York provoked strengthened the shift of perspective from migrants to Muslims. The attacks in Madrid, London and Paris, as well as two political murders on outspoken critics of Islam that startled the Netherlands in 2002 and 2004 led policy and opinion makers to the conclusion that “Islam” was a problem, a cause of political violence and public confrontation.<sup>71</sup>

The politician and liberal intellectual Frits Bolkestein had prepared the ground from the early 1990s in debates about Islam as opposed to European culture which for him was rooted in Christianity and Judaism. One of his interlocutors was Mohamed Arkoun, with whom he published a book. Among his protégées was Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who moved from the Labour Party to the Liberals. She added the gender dimension to the debate, claiming inside knowledge about patriarchal Islamic culture through her background as a Somali refugee. “Islam” became the crucial category to understand all problems. Other categories, such as class, ethnicity or migration became less fashionable, in fact they were almost obscured by religion. In 2004 the public interest in gender and Islam led to the award of the prestigious Erasmus prize to the Moroccan sociologist and intellectual Fatema Mernissi, together Abdulkarim Soroush and Sadik al-Azm for the theme “religion and modernity.”

The rise of Islam as an object of anthropological studied was also closely linked to internal developments in the Moroccan-Dutch communities.

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70. Mariëtte Van Beek, “De wereld is een verhaal, het verhaal is een wereld. Interpretaties van orale heiligentradities uit Marrakech, Marokko,” (Leiden: Onderzoeksschool CNWS [Ph.D. Thesis], 2003).

71. Ian Buruma, *Murder in Amsterdam. The Death of Theo Van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006); Sam Cherribi, *In the House of War: Dutch Islam Observed* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

There was a dialectic between the external identification and the internal self-identification as “Muslims,” which also manifested itself in the institutionalisation of Islam in the Netherlands.<sup>72</sup> Many of the first generation of “guest workers” reached an age in which they turned increasingly to Islamic norms for orientation in life, visiting mosques as places of sociability, as did their kin who had remained in Morocco. The Moroccan-Dutch sociologist and politician Oussama Cherribi shed some light about what imams were preaching in mosques in Amsterdam in his doctoral thesis.<sup>73</sup>

Some children of the first generation immigrants were highly educated. Their literacy combined with their quest for a clear identity as a response to their perceived rejection and discrimination in Dutch society brought some of them to a scripturalist Islam. During the weekends they sent their children to mosque to learn Arabic and Islam, partly because the Dutch government’s policy no longer provided this as part of the regular curriculum. Some of them founded Islamic schools. Intermarriage with non-Muslim Dutch relatively common among first generation immigrant men drastically decreased. Some young Moroccan women preferred Turkish men to countrymen as they considered them to be more “modern,” while still being proper Muslims. Younger generations embraced a Gulf-inspired scripturalist and puritanical Islam, often identified as “Salafi” Islam. This led to the rise of a more general Islamic identity, surpassing ethnic divides. As anthropologist Daan Beekers argued in religious orientalism many young Muslims resemble their Christian fellow Dutch in their quest for faith, piety and “spirituality.”<sup>74</sup>

Academically, these trends manifested themselves in a transformation of many departments of languages and cultures of the Middle East into programmes for Islamic studies, often incorporated in new institutional structures for “religious studies,” which replaced the dwindling faculties of theology. In colonial times, Dutch academia had played an important role in the coming into being of Islamic studies as a “useful” academic field. With decolonisation the study of Islam had attracted considerably less interest, scholars turning to Arabic literature or history instead. From the end of the last century, Islamic studies became useful again and the government made funding available. In 1998 this led to the foundation of the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM), which flourished for ten

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72. Nico Landman, *Van mat tot minaret. De institutionalisering van de islam in Nederland* (Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 1992).

73. Oussama Cherribi, “Imams d’Amsterdam. A travers l’exemple des imams de la diaspora marocaine,” (Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam [Ph.D. Thesis], 2000).

74. Daan Beekers, “Precarious Piety. Pursuits of Faith among Young Muslims and Christians in the Netherlands,” (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam [Ph.D. Thesis], 2015).

years, and from 2009 to the Netherlands Interuniversity School for Islamic Studies (NISIS). In both structures, anthropologists played an important role. Strijp gave an overview of Dutch researchers in Islam at the start of ISIM.<sup>75</sup> It was striking to see that in all these developments much more researchers, both anthropologists and Islamicists, opted to study Islam in the Netherlands than in Morocco or Turkey.

At Leiden University the Arabist Pieter Sjoerd van Koningsveld widened his interest from Muslim Spain to include Islam in contemporary Europe, when he moved from the library as keeper of oriental manuscripts, to become a lecturer on Islam at the Faculty of Theology in 1974. He was a fierce critic of the Leiden establishment, taking inspiration of Said's *Orientalism* to attack the reputation of the founder of Islamic studies in Leiden Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje. He also became a strong defender of equal rights for Muslims. Van Koningsveld was a philologist, giving primacy to textual sources, which he studied from a historical-critical and comparative perspective. He cooperated for several decades with the anthropologist Wasef Shadid. Like Sjeff Theunis, Shadid had also defended a thesis on Moroccan workers in the Netherlands in 1979. His book was based on a rigorous quantitative approach and an extensive survey. Instead of personal stories gathered through interviews, presented in a phenomenological manner, Shadid offered exact figures. Van Koningsveld and Shadid would together play an important role in the study of Islam in the Netherlands, publishing several monographs and edited volumes together.<sup>76</sup> Van Koningsveld would also continue his historical studies on Islam in al-Andalus and the Maghrib. In his inaugural lecture on becoming a full professor, he related the study of contemporary Muslims to his historical research, by claiming the continuous existence of tradition of a crypto-Islam in the Iberian Peninsula.

Van Koningsveld and Shadid supervised ethnographic research on Muslims in the Netherlands. Nathal Dessing studied rituals of birth, circumcision, marriage and death among Muslims of Moroccan, Turkish, Surinamese Hindustani and Surinamese Javanese origin in the Netherlands. She described actual practice's and related these to normative texts.<sup>77</sup> In order to understand these practices, she also visited Morocco and Turkey and used ethnographic literature on these countries. Khadija Kadrouch-

75. Ruud Strijp, *A Guide to Recent Dutch Research on Islam and Muslim Societies* (Leiden: International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM), 1998a).

76. W.A.R. Shadid & P.S. Van Koningsveld, *Religious Freedom and the Position of Islam in Western Europe. Opportunities and Obstacles in the Acquisition of Equal Rights* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1995).

77. Nathal Dessing, *Rituals of Birth, Circumcision, Marriage and Death among Muslims in the Netherlands* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001).

Outmany, one of their last doctoral students, wrote a thesis on Islamic burials in the Netherlands, in which she put her legal and religious studies to good use.<sup>78</sup> Later she would accompany Moroccan-Dutch pilgrims to Mecca as an ethnographer in the Hajj project of Marjo Buitelaar.

Van Koningsveld worked together with Ron Haleber on a book about Mohammed Arkoun,<sup>79</sup> who was appointed as a guest professor at the University of Amsterdam in order to contribute to the creation of an enlightened Islam in the Netherlands. Many people had high expectations of Arkoun, as showed the book that the politician Frits Bolkestein and Mohammed Arkoun published together. Ron Haleber was as a philosopher and sociologist very active in the debate on Islam in the Netherlands in the 1990s. He based his knowledge of Morocco not only on a rich historical and sociological library and exchanges with Moroccans living in the Netherlands, but also on regular visits to Morocco, where he was engaged in long-term research. In 2001 he defended his doctoral thesis at the University of Amsterdam on views of young Moroccans of the West based on a quantitative study of interviews in Southern Morocco.<sup>80</sup> Haleber enjoyed debate and polemics, also with his colleagues in Morocco. An early article on the growing alienation of Moroccan migrants in Dutch society published in the Moroccan journal *Economie et socialisme* demonstrates his engagement, founded in a philosophical perspective.<sup>81</sup>

At the Free University in Amsterdam Edien Bartels moved from Tunisia and Morocco to the study of Moroccan migrants living in the Netherlands. She had a strong interest in gender and health. In the 1990s, she started a research project in Gouda, a town with a sizeable community of Moroccan migrants. Martijn de Koning wrote a doctoral thesis on identity politics and the experience of Muslim faith among youngsters.<sup>82</sup> This was the beginning of prolonged fieldwork on new developments on Islam in the Netherlands with a strong interest in Salafism. Martijn de Koning also became known for his contributions to public debates about Islam and citizenship. He

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78. Khadija Kadrouch-Outmany, "Islamic Burials in the Netherlands and Belgium. Legal, Religious and Social Aspects," (Leiden: Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Developmental Sociology, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Leiden University [Ph.D. Thesis], 2014).

79. Ron Haleber & Pieter Sjoerd Van Koningsveld, *Islam en humanisme. De wereld van Mohammed Arkoun* (Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 1992).

80. Ron Haleber, "La révolte mondiale contre l'Occident: la jeune élite marocaine face au choix entre tradition et modernisation. Interviews quantifiées dans le Maroc méridional," (Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam [Ph.D. thesis], 2001).

81. Ron Haleber, "L'aliénation croissante du migrant marocain dans la société hollandaise," *Economie et socialisme* 9 (1988): 65-89.

82. Martijn De Koning, *Zoeken naar een 'zuivere' islam. Geloofsbeleving en identiteitsvorming van jonge Marokkaans-Nederlandse moslims* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 2008).

would contribute considerably to research projects on Islam in Europe at the University of Amsterdam directed by Annelies Moors and to Islamic studies in Nijmegen. Lenie Brouwer started with research on Moroccan and Turkish girls in the Netherlands, got then interested in online anthropology, and also taught several times courses on ethnographic research methods at NIMAR in Rabat. Together with Edien Bartels she published on women involved in the February 20 movement in Morocco.<sup>83</sup>

At the Radboud University in Nijmegen anthropologist Karin van Nieuwkerk was appointed to a chair in Islamic studies. She moved from work on female dancers in Egypt to Islam and gender in the Netherlands working on conversion to and from Islam among other subjects. Together with the Arabist Versteegh, she supervised the earlier mentioned thesis of Nina ter Laan on Islam-inspired music in Morocco, which also fitted with Van Nieuwkerk's interest in performance studies. Ter Laan's research also tied up with earlier work on music and identity among young Moroccan-Dutch by Miriam Gazzah.<sup>84</sup>

Academics and legal practitioners also became interested in law, especially family law in order to contribute to the governance of communities of Moroccan migrants. Legal scholars were the first to study Moroccan family law, for example Frans van der Velden, Leila Jordens-Cotran and Susan Rutten, the latter at Maastricht University. In 1987, the Law faculty in Leiden appointed me to do fieldwork as an anthropologist on law and family relations in Morocco. The idea was that I would produce knowledge that would be useful for legal practitioners in the Netherlands.<sup>85</sup> In Belgium, Marie-Claire Foblets started similar socio-legal studies at about the same time. For me, and for the development of legal studies in Leiden, the cooperation with the Belgian-French researcher Baudouin Dupret, for a long time based in Cairo and later director of the Centre Jacques Berque in Rabat, has been very important. Also, as part of this network several younger researchers have done research on family law in Morocco, combining legal and anthropological perspectives, such as Maaïke Voorhoeve, who mainly works in Tunisia, and Nadia Sonneveld.<sup>86</sup>

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83. Lenie Brouwer & Edien Bartels, "The Women's Movement and the 20 February Movement in Morocco: An Awkward Relationship," in *North African Women after the Arab Spring. In the Eye of the Storm*, Larbi Touaf, Soumia Boutkhil, Chourouq Nasri, eds, 149-68 (Cham: Palgrave/MacMillan, 2017).

84. Miriam Gazzah, *Rhythms and Rhymes of Life. Music and Identification Processes of Dutch-Moroccan Youth* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press/Leiden: ISIM, 2008).

85. Buskens, *Islamitisch recht en familiebetrekkingen in Marokko*.

86. Nadia Sonneveld, "Seeking Portia and the Duke: Male and Female Judges Dispensing Justice in Paternity Cases in Morocco," in *Women Judges in the Muslim World. A Comparative Study of Discourse and Practice*, Nadia Sonneveld & Monika Lindbekk, eds, 123-52 (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2017).



Family law offers ample opportunity to study transnational connections between people living in Morocco and migrant communities in Europe. It is striking to see that this subject has obtained so little attention. Friso Kulk<sup>87</sup> and Iris Sportel<sup>88</sup> both did interviews in the Netherlands and Morocco in a legal sociology project that explicitly focused on transnational ties. Anthropologist Oka Storms, a student of Edien Bartels, wrote a dissertation about legal problems of Muslim women in northeast Morocco and the Netherlands.<sup>89</sup> But many researchers, including myself, opted either to do research in the Netherlands or Morocco.

One would imagine that in times of multi-sited ethnographies an interest in migrants would lead to studies focusing on moving and transnational relations. Ruud Strijp was one of the few anthropologists who really moved with the people he was studying from the Netherlands to Morocco and back.<sup>90</sup> Fenneke Reysoo worked on a rather dramatic case of transnational ties: together with Karima Ouchan she wrote a book about how her co-author was forced by her father to travel to Morocco in order to be married to a much older husband there and how she escaped.<sup>91</sup> The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs made funds available for an anthropological study by Merel Kahmann on the ways in which the Moroccan government tried to strengthen the ties with its citizens living in the Netherlands and in the religious domain.<sup>92</sup>

A recent example of ethnographic work on transnational connections is the doctoral thesis of Ellen van de Bovenkamp on the interest of young people in Rabat in the work of Tariq Ramadan.<sup>93</sup> Lauren Wagner is based at Maastricht University and identifies herself as a “post-disciplinary social scientist,” working for example with tools from linguistic anthropology and

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87. Friso Kulk, *Laverend langs grenzen. Transnationale gezinnen en Nederlands en islamitisch familie-en nationaliteitsrecht* (Nijmegen: Wolf Legal Publishers, 2013).

88. Iris Sportel, *Divorce in Transnational Families. Marriage, Migration, and Family Law* (Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

89. Oka Storms, “Muslim Women Navigating Marriage. A Study of Women in Northeast Morocco and Dutch Moroccan and Turkish Women in the Netherlands,” (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit [Ph.D. Thesis], 2016); Edien Bartels & Oka Storms, “The Reform of the Moroccan Family Law and Women’s Daily Lives: Navigating between Structural Constraints and Personal Agency,” in *North African Women after the Arab Spring. In the Eye of the Storm*, eds. Larbi Touaf, Soumia Boutkhil, Chourouq Nasri, 191-210 (Cham: Palgrave/MacMillan, 2017).

90. Ruud Strijp, *A Guide to Recent Dutch Research on Islam and Muslim Societies* (Leiden: International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM), 1998a).

91. Fenneke Reysoo & Karima Ouchan, *Karima. Nooit geschreven brieven aan mijn vader* (Amsterdam: Bulaaq, 1999).

92. Merel Kahmann, “Ontmoetingen tussen Marokkaanse Nederlanders en de Marokkaanse overheid. Een antropologisch perspectief,” (Leiden: Universiteit Leiden [Ph.D. Thesis], 2014).

93. Ellen Van de Bovenkamp, “La popularité de Tariq Ramadan au Maroc,” (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit [Ph.D. Thesis], 2017).

geography. In 2017, she published a study on European-Moroccans and their sense of belonging based on her travels with them to Morocco during the summer holidays and her observations of their “negotiations.”<sup>94</sup> Together with geographer Claudio Minca, based at Wageningen University, she wrote a study about European visitors to Morocco and the making of a culture of tourism rooted in a colonial orientalist legacy.<sup>95</sup>

One can imagine many reasons for anthropologists to do multi-sited research. It might be partly related to the politics of funding, which encourage work being done in the Netherlands, as this seems to be more relevant for policy and governance. We indeed see that since the 1980s more work has been done on Moroccan-Dutch citizens living in the Netherlands than on Morocco. Studies of networks between Moroccan migrants living in European countries, for example, people of Riffian descent with family members in the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, France, Spain and Morocco are disappointingly scarce. These would require considerable effort, linguistic skills and energy. They would also offer us a much better picture of the new sociabilities and cultural trends. Several new mosques in the Netherlands were for example built thanks to fundraising meetings in several European countries. These transnational networks have several other significant dimensions from recruiting religious leaders to finding spouses, and all kinds of organised collaborations.

In a period of about half a century the Dutch tradition of anthropological research on Morocco has changed from an interest in an exotic country good to make the middle-class marvel, via the home country of newcomers into Dutch society from the late 1960s and early 1970s to an embodiment of Islam. A faraway destiny for adventurers and artists, Morocco became closer through the coming of labour migrants, who transformed from exploited workers into potentially dangerous Muslims. The stress on Islam has obscured many other aspects of Morocco. In the same process, most academics have directed their attention to migrants of Moroccan descent in the Netherlands, taking Morocco in their stride only to the extent that it offers material to understand these co-citizens. These choices are the result of government politics, also embodied in funding, and internal debates in Moroccan migrant communities. Problems of governance and radicalism are understood through a reductionist and idealist

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94. Lauren Wagner, *Becoming Diasporically Moroccan. Linguistic and Embodied Practices for Negotiating Belonging* (Bristol: Channel View Publications, 2017).

95. Claudio Minca & Lauren Wagner, *Moroccan Dreams. Oriental Myth, Colonial Legacy* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016).

lens. The ensuing view of the Muslim as the ultimate other is part of a long tradition.<sup>96</sup>

These reorientations in research demonstrate how academia is related to societal concerns and to cultural trends. The turn to Islam among Dutch scholars is part of a much broader academic history of the coming into being of an anthropology of Islam. We might consider the publication of Clifford Geertz' *Islam Observed* in 1968 as a first announcement of these changes. An important hallmark was Talal Asad's critique of Geertz, to begin with his programmatic *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam* in 1986. John Bowen has been a major figure in the shaping of the field, first through his rigid ethnographic fieldwork in northern Sumatra, combining texts and participant observation, then through his comparative work, and finally by his study of Islam in Europe. He summarised his views in *A New Anthropology of Islam*.<sup>97</sup> The Dutch anthropologists' turn to Islam was part of a general reorientation in the humanities to the study of Islam.<sup>98</sup>

In the Dutch studies of Islam among Moroccan-Dutch, themes familiar in the broader framework were very visible. First of all, the focus on gender: women and inequality, for example in family life and law, got considerable attention. Recently, colleagues did studies on "forced marriages," marriages of minors, and Islamic marriages outside the framework of state-law. Issues of female dress, veiling etc also were prominent. Furthermore, forms of political Islam, radicalism, Salafism and other recent trends were prominent in generously funded research projects. True to the Asadian paradigm, as further developed by Saba Mahmood and Charles Hirschkind, new forms of spirituality and the creation of new Muslim subjectivities got considerable attention. Unfortunately, Dutch anthropologists have not been very active in using their material on Morocco and Moroccan-Dutch communities to go beyond this now a bit worn approach. However, my main criticism in this section is that the attempt to understand and to administer migrants through the lens of "Moroccan culture" has been replaced with the lens of Islam. This has resulted at best in research in Morocco to deal with questions about the Netherlands not in a real anthropology in Morocco.

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96. Nadia Fadil, "The Anthropology of Islam in Europe: A Double Epistemological Impasse," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 48 (2019): 117-32.

97. John R. Bowen, *A New Anthropology of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

98. Léon Buskens, & Annemarie Van Sandwijk, eds., *Islamic Studies in the Twenty-first Century. Transformations and Continuities* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016).

## 6. Berbers and Others

In the previous section I described how developments in Dutch society led to a strong focus on migration and on Islam, which resulted in a reductionist view of both the migrant communities and their country of origin. Moroccans seem to be first of all, and almost solely Muslims. In actual debates, in the Netherlands as well as Morocco, we witness small groups of secular intellectuals who actively oppose this view, replacing it with an “ethnic” label stressing their identity as Imazighen, or Berbers as many used to call themselves in the past. The anthropologists Henk Driessen<sup>99</sup> and his student at that time Nina ter Laan addressed this issue.<sup>100</sup> The former did some research among Riffians in the Netherlands, while the latter specifically focused on artistic movements in Morocco. In 2013 historian Norah Karrouche defended a doctoral thesis on the Riffian movement.<sup>101</sup> The Arabist and reporter Sietske de Boer lived for several years in al-Hoceima and wrote two books of journalism on the Rif informed by her academic studies.<sup>102</sup>

From about 1987 the linguist Harry Stroomer has been working tirelessly to create a school of Berber studies in the Netherlands. Since his main interest is descriptive linguistics his work has a strong ethnographic dimension, as demonstrated in his lexicographical work and many volumes of folk-tales and ethnographic texts in Tashelhiyt.<sup>103</sup> He closely collaborates with Mohamed Saadouni, who published also on material culture and is active in Amazigh cultural movements. Their colleague Roel Otten, and Stroomer’s former students Maarten Kossmann, who succeeded him to the chair for Berber Studies at Leiden University, Mena Lafkioui and Khalid Mourigh, focus on the Rif area. Especially Kossmann has published extensively on folklore of Eastern Morocco and the Rif.<sup>104</sup> In his work, he also pays attention to cultural movements of Riffians in the Netherlands. Until her move to INALCO in Paris in 2015, Daniela Merolla worked with them as anthropologist studying

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99. Henk Driessen, “Le mystère du pirate rifain et de la culture rifaine,” in *Le Maroc de près et de loin. Regards d’anthropologues Néerlandais*, 97-108 (Rabat: Marsam, 2010).

100. Nina Ter Laan, “Berberse kunstenaars als politieke voorvechter. “Wij zijn geen Arabieren!”,” *ZemZem* 1, 1(2005): 106-12.

101. Norah Karrouche, “Memories from the Rif. Moroccan-Berber Activists between History and Myth,” (Rotterdam: Erasmus Universiteit [Ph.D. Thesis], 2013).

102. Sietske de Boer, *Het volk van Abdelkrim. Actualiteit en geschiedenis van de Marokkaanse Rif* (Dokkum: Wijdemeer, 2013); Sietske de Boer, *Het verdriet van de Rif. Kroniek van een langverwachte opstand* (Amsterdam: Jurgen Maas, 2019).

103. Harry Stroomer, *Tashelhiyt Berber Texts from Ida u Tanan (South Morocco)* (Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2004).

104. Maarten Kossmann, *A Study of Eastern Moroccan Fairy Tales* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2000).

cultural expressions of the Imazighen movements in the Maghrib with a strong interest in oral literature.<sup>105</sup>

This interest in contemporary cultural production among Imazighen in Morocco and the Netherlands is linked to a tradition of philological research on oral and written Berber texts initiated by the Egyptologist Bruno Stricker, who edited a text written by Muhammad Awzal in 1960. Research on Berber manuscripts was taken up again by one of Stroomer's doctoral students, Nico van den Boogert. We also witness the reviving of an interest in Amazigh material culture and art, spearheaded by Jongmans and Jager Gerlings in the 1950s, by Mohamed Saadouni,<sup>106</sup> and by Belgian photographer Bart Deseyn. Deseyn first published a beautiful book on Berber architecture,<sup>107</sup> and later a visual ethnography of a Berber village in cooperation with Abdelkrim Bamou, with an essay by David Crawford.<sup>108</sup> Unlike the studies on Islam discussed in the previous section, publications on Amazigh culture focus on actual cultural developments in Morocco. Tamazight studies and Imazighen activism in Morocco obtained official recognition in the Netherlands when in 2002 the Prince Claus Fund gave its principal award to Mohamed Chafik.

Fortunately, Dutch anthropology has also a space for a number of colleagues who individually pursue their own interests. Angela Jansen privately funded her research on Moroccan fashion. Based on several years of fieldwork in Fez, Marrakech and Casablanca, she wrote a doctoral thesis on the development of Moroccan urban dress during the last five decades,<sup>109</sup> which she later developed into a monograph on Moroccan fashion.<sup>110</sup> Jasmijn Rana became fascinated by young women in the Netherlands and in Morocco practicing kickboxing, and turned this into a doctoral thesis based on ethnographic fieldwork in the two countries.<sup>111</sup> It is her point of departure for an anthropological engagement with gender, ethnicity, sports and urban studies. Her colleague Cristiana Strava also pursues her interest in urban

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105. Daniela Merolla, *De l'art de la narration tamazight (berbère). 200 ans d'études: État des lieux et perspectives* (Paris & Louvain: Éditions Peeters, 2006).

106. Mohamed Saadouni, "La collection d'objets amazighes au Tropenmuseum. Histoire et présentation," *Asinag* 6 (2011): 73-86.

107. Bart Deseyn & Jean Dethier, *Amazigh. De Berbers en hun habitat in Zuidelijk Marokko/Habitats et habitants berbères au Sud du Maroc* (Brussel: Mercatorfonds, 2006).

108. Bart Deseyn, Abdelkrim Bamouh, and David Crawford, *Nostalgia for the Present. Ethnography and Photography in a Moroccan Berber Village* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2014).

109. M. Angela Jansen, "Fashionable Traditional. The Development of Moroccan Urban Dress in the Last Five Decades," (Leiden: Leiden University [Ph.D. Thesis], 2010).

110. M. Angela Jansen, *Moroccan Fashion. Design, Culture and Tradition* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

111. Jasmijn Rana, "Young Muslim Women in Kickboxing: Learning and Belonging," (Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin [Ph.D. Thesis], 2017).

studies at Leiden University, focusing on the uses of space in a popular quarter in Casablanca,<sup>112</sup> and recently also on the megaprojects linked to neoliberal economics. She published together with Raffael Beier on resettlement projects for inhabitants of *bidonvilles* in Casablanca.<sup>113</sup> Beier defended his thesis on this subject based on ethnographic research at the International Institute of Social Studies (part of Erasmus University) in 2019 under the supervision of Sylvia Bergh.

Sylvia Bergh is an associate professor at the International Institute for Social Studies in The Hague. She is a specialist in development studies, focusing on decentralisation, local government and questions of civil society. Based on her experiences at the World Bank office in Rabat and fieldwork in two villages in the western High Atlas, she published a monograph from what she calls an “anthropology of policy approach,” on local governance, participation and development in rural Morocco.<sup>114</sup>

Lisa Bossenbroek has moved from the Netherlands to Morocco, where she carries on the legacy of Paul Pascon and his group in her studies of young people living in the countryside in different parts of Morocco. She closely collaborates with various Moroccan colleagues such as Zakaria Kadiri, Fadma Ait Mous and Badiha Nahhass. At Wageningen University, she contributed to the Netherlands-Moroccan cooperation in agronomy by writing a thesis on young people working in agriculture in the Saïss plains.<sup>115</sup>

At the African Studies Centre of Leiden University, a growing number of colleagues develop an interest to look at Trans-Saharan connections from their research on Sahel and West African societies, for example Mirjam de Bruijn and Mayke Kaag. Geert Mommersteeg and his colleagues have also done valuable work in this tradition, especially on the literate culture and architecture of the city of Djenné. Recently the Dutch institute in Morocco (NIMAR) has also started to explore cooperation in the field of Museum- and Heritage Studies with colleagues in Morocco, especially Mohammed Said El Mortaji of the Université Mohammed V in Rabat.

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112. Cristiana Strava, “At Home on the Margins: Care Giving and the ‘Un-homely’ among Casablanca’s Working Poor,” *City & Society* 29, 2 (2017): 329-48.

113. Raffael Beier & Cristiana Strava, “Losing or Gaining Home? Experiences of Resettlement from Casablanca’s Slums,” in *The Everyday Life of Urban Inequality. Ethnographic Case Studies of Global Cities*, eds. Angela D. Storey, Megan Sheehan, Jessica Bodoh-Creed, 3-22 (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020).

114. Sylvia I. Bergh, *The Politics of Development in Morocco. Local Governance and Participation in North Africa* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2017).

115. Lisa Bossenbroek, “Behind the Veil of Agricultural Modernization,” (Wageningen: Wageningen University [Ph.D. Thesis], 2016).



Although I have not been respecting the limits of anthropology and Morocco too much so far, I would go too far astray if I would also annex the work done by several Belgian colleagues such as Marie-France Cammaert or Nadia Fadil to Dutch anthropology. I have already taken the liberty previously to mention in passing some Belgian colleagues who were collaborating on certain projects with their Dutch neighbours.

### **Conclusions: Looking Back and Forward**

The trajectory of Dutch anthropologists studying Morocco demonstrates how social and political conditions influence academic knowledge production. Dutch scholars started to interest themselves in Morocco at the eve of decolonisation in the 1950s. They were no longer welcome in the former Dutch colony of Indonesia, and the Netherlands began to take an interest in Africa partly for economic reasons. Former colonial museums made funds available for travelling and collecting. The resulting writings and exhibitions connected with a tradition of exotic orientalism, making the middle-class marvel.

Gradually, with the coming of Moroccan labour migrants to the Netherlands from the 1960s, anthropological knowledge of Morocco became useful knowledge, not unlike the previous colonial configuration in which anthropology and governance were linked, albeit in an uneasy way. The young students who went to Morocco made their own counter-culture: they were not only, maybe not even primarily *fi talab al-'ilm*, in search of knowledge, but often also on a quest for personal liberation. And so were their Moroccan peers who came to Europe as hippies. In the 1970s and 1980s Mediterranean anthropology offered an academic discipline to some of the travellers. However, the alternative paradigm of ethnicity and migration studies proved to be more powerful. Unlike the mainly scholarly interests of the Mediterraneanists, the focus on migration created the impression of societal relevance. Government agencies were funding studies on Moroccans in the Netherlands from the 1980s onwards. Increasingly, these studies would focus on Islam. From the beginning of the new millennium Dutch citizens with Moroccan roots would identify themselves, as would anthropologists do in their turn, as Muslims.

Linguists with an interest in ethnography would not let themselves be blinded by this reductionist lens, and created an important tradition of Berber/Amazigh studies. A few anthropologists and historians joined forces with them. Their work would mainly take place in Morocco. Parallel to these general trends, all along the way there were individuals who pursued their

own private interest, often with considerable materials difficulties. Today, new trends are announcing themselves. Morocco increasingly presents itself as an African country, for political and economic, and also for ideological reasons. Dutch scholars are beginning to take an interest in this African dimension, in migration, cultural exchanges and long-distance connections.

Among the subjects that anthropologists preferred gender, migration and Islam loom large. Dutch anthropology of Morocco seems like so many anthropological works more to deal with issues in Dutch society than in Morocco. It is primarily a mirror of Dutch concerns and issues changing over half a century. It is ironic to see that in the Netherlands societal relevance made the anthropological study of Morocco flourish *and* limited it at the same time. Anthropological research was a product of social conditions and concerns, while becoming increasingly internationally oriented and connected. Both the academic and the social trends reduced the focus too strongly to Islam. It is now time to overcome this reductionism. Although so far there has been little cross-fertilisation between the research in Morocco and in Moroccan-Dutch communities, we might try to change this. Studying the dynamics of the new transnational ties, in all their dimensions, not just the Islamic part, might be promising.

Despite their expertise on culture, anthropologists have not succeeded in playing a leading role in debates in Dutch society about migration and Islam that have been prominent in public opinion since the 1990s. Maybe this is partly because of the strong politicisation of these debates. However, anthropologists simply do not manage to make themselves heard. A contemporary Margaret Mead or Ruth Benedict is lacking in the Netherlands.

Anthropologists studying Morocco do not occupy a prominent place in the development of contemporary anthropology in the Netherlands either. It is quite difficult to obtain a position in an anthropology department, which means that several anthropologists moved to other programmes, for example religious studies or Middle Eastern Studies. Within the social science research on the Middle East, Morocco has become quite prominent though. I would consider anthropology in the Netherlands rather fragmented, while being at the same time internationally connected. Anthropologists studying in Morocco have not managed to set the agenda in Dutch anthropology. The closest came Willy Jansen who did field work in Algeria and later in Jordan, and became one of the founding figures in gender studies.

The importance of Dutch anthropologists in Moroccan academia also seems rather limited. Since the Protectorate period, France offered the dominant

cultural model, French being the language of anthropology par excellence. The last decades the United States have been prominent in anthropological research, attracting through scholarship programmes prominent young researchers to strengthen American academia temporarily or permanently, as numerous examples demonstrate. Despite early beginnings of scholarly contacts, the modest means that the Dutch government makes available do not lead to much visibility of Dutch anthropology. The situation is further complicated by the particular history of anthropology in Morocco. Many nationalist intellectuals distrusted anthropology as a colonial enterprise. At best some aspired to be sociologists. These early social scientists, such as Fatema Mernissi and Abdelkébir Khatibi, came under severe political pressure in the 1970s and were isolated in the “garage” of the Institut Universitaire de Recherche Scientifique. After a period in which it became acceptable to plea allegiance to anthropology, many younger scholars turn to political science nowadays.

At present the Dutch institute in Rabat is trying to strengthen academic cooperation in the social sciences. In March 2020, NIMAR hosted a symposium in honour of Hassan Rachik, one of the architects of contemporary anthropology in Morocco. A view from one periphery to another, to resume the provocation from the beginning of this essay, might offer many opportunities for collaboration, exchange and discussion, tending mirrors to each other. Fortunately, the relations between Morocco and the Netherlands are not burdened by a colonial past, with unequal symbolic and economic power balances. The migration of a sizeable group of Moroccan citizens, who mostly also are Dutch nationals, plays an important role in the contacts. It is to be hoped that young Moroccan-Dutch scholars are willing to take part in academic collaboration in the humanities and the social sciences. In a true post-colonial condition, scholars engage in dialogues and exchanges, preferably also in the form of joint programmes.<sup>116</sup> They take each other’s work seriously, even if it is published in languages and places that are not immediately familiar. I would like to end this overview with some suggestions for new forms of cooperation.

As I argued, the presence of Moroccan communities in the Netherlands has paradoxically to a certain extent hampered the flourishing of an anthropology in Morocco. This very presence could lead to new views if

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116. Moha Ennaji, Fatima Sadiqi, and Karen Vintges, eds., *Moroccan Feminisms. New Perspectives* (London & Trenton NJ: Africa World Press, 2017); Marjo Buitelaar, Moha Ennaji, Fatima Sadiqi, and Karen Vintges, eds., *Activisme, Feminisme en Islam. Stemmen van Marokkaanse en Marokkaans-Nederlandse Vrouwen* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018).

we would take multi-sited ethnography, focusing on transnational networks, seriously. If Moroccan and Dutch ethnographers would join forces and truly collaborate this could lead to fruitful results. It would be even better if we would also look at the networks across Europe and across the Sahara. What would comparison of the ties of different Western European countries teach us about Morocco, the Netherlands, and countries like Belgium, Germany, France, Spain and Italy?

We urgently need Moroccan ethnographers doing fieldwork in the Netherlands, not only on Moroccan-Dutch communities or African migrants, but also on other Dutch locals. During my first fieldwork in Larache in 1984 some casual remarks of a young man who had spent some time in the Netherlands shocked me. We would like to get more of these shocks. True decolonisation means that Moroccan anthropologists go everywhere, not just to the High Atlas or Rif. Are they ready to do an ethnography of vanishing life in Catholic monasteries in the southern provinces of the Netherlands? If so, they should hurry to study the last members of this vanishing culture in the best anthropological tradition.

NIMAR has also been founded to function as a Moroccan window on Africa. It would be good if Moroccan and Dutch anthropologists would work together on Morocco in Africa and Africa in Morocco. Since many centuries Morocco is at the cross-roads of several interregional networks: Mediterranean, Trans-Saharan, and Atlantic for example. Anthropologists could work together with historians, archaeologists and linguists to understand these connections in the *longue durée*, moving beyond the contemporary concerns with issues of migration and security. One important subject would be slavery, both of Sub-Saharan as well as European populations, and social hierarchies.

I have kept the most obvious field of cooperation until the last. Since Geertz published *Islam Observed. Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* in 1968 few scholars have taken this unexpected comparison further. Dutch anthropologists and historians would be the obvious candidates to do so. Morocco served as a starting point for two historians of Islam: both Herman Beck and Nico Kaptein first wrote dissertations about Moroccan religious history to then become specialists on Islam in Indonesia. In 2018 NIMAR organised a workshop to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the book that can be considered the beginning of a modern anthropology of Islam. Previously, an official delegation of Indonesian scholars had visited NIMAR to look for possibilities for a trilateral cooperation between the countries concerned. The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), based in

Leiden, has also started working on a cooperation with Moroccan partners. Japanese anthropologists and historians working on North Africa have also visited NIMAR to strengthen ties. Anthropologists from all countries concerned could play a pivotal role in bringing Moroccan, African and Asian studies together to look for unexpected comparisons. It could be a gift to the discipline at large and to the societies concerned.

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### علماء الأنثروبولوجيا الهولنديون في المغرب: من الإغرابية (الغرابية) إلى الإسلام المحلي

ملخص: دأب علماء الأنثروبولوجيا من هولندا على دراسة المجتمع المغربي منذ خمسينيات القرن العشرين. ونما عددها تدريجياً منذ السبعينيات. وفي الوقت الحاضر، أصبحت لدينا مجموعة كبيرة من المنشورات المتعلقة بالمغرب والصادرة عن مجموعة من علماء الأنثروبولوجيا الهولنديين. ويقدم هذا المقال المفصل لمحة عامة عن ظهور هذا التقليد الجديد، مع اهتمام خاص بالظروف الاجتماعية لإنتاج هذه المعرفة. وكانت البدايات مرتبطة بمرحلة إنهاء هيمنة الأنثروبولوجيا الهولندية. ونشأت الدفعة الرئيسية من هذه البحوث مباشرة بعد هجرة "العمال الضيوف" المغاربة وأسرههم إلى هولندا. وقد تزامن ذلك مع ظهور أنثروبولوجيا البحر الأبيض المتوسط. ومنذ ثمانينيات القرن الماضي فصاعداً، أصبح "الإسلام" محط اهتمام متزايد من قبل الباحثين، فاتخذ منعطفاً جديداً مع "الحرب على الإرهاب" في بداية الألفية الجديدة. ويختتم المقال بالتفكير في التضمين الاجتماعي للأنثروبولوجيا الهولندية في المغرب، وتوجيه النداء لإتاحة الفرصة أمام مزيد من الحوار وتبادل الأفكار.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأنثروبولوجيا، المغرب، هولندا، الإسلام، الهجرة، تاريخ الأنثروبولوجيا، البحر الأبيض المتوسط.

### Anthropologues néerlandais au Maroc: De l'exotisme à l'Islam chez-soi

**Résumé:** Les anthropologues des Pays-Bas étudient la société marocaine depuis les années 1950. À partir des années 1970, leur nombre a augmenté progressivement. À l'heure actuelle, nous disposons d'un nombre important de publications sur le Maroc d'anthropologues néerlandais. Cet article donne un aperçu de la naissance de cette nouvelle tradition, avec une attention particulière aux conditions sociales de production des connaissances. Les débuts étaient liés à la décolonisation de l'anthropologie néerlandaise. Le principal stimulant de la recherche provient de l'immigration de "travailleurs invités" marocains et de leurs familles aux Pays-Bas. Cela va de pair avec l'essor d'une anthropologie méditerranéenne. À partir des années 80, "l'Islam" est devenu un centre d'intérêt, qui a pris un nouveau tournant avec la "guerre contre le terrorisme" au début du nouveau millénaire. L'article se termine par une réflexion sur l'enracinement social de cette anthropologie hollandaise du Maroc, et par un plaidoyer pour plus de dialogue et d'échange.

**Mots-clés:** Anthropologie, Maroc, Pays-Bas, Islam, migration, histoire de l'anthropologie, Méditerranée.