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Gunpowder Women:

Gender, Kinship & Horses in Moroccan Equestrian Performance

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Anthropology

by

Gwyneth Ursula Jean Talley

2019

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Gunpowder Women:

Gender, Kinship, and Horses in Moroccan Equestrian Performance

by

Gwyneth Ursula Jean Talley

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2019

Professor Suzanne E. Slyomovics, Co-Chair

Professor Nancy Levine, Co-Chair

This dissertation primarily aims to document women's participation in the Moroccan equestrian practice of *tbourida*, today. Understanding the development of *tbourida* in historical context is crucial to analyzing this particular intersection of sporting culture and gender from a non-Western perspective. In North Africa, horses, cavalry, and horse sports have a long and distinct history shaping the issues faced by the women's troupes that I engaged with in fieldwork. I first present a history for *tbourida*, which situates ideas of human-horse relationships within both the Moroccan tradition and the broader Arabic knowledge of horses and horsemanship that women riders engage with when they ride *tbourida*. Most importantly, this history is dynamic and changing, demonstrating how the sport has been adapted, reshaped and

reinvented over the centuries (Talley 2017). Next, these chapters engage with several years of fieldwork and ethnographic analysis of my fieldnotes of that time. I discuss the techniques women of *tbourida* use to navigate this male dominated sport. For example drawing on interviews, I discuss how women are recruited or join a *tbourida* troupe and how familial interest in the sport as well as ancestral horse keeping makes it easier for some riders to participate in *tbourida*. I also discuss how riders and their horses become co-beings and share a relatedness if they share a close bond. Finally, I discuss the visuality of *tbourida* starting with Orientalist narratives in paintings and early ethnographic photographs. I conclude with my own photo essay to create a counter-narrative to the typical images of *tbourida*. The addition of women riders in *tbourida* represents a new twist in its long history, one that shapes their individual experiences navigating the contemporary scene and enriches our understanding of horse-human bonds, kinship, and the visuality and visibility of women in Moroccan culture.

The dissertation of Gwyneth Ursula Jean Talley is approved.

Aomar Boum

Aparna Sharma

Nancy Levine, Committee Co-Chair

Suzanne E. Slyomovics, Committee Co-Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2019

DEDICATION

To my parents for their love and support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
List of Figures.....	vii
Note on Transliteration.....	ix
Glossary of Terms.....	x
Acknowledgments	xi
Biographical Sketch.....	xv
Prologue.....	1
Chapter 1 <i>Tbourida</i> : War, Tradition, or Sport?.....	4
Chapter 2 Women <i>Tbourida</i> Riders: Exceptionalism and Strategies for Navigating the Sport...34	
Chapter 3 Kinship/Relatedness with Riders and Horses.....	68
Chapter 4 Visualizing <i>Tbourida</i>	118
Chapter 5 Picturing Women in <i>Tbourida</i> : A Photo Essay.....	144
Conclusion.....	174
Photo Appendix.....	178
Bibliography.....	208

LIST OF FIGURES

*All figures to be found in the Photo Appendix unless otherwise noted. Photos are by author unless otherwise noted.

Figure 2.1 Aisha Bebedia performing *tbourida*

Figure 2.2 Amal Ahamri as a hologram

Figure 2.3 Women riders watching the live broadcast of the SOREC qualifiers

Figure 3.1 Amal's kinship chart. Highlighted names designate riders. Chart by author. 2019 (included in text)

Figure 3.2: Patrilineal kinship chart of Mohammed El-Kazzouli. Chart by author. 2019.

Figure 3.3: Kinship chart of *Muqaddam* Mohammed. *Muqaddam* in blue who does ride, the men highlighted in yellow ride in *tbourida*. Chart by author. 2019. (included in text)

Figure 4.1 A male troupe ready to fire

Figure 4.2 The author and Mariem Naciri forming their *sorba*

Figure 4.3 *Fantasia ou Jeu de la poudre* by Eugène Delacroix

Figure 5.1 Women holding their gunpowder rifles

Figure 5.2 Horses tethered at a festival

Figure 5.3 Construction of the team tent in Oued Merzeg.

Figure 5.4 Shoes near the carpets

Figure 5.5 Saddles on display at the entrance to the team tent

Figure 5.6 Women sleeping in the tent at a festival

Figure 5.7 Women eating breakfast at a festival

Figure 5.8 Women's troupe practicing with the rifles before the festival

Figure 5.9 Fatima arranging and distributing costumes

Figure. 5.10 Women preparing for the tbourida festival

Figure 5.11 Fatima blowing down the barrel of her rifle

Figure 5.12 Amal reading Qur'an

Figure 5.13 Kisses for good luck

Figure 5.14 Women's *tbourida* team photo

Figure 5.15 A male rider adjusts his saddle after mounting

Figure 5.16 A typical saddle with embroidery

Figure 5.17 Fatima putting the bridle on a horse

Figure 5.18 A rider mounting her horse

Figure 5.19 Women's troupe waiting in line to perform *tbourida*

Figure 5.20 Amal's troupe advances down the field

Figure 5.21 Amal's troupe discharges the gunpowder rifles

Figure 5.22 A female rider fallen off her horse

Figure 5.23 Night fire

Figure 5.24 Amal rides with her daughter

NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION

Moroccan dialectical Arabic (*Darija*) varies from region to region and does not have a standardized written form, unlike Modern Standard Arabic. For words from Modern Standard Arabic, I have relied on the *International Journal for Middle East Studies* (IJMES). For *darija*, I refer to the Heath 1987, Harrell 1962, and the IJMES for transliteration. Where there are standard spellings for words that occur in English texts, such as *tagine*, *Qur'an*, or *Alaoui*, I used the Anglicized versions. Diacritics that occur in IJMES and Darija transliteration do not occur in English have been eliminated to make them accessible to readers. I have also represented most words only in the singular, with plurals indicated by the English -s to keep things simple for the reader.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

All entries will be marked with a (d) for *Darija* or (f) for *Fusha* or Modern Standard Arabic. Some words are present in both languages but if they are marked in Darija it is due to the particular transliteration, the context they are used, and the pronunciation.

Bardi (d)– a male knight

Bardia (d)– a female knight

Berrad (d)– a teapot

Dahir (f)– royal decree

Dalil (d)– a small leather bag that holds a Qur'an

Djellaba (d) – a Moroccan robe wore loosely

Fantasia (d) – the French term for the North African horse display

Furussiya (f) – tradition of horsemanship and chivalry that came from the Mamluks

Gerrab (d)– a water bearer

Harira (d)– Moroccan tomato soup

Khanjar (d) – a small dagger

M'aellem (d)– a master (at something), typically an art or craft

Mudawwana (f) – the 2004 revised Moroccan Family Law Code that governs the rights of women and children

Mukahla (d)– a gunpowder rifle

Muqaddam (d)– male leader of a tbourida team, historically a military leader

Muqaddama (d)– female leader of a tbourida team

Nimcha (d) – a single handed sword

Qawm (d)– a Moroccan soldier

Sebsi (d)– a small brass pipe

Serj (f)– a saddle

Sirwal (f)– loose pants

Sharif (f)– a leader of a tribe

Slougui (d)– a small hound, like a whippet

Sorba (d)– a team, or a line that the team makes

Takcheta (d) – a formal dress worn at weddings, births and other important occasions

Talqa (d)– discharge of rifles

Tamaug (d) – boots worn by horseback riders

Tbourida (d)– traditional Moroccan cavalry display and sport

Tesslima (d)– the call of the leader of the tbourida troupe

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This PhD process has been, to date, the most challenging experience of my life and I was lucky to never be working on this alone. My research participants, friends, and especially family helped me cross the finish line and achieve my higher goal. Early in my academic career, I was lucky to meet several individuals who made a deep impact and got me to where I am now. I owe my thanks to my first Arabic teacher Beligh Ben Taleb, my first host family, Rachid Louladi and family, Mohammed Aitrhanami, and all my amazing instructors at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, especially James Le Sueur, Wayne Babchuk, Christina Brantner, Robert Gorman, and Stephen Lahey.

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when I need company more than anything else. It is such a wonderful gift to have not just great parents, but great friends and I love you both so much.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Before attending the University of California, Los Angeles, Gwyneth Ursula Jean Talley earned a Bachelor of Arts in Global Studies, Anthropology, History, Medieval and Renaissance Studies, and English at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in 2013. She studied abroad in Meknes, Morocco in summer 2010 and in Berlin, Germany in spring 2012. She completed an intensive summer Arabic Program at Qalam wa Lawh in Rabat, Morocco in 2012.

While at the University of California, Los Angeles, Gwyneth was the recipient of the Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship in Arabic from 2014 to 2015. She was awarded a National Geographic Young Explorers Grant (now Early Career Grant) in 2014. She completed her Master's degree in September 2015. In 2015, she also received a Critical Language Enhancement Award and a U.S. Student Research Grant to study Arabic and continue her doctoral research in Morocco.

Gwyneth worked for seven quarters as a Teaching Assistant and was nominated by the Anthropology department for the Distinguished Teaching Assistant Award. She was the instructor of record for three courses, including one as a summer lecturer, one as the Teaching Assistant Consultant for the department of Anthropology and one as part of the Collegium for University Teaching Fellows, which is a course she designed focused on Animals in Anthropology. From 2017 to 2018, she taught English as a Foreign Language at the Center for Modern Languages in Rabat, Morocco. She also completed pedagogical training while a Center for the Innovation of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL) Associate.

PROLOGUE

On Wednesday, May 21, 2016, I left for a major horse festival in Arbaoua, a remote rural area in Morocco. Arbaoua had a train station but no platform, and no means of transportation into town besides a horse-pulled cart. As a result, I opted to get off the train at Ksar el-Kebir and get a grand taxi to the fairgrounds, where I planned to meet the rider Amal Ahamri. I had come to this remote place for a weekend of fieldwork with Amal's all-female horseback riding troupe—a novelty among the other 20 all-male teams performing in the festival. The driver, a rider himself, chatted about horseback riding and the importance of *tbourida*—historical cavalry charges, now festive and celebratory, performed at saint's day gatherings and important events. After a 30-minute ride in the dark through the rural area, we came across the encampment. It was dimly lit by single lightbulbs in tents, but still lively with horses tethered nearby, and people chatting and embracing.

I thanked the driver profusely and got out of the car to be hugged and kissed by Amal, her husband, her mother, and her teammates. I had not seen Amal since January when her troupe performed to the south in Zagora at an environmental celebration. The evening was cool and I was glad to have my jacket. I could never pack light on these trips. I had a backpack with all my photography and film equipment, and an overnight bag to last me the long weekend. But even after a tiring journey, I was thrilled to see the familiar faces. Amal quickly took me aside and told me a BBC reporter was coming to interview her about the all-women troupe and that my presence was going to be so helpful. Jihane, Amal's English-speaking friend, and I were assigned to watch for the reporter and answer questions.

Amal has a reputation as a key figure in the women's *tbourida* in Morocco. She is charismatic, friendly, strong, and confident. She is also an exception among many of the riders,

having a husband that supports her horse interests, being a mother, and working as a mounted police-woman. She attended Ibn Tofail University in Kenitra, but did not complete her exams because she was competing in the national *tbourida* competition in Rabat. Amal and her troupe were photographed and interviewed relentlessly while the women's class in the national competition was offered from 2005 to 2010. After the competitive class was abruptly discontinued, her troupe remained active, appearing at local festivals and events.

Over the years, Amal's troupe has changed and grown. Amal recruited her youngest sister, Nourelhouda, and riders she met in other troupes, such as Saida, Senaa, and Fatima. She gathered friends from school or other riders' friends to join the team, cobbling together a group of dedicated and fearless women who knew about or had grown up around horses, and had families that would support them in this traditionally male sphere. While many domestic and foreign reporters talked about the novelty of the female *tbourida* troupes, few understood the implications and timing of their rise from obscurity.

Tbourida had long been a military maneuver that a mounted vanguard would use to scare and attack their enemies during tribal raids and against colonial forces in North Africa. Amazigh (or Berber) and later Arab men typically made up the warriors on horseback, but there were also always a few women on the periphery of history riding into battle. The French colonial administration eventually phased the horseback maneuver out of combat training and turned the practice into a valorization of local cultural heritage. In the 1980s, a woman named Aisha Bebedia rode openly with her father in *tbourida*, but it would be another 25 years before anyone would see more than a single woman on the *tbourida* field.

Today, reporters tell the story of women participating in *tbourida* as an act of defiance by Muslim women against a traditional, patriarchal society. The BBC reporter in Arbaoua was no

different. She kept angling to get Amal to give sound bites about being defiant and fighting for all women on the field. After spending two short days with the troupe, the reporter quickly exited the scene, much to Amal's relief. She confided to me that it had been her worst interview yet. The reporter had not grasped that it was hard for Amal to talk about the difficulties of *tbourida*. The reporter insisted on English and the extra exertion left Amal frustrated and tired. She could not easily convey the delicate details of navigating her troupe through a minefield of cultural attitudes toward women on horseback in the public eye. Instead, these women walk a fine line by following the rules of dress and tradition associated with *tbourida*, while also crossing into the male-dominated public of the *tbourida* field, astride horses.

01 *TBOURIDA*: WAR, TRADITION, OR SPORT?

Tbourida originates from traditions of Amazigh (or Berber) and Arab Bedouin warfare. In Morocco, the word *tbourida* derives from the Arabic word *baroud*, meaning gunpowder, and used in the phrase *laab al baroud*, or gunpowder games (Talley 2017, 220). In the pre-colonial Maghreb region (pre-1830), members of tribes performed or used *tbourida* for nomadic raids, which the French colonial authorities referred to as *razzias*, a deformation of the Algerian Arabic word for a raid, or *ghaziya*. *Tbourida*, in pre-colonial times, was a tribe or army's vanguard cavalry charge, with male riders on their horses galloping at their enemy and shooting in unison—a maneuver that became iconic throughout North Africa, including Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya. *Tbourida* was also performed at rites of passage such as births, circumcisions, marriage, and for *moussems*—saint's day festivals—through the early twentieth century.

The French Orientalist painter Eugène Delacroix is credited with giving *tbourida* its moniker of *fantasia* when he first saw and later painted it in 1832. A *fantasia* referred to a type of entertainment, both foreign and ostentatious, that became synonymous with the Moroccan Arabic phrase *tbourida*. *Fantasia* is a hegemonic name that Westerners gave to this sport and still use broadly today. Eugène Dumas, a French general in Algeria (posted 1835-1850), described *fantasia* as a “dashing display of horsemanship and warrior prowess with weapons” (1971[1850]:31). Assia Djebar, the Algerian writer, suggested that the word *fantasia* means something ostentatious, “a set of virtuoso movements on horseback executed at a gallop, accompanied by loud cries and culminating in rifle shots” (1993[1985], iv). Today, the ostentation comes less from a Western perspective of the dangerous and war-like *tbourida*, but instead from the intricate beauty of the horses, saddles, costumes, and the synchronization of the

display. The performance has always demonstrated skilled horsemanship, bravery, and warrior prowess, especially when men would return to their tribe and conduct *tbourida* in celebration. As of 2019, *moussems* and major holiday festivals are the largest gathering of spectators and horse-people for this competition.

What began as a cavalry charge used in warfare as well as celebration, the French later appropriated and used to fashion their own light cavalry regiments out of indigenous populations. *Tbourida* was relegated to performance at festivals and saint's day celebrations. Post-independence, it fell into decline before to royal patronage recognized *tbourida* as a significant part of Moroccan identity and cultural heritage (*turath*), and ultimately, supported it. While King Hassan II (1961-1999) was passionate about the sport, he implemented strict regulation on rifles, firearms, and gunpowder after surviving two attempted coup d'états. Those wishing to obtain gunpowder for a *tbourida* display had to apply for permission, ask for a specific amount, and use the entirety of it over the course of a festival under the watchful eye of a gendarme.

As *tbourida* evolved to today, it has been adapted as a social performance, a sport, and as heritage tourism. No matter the setting, contemporary Moroccan *tbourida* consists of a series of coordinated movements by a group of riders. These riders are called *bardi*, meaning knight (in Moroccan Arabic or *Darija*; in Modern Standard Arabic, *faris* is commonly used for horseback rider, equestrian, and also for knight), and form a team or *sorba*. The troupe consists of six or more riders—typically male. For large national competitions, troupes are capped at fifteen riders including the leader, although all-female troupes may be as small as seven to nine members. They ride dressed in traditional Moroccan costume of *djelleba*—long shirt, loose pants, pliable leather boots—armed with gunpowder rifles with no shot or bullet, and mounted on their individual horses, either a saddled Barb (a native North African horse) or a cross between the

Barb and the shorter and slimmer Arabian horse to create the Arab-Barb. The mounted riders form a line together as a *sorba*, positioning their horses in a row across a loose dirt field and featuring the leader in the center. The leader is known as a *muqaddam*, a general term for leaders of horseback riders, musical groups, or religious groups (from the Arabic *al-muqaddama*, or the person in the forefront (Cook Jr. 1994, 139). At the *muqaddam*'s command, the riders spur their horses forward to a short trot, executing rifle-handling demonstrations. At the next command, the *muqadem* orders the group forward at a gallop. The riders stand in their stirrups, raising their rifles up in a designated style as they approach the end of the field. The first run requires the riders and the *muqadem* to bow to the spectator or VIP tent at the end of the field. They whirl and twirl their rifles together, acknowledging their host(s). In the second and third runs down the field, the rifles are loaded with gunpowder. The *sorba* repeats the process, and near the end of the field at the final moment, the *muqaddam*'s command "HUP!" signals the riders to discharge their rifles together, and roughly rein in their horses to stop simultaneously. Synchronization is key to a successful run down the field, as the aim is to hear a singular cannon-like blast, rather than a series of individual pop-pop-pops. In most *tbourida* competitions, *sorbas* have only three opportunities to garner the points needed to win. Points are given for costume, presentation of horses, and synchronicity.

Local holidays, festivals, and saint's days draw crowds of all ages to rural spaces for the time-honored equestrian display of *tbourida*, alongside carnival games and rides, musical performances, a *souq* or market with traditional and handmade goods, and the joy of sweet treats like fried *sfinj* or doughnuts, roasted nuts and chickpeas, freshly-pressed orange juice, and brightly colored cotton candy. These revelries are typically free to attend, easy to access either on foot or via grand taxi, and the foods are cheap, making this a wholesome event for the entire

family to enjoy. At festivals, the judges are less rigid, and the winning *sorbas* are typically the crowd favorites for their execution and costumes. *Tbourida* takes place predominantly in a festival sphere, in which the practice is a highly public and visually impactful one. In a festive and spectacular display, the relationships between riders, and between riders and their horses, are visible for all to see.

Equestrian sports, like *tbourida*, are unique because they include non-human participants. Levi-Strauss argued that animals are “good to think with,” meaning that the usages and interactions of animals can reveal interesting phenomenon within societies (1962). He focused on them as passive objects rather than active participants in cultural activities. However, the human-animal relationship, and in particular the human-horse bond, has bloomed within anthropology as a subject of study. Research into equestrian sports and culture primarily examines Western phenomena such as “horse-crazy girls,” the balancing of professional equestrian and family life, as well as the economics and social barriers affecting participation. However, little attention has been paid to human-horse sporting interactions from a non-Western view, let alone the role of gender within that sphere. Currently, traditional equestrian traditions focusing on gender and human-horse relations or the history of human-horse interactions have come from South Africa, West Africa, and Mexico (Swart 2010, 2017; Ramírez 2016; Nájera-Ramírez 2002; Law 1980). My research therefore contributes a needed dialogue regarding women in equestrian sport in a non-Western tradition.

The question of women participating in this sphere is scholastically complex, because it requires a balanced understanding kinship and human-horse relationships, but also creates a need to visualize the women of *tbourida*. In Morocco, the equestrian tradition is still a masculine tradition with masculine rules, although an increasing number of girls and women are interested

in equine sports. In general, Moroccan women struggle to enter this male-dominated domain and participate in the world of human-horse relationships. My fieldwork and analysis therefore examine women riders and horses in the sport and performance of *tbourida*. The key questions of this dissertation are: Who are the women of the Moroccan *tbourida*? How did these women start riding horses and become involved in the Moroccan *tbourida*? How do they navigate the nuances of being women in this male sporting sphere? And how does the visibility of women riders in this spectacle matter?

METHODOLOGY

The motives for this research began early through my own experiences riding and learning about Arabic-speaking cultures. I grew up horseback riding at a very young age, and my parents took me camping and horseback riding throughout the Midwest. But I also loved to travel, and I was originally drawn to Morocco in 2010 for study abroad focusing on Arabic and cultural studies after my sophomore year at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. My host family in Meknes lived by the regional horse breeding and training facility in the city and I spent mornings watching horseback riding lessons and walking by the stalls of large Barb and Arab-Barb bred stallions. I gained the vocabulary and knowledge that would allow me to confidently talk about horses, alongside my lifelong familiarity with horses and riding. The connection between horses and Morocco always seemed natural to me and became the catalyst on my return to study Arabic and continue with Master's and doctoral research linking these interests between Morocco and horses, from the perspective of women participating in equestrian sports.

The major objective for starting fieldwork on women participating in *tbourida* was finding informants to interview. For my research, I worked with a wide age range of riders, male

and female, who all participate in *tbourida*, and photographers who regularly attend festivals. My initial research proposal included riding with a team, apprenticing, and then participating as a full team member, but due to lack of time and scheduling conflicts, this was not possible. I generally sought out informants at festivals by striking up conversations with troupes prior to the competitions. Finding female participants was much more difficult, but I particularly wanted to find a leader of an all-female team active during the time that women were allowed at the national competition in Rabat (2005-2010).

To identify women riders, I watched publicized interviews with female troupes to obtain their names, and then searched for them on Facebook. I would direct message them, explaining who I was, and what my project was about. Once people understood that I was looking to interact with different riders, mostly female riders, the snowball effect increased my contacts with collaborators, introducing me to their friends and acquaintances. I choose to use the word collaborators and participants to denote that over time, many of these people became friends who volunteered their time to help me, drive me, and include me in their lives and practices. I reciprocated how I could via small gifts and tokens, such as horse scarves, horse necklace and earring sets, taking pictures for these individuals, paying for gas, and buying or bringing host(ess) gifts such as flowers, sweets, or snacks for the road.

I first heard of Amal Ahamri thanks to multiple TV interviews and online newspaper articles about her (El Moueden 2011; Hamouche 2013). She belongs to the first generation of all-women teams, which had grown from four teams at the outset in 2005, to approximately nine to thirteen teams in 2019 (the number is still uncertain because they are not counted by the Royal Moroccan Equestrian Federation). Amal had participated with her troupe in Rabat and continued to ride even after the national competition for women was eliminated. Her troupe had evolved

after some of the riders married and had children. I first “added” her as a friend on Facebook at the end of my stay in Morocco in the summer of 2012. As I spent time interviewing Amal, she would constantly direct me to other people she thought I should talk to, people to avoid, and offered opinions on who could give me the best information. Other female riders not in her troupe would gossip with me and have interesting (and sometimes negative) things to say about why I should not follow Amal. As I became accepted into Amal’s women’s team, I progressed from being just a fan girl or photographer (as many people presumed with my large camera), to part of the entourage, making myself useful where I could—setting up saddles, clearing off tables, and helping translate if a foreign journalist came to interview the team. I went from being an outsider hanging about to an insider hanging out (Woodward 2008).

I attended any festival I could that featured women riders or that my main collaborators thought I should attend. I found it helpful to travel to various events with my collaborators, when possible. Attendance at these outings was crucial to filming for my documentary, currently titled *Gunpowder Women*, which is based on this research. Many times, I had to invite myself along which, luckily, was never refused, thanks to Moroccan hospitality. These festivals allowed me to see many rural places to which I would not likely have ventured on my own and also gave me extended periods of time with my collaborators, allowing me to bond with the teams, and watch the process unfold. I attended some of the first meetings held by female leaders of the *tbourida* groups and listened to complaints and gossip among the ranks. I also invited myself to birthday parties or trips to their farms. As a result of my attentions, I was also invited to special occasions such as Amal’s son’s *seboua*, or baby shower, where friends and family celebrated the baby’s first rite of passage seven days after he was born. These opportunities allowed me significant time to work on building trust and friendships with my collaborators. Deep hangouts like this

were integral to seeing different aspects of the life of women riders outside *tbourida* and the festivals.

While this dissertation primarily aims to document women's participation in *tbourida* today, understanding the development of *tbourida* in historical context is crucial to analyzing these issues of sporting culture and gender from a non-Western perspective. In North Africa, horses, cavalry, and horse sports have a long and distinct history shaping the issues faced by the women's troupes that I engaged with in fieldwork. In this chapter, therefore, I first present a history for *tbourida*, which provides context for the ideas of human-horse relationships within the Moroccan tradition and its relationship to the broader Arabic knowledge of horses and horsemanship that Amal and her fellow women riders step into when they ride *tbourida* in competition or on festival days. Most importantly, this history is dynamic and changing, demonstrating how the sport has been adapted, reshaped and reinvented over the centuries (Talley 2017). The addition of women participants represents a new twist in this history that shapes their experience navigating the contemporary scene and enriches our understanding of horse-human bonds.

Across North Africa and the Middle East, early use of cavalry and horse breeding led to the development of the chivalric practice of horsemanship known as *furusiyya*. I will first discuss the surviving literature about *furusiyya* and other horsemanship manuals, and how it influenced the military horse practices of pre-colonial Morocco. Many of these traditions changed under French colonial influence, which I will discuss in the areas of sports participation and the military in the Maghreb. A revival of earlier equine traditions in the post-colonial era under Mohammed V and his son Hassan II revitalized interest in horses and their use in diplomacy (1956-onward). The current state of equestrian sports, including *tbourida* under Mohammed VI

(2000-onward), frames my discussion of Moroccan and Maghrebi women’s participation in sports since the post-colonial era. Finally, I describe the advent of women’s participation in *tbourida* and how that grew into a separate class for women to compete in at the national competition at the “Week of the Horse” festivities, setting the stage for the experiences of Amal’s troupe and other all-women teams in *tbourida* today.

FURUSIYYA AND GUNPOWDER

The equestrian cultures and traditions of the Maghreb in the post-Roman era had numerous influences—predominantly via invasion and sometimes trade—incorporating riding and cavalry styles, knowledge of horses, and the breeding of horses through this contact. Roman rule eventually gave way to Vandal rule, then Byzantine, and eventually Arab leaders bringing Islam and their own traditions of horsemanship and chivalry, known as *furusiyya*. The Arab tradition conveyed a broad and deep understanding of horses as displayed in manuscripts of horse keeping, farriers, and veterinary medicine. Horse breeding across the Mediterranean also influenced the Maghreb, since the Arabs rode a breed of horse raised in the Arabian Peninsula, less hearty and compact, but thinner and more agile than the Barb horse native to North Africa. In addition, the Mamluk soldiers of the Sultanate in Egypt and the Levant from 1250-1517 were important and influential cavalymen, first as Arab slaves and then by establishing their own dynasty in the Levant, Egypt, and India. Mamluk equestrian tradition and tactics became an additional layer to the accretion of equestrian cultures in North Africa.

Court historians wrote detailed accounts regarding horsemanship, horse care, early veterinary techniques, and other cavalry tidbits under the broad nomenclature of *furusiyya* literature. Other ways of referring to *furusiyya* include *funun al-furusiyya* or *anwa’al-furusiyya*,

the arts or branches of horsemanship, or sometimes *'ilm*, the science discussed in military treatises. Mamluk *furusiyya* literature or treatises on horsemanship to date remain largely unpublished and untranslated (al-Sarraf 2004). However, scholars like Ayalon and al-Sarraf have sifted through the general texts and substantially draw from two: *al-Nujum al-zahira fi muluk Misr wa'l-Qahira* and *al-Manhal al-safi wa'l-mustawfi ba'd al-wafi* written by a Mamluk court historian Yusuf Ibn Taghribirdi—the son of one of the Mamluk commanders-in-chief. While some biographers of Taghribirdi note that he tended to boast about his own prowess in the military exercises, his descriptions (if not his skill) of *furusiyya* can be trusted (Ayalon 1961, 34). Taghribirdi states that “*Furusiyya* is something different from bravery and intrepidity, for the brave man would throw down his adversary by sheer courage, while the horseman is the one who handles his horse well in his charge and in his retreat and who knows what he needs in matters pertaining to his horse and his arms and the arrangement of all this in a manner that he may follow the rules known and established among the people of this art” (*al-Nujum* translation by Ayalon). Once a Mamluk reached a level of proficiency, he earned *kamalat*, or accomplishments or perfection, or *fada'il*—possessing the virtues of a true horseman. *Furusiyya*, thus, is more about the knowledge and skills of working with horses, the accoutrement, and the games and exercises associated with it, than just the courage of a knight. Emphasizing the layered skills involved in human-horse relationships, historian Abraham Poliak has translated *furusiyya* as “physical culture” rather than “chivalry” (1939,15). Horsemanship, then, is an all-encompassing concept and one that becomes an embodied practice through knowledge, writing, and experience.

Historians argue that from the height of the Mamluk tradition of horsemanship, *furusiyya* and its traditional games declined when gunpowder and firearms were introduced to the military. In 1437, the Portuguese King Duarte’s expedition first introduced handguns to Morocco,

although the technology did not spread very far. Then by 1490, the arquebus, an early portable rifle balanced on a tripod, was brought into popular use during the course of battles between the Ottomans and the Mamluks. While more guns came into use, a separate recruitment for soldiers to wield the arquebus, typically from a lower class, slaves, or ex-cavalrymen, was implemented, and the mounted soldiers continued to use the older, more traditional weapons (1978, 62). It was the Mamluk's late adaptation and low emphasis on the importance of guns that led to the Ottoman Empire overtaking the otherwise highly skilled Mamluk armies. During the late 1490s, Moroccans would acquire more handguns via capturing outsiders, contraband, and piracy, although the majority of gunpowder weapons were used by the artillery. Finally, in the 1530s, Morocco began to produce its own gunpowder and rifles (Cook Jr. 1994, 181). The usage of gunpowder led the horsemen to forgo swords and lances in favor of rifles for intertribal conflict and later resistance movements against the French and Spanish colonial armies.

FRENCH INFLUENCE ON SPORTS AND THE MILITARY

One of the major challenges when examining sports, specifically sports in non-Western societies, is the emphasis of sociological and historical research on Western sports. Many of these theories may work in the Western context, but not when superimposed on the Global South. In Morocco, French colonial history overlays both histories of sport, which indicates the futility of disentangling sports as strictly Moroccan or strictly French. The history of *tbourida* demonstrates these dual conventions in its re-invention as a sport under colonial rule.

Western scholars trace the invention of modern sporting activity to nineteenth-century British public schools where activities were designed to improve character and promote healthy bodies, and as a manageable way of supervising adolescents. While sports evolved in different

locations at different times, the British notion of sports and record-keeping stems from the British tradition of physical competitions (Besnier et al. 2018, 3). Historian Allen Guttman's game-changing argument is that premodern sports had a ritual character that disappeared with the emergence of industrial society, and was replaced by an emphasis on achievement, as manifested in sports records (1978). Colonizers, specifically the French and English, imposed their variations of organized sporting activity on their colonized populations, resulting in an arbitrary distinction of sports from other activities.

In the 20th century, sports began to enter the school curriculum and public sphere in Islamic countries. Scholars regarded the British emphasis on physical fitness as a "greatness to be emulated" and that it "promoted courage and activism" (Blanchard, 1995 Raffin 2011, 258; Besnier et al. 2018). Historian Anne Raffin argues that France used sport and youth corps activities to mobilize physical education as a means to regulate cultural behavior and political loyalties among the French and their colonies (2011, 96). After their defeat in the Franco-Prussian war in 1870, France explained their loss as a lack of proper military and physical training in schools. The country needed to redirect its focus on creating bodies that were strong, disciplined, and able to defend their country. These sporting policies would create a contradiction in the purpose of sports for the bodies of the Frenchmen and their colonial subjects. The colonial policy encouraged the indigenous people to release energy through new kinds of physical exercise to build strong bodies that could defend the empire against external and internal threats, while at the same time, making sure that the sporting activities were inoffensive, teaching self-control, and ensuring loyalty and gratitude toward the French empire (2011, 97). The French government pre- and post-World War I would continue this "recolonization through sports" throughout its populace and colonies (Combeau-Mari 2011; Dine 2002; Centre Des

Archives D'Outre-Mer 1992). In the late 1920s, the creation of sporting associations formed part of the colonial assimilation project by the French Protectorate for the favored Moroccan elite (Dine 2002, 497; Wahl 1992, 44). The French outlawed *tbourida*, as many tribes still retained their firearms and resisted colonial rule. Only tribes considered allies or friends were allowed to perform it during wedding or circumcisions and saint's day festivals. As the French worked to declaw *tbourida* as a military tactic for resistance, and relegate it to a competitive sport or celebratory activity, they also studied these horse practices for their own military purposes.

While North African countries prior to colonization did not experience a similar "invention" of sporting activities, there were early organizations and interest in recreational and sporting pursuits through numerous avenues. There was (and is currently still played) *mata*, an equestrian competition exclusive to the north of Morocco, and horse racing, as well as leisure activities such as chess, backgammon, and athletic competitions for strength and running oriented toward men. Moroccans used horses in sports and leisure such as for racing and hunting, but horses were still crucial for warfare and the military leading into World War I. *Tbourida* was used as a military tactic and had not yet been reinvented as a sport, although it was also common to see public demonstrations of these skills in times of peace.

In the mid 1840s, as the French gained new territory in Algeria, Moroccan Sultans 'Abd al-Rahman and Hassan I struggled to improve the military to a new level of preparedness. Reforming the military was not an easy task, as it was made up of a combination of *gish* (Modern Standard: *jaysh*), or units of professional soldiers, and *na'iba*, the irregular tribal contingents. Moroccans were sent to Ottoman Turkey to train in new methods of warfare, the *nizami* or "ordered" style (Bennison 2004). While Morocco had relied on their mounted cavalry for centuries, their defeat by the French at the Battle of Isly (near the village of Oujda) in 1844

and by the Spanish in Tetouan in 1860 required new strategies. The reformed Moroccan troops were drilled, dressed in uniforms, ranked, and began to carry the more modern British flintlock rifles. These rifles became the inspiration for the specially made gunpowder rifles used in *tbourida* today.

On the other hand, when the French encountered *tbourida*, they actually appropriated the tactic in order to create an indigenous cavalry called the Spahis to serve as French auxiliary troops. Rosaldo discusses how Europeans used the knowledge they gathered about the lands and people of this area to increase their power, but also used these ethnographies as complete truths in describing how cultures “really were” (1989, 32). Vogl, in agreement with Rosaldo, adds that “seemingly neutral, or innocent forms of description both reinforced and produced ideologies that justified the imperial project” (2003, 42). This can be seen in European travel narratives’ description of *tbourida*. Edmondo de Amicis’ vivid description of *tbourida* from Tangier illustrates the excitement of a visually stimulating event, at the same time that it emphasizes its exotic and archaic elements:

“My curiosity impelled me to look everywhere at once, but a sudden scream of admiration from a group of women made me turn to the horsemen. There were twelve of them, all of tall stature, with pointed red caps, white mantles, and blue, orange, and red caftans, and among them was a youth...the son of the Governor of Rif....At first there was a slight hesitation and confusion, but in a moment the twelve horsemen formed but one solid serried line, and skimmed over the ground like a twelve-headed and many-colored monster devouring the way. Nailed to their saddles, with heads erect and white mantles streaming in the wind off their shoulders, riders lifted their rifles above their heads, and pressing them against their shoulders, discharged them all together with a yell of triumph, and then vanished in a cloud of smoke and

dust. A few moments afterwards, they slowly came back and in disorder—the horses covered with foam and blood, their riders bearing themselves proudly, and then they began again. At every new discharge, the Arab women, like ladies at a tourney, saluted them with a peculiar cry that is a rapid repetition of the monosyllable *Jù* (or in English *yù*) like a sort of joyous trill” (1882, 45-46).

Thirty years later, Emily Keene, who married the Sharif of Ouazzane, made detailed notes of the horses and harness in her autobiography and records some changes in the spectacle. During one attempt to enter Fez, she encountered a *tbourida*: “There was an escort of about twenty men, all well-mounted on gaudy saddles...Soon after starting, powder-play began on the road. According as the width of the path allows, so many horsemen form a line abreast, and at a given signal all start, holding a loaded gun high above their heads. The pace increases, the reins are loosened, the gun lowered, and all fire simultaneously. Then the reins are gathered up quickly, and the horses’ progress so quickly arrested that they are thrown almost on their haunches” (Keene 1912, 103). These descriptions, and others like them, formed the modern French and English understanding of the Maghrebian horseman, emphasizing as key the spontaneity of the act, but also the common occurrence of the spectacle. Almost every travel narrative, whether English or French, mentions the powder-play.

One of the first ethnographic portrayals of Moroccan horsemen was published in 1858 by the French General Eugène Daumas, in *Les Chevaux du Sahara et les mœurs du desert* (*The Horses of the Sahara and the Ways of the Desert*). From 1835 to 1850, Daumas had been stationed in Algeria, eventually becoming the head of the Office of Arab Affairs in Oran. Daumas learned Arabic and was frequently on horseback, building rapport with local conscripted tribesmen. When the great Algerian resistance leader, the Emir Abd el Kader, was captured in

1847, he was taken to France and treated as a captive dignitary with living quarters, access to books, and allowed to receive visitors (Achrati 2007, 141). During Abd el Kader's imprisonment, Daumas frequently questioned him to gather an understanding of horses and the importance of the horse in Algeria. In the preface, Daumas claims his writings "were of great help to the French cause, clearing up important problems in connection with war, trade, and government" (Daumas 1971(1858), 3). While his colonial motives were clear, he does make a point of assuring the reader that his goal was to understand the Arab horseman and the breeding of horses. Employing ethnographic techniques, he "wanted to learn, not from hearsay, but from personal observation; not from books, but from men" (Daumas 1971 (1858), 4). He even goes so far as to say he did not gather the information from one person alone but from horsemen of a large tribe, many imprisoned with their leader the Emir, who possessed varying knowledge on the topic, and sought out rare documents in order to help him write his book. The last statement concludes with him declaring he attempts not to make any judgement good or bad, but instead simply wants to attempt an ethnographic account to record "this is what the Arabs do." Daumas' attempt to describe what he sees and insights from the riders he interviewed sets his writings apart from the typical travel narratives that describe the "powder play" as a something fantastical that happens without understanding its purpose.

A second book, *L'équitation arabe* (1924) by General Eduard Descoins, became the French manual for Arab horsemanship among future French officers. Sadly, his style lacks the rhetorical flourish of his predecessor General Daumas, although it nonetheless gives great insight to the principles of Arab equitation. Because French officers with experience riding *à la anglaise*, or English-style could not effectively communicate with the riders who were riding in Arab-style harness (saddle and bridle), this book instructs riders to "speak the same language"

(2007 (1924), 19). The English style of riding that the French officers were accustomed to required constant balance and training for battle conditions. The Arab-style of riding utilized a saddle with a high front and back that enabled long hours in the saddle without constant need for balance as well as a brace for impact when shooting from horseback. Both of these books resulted from intense military usage of horses and cavalry as part of the French conquest of Algeria launched in 1830, showing that the traditions of horsemanship in the Maghreb persisted and influenced the colonizers.

In Morocco, the French Protectorate administration created several programs for horse breeding and remounting facilities for their mounted troops. Based on the success of the breeding facilities in Algeria, in 1912, the year the French Protectorate regime began in Morocco, the first military remount service and the first *haras*, or breeding facility, opened in Meknes for Arab-Barb breeding, and in Temara for purebred Arab horse breeding (Préau 1990, 133). The success of these stud farms, which have now been displaced by their corresponding cities, was followed by the opening of four more farms around the country in Oujda (1913), Marrakesh (1913), El Jadida (1913), and Bouznika (1994). Many horse breeds across the world were endangered through the constant requisitioning of horses to carry troops on the battlefield throughout the wars of the late 19th and early 20th century. During World War I, cavalry remounts were constantly required across the globe, and the need for breeding and horses came at a premium. The *haras* in El Jadida and Marrakesh supplied the military and remount horses for wars in the 20th century, while the others focused on horse breeding and the training of military officers (SOREC 2018). In 1927, stallions numbered 130 pure-bred Arabs, 49 pure-bred Barbs, and 67 Arab-Barbs (Préau 1990, 133) across the nation. This figure probably does not account for personal horses without verifiable breeding, but it does illustrate the strain on the

Moroccan remount facilities, especially for pure-bred Barb stallions. As tanks and armored jeeps became the cavalry of the late 20th century, the need for horses for military purposes slumped. By 1947, all the Moroccan military remount and breeding facilities, with the exception of Temara, were transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture.

SPORTS AND HORSES IN THE POST-COLONIAL ERA

During post-independence (Libya in 1952, Morocco and Tunisia in 1956, and Algeria in 1962), the North African countries held on to their traditional activities, such as *tbourida* as resistance and alternatives to colonialism, but they also kept the French-introduced modern sports. As post-colonial nations sought recognition on the international level, and participated in the Olympic games, sports became a major unifier of the Arab and Muslim world. In 1954, UNESCO sent some Arabic-speaking professors of physical education to help organize physical education and sports in Libyan schools (El-Bah 1972, 41).

After Morocco gained independence in 1956, sports became a form of political soft power to utilize in the international political and sporting arenas when working toward decolonization, but also as a vehicle to mobilize people around nationalist movements (Amara 2012, 8; Guttman 1994, 183; Besnier et. al. 2018, 1999). In Morocco, for example, the government formed its Olympic committee shortly after independence in 1959. As Joseph Arbena notes of sports in Latin America, “imported sports (from European powers) had a partially imperialistic impact in that they helped to shape local elites and their values in ways at least initially beneficial to the Europeans,” but they later began to be seen as “the agent of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism” (1990, 6). Janet Lever agrees with this statement through her study of Brazilian soccer. She notes that, “sport contributes to national integration by giving

people of different social classes, ethnicities, races, and religions something to share” (1983, 19). National teams often represent ethnic, religious, and racial diversity (now more so than in the past), and provide hubs around which a country’s citizens can rally. As Guttman suggests, international sporting events allowed for formerly colonized states to make their presence known to the world in a way other than reporting on natural disasters or political turmoil (1994, 184). However, national teams that play at an international level are primarily male-dominated, and this fact reflects the general inequality of male and female participation in local, national, and international sports in the twentieth century.

Under Mohammed V and Hassan II, sports culture in general grew and thrived in Morocco. In 1964, Hassan II formed the Ministry of Youth and Sports, which began to actively oversee all sports federations as well as youth institutions, becoming a significant establishment in the Moroccan government (Lyazghi 2006). Emphasis on developing a ministry for youth and sports and promoting physical education similarly developed in Tunisia (Zouabi 1975). The late 1970s and early 1980s saw another wave of federations created for East Asian-based martial arts, including karate and taekwondo.

In 1958, just two years after Moroccan independence from France, King Mohammed V founded the Fédération Royale Marocaine des Sports Equestres (FRMSE) to develop the equestrian sports in the country, knowing that his son, the future King Hassan II, had a passion for horses. Hassan II, Crown Prince during his father’s reign (1927-1961), had many interests including high performance cars (Blair 1970, 146), horses, and golf (Federation Royal du Golf 2019), but his main love was horses. In almost any collection of photos or memoirs, there is always a mention of the Prince, or later the King entertaining diplomats on horseback or leading a procession to a mosque from the top of a horse. In 1959, Hassan II made Temara’s breeding

facility into the Equestrian Center for the Royal Army and transferred the breeding operation to the small town of Zouada, next to Tetouan, for the production of sport horses (Préadeau 1990, 135). After World War II and the Algerian War of Independence (1954-62), the Barb horse stock in North Africa was depleted and in danger of being forgotten (Blair 1966, 307). While British demand for Arab horses to contribute to their Thoroughbred stock guaranteed enthusiasm for the Arabian breed of horses, Barb horses were in little demand. Thus, the interest in fostering sports, and particularly equine competition, revived the Barb horse breeding tradition in Morocco.

In 1961, Hassan II deemed horses the lifeblood of Morocco and he became deeply involved in making sure the bloodlines would endure. To ensure the breeding and production of the horses, the services of the *haras* were free to all Moroccans. In 1970, the equine population was nearly 1 million (horses and mules included, donkeys not included) making the ratio 1 to 15, equid to human, although this number would drop to 600,000 total equids by 1990 (Préadeau 1990, 135-6). Despite the interest of the royal family in equine sports, the outlook for the native Barb horses was grave at the national stud farms. In 1985, Princess Lalla Amina, Hassan II's youngest sister, saw the need for a breeding program for Barb horses and established a special 2000 hectares (approximately 5000 acres) breeding facility in Sidi Brini, to meet the challenge of improving the breeding of Moroccan sport horses (FRMSE 2018). Moroccan interest in the bloodlines of the pureblood Arabs and Barbs had also shifted; in 1927, the majority of state stallions were pure-bred Arabs, whereas by the 1970s, the overall number of stallions had increased but the vast majority were mixed Arab-Barb stallions. This downward trend in Barb stallions continued, as by 1990 the stallions nationally numbered 93 Arabs, 14 Barbs, and 150 (Préadeau 1990, 135). Therefore, in 1994, the Ministry of Agriculture established a new national *haras* in Bouznika, to accommodate the growing interest in the preservation and

maintenance of horse sports and culture, even though other stud facilities had fallen into disrepair. By 2002, Bouznika was the first facility to offer frozen semen and artificial insemination services. It is also fully compliant with European standards, making it the only facility of its kind in North Africa (SOREC 2018).

In 1999, during the succession of King Mohammed VI, the Moroccan equestrian world also underwent changes. While Mohammed VI liked horses, he enjoyed other high-adrenaline sports in his youth such as skiing, jet-skiing, and hunting. When Sharif Moulay Idris Al-Wazani, the president of the equestrian federation (FRMSE), died in 1999, his wife, Princess Lalla Amina, Hassan II's youngest sister and paternal aunt to Mohammed VI, was appointed president of the FRMSE. Lalla Amina both became the first woman leader of a sports association and continued the tradition of royal patronage of the equestrian arts initiated by her father and brother. Lalla Amina had previously made her own mark in the Moroccan equestrian world, despite its male-dominated history, with the privileges of the royal family's access to and passion about horses and promoted its importance to Moroccan national heritage and its international presence. Later she would become the patron and main support of the all-women *tbourida* teams.

The official equestrian sport federation (FRMSE) was, and still is, categorized under the Ministry of Youth and Sports. As a result, this institution only supported the human participants of equestrian sports while the horse partners clearly needed assistance in terms of breeding and registration, health and veterinary supervision, and the successful management of the horses in the country. In 2003, the Société Royale d'Encouragement du Cheval (SOREC) was created under the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (SOREC 2017). Their mandate is to supervise the breeding and improvement of racehorses in the national stud farms, organize horse races at racetracks, and manage horse competitions as well as the construction and operation of horse

facilities. SOREC is funded by billions of dirhams a year through national horserace betting and gambling, allowing a steady stream of income for the organization's activities. By 2007, SOREC had taken over all the regional breeding facilities and instituted new policies to reinvigorate and add to the breeding programs. Regional breeding facilities continue to be free of charge for Moroccans wishing to breed their own horses to the national stallions. Within the *haras*, there was a substantial amount of construction around the rebuilding of the racetrack. Upon returning to Morocco in 2012, 2014, and 2016, I observed more horse stalls and barns were added and/or renovated to accommodate the growing number of requests for stallion breeding services. As of 2019, there are 283 stallions for national and private breeding at the five regional *haras* of Bouznika, El Jadida, Meknes, Marrakesh, and Oujda (SORREC 2019).

Since 2000, sporting and pleasure interest in horses and horsemanship has diversified and grown in terms of the number of organized events, sponsorships, and affiliations. With the shared interests of human participation and horse management, these two organizations-FRMSE and SOREC-have partnered for nearly every national horse event in the country since 2007 (SORREC 2017). King Mohammed VI was quoted on the SOREC page saying "Strongly present in our literary artistic heritage, the horse confers beauty and aesthetics to our religious and national festivals and our family festivities...some Sultans of Morocco made the back of their horse their throne of predilection, thus giving the most beautiful illustration of the heights to which the Moroccans raised the status of the horse." This harkens back to the proverb about Hassan I's throne being on horseback. The protection and encouragement of the horse still is a royal affair through the federation's patronage. Today, the King's cousin Sharif Moulay Abdellah Alaoui is the patron and president of the Royal Equestrian Federation. Though not a horseman, Moulay Abdellah has worked with the International Equestrian Federation (FEI),

earning the federation the FEI solidarity trophy in 2016, for their work in promoting equestrian sports (FRMSE 2019). The Royal Moroccan Equestrian Federation and SOREC have jointly sponsored many horse festivals and sports, including the regional and national competitions for *tbourida*, the annual *Mata moussem* in the North, the Royal Morocco Tour for jumping, dressage competitions, breed shows for Barbs, Arab-Barbs, and purebred Arabs, and horse races throughout the year.

WOMEN IN *TBOURIDA*

King Mohammed VI has set policies that the media and international commentators view as more moderate than his father, with moves to reform the Family Law Code, open up governmental positions to women, and develop the tourism industry. In many ways, the legal changes for women that happened in 2004 with the reform of the Family Law Code, or *Mudawwana*, have contributed to women participating in *tbourida*. These legal changes, such as abolishing the requirement of the male guardian after age 18, allowed for women to become more independent, and opened the way for them to further pursue their interest in sports and education.

Bigger changes in the Moroccan equestrian scene were also underway. From 2003 to early 2004, the new political climate, combined with Princess Lalla Amina's title and five years of experience leading the equine federation, allowed her to try something daring. In a film made in 2007, Lalla Amina narrates the story of a young woman approaching her, saying that she was interested in riding in *tbourida* because her father and grandfather rode in *tbourida*, but her male relatives were against her participating. Women *tbourida* riders became more visible on the fields in 2004. This opening ultimately led to the creation of the first all-female competition in

2005 at Dar Salam, home of the FRMSE, in Rabat (Essakali 2007). From 2005-2010, the national competition included a women's class for the Hassan II *Tbourida* Trophy.

Female *tbourida* leaders hotly contest who was truly the first *muqaddama* of an all-female team. Halima Barhraoui, of Mohammedia, insisted to me and other *muqaddamas* that *she* was the first woman leader of an all-female *tbourida* team. Other women were on the scene riding with women locally or riding with men before her. In 2004, Hanane Boulhim created a group in the Meknès-Tafilalet region, making a quiet splash in the local press (LePeron 2004; Guisser 2009). She also aspired to encourage the development of a national championship class for women. The press has predominantly featured Halima and her narrative, but she was only one of four *muqaddamas* who debuted their teams at the 2005 Week of the Horse.

Amal began riding with male teams in 2004, and in 2006, Amal also began riding with a women's team from Khemisset. Nour, Amal's youngest sister who was pursuing modeling, joined in the *tbourida* fun, and on the way, they met the young women who would eventually be the pillars of Amal's team: Senaa, the woman jockey who loves crazy horses; Saida, quick to laugh and make jokes; and Fatima, the potty-mouth jokester who always doctors everyone's injuries. As the group in Khemisset grew, the male *muqadem* who had sponsored and supported the team told the women to pay more for logistical costs. Some of the women refused, however, and he then asked them to leave the team. As a group, they recruited other girls and Amal became the hub around which everyone gathered: she was the *muqaddama* leading her own troupe of female riders in 2006.

Soon, *tbourida* began to rule Amal's life. She remembers being emotional and strict with her teammates (interview 07/17/2016). She would drill her team to perfection so everyone's timing with the rifles was in sync. She even commandeered her school time and devoted it to

tbourida. In May 2008, as the spring semester at the university came to a close, Amal's final exam for her English classes conflicted with the national women's class, but the competition was more important than the exam. Amal and her troupe won the gold (first place) at the 2008 national competition and received their medals from Princess Lalla Amina.

By 2009, there were six formally organized women's troupes in Mohammedia, Kenitra, Khemisset, Meknes, El Jadida, and Ben Slimane. However, almost as soon as the women's *tbourida* class appeared at the national competition, it disappeared. In 2011, Lalla Amina eliminated the female class for the Hassan II *Tbourida* Trophy at the Week of the Horse competition. Press hype regarding women troupes in *tbourida* at local festivals was still strong, but no questions were asked as it was quietly removed from the Week of the Horse program. Hanane Chorfané, member of a troupe in Rabat, suggested; "The ruler of Saudi Arabia came to the Week of the Horse in 2010, and didn't like what he saw. He spends a lot of money sponsoring Arab horse activities and perhaps threatened to take away the financing." Others imply it was increasingly public animosity between two female leaders that led to the decision. According to several female riders, one of the troupes was caught engaged in doing something considered immoral. Some say it was smoking (cigarettes or *sebsi* pipes) or drinking, others think the troupe had invited men into their tent. The majority of female riders agree it had to do with the spotlight on the female teams.

Speculation ran wild about the cancelling of the women's *tbourida* class. Unconfirmed rumors and gossip spread throughout the *tbourida* community. Naturally "the truth of the rumors becomes less important than its passage through social circles and the message about individuals or the social actions taken by individuals whose conduct is in question" as Donna Lee Bowen discusses in her study on changing contraceptive mores in Morocco (1998, 69). The rumors

mostly circulated around the moral standing of the women who participated in *tbourida*, and not about the event itself. For single women to be accused of loose morals makes them deviants from the social norm, even more so than riding in *tbourida* with the men. Society labeled not just the women who were implicated, but the rest of the all-women troupes as well. As Rachel Newcomb notes about Fassi rumors, “individuals use rumor to comment on aspects of social life that are changing rapidly or are threatened by the presence of alternative discourses (2004, 95). Thus, rumors about the women *tbourida* riders are also narratives of identity, revealing schisms between a vision of the world asserted in the story of participating in *tbourida* alongside men, and the actual reality of the world.

Rumors circulating around the monarchy in this manner are also important to note, as the Moroccan monarchy maintains its strength through a certain amount of mystery. For example, after King Hassan II survived two assassination attempts, one in 1971 and the other in 1972, a rumor began that Hassan II was immortal or impossible to kill. Journalists are not allowed to report on the personal life of the King and his family, nor are they permitted to publish anything that criticizes the royal family. As a result, the major source of knowledge production and understanding of the monarchy and its decisions is found in rumors.

At a time when attention focused on the emerging women in a male-dominated sphere, the stakes were high and the result of these implied actions reflected poorly on the Princess. Actions that were inconsequential for the men were unacceptable for the women, demonstrating the double standards that exist in Moroccan society. By some hidden means, a decision was made, and King Mohammed VI and Princess Lalla Amina decreed that the class could no longer continue. Then, in August 2012 during Ramadan, Princess Lalla Amina died of lung cancer.

For a period of time, the momentum of women interested in riding in *tbourida* was too great to stop. There were nine to thirteen troupes at any given time, but the lack of a national competition demoralized the established female troupes. Without their female royal advocate, women's interest and the attempts to increase participation in *tbourida* stalled. The hope for this national class to be resurrected is high, but when the newer female leaders attempt to go through official channels requesting it be reinstated, they are met with bureaucratic 'run-around' and evasive answers.

CONCLUSION

This history of *tbourida* is centuries old. From the early Numidian period to the Arab conquest horseback riding was a common occurrence throughout North Africa, leading the local tribes to create the military maneuver of tribesmen charging at one's enemies in a straight line with lances, spears, or swords. With the advent of gunpowder, rifles became the weapon of choice and leading to the activity known as *tbourida*, which incorporated gunpowder into its name. Under French colonialism the practice was banned and relegated to celebratory events, such as weddings, circumcisions, and saint's day festivals. The rifles no longer contained bullets, just gunpowder. Over the course of World War I and World War II, Moroccans struggled to maintain their horse population leading to a decline in practicing their traditional horsemanship. However, upon gaining independence in 1956, first King Mohammed V, then later his son, King Hassan II worked to revive the horse breeding as well as to revive the cultural heritage of *tbourida*.

King Hassan II focused on the shifting role of *tbourida* in society. He was fond of many sports including golf, car racing, and horseback riding and sought to create a competition of

tbourida. The French had introduced the form of structured Westernized sports, including the formation of sports federations. After independence, the newly reinstated monarchy of Mohammed V and his government took over the sports' governing bodies. When Hassan II ascended the throne in 1961, he created competitions for *tbourida* within the Royal Moroccan Equestrian Federation. Only men who could afford horses and only those who were in favor with the King and his government were a part of maintaining this male-only, intangible cultural heritage in its new sport-like conditions.

Through Hassan II's rule, this non-Western equestrian activity, now a sport following specific rules in competition, had classes for junior and senior male riders, and earned prize money in some of the top competitions. By the time of his death in 1999, Hassan II had revived *tbourida* as the second most popular spectator sport in Morocco. Under the new king, Mohammed VI, women riders did not appear on the scene until 2004. Mohammed VI appointed his aunt, Princess Lalla Amina, the president of the Royal Moroccan Equestrian Federation. During her tenure as president, she empowered women to participate in a range of horse activities including jockeying, jumping, and *tbourida*, which coincided with the revisions of the new Family Law Code granting women more rights. Without the need of a male guardian, women could participate in sports including *tbourida*, but still faced discrimination for being the trailblazers in such a male-dominated, deeply held cultural practice.

Moroccan women faced harassment and name-calling by their male-counterparts. Male teams often blocked their paths in local competitions and festivals. Other riders insulted their horses. However, the impact of the women's participation is growing. Since the first women's class at the Week of the Horse in Rabat in 2005, four teams of eight to eleven women have grown to nine teams in fifteen years. Young girls are now seeing sporting examples of what they

could do when they get older. *Tbourida* sets one example for the impact of women in sports in Morocco.

Fifteen years after the government passed the *Mudawwana* in 2004, Morocco has seen experimental and incremental change in women's sports. Women continue to struggle with their newfound rights and the West's push for modernity versus the traditional societal expectations of women's roles. As Rachel Newcomb notes, the government's "visions of more egalitarian gender relations may not mirror existing conditions in the population but are nonetheless influencing middle- and upper-class Moroccans," such as Amal and her family (2017, 74). Amal's balance of marriage, motherhood, work, and a serious leisure pursuit that takes up her waking hours, shows the pressure put on Moroccan women to adhere to the now multiple societal roles expected of them. While the Moroccan government has moved to be more inclusive of women in government and worked to establish more sporting opportunities for women, gender disparity is still widely apparent. Women wishing to compete internationally lack the funds and the societal support. Appropriate sporting clothes and Islamic attitudes toward the female body continue to plague women wishing to share space on the sporting field, beaches, and gyms. The establishment, and subsequent elimination, of the women's *tbourida* class at the Week of the Horse, is a vivid example of how allowing women into a predominantly male sporting arena has clashed with Moroccan societal expectations of women's behavior and roles.

Moroccan women still struggle with being held to higher moral standards than their male counterparts. These female riders also struggle facing down societal expectations of women. This is not an issue singularly held by Morocco or the Islamic world. In accordance with international demands for gender equality in sports, specifically equestrian sports, can be seen throughout the world. Women in the Mexican equestrian tradition of *charrería* face numerous

similar issues; negotiating societal expectations, religious pressure and devotion, and sharing the field in a predominantly male-run sport (Sands 1993; Nájera-Ramírez 2002; Ramírez 2017). However, most human-horse research focus remains on the issues faced in Western countries by female riders (Cassidy 2002, 2007; Lawrence 1984, 1985; Davis, Maurstad & Dean 2014; Sampson 2018; Thompson 2010, 2013). These problems have been noted in the European mounted bullfight and the standard footed bullfight, calling into question the physical capability of women in terms of strength and endurance in these sports (Pink 1997; Thompson 2013). British women struggle with balancing familial obligations, horse conditioning, and competitive excellence within their sporting lives (Dashper 2013:45). They must often acquiesce to their familial and job obligations, due to the lack of financial and social support offered to competitive female equestrians.

Understanding how Moroccan women riders' issues are both similar to (societal expectations, religion) and different from (strength, endurance, economic issues) their female Western equestrian counterparts is important to understanding the women of *tbourida*. The next chapters will contribute to this picture by specifically asking questions about who the women of *tbourida* are and how they navigate these issues of societal expectations and religion. The answers include the negotiations of family and friends support, ancestral ties to horsekeeping and the horse-human relations that encourage women to continue to be a visible addition on the *tbourida* field.

02 WOMEN *TBOURIDA* RIDERS: EXCEPTIONALISM AND STRATEGIES FOR NAVIGATING THE SPORT

In 1980, Aisha Bebedia became the first woman rider in the male-dominated Moroccan equestrian display known as *tbourida*. Wearing men's pants and *djellaba*, she galloped next to her father in the centuries-old cavalry charge (figure 2.1). In the 1980s, this was an exception to social norms, but flew under the radar compared to the larger political issues regarding feminism. After the Family Law Code, or *Mudawwana*, reform in 2004, several girls and women began riding with their fathers, brothers, uncles, and grandfathers in *tbourida*. In 2005, as interest began to grow, the national *tbourida* competition designated a class specifically for the women. Today, the mention of *tbourida nswiya*, or feminine *tbourida*, is met with varied looks of confusion, shock, or— from the occasional *tbourida* devotee—a nod in approval. Almost forty years after Aisha's example, women on the *tbourida* field are becoming a recognizable part of many local saint's day celebrations and festivals in Morocco. *Tbourida*, moreover, is not the only place to now find women on horseback.

In 2012, the director of the Royal Cavalry Police Institute (Institut Royal de Police École de Cavalerie de Sûreté Nationale) in Kenitra telephoned Amal Ahamri, the *muqaddama* of an all-female *tbourida* troupe. As training grounds for the police academy's mounted division, the director was recruiting the first cohort of women to become mounted police officers—a first for any mounted security force in Morocco. Other mounted groups followed suit in recruiting women, including the Garde Royale (a military force charged with guarding the royal family), the gendarmerie (a military branch with jurisdiction in civil law enforcement), and the army. While most likely a public relations move on the part of the Sûreté Nationale after the 2011 constitutional reform, the program was largely successful. The first group consisted of twelve female recruits, ten of whom are still working at the police equestrian academy. Amal's well-

known reputation as a *tbourida* leader and skilled rider led the director to offer her a position with the mounted police. She had just given birth to her first child, Lilia, but within four weeks, she was off to police training in Kenitra. The next year in 2012, the Sûreté Nationale debuted the first co-ed Moroccan mounted police spectacle at Salon du Cheval in El Jadida. Since then, Amal has risen through the ranks, continuing to work and patrol on horseback at events such as the Mawazine concert series and football matches. Yet, the number of female mounted riders across all the mounted divisions remains small. Two weeks prior to the 2018 Salon du Cheval, a brief video of Amal was recorded, describing the mission of the Sûreté Nationale. At the Salon du Cheval, Amal's image was projected onto a cutout form of a police officer and she became a digital spokesperson at the Sûreté Nationale booth (figure 2.2). The increasing visibility of women in jobs like these encourages more exceptions to typical representations of women in the Moroccan public sphere. Amal's experience bridges women's visibility on horseback both at work and in the sport of *tbourida*.

The importance of women's visibility today can also be seen in the monarchy. Lalla Salma is the first female royal to be a public and visible figure representing the Moroccan monarchy, although she is not the only royal to have a more public role under Mohammed VI. Prior to and throughout the colonial period in Morocco (1912-1956), the Sultans' wives were not public figures. After independence, King Hassan II continued to keep a harem and had four wives, none of whom were publicly known. On the succession of King Mohammed VI in 1999, he became the first monarch to have only one wife who was given a royal title *and* was publicly visible. Since her marriage in 2001, Princess Lalla Salma has kept a fairly low profile, supporting cancer research associations and serving as the patron of the World Sacred Music Festival in Fes. Photos from their marriage or celebrating their daughter's birthday are commonplace in

government buildings, shops, and bakeries. The king's sister, Lalla Asmaa, has a public track record of philanthropy, such as being the honorary president of the Society for Protection of Animals Abroad (SPANNA) and honorary president of the Lalla Asmaa Foundation for Deaf Children. The king's aunt, Lalla Amina, was a guiding patron and president of the Royal Moroccan Equestrian Federation from 1999 to her death in 2012. She led the creation of the women's class in 2005 for the national Hassan II *Tbourida* Trophy during the Week of the Horse held annually in Rabat. These three examples highlight the increasing prominence of royal women from the Moroccan monarch's household.

Moroccans who see women physically in the public sphere (streets and festivals), in public jobs, and in the monarchy start to become accustomed to envisioning women in these roles. Since the advent of lower-class women entering the job market in the 1960s under Hassan II, women working in a public, and previously male-dominated sphere started creating a norm of women working in public. But for women living a public life, working in typically male-dominated jobs, and participating in male-dominated sports, they must perform what Judith Butler calls "appearances of substance" (1988, 520). Butler's appearances of substance refers to a constructed identity and a performative accomplishment with regards to gender, through which the social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe in, and to perform according to this mode of identity and performance (1988, 520). By referring to gender as an act, Butler incorporates anthropologist Victor Turner's discussion of ritual social drama. Social action requires a performance, which is repeated. Once it is repeated, it becomes a reenactment and reexperiencing of a set of meanings, socially established; in mundane and ritualized form, the acts legitimize social meaning in public (1988, 526; Turner 1974). In the environment of spectator sports, especially *tbourida*, a set of performative actions have established a male-

dominated sphere, but by participating in these actions women legitimize their visible presence in the sport (Talley 2017). Women riders, like other female athletes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, become the exceptions to the rule.

Anthropologist Deborah Kapchan has looked at female exceptions in language, female speech, and the marketplace using the term “hybridization” (1996, 5-7). Kapchan focuses on the hybrid process not as “one that cuts and pastes, but an actual mixing and blending of forms” (1996, 7) in both language and physical space. As women enter the market, they also pass through the street, a public space. Mernissi considers women in these in-between spaces to be in “a world of shifting, volatile sexual identity” (1987, xxviii). Both Kapchan and Mernissi show that while tradition calls for the continued polarization of the private and public spheres, exceptional women, such as the *tbourida* riders, “rally for new and hybrid definitions of social identity” (Kapchan 1996, 13). Women perform their “appearances of substance”, and by repeating their social performances they also hybridize the spaces that they enter, becoming the exceptions that allow women to participate in male-dominated activities like *tbourida*.

On the global stage, equestrian sports are the only Olympic sport and one of the few professional events that are not segregated by gender. Instead, judgment is passed on the athletic team of the horse and rider together. In Western equestrian sports, however, many women are not able to rise to the top professional level due to lack of sponsorship and funds, the desire to raise a family, and the ability to broach the last male bastions in sports, whether as racehorse jockeys or Grand Prix dressage riders (Adelman & Knijnik 2013; Burke 1997). For women in Morocco, by extension, entering any sport at any level is difficult, and especially equestrian sports.

In Morocco, *tbourida* arose from a male military practice that has now begun to include women's involvement, and so women's participation engages with gendered forms of cultural heritage and sporting activity that remained exclusive to men until the early 2000s. Chapter 1 described how *tbourida*, as a Moroccan cavalry maneuver, was usurped by the French cavalry for the Spahi regiments in North Africa, and then reintroduced as an "invented tradition" for performance at *moussems* and festivals (Hobsbawm 1983; Dine 2018, Talley 2017). After independence in 1956, the Moroccans re-appropriated *tbourida* as a national symbol and competition, putting images of *tbourida* on postcards, money, and continuing to perform *tbourida* as a sport, a domestic and international tourist spectacle, and part of heritage tourism (Talley 2017). With the technological advances of military motor vehicles and limitations on firearms and gunpowder, horses and *tbourida* were rendered obsolete and relegated to a sporting field.

As sport historian Alan Guttman has argued, "wherever traditional sports survived, they either take on some of the characteristics of modernity or to persist in the form of what Raymond Williams refers to as "residual" culture" (1994, 158). The characteristics of modernity in this dissertation focus on the women who are partaking in this traditional equestrian sport. When looking at sports, they are an example of cultural expression with respect to the importance of rules, the allocation of leisure activities, the attitudes of players (to each other and to the fans), the connection to heritage, and the norms of gender inclusion or exclusion. Examining traditional equestrian *tbourida*, in particular, is an excellent focal point for understanding cultural change and creation of Moroccan identity, the impact of Westernization and globalization, and the pulse of social change. Sands notes that power and politics drive sports as a phenomenon, but they also provide insight into the inner workings and cultural variation of societies (1999, 11). In this

sense, an understanding of women's public visibility in Moroccan culture is a necessary factor for contextualizing the inclusion of women riders in *tbourida*.

I argue that the women's visibility as a new generation in the streets, in male-dominated jobs, on social media, and in the news thanks to the *Mudwawana*, has allowed for more support of *tbourida* female riders. In particular, the relationship between the emergence of women's activism and then women's rights through the revision of the *Mudawwana* has influenced women's participation in sports, and helped to define the strategies available to sustain women troupes in *tbourida*. In this chapter, I will first examine the implications of *tbourida*-as-patrimony on the inclusion of women in the sport. Then, I will give a brief history of feminist activism in Morocco, the revision of the family law code in 2004, and how this history parallels the emergence of women in *tbourida*. Finally, I will conclude by defining the techniques that women riders (and other female athletes) use to navigate the male sphere of *tbourida*. As the women perform appearance of substance, they become the allowed exceptions in this sport. The techniques they use allow for the women riders to navigate and hybridize the space for them to become visible exceptions in the male-dominated sport of *tbourida*.

PATRIMONY, SPORTS, & TBOURIDA

Sports traditionally served as a place for the creation and maintenance of hegemonic masculinity within both Western and Global South societies (Connell & Meerschmidt 2005; Davis 2016; Messner 1988; Messner 2013; Micelotta, Washington, & Docekalova 2018; Talbot 2002). Sports sociologist Jennifer Hargreaves notes that conventional images of the masculine and feminine in sports have traditionally articulated women's subordination (1994). However, a growing number of women are participating in traditional male sports, which also means that the

presence of women in sports culture transforms conventional definitions of gender and tradition (Hargreaves 1994, 283). Just as Butler emphasizes the repetition of these acts, Hargreaves argues that, “the process of reproduction is clearly complex and contradictory and results in an increasing range of sporting femininities” (1994, 283). The contradictory effects of these repeated acts holds especially true for *tbourida*, which originated as a masculine military maneuver practice before being repurposed during the colonial period (1912-1956) for festivals and celebrations (Talley 2017). *Tbourida* by nature is patrimony and therefore, a sport originating with and played by men.

Tourist brochures, advertisements from the Royal Moroccan Equestrian Federation, and riders themselves tout *tbourida* as cultural (*taqlidiyya*), a Moroccan art (*fann*), and Moroccan patrimony, legacy, and heritage (*turath*). The Arabic word for patrimony refers to both heritage and patrimony, demonstrating the overlap between form and the order it performs. Patrimony typically refers to “property inherited from one’s father or passed down from one’s ancestors or inheritance” (OED 2019). Heritage, in English, refers to anything given or inherited without specification of where or whom it came from. With the intersection of patrimony and heritage in Arabic, cultural property like *tbourida* becomes part of the male domain, and its cultural roots justifies male-dominance. Men were the primary riders in *razzias*, or tribal raiding, and later, in campaigns resisting the French.

However, there are also records of exceptional women that joined the mounted troops and other resistance groups against the French (1830s onward) (Djebar 1977). Noting the existence of such exceptions, Hargreaves draws the conclusion that “the longer men practically and ideologically appropriate an activity, the more difficult it is for women to take part” (1994, 279). Women struggle for recognition in sports because there is little history to draw upon, few (if any)

role models or networking arrangements, and no female organizations or coaches (Hargreaves 1994, 279). With gender divisions casually reinforced this way, women have to rely on male coaches and associations, and recognition of national or in this case, royal governing bodies to gain support for their place in the sport.

Women who participate in *tbourida* are exceptions in a male-dominated sphere. They are not the only female exceptions in male sports in the Arab World, however. In 1998, King Hassan II praised the growing number of women in sports after the performance of the Moroccan women's team at the 26th World Cross Country Championships, insisting that the Muslim women's sports movement 'is taking place within the framework of the cultural and religious traditions of the Arab world' (Hargreaves 2000, 68). During the preparations for the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Saudi Arabia and Qatar sent their first women athletes to international competitions. In the 2017 film *Speed Sisters*, a group of five Palestinian women competed in a regional male-dominated car-racing circuit. In 2016 in Morocco, a women's motorcycle group formed 'Miss Moto Maroc', to have their own space for women who enjoy riding motorcycles. Using Harkness and Hongsermeier's framework for how women perform every day resistance by using specific strategies for participating in sports, I will demonstrate how women navigate patriarchal rules as women riding in a male-dominated equestrian sport to become exceptions to the rule.

For a country of over 36 million, there are 309 official *tbourida* troupes with over 5,433 participants, as compared to the international Salon du Cheval (horse festival) numbers listing over 500 troupes and 10,000 participants as of 2014 (SOREC 2014; Salon du Cheval 2014). Official troupes refer to the number of male troupes that are registered and compete on the regional and national level in Société Royale d'Encouragement du Cheval (the Royal Society for

the Encouragement of the Horse, or SOREC) and the Fédération Royale Marocaine des Sports Equestres (The Royal Moroccan Equestrian Sport Federation, or FRMSE). These groups typically have the money to participate every year and come from higher-income backgrounds. At the Salon du Cheval, the organizers typically invite groups from all regions whether they are registered or not with SOREC. There are many other riders and troupes unaccounted for, especially among lower income farmers and horse owners who do not register their horses and only compete locally. Among women competitors, there are less than 100 female riders scattered between all-female troupes and riders who ride with their fathers, brothers or cousins. The all-female troupes number between nine and thirteen because they are constantly reformed and reorganized into amalgamations of other troupes, as the career of Amal has demonstrated in her movements between multiple teams over her first 10 years in the sport.

Enthusiastic women ready to participate in *tbourida* are creating small cracks in the sport's "patriarchal bastion." The women *farisas* (riders) or *bardias* (knights) (both words used interchangeably) know their presence is paving the way for others, whether they acknowledge it or not. In a BBC TV interview, Amal said, "Before I started riding, I saw women just cooking, taking care of the horses, but now women ride horses. Other people see power-girls." She also noted the typical reactions: "Men would say you are just a woman. Your place is not here—it is at home with the children. But I like a challenge" (Zand 2016).

Hargreaves notes that most women, like Amal, who are involved in female sport tend to operate outside an explicit political framework or intention (2000, 55). Amal never claims to be a feminist nor is she politically active. On the other hand, the work of feminists, who are politically aware, active, and affiliated, have helped female athletes' cause for recognition (Karam 1998). Earlier generations of women's rights activists—notably the established feminist

groups Union d'Action Femmes (UAF) and Association Marocaine de Lutte contre la Violence Fait aux Femmes (ADFM)—focused on change within state policies and legal reforms (Hatem 2005, Moghadam 2003). Errazzouki argues that older groups like these and their actions to fight for reforms within the government do little to fight for all women, especially working-class women. Instead, the monarchy seizes on women's rights as a tool for liberalizing the political economic system and propping up the authority of the state (2014, 266).

Tbourida is likewise a case of the monarchy appropriating a heritage practice and allowing a few exceptional women to participate. Since King Mohammed VI ascended to the throne, the Moroccan government has maintained a global 'progressive' façade. Mohammed VI disbanded the royal harem, taking only one wife, a wife, moreover, who is not veiled. He also gave her a title, and had her lead politically neutral associations, such as the Lalla Salma Association Against Cancer. The *makhzen*, or Moroccan government and ruling class, has also become more gender inclusive within the business elite and by making some changes to the constitution in 2011 (Errazzouki, 2014, 262). By creating a 'state feminism,' the *makhzen* liberalizes their authoritarian power by acceding to a few demands for a small part of the female population, without having to undergo a process of true democratization.

EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN IN *TBOURIDA*

In 2004, the *Mudawwana*, or Family Law Code, was revised to give women more freedom and additional rights inside and outside of the home. The new law code permitted the wife to initiate divorce proceedings, allowed for child custody, raised the legal marriage age to 18, and abolished the mandatory male *wali* or guardian. The *Mudawwana* was an important change in women's status, but many inequalities remained. Women can now divorce, but they

still are not treated with parity. Women's rights to inheritance continue to be fraught under discussion of Islamic law. The new code eliminated guardianship for women, but it was still safer to travel and participate in activities with male support like a brother, father, or husband, especially in *tbourida*. Nevertheless, it is significant that revision of the *Mudawwana* correlates to the same time in which women began participating in *tbourida* at the national level.

In 2004, a young woman petitioned Princess Lalla Amina, the Royal Moroccan Equestrian Federation (FRMSE) president and patron at the time, to create a competition class for women *tbourida* riders. For a few years prior, several women had been riding with their familial *sorbas*, but with the advent of the new *Mudawwana*, or Family Law Code in 2004, Lalla Amina was amenable to the suggestion. Halima Bahraoui, a young woman from Mohammedia whose father was a *muqaddam* or leader, had started an all-female team around the same time. During the Semaine du Cheval at the equestrian federation's headquarters in Dar Es Salam, Rabat in May 2005, four all-female troupes competed for the first Hassan II *Tbourida* Trophy.

From 2005-2010, when the national *tbourida* competition included women, *tbourida* briefly became an elite social movement headed by Princess Lalla Amina, and approved and promoted by the Royal Moroccan Equestrian Federation. With the monarchy stepping in at this juncture, Lalla Amina, the Federation, and the King commandeered the wishes of women riders to participate in *tbourida* at the highest levels of competition of a male-dominated sport and cultural practice in order to show a united front for gender equity on the *tbourida* field. Because the King sponsored the competition, the male *tbourida* teams and their leaders could not outwardly complain, nor were they openly challenged by the women because they had their own class separate from the women. With Lalla Amina at the head of the federation and in charge of the women's class, the state controlled the women's class, allowing the women to compete while

“preserving men’s dignity” within the patriarchal bounds of the sport. The women briefly ceased being fragmented actors and were unified under Lalla Amina’s direction and the patronage of the Moroccan monarchy. As John Waterbury discusses, “patronage is one of the king’s most effective levers of control” (1970, 150). If women in *tbourida* became a success, the King and the monarchy would be touted for being progressive and supporting women in sports. If the women did poorly or acted out of order, the monarchy could pull the plug on the whole thing without the international world being the wiser. Only a few years would confirm or refute women’s position in *tbourida* at the national competition.

The women’s competitions were openly covered through local news outlets. A documentary entitled *Les rebelles d’Atlas* (2007) showcased the original teams who competed at the national level in Rabat. The film interviewed Princess Lalla Amina, demonstrating her enthusiasm and support for the women’s participation. Fresh-faced and in their teens, Amal Ahamri, Halima Bahraoui, and Senaa Ben spoke of their love of horses and the sport. The TV stations 2M and Medi1 featured this program on their channel for several months. Today, Amal and Nour, Amal’s sister, giggle and joke, covering the screen with their hands, and complaining about how young and embarrassing they were in their teens when Omar Essakalli shot the film.

Ibtissam Maririhi, a *bardia* who rides with an all men’s team, has challenged the gender norms in *tbourida*, as well as being an active hunter, and a champion and gold medalist in trap shooting. She remarks, “There are some people who refuse to allow women in their *sorba* (team), or they refuse to let a woman ride. Nothing can dissuade us. You know what I say? I don’t care. It’s not my job, it’s their job [to change their minds].” Pretending to talk to a man, she says, “I’m like you, you eat, you sleep, you wake up. It’s the same thing for me. When I’m with the *sorba*, the men (of the troupe) don’t tell me *hshouma* (shame on you). And a lot of women

when they see me, they tell me ‘we are so proud of you.’ Because in Morocco there are two kinds of people—those with open minds and those with closed minds. It’s the same thing when we go hunting—they tell us ‘you must go home.’ I tell them ‘it is my pleasure, it’s not your problem’” (Interview Oct. 24, 2018).

When interviewing men over 50 years old who participate in *tbourida*, one hears mixed opinions about women riding. At the Salon du Cheval in El Jadida in 2018, one *muqaddam* commented saying, “Man or woman, it is the same. They must have the courage and a strong personality. Some men try to get on horses and they don’t know how to ride or they are scared. It’s the same with women. It doesn’t matter. They must have a strong heart and a strong will to ride.” Another *muqaddam* at the Salon said, “Women don’t belong in *tbourida*. They did not ride before and they should not ride now.” One older rider told me at the 2018 Salon du Cheval, “We wrap ourselves in white like the shrouds [referring to the riders’ *djellebas*] we are buried in and we pray to God to protect us. Women are not pure. They cannot and do not do this.” (Interview October 2018). Male riders use interpretations of Islam as a reason to exclude or disapprove of women riding on horseback in Morocco. While Islam has no restrictions for men to clean or purify their bodies other than the *wudu* or ablutions, women are considered “polluted” with menstruation, sexual relations, and childbirth (Bourqia 1992).

After Amal began riding with an all-male troupe in 2004, she told me she encountered many problems as the only woman. The *muqaddam*’s family pressured him to remove her from the troupe. Being a single female, she was subject to name-calling and scrutiny by the male members. She told me she remembered being called a *baayra*, a spinster or a single woman, which led her to develop a ‘thick skin’. Amal said she was called other names, but refused to repeat them.

Reflecting on this time, Amal used the proverb “for every chapter, a title.” This chapter of difficulty riding with only men was closing as the new challenges of riding with all-female teams began. In 2005, Amal joined an all-female troupe based in Khemmiset. She continued to ride occasionally with male teams, but the buffer of an all-female team gave her more credibility and confidence. When the troupe in Khemmiset split later that year, Amal and her teammates from Kenitra joined together to create their own team.

Amal’s resilience and persistent presence on the *tbourida* field and in the face of the pushback against women riders demonstrates what the older *muqaddam* mentioned about needing a strong personality to ride in *tbourida*. Women regularly face down criticism and continue to ride. “Some men’s teams tried to cut in front of me at a festival, so I kicked our horses on and took our place,” said Amal. Even as a smaller group of nine horses, the women on her team are tough and follow her lead, consolidating their leader’s determination into a group movement.

In 2011, the women’s class disappeared from the program at the national level. Rumors spread among the female troupes concerning the cause. In 2012, I questioned anyone I could find about the reason, but the wound was still too fresh and no one would name the group, or the individual. Princess Lalla Amina died in August 2012 after a short battle with lung cancer. Finally, in 2014, enough time had passed that more riders were willing to discuss why the class had been eliminated. An all-female troupe was accused of immoral acts—drinking, sex, or smoking. With so much focus on women emerging in this male-dominated sphere, it looked as if they were not ready to be the trail-blazers for women in *tbourida*. King Mohammed VI and Princess Lalla Amina withdrew their patronage from the women’s class, proving that women’s participation was subject to the royal definition of how women should behave.

The women's troupes remained active despite the loss of their patron and the loss of the national competition. However, their once unified group had shattered as groups took sides in the debate as to who was responsible for the class being cut from the Week of the Horse program. This could also be a classic *makhzen* (governing body in Morocco) technique to ensure that the women would not attempt to challenge the decision of the *makhzen* and to play in *tbourida* at the national level again. By sowing possibly false rumors and or amplifying them, this gossip assured fragmentation among the riders that has yet to be mended.

Life moved on for the first generation of *tbourida* leaders. After skipping a final exam at Ibn Tofail University in order to compete in the 2009 national *tbourida* competition, Amal decided to go to work instead of finishing her English degree. In 2011, she married Mehdi Aneur, a horse trainer from Rabat. A year later, she gave birth to her daughter Lilia, and was then recruited into the mounted police. Nourelhouda, Amal's younger sister, started and finished university. The troupes changed faces quickly. As Amal scans over pictures from 2011-2013, her finger points as though playing a variety "duck duck goose" with "zwoj, zwoj, ma zel": "married, married, still here" with the women of her troupe. Manar Gribi, a younger member of the current troupe replaced her own older sister who had married.

The women's troupes did not flounder after the removal of the class from national competition. They continued to actively participate in local festivals all around the country, growing from four troupes in 2005 to nine in 2013. As a result of this visibility, more women and young girls were asking to ride with their families. In 2011, after the elimination of the national class for women, the riders resorted to social media—now more widespread throughout the younger generations—turning disappointment into an advantage, and shifting their individual

struggles into a visual, audible, and collective defiance of the gender norms for women in a public space and in the male-dominated sport of *tbourida*.

The past eight years since the elimination of the women's class in the national *tbourida* competition have seen an increase in the number of female *tbourida* riders. *Muqaddamas* such as Amal act as beacons and advocates for the younger generation of riders interested in *tbourida*. One of Amal's Facebook posts reads, "A subject I often encounter on Facebook is about feminists or feminism. It is their preoccupation. They are not interested in the heritage of the hobby or the validity of its practitioners. Some of [the riders] supported the feminist element in the field, and some of them rejected it, and some of them like sheep go with the flock and agree with what their predecessors say or reject. They pick and choose what they want. Beer, wine, *sheikat* (dancers) and red nights (prostitution) are all *haram* (forbidden). In my opinion, self-respect and appreciation before respecting each other is a duty on both sides" (Facebook post translated from Arabic from the *sorba* page of Amal Ahamri, 10 July 2018). Amal also added that she was not calling out anyone in particular, but rather aimed to keep the dialogue going about the problem of holding a moral double standard for male and female *tbourida* riders. She addresses how the "feminine element" in *tbourida* gets lumped in with things that are considered *haram*, or forbidden—the same issue of morality that led to the elimination of the women's class at the national level. Fifteen years after the women's debut on the national level, Amal is still addressing the mentality of male riders and how they balk at sharing the *tbourida* field with them. Posts like these garner support in the forms of likes and messages from her Facebook followers. "Keep going sister Amal" one reads, and others quote the *hadith*, "Teach your children swimming, archery, and horseback riding."

Individual actions, such as Amal's posts, serve as ways to bolster and reinforce the changes to *tbourida* as women join men on the field. Actions like hers have led to an interest in trying to shift from individual female *tbourida* riders or all-women troupes, to a rider's association or a united group of female *tbourida muqaddams*. In March 2018, the first meeting of women *tbourida* leaders was held at the home of the *muqaddama* Bouchra Nabata. Petite, quiet, and green-eyed, Bouchra hosted leaders and their *bardias*, or knights, from their respective troupes, on her family's farm outside of Rabat. Hanane, one of her long-time troupe members, was the notetaker and leader. Over a long and succulent meal of roasted chicken, lamb tagine, and cakes, the representatives of five female *sorbas* from Khemisset, two from Mohammedia, Casablanca, and Rabat discussed the importance of being united to get expenses paid for at festivals, to attempt to get the women's class reinstated, and to simply have more collective bargaining power. Unfortunately, considering how difficult it had been to get everyone to show up on time and to get more than six troupes involved, the meeting resulted in being largely socially, rather than politically, organized.

Halima Brahaoui, another *muqaddama*, hosted the next meeting at her farm outside Mohammedia in April of 2018. It was the same day as the SOREC qualifying meet for the national competition, and as I rode in the car with Bouchra and Hanane, they watched and listened to the Facebook live broadcast on the phone positioned on the dashboard (Figure 2.3). Bouchra's brother's troupe was competing and she was eager to hear the results. Halima's mother and father, a *muqaddam* of his own troupe, hosted Halima's team, the women's leaders, and some of their compatriots. With enough pre-planning, a few more *muqaddamas* attended. We gathered outside in a tent and nestled on couches and pillows. Talk would turn to gossip and one of the women leaders would attempt to get the meeting back on track. The largest and most

significant issue addressed was the lack of the women's class during the Week of the Horse in Rabat. The *muqaddama* from Khemisset, Oumkeltoum, said she had repeatedly asked people at SOREC and at the Federation why the class was no longer available. Her frustration was more palpable as she explained how the administration never gave her a clear answer and always told her to talk to someone else at the other organization. Many of her fellow riders gathered around concurred, but the discussion did not last long. The meeting eventually concluded after a lengthy meal of couscous, lamb *mechoui* (slow grilled meat), cakes, and colas. The women had not decided on a distinct course of action to reinstate the class. Unfortunately, the date for the next meeting was not set. The women went their separate ways, saying that once *tbourida* season would start they would all be busy, and after that was Ramadan when they would all be on vacation, if not riding in festivals. Some of the women left disappointed. A documentary crew filmed the interactions, but the result was ineffectual—merely a promo video of who attended and footage of the group eating.

This attempt by the women's *tbourida* riders to form an organized association did not yield great success. Gossip was, in large part, a great deterrent. During the two meetings, a feud between two leading *muqaddamas* was brought up repeatedly. Some of the younger riders were not privy to the gossip or were not present during the original points of contention, so they only heard one side of the story. One of the *muqaddamas* had married the former husband of another, creating a rift. They could no longer be in the same room as each other and each challenged the legitimacy of the other to participate on the *tbourida* field. Solidarity between riders that had begun on the *tbourida* field in 2005 was no longer an option, leaving the group of women fragmented. Even while *tbourida* women riders exclude or avoid those with whom they have

tensions, they also actively avoid gossiping in public during TV interviews and work toward the promotion of women in *tbourida*—their shared interest and identity.

Only a small percentage of women actually participate in *tbourida*, but their participation has larger consequences. Spectators start to look for the female teams and the people who follow and support the women via social media are countless. It is the common practice of these women and their supporters to normalize and legitimize the presence of women in these male-dominated spheres via their physical presence—not only in *tbourida*, but other sports, public jobs—as well as their online social presence. More women on the *tbourida* field correlates with more women seizing ground, assuming spaces of power in sports, and allowing other women to cultivate, consolidate, and reproduce their counterpower. As soon as a woman begins participating in a male-dominated sport or working in a typically male job, they become pioneers, role models, or leaders; examples for girls and women to follow knowing that a small trail has been made for them, even if it might not be easy.

STRATEGIES FOR NAVIGATION

Tbourida as it is performed in local festivals is a sport, and it is also a spectacle: a martial art for participants both young and old, and for spectators of all ages from urban and rural areas. Sociologists Geoff Harkness and Natasha Hongsermeier (2015) have outlined how athletic participation (broadly understood as sports with formal organized contests, as well as athletic activities such as working out) can serve as a form of what has been described as nonmovement for women in parts of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Bayat's theory of social nonmovement focuses on performances and resistances in everyday life, rather than on social revolutions by large organized groups (2013). Harkness and Hongsermeier expand on Bayat's

theory of social nonmovement with five resistance strategies used by women in the MENA to counter barriers to female sports participation. In brief, women merge athletics and Islam by creating a compatible narrative, they play sports in gender-segregated settings, they adhere to sartorial customs, they get their family on board, and finally, they play sports at school (Harkness & Hongsermeier 2015) (1087-1089). Instead of thinking of these as just resistance strategies, I broaden these categories to show how they also become strategies of navigation for women to maintain their participation in *tbourida*, and can be applied to other sports.

Strategy #1

The first of Harkness and Hongsermeier's strategies is merging athletics and Islam (2015, 1087). As Hargreaves notes, Muslim women in sport tend to work within the parameters of Islamic thinking (2000, 55). Moroccan Islam has historically been heterodox, with Muslims following the Qur'an, *hadiths*, and *sunna* or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. Morocco also contains a variety of popular religious practices based on Islam, such as Sufism or mysticism (Spadola 2013; Cornell 1998); maraboutism, or the practice of seeking blessings at the tombs of holy people, including both Jewish and Muslim saints (Eickelman 1976; Mernissi 1977); the wearing of amulets as protection against black magic (Crapazano 1973; Kapchan 1996); the wearing of the blue eye on jewelry as protection from the evil eye (Gaddar 2013); as well as trance and spirit possession (Kapchan 2007). This rich variety means there are infinite interpretations of Islam in Morocco.

When I presented preliminary research at the Tangier-American Legation in Morocco in 2018, a group of women mentioned the often-used excuse (in almost every part of the world) that "women will lose their virginity if they ride." This belief is common among parents and

physicians globally, but factually untrue (Brown, et al. 2014). This common misconception has affected women around the world, leading to the invention of sidesaddles, riding in carts, or walking so as not to be astride or introduce a horse between a woman's thighs. In Morocco, the belief that a woman loses her virginity, or damages her hymen, through horseback riding feeds into what older males refer to as being "not pure." Riding horses questions the social expectation of a woman's body being closed (virgin), as a female goes from being a *bint*, a girl or unmarried woman, to a *mra* or woman and thus open (non-virgin) (Bourqia 1992; Obermeyer 2000). A woman's virginity is linked to her family's honor in Morocco. (Newcomb 2006; Obermeyer 2000; Bowen 2008; Pourmehdi 2015). As a woman's body also is on display on horseback, some male riders imply this means a woman is also no longer a virgin, suggesting that she is no longer pure or eligible for marriage.

Being impure or unclean is unacceptable in Islam, so Amal and other women took precautions to combat these negative ideas. On the *tbourida* field and within the practices, costuming, and actions of the sport, riders of both genders balance warding off the evil eye (or bad luck caused by the jealousy of others), avoid *djinns* (spirits that can inhabit themselves or their horses), and increasing or attracting *baraka* (religious charisma, blessings, or good luck). *Baraka* thrives as a social act to ward off the social and physical threat of the evil eye. Often certain behaviours or items offer protection against the evil eye and *djinns* together, while certain rituals for *baraka* are also put in place to protect against the evil eye. Older, typically male riders continue these habits and adhere more strictly to certain practices, while the younger generation focuses solely on protecting themselves against the evil eye. The following sections will discuss how to avoid the evil eye and *djinn*, and how riders attract or receive *baraka*.

Costumes and the trappings of the uniform are an important part of *tbourida* and have specific purposes in warding off the evil eye and allowing the rider to be considered pure. Historically, many male (and early female) participants customarily wore a *burnous*— a white cape or a white robe—*djellaba*. “We wrap ourselves in white like we prepare for death,” female rider Ibtissam Marirhi told me in an interview. Other male *tbourida* riders echo this sentiment. “We wear white to show our purity and clean hearts,” said a *muqaddam* to me at the Salon du Cheval in October 2018. He explained that historically, wearing white into battle made it easy for those killed to be buried as quickly as possible in the required white shroud, in accordance with Islam.

Tbourida uniforms vary to include bright colors and other colors such as green or black, which often have Islamic meanings and folkloric meanings. Green is the color of Islam and associated with paradise in the Qur’an. Amal decided her troupe would wear green *djellabas* and pants in honor of Islam, and wear white scarves on their heads as a symbol of purity, which gives them good luck. Male Saharan *tbourida* troupes often wear their traditional blue *gandoras* or robes, with black capes and turbans. The blue has folkloric significance being the traditional color worn in the South, but black has a conflicting meaning, most often associated in this case as a color of humility and worn in protection against the evil eye, which will be discussed further in this chapter (Westermarck vol. II 1926, 18).

Yellow symbolizes the shining sun and many troupes wear the color interwoven in their white *djellabas* or dress in it as a solid color, believing that it contains magic virtue (Westermarck vol. II 1926, 21). Specifically, men commonly wear the yellow slippers in Morocco for traditional celebrations such as circumcisions, weddings, holidays, and in *tbourida*. The yellow of the slippers protects the wearer from the evil eye and encourages respect from

other people (Westermarck vol. II 1926, 21). Many of the white boots are embroidered in yellow or the riders wear the simple yellow leather slippers, rather than a full boot, when they ride their horses.

Additional colors likewise may offer protection against the evil eye, like blue and red, while other color combinations bring new meanings to the special costumes chosen by troupes for their performances. Red and green represent the colors of Morocco and are often seen in costumes and on the saddles. Today, men and women on the *tbourida* field have also branched out to less traditional colors such as orange and pink. These new colors are a result of wanting to stand out as a troupe at competitions, but also show changes in the stylizing of troupes. Of the two women's troupes I interviewed, most of them prefer wearing colors that coordinate well with the saddles and horses, and are less concerned about what the colors symbolize. The five older *muqaddams* I interviewed typically referenced the color meanings for their troupe's costumes.

Most troupes require riders to wear a sword or dagger, and a pouch with a pocket Qur'an inside. All of these items provide protection against evil spirits or *djinn*. Westermarck noted that swords and daggers were essential items for driving away *djinns*, and were also buried with the body during funeral rites (1926). Many male *tbourida* riders commented on the historical significance of the swords or *khanjar*, and how they were used as weapons, although I cannot confirm continued beliefs in the weapons warding off *djinns* in today's *tbourida*. However, the pocket Qur'an carries much spiritual power in *tbourida*. Many riders will read from it before they mount their horses (figure 2.12). For women, this is a more awkward circumstance because they should not touch the Qur'an while menstruating. As a result, other precautions against the evil eye must be taken such as group prayers, saying *bismillah* before mounting the horses, and wearing the *hamsa* necklaces.

Amal used prayer for protection in her early years in *tbourida*. “I would be very serious. I would get ready and sit and wait in the tent until it was time to ride. I would just sit and stare and think about *tbourida*. I wouldn’t look at anyone. I wouldn’t talk to anyone,” Amal recalled. Although wholly absorbed in her riding, she felt “the eyes” on her. “They would give me bad eyes,” she said, meaning the evil eye. The evil eye is a common folkloric belief across the Mediterranean World, and Moroccans of all ages strongly believing in its existence (Ababou 2005, 37). Because Amal has to face the evil eye, or the “eyes on her,” she prays before she rides, asking for protection. Her mother, Touria, puts dirt from the ground of Amal’s home in her boots, after she has mounted her horse. This type of usage of popular and normative Islam supports Amal and her fellow female riders spiritually and gives her credence with male riders showing her adherence and respect for Islam, despite their cultural beliefs about women riding horses.

Strategy #2

Gender segregation, the second of Harkness and Hongsermeier’s strategies, is recommended or completely required in some interpretations of Islam. As Turkish scholars Koca et al. remark, gender segregation makes the Turkish female athletes “feel safe” or family members require it (2009). Because Amal’s mother, Touria, is the team’s chaperone, it is up to her to impose a segregated area for the parents of the women who have entrusted the safety and reputation of their daughters to her. The creation of an all-female team served as a type of gender-segregation that allowed the team to recruit more women members. Khadeja, a younger friend of Amal, was allowed to accompany the troupe because Amal’s mother always chaperoned the women. Occasionally, Amal would ask women from other troupes to fill in for

riders that had work or school commitments during a festival. At the May 2016 festival in Araboua, Hanane Talid, a *muqaddama* from a Marrakesh troupe, gladly rode with the troupe because they were an established and chaperoned troupe. With an already established women's group, families were much more likely to allow their daughters to participate in *tbourida*.

When the Royal Moroccan Equestrian Federation and its president Princess Lalla Amina created a women's *tbourida* class at the national level for the Hassan II Trophy (2005-2011), men accepted this because the women were not competing against the men, nor were they on the field at the same time. The separation of genders by competition classes differs from the norm in other equestrian games, specifically Olympic sports such as dressage, jumping, endurance, and reining, which are not gender segregated, and in fact represent the only co-ed competitions in the Olympics. Other more folkloric horse sports and events, such as the women's *Escaramuza Chara* in Mexico, of the men's Common Ridings in Scotland, and the men's Horse National Indian Relay in the United States, have a gender divide. In Morocco, when a member of the royal family and the King endorsed the separate women's class, the imposed gender-segregation of competition classes was considered acceptable.

Even after the women's national class was eliminated in 2011, officials that invited female troupes to local festivals typically set the women's tents at a distance away from the male troupes' tents, and the women were often housed in a student dorm or school near the festival grounds. In Zagora during January 2016, Amal's troupe was situated nearest the VIP spectator tent, which would not be occupied at night, and a student dorm that only the women stayed in was a ten-minute drive away by minibus. In May 2016, the women's tent similarly resided next to a water spigot, and near tents that would be occupied by merchants and doctors coming to the festival during the day rather than being slept in at night. The tent was also near the school they

were supposed to sleep in, although the women preferred the tent. Because in this instance the female members of Amal's troupe chose the tent, they also self-imposed gender segregation within the space. All the women who were unmarried, with the exception of Amal, slept close together in a group on the left side of the tent, and the men slept on the far side of the tent, with only the older married couple marking the gender boundary, joking that they were like Romeo and Juliet. Mehdi, Amal's husband, slept with the group of men, keeping the young people segregated.

Strategy #3

The next strategy that female athletes use is adhering to clothing regulations. Islamic interpretations of what is appropriate sporting attire has led to advances such as the burquini or Birkini® in 2007 and the Nike® Pro Hijab in spring 2018. Nike also released a commercial promoting their sports lines to Muslim Arabic-speaking women, with the question "what will people say about you?" It features five female Muslim pro-athletes wearing various sporting attire from a female boxer wearing a ponytail and a sports-bra, to a figure skater wearing the *hijab*, long sleeves, and pants (Nike 2017). Today, most clothes for any equestrian sport are androgynous, with similar styles for men and women. In Iran, equestrian Elmira Mostajaboldaveh conformed by wearing a scarf under her riding hat and a thigh-length coat over her jodhpurs in order to train with the national equestrian squad and compete against men in open competition at the 1998 Olympics (Hargreaves 2000, 58; Longman 1998). Consequently, within *tbourida*, female riders adhere to a similar dress code as their male counterparts. In Amal's troupe, only two of the women actively wear the *hijab* in their daily lives. This does not

impede them from participating, because when the women don their costumes, everyone, including the men, has a covered head.

Male troupes require the use of a variety of head coverings for *tbourida*. Turbans with multiple layers are usually worn by Saharawi and troupes from the southern regions of Morocco. Other troupes wear a *riza*, which is a small thin strip of cotton wrapped around the head. Some troupes from further North might wear *rizas* and a straw hat with bright colored pom poms, like those worn by *ghirabs*, or the water bearers. Female troupes such as Amal's typically wear a simple hair covering. They put their hair in buns or ponytails, wrap a scarf across the top of their head, and knot it at the nape of their necks. Other troupes like Bouchra Nabata's, opt for the more masculine tradition, wrap their heads with a *riza*, and layer it with a light cotton *burnous* or cape, connecting it to their waists and allowing it to flow behind them.

The women riders adhere to clothing expectations, leaving little room for discussion regarding women changing *tbourida* or breaking with tradition. Even the color choices by women—bright pinks or greens—are not subject to debate. The male teams at the national competitions I viewed in 2014, 2015, 2017, and 2018 had comparable male and female teams wearing bright yellows, pinks, mauves, and light blue *djellebas* under their capes. The dress expectations here are more culturally normative to the sport of *tbourida*, rather than the need for Islamic interpretations as it is the case with sports that require more range of movement such as swimming or fencing. Because most of the female riders in their everyday life wore jeans, pants, or long skirts, and long-sleeved shirts, and were already adhering to what is considered the Moroccan norm, the clothing for *tbourida* was not significantly different and did not expose more or less of the body.

Strategy #4

Harkness and Hongsermeier's fourth resistance strategy used by female athletes is to get their parents and family members to encourage and support their participation in sports (2015, 1088-1089). Harkness and sport sociologist Kristen Walseth found that some female athletes in the Middle East and North Africa described families that encouraged and enabled sports participation (2015; 2006). Other scholars found that women navigated their participation so that it did not conflict with their family obligations (Gieb-Stuber et al. 2011; Hamzeh & Oliver 2012; Harkness 2012; Jiwani & Rial 2010; Karfoul 2009; Kay 2006; Knez et al. 2012; Pfister 2008).

When recalling her life, Amal told me about all the sports she tried growing up. "I played volleyball, handball, basketball. I did dance and I learned to play the piano. I had a very classical upbringing," she said. "I wanted to try every sport when I was in school." Finally, at age 12 she started to spend more time at the Kenitra equestrian club. "My mother was very encouraging. She would drive me to all these activities." Later, it was Amal's mother who volunteered her daughter to ride in *tbourida* at a local festival. Amal rarely ever talked about her father's opinion on *tbourida*. One day after I pestered her about her father, she said, "He supports me, but he thinks *tbourida* is boring. That's why he doesn't come to the festivals. He once came, watched our team, clapped (she imitated a bored applause), and went home."

Female *tbourida* troupe leaders and riders typically have strong family backing like Amal. The *muqaddama* Bouchra Nabata grew up on a farm outside Rabat where her father raised sheep and horses. He participated in *tbourida*, and taught all his children—three daughters and one son—how to ride horses. Bouchra told me, "My father was the one who taught me and encouraged me." She also competed for the Hassan II National Trophy when there was a women's class. Halima Brahaoui, *muqaddama* of a troupe in Mohammedia who also participated

in the first class of women, related how she began *tbourida* on the Moroccan TV talk show, *Qissat a-Nass* (2015). Halima told the hostess that her father and his troupe were at a festival, and they had brought a horse that they were not riding. “I wanted to ride and take a picture, but my father and the *sorba* prevented me from riding...they said it was *hshooma* (shameful) to ride...I was 13...I would watch my father do *tbourida* and then I would practice at home galloping the horse and holding a stick.” Eventually, as she got better at riding, she says, “her father was pleased,” so she rode with the men in *tbourida*. Her father had her ride close to him in the *sorba*, but his teammates rejected her. “They [spectators] would say ‘the girl didn’t make any mistakes and you the old men, you made a mistake.’” When her father was not present, Halima struggled to ride with the men.

Around 2004, after Halima rode with the male team, she started training her own team of girls. “I want my own female-team.” She told her father she wanted to be a leader of a *tbourida* troupe, a *muqaddama*. “He said that was impossible, too. Why? Because only me among men caused a problem. A woman in a man’s team was a shame and disgrace, so how would a female team go participate with men? I started practicing [with girls] in secret. We were in school together and I used to take my classmates to the countryside so they could see the horses on weekends... and I was trying to make them love [*tbourida* and horses, in general]. It’s a bad addiction. It’s an injection, that right after being injected, you can’t give up. So the girls started telling me ‘let’s ride.’ So I started teaching them...without their families knowing” (Qissat aNass Interview).

Halima’s story of teaching other women in secret is a common trope among female riders. Hanane Chorfané, who rides with Bouchra Nabata’s troupe, told me as we were driving to meet a group of women riders that her “family was so afraid. They didn’t want me to ride. They

said it was dangerous. So I kept doing it [in secret] until I showed them I was good and I was safe.” Other members of Bouchra’s troupe like Aziza Bouabidi [no longer a member] and Kaoutar said they would practice with the troupe and fall off without telling their families. Only when the girls believed themselves ready did they let their families know or demonstrate their abilities. Halima recounted, “They [the families] knew they were going with me to see the countryside and that’s it. And even my parents didn’t know I was forming a female team because if they knew, they would stop me from doing that. So, one day my father came and found the whole team riding and practicing *tbourida* without anyone’s knowledge. He asked me, ‘What is this?’ and I told him, “As you see.”” In almost every interview I conducted, the women commented that it would be impossible to ride in *tbourida* without the support of their family. The support might be financial or psychological, but the most important was emotional support. Once women proved their willingness to participate and their skill in the sport, the parents were “on-board” with their daughters riding in *tbourida*.

Strategy #5

The last resistance strategy female athletes use is their involvement in sports at school (Harkness & Hongsermeier 2015). Within *tbourida*, women who started their own teams and recruited other women were typically physically active women. While sports in school in Morocco is not as common as it is in the United States, many were already involved in horse sports at equestrian clubs or in activities such as dance and other sports. I would expand Harkness & Hongsermeier’s last strategy to include active lifestyles outside of school through exercise, or physically active jobs. As Amal noted earlier, she participated and tried a variety of sports growing up. These sports were volleyball, handball, basketball, soccer, and tennis. Amal’s

youngest sister, Nourelhouda, is a semi-professional model and regularly works out at a gym in Kenitra. Pictures and stories on her Instagram page feature her weightlifting and boxing. Both sisters have spent time participating in sports or going to the gym, and other female *tbourida* riders likewise lead active lifestyles, whether for work or in their leisure time. *Tbourida* riders Ibissam Marirhi and her younger sister, Yasmine, are active trap shooting competitors. Ibissam also hunts rabbits and fowl with her father during the season, and Yasmine regularly goes to the gym and features moments at the gym on her Instagram.

Other riders have active jobs that keep them physically moving. *Muqaddama* Bouchra Nabata works at a nursery school where the children are energetically running and playing, and she often chases them around. Rider Hanane Chorfan works at a hotel where she is on her feet and moving every day. Amal Ahamri's job as a policewoman keeps her in the saddle at least four hours every day. She rides and drills for precision when the mounted police perform at annual events such as Salon du Cheval, or she patrols beaches, large events like soccer games, and concerts that require a police presence. Amal's children, Ghali, a boy aged one and a half, and Lilia, a girl who is five, require playtime and chasing, so Amal spends her time at home tending to and playing with the children. These active lifestyles, whether in public through work, competitive sports or gym attendance, or in private through hunting, playing or doing physical activities with family, create an atmosphere where physical activity is accepted as an aspect of everyday life.

The women of *tbourida* use Islam, gender-segregate themselves, adhere to the clothing regulations, attain familial support, and play sports in school or live active lifestyles, as resistance strategies to facilitate greater acceptance on and off the *tbourida* field. These acts of "everyday" activism push back at the patriarchal domination of *tbourida* (Bayat 2013). Public

acts such as using interpretations of Islam, especially the hadith “Teach your children swimming, archery, and horseback riding,” is a favorite among the women I interviewed. They note that they pray and carry the Qu’ran with them when they ride, and observe the clothing expectations of *tbourida* riders that are also required when they pray, such as covering the head. Familial support is a strong factor for women riders wishing to participate and continue riding in *tbourida*. Finally, active lifestyle choices in work and at home show these women creating spaces where being active is normal and accepted by families and at work.

CONCLUSION

When questioning old *bardis* (knights of *tbourida*), or *muqaddams* (leaders of *tbourida*), the ones who support the women usually make note of the resilience and the strong personalities needed for the women to ride on the field. “It’s the same for both,” said one older leader I met in El Jadida, “they both must be unafraid, and be bold. Man or woman, it’s the same. They must have a strong personality to ride the horses, and brave to shoot the rifles.” It is the women who have been bold enough to ride, to be seen, and to put themselves out in the spotlight to lead.

While Amal, Nour, Ibtissam, Halima, Bouchra, and Hanane’s actions to become *tbourida* riders or leaders were undertaken separately, these effects do not fade away into a void. Their actions and attitudes compound each other’s and many others, creating a dynamic more powerful in its entirety than the individual activity, and generate more power with more actions. While collectively Amal, Ibtissam, and the others have shared interests, they do not have shared identities, except when confronting a common threat such as those preventing or deterring women from riding. In this realm, these women riders used the strategies outlined by Harkness & Hongsermeier to navigate their way into *tbourida*.

In addition to these strategies, their recognition through TV reports, active presence on the *tbourida* field, and photos on their Facebook and Instagram social media profiles, generate a growing acknowledgement of women who are capable of riding. As historian James Gelvin notes about the Arab Uprisings, “social media certainly played a role...but did not cause the uprisings,” and the same is true for women’s visibility in Morocco (2015, 57). Social media performs two functions: facilitating communication among the women, activists, and would-be participants, who later take part in the conversation either online, or in real time; and it also broadens the range of tactical options (such as organizing meet-ups and announcing events) open to those participants. Facebook and Instagram are secondary instruments in women’s visibility, to the reality of women actually being out in the world and being visible.

The *tbourida* field, festival, and celebration also act as public spaces, like the football field, drawing together players and spectators. At pilgrimage sites such as saint’s tombs, the *tbourida* field is generally near the tomb. It is a space of movement, where people can create alliances or solidarity with others, express their grievances, forge identities, and extend their opinions beyond their immediate networks to include the unknown fellow riders and audience. Saint’s day festivals or *moussems* sponsored by local associations are held on the weekends in rural regions throughout the year. These festivals serve as a medium through which participants, associated parties, and audiences can make their presence felt, establish communication, and recognize mutual interests and shared sentiments. It is an outdoor space where the women began as passive actors—watching, walking, and passing by—and transitioned to actors by riding onto the *tbourida* field. Small demonstrations for the early women riders have grown into a massive exhibition of solidarity (O Feminin 2009). While individually these women might not always get

along, their mutual interests and similar activities have triggered social change on the *tbourida* field.

Among the women who ride in *tbourida*, they often find themselves in a close level of relatedness with their horses. Both men and women discuss not only their familial relationships to *tbourida*, but also their ancestral claim to horse keeping. The next chapter will discuss the kinship of men and women riders of *tbourida*, their links to *tbourida* and the human-horse relationship that evolves into its own kind of relatedness.

03 KINSHIP / RELATEDNESS WITH RIDERS AND HORSES

“Blessings lie in the forelocks of horses”

-Arab proverb and *hadith* attributed to the Prophet Mohammed

Among male *tbourida* riders in Morocco, keeping horses typically runs in the family. Horses were and still are expensive to raise and keep because of the arid climate of Morocco. Unlike donkeys and mules, which forage and eat a widespread array of plants, horses require grain and are selective toward grass, therefore allowing only a group of relatively affluent men to keep horses. As of 2017, Morocco averaged a little less than 188,000 head of horses, whereas mules numbered closer to 392,000 head, with the total number of donkeys unaccounted for, demonstrating the exclusive nature of horse ownership (FAO 2019). The cost of buying and keeping a horse is still prohibitive to most Moroccans. Families who own farms outside the cities, or have a historic relationship with breeding and keeping horses, however, manage to maintain a small herd.

When *tbourida* was used for tribal raids (pre-1912) and against the French and Spanish colonial powers (Algeria starting in 1830; Morocco 1912-1956), local *sharifs* (*chorfa* in *Darija*), or tribal chiefs, recruited capable and wealthy young men to gather their horses and ride with them. *Sharifs* are considered descendants from the Prophet and therefore given authority as a ruling family in more urban areas. Most of these *sharifs* or *chorfa* kept horses since they were noble families. One of the most famous horse keepers was the Sharif of Ouazzane, noted in many travel narratives and in his former wife’s memoir (Perrier 1873; Keene 1912). Local tribal governors, or *caids*, in rural areas were also horse owners and responsible for being able to call up a militia. In general, the Moroccan kingdom relied on a group of professional soldiers known as the *gish* (or *jaysh* in MSA), which was supported by irregular tribal contingents or *na’iba*

(Miller 2013, 37). When called upon by the *makhzan*, the ruling Sultan and his nobles comprising the government, both *sharifs* and *caids* would gather their riders, and offer them in support of the Sultan (Hammoudi 1997, 80; Burke 1976, 14). The militias were “composed of men in the tribe with sufficient wealth to afford a horse and a mounted retainer” (Burke 1976, 14). Later, the *qawm*, or *goum* in the French deformation, referred to people of the same tribe in a cavalry unit raised by the French in Algeria, and in 1908, Morocco developed its modern version of the same concept of the *qawm* for calling up native cavalry (Burke 1976, 269; Bimberg 1999, 7).

It is from these ancient ways of calling up a local militia that *tbourida* troupes were formed. When I interviewed Ahmed Yassine Bousselham (known as Yassine), a young *tbourida* rider in his mid-20s, he told me that his grandfather had been a *sharif* and organized a troupe. Yassine could not remember how far back his grandfather’s ancestors were *sharifs* and horse keepers, but the *sharif’s* land was passed on to his grandmother, and then her son continued to raise horses. Yassine, his father, and his brother all ride in the same *tbourida* troupe, continuing the family tradition. Today, Yassine and his brother Reda raise Barb and Arab-Barb horses which they use to ride in *tbourida*.

In searching for the origins of *tbourida* all-women troupes, I am led back to the notion of kinship and relatedness. Female riders in *tbourida* required the support of their families, and sometimes were able to ride with male family members, or recruited female family members to their troupes. Likewise, their families’ connections to riding and horses revealed deeper lineages related to the status of *sharifs* and traditional Moroccan arrangements for horse breeding that had drawn locally on familial ties and more broadly on tribal ties to marshal militia or cavalry units. Not incidentally, then, a rider’s ancestral history with horses and *tbourida* is also important to

gaining legitimacy with the *tbourida* community. Most male *tbourida* riders are descendants of long lines of horseback riders in their families. However, some female riders struggle to gain acceptance in *tbourida* circles, because they lack similar lineages. Many women (and some men now) are recruited through their school friends, the *muqaddam* or *muqaddama*'s network, or have expressed their interest in a *sorba* via social media. These recruits typically lack the familial experience around horses. While the recruitment of new *tbourida* riders is not exclusive to kin groups, it gains coherence when examined through imagined lineages generated by horseback riding and by horse ownership. Rather than conducting a systematic description of the kinship practices of *tbourida* families, therefore, this chapter focuses on the blurred lines of horse-human relatedness, defined by the connections that female riders are able to forge in the *tbourida* community.

My research, in this regard, followed the approach of Cassidy and Stathern by taking its cue from the interests of my participants. It was my participants who described the relations that sustained their participation in *tbourida* as encompassing family and ancestors, as well as non-kin friends, and kin-relatedness with their own horses (2002, 32; 1981, xxxi). While horses do not share our homes like cats and dogs, as a working animal or one used for sport and recreation, the horse also becomes a companion animal (De Mello 2012). There have been many studies of Western households demonstrating that owners consider companion animals to be family or friends (Grier 2006; APPMA National Pet Owners Survey 2007-2008). In the Middle East and North Africa, where pets and companion animals are less common, however, there has been little research into attitudes and meaning placed on companion animals by their human owners. My approach therefore raises questions about relatedness and co-becoming with animals that are essential to tracing the process of becoming a female *tbourida* rider in Morocco today.

Moroccan riders speak of horses as family, as ‘brothers’ or ‘children,’ creating a relatedness “whose agency, intention and capacity for emotion was crucial in shaping the relationships” horses make with humans (Govindrajan 2018, 6). Starting with Clutton-Bock’s contention that “a domestic animal is a cultural artefact of human society” I center my analysis on asking what the woman-horse relationship in *tbourida* reveals about the Moroccan society by which it is defined (1994, 29). In his discussion of racehorses, Lévi-Strauss contended that horses “do not form part of human society either as subjects or objects...they are products of human industry and they are born and live as isolated individuals juxtaposed in stud farms devised for their own sake...they constitute the de-socialized condition of existence of private society” (1966, 206). Through my fieldwork, I suggest the opposite: that horses in *tbourida* are both subjects and objects in particular contexts. They are neither the single result of human industry through breeding, buying and selling, nor are they always a subject or possess full agency over their lives. Rather, Moroccan riders and horses in *tbourida* are part of a system of deep engagement, interdependency, and ‘becoming with’ each other (Haraway 2008, 16).

Instead of viewing the role of human-horse relations in equestrian sports like *tbourida* as an example of nature and culture in opposition to each other, or even alienated entirely from such a binary as Levi-Strauss proposed, a more productive approach is to think of this relation as ‘mutually interactive’ (Maurstad et al. 2013, 323). A significant amount of recent work has focused on the study of sport and the cultivation of the body in anthropology, which has brought co-being or processes of ‘becoming with’ to the fore (Dance: Daniel 2005; Martial Arts: Farrer & Whalen-Bridge 2012; Music performance: McCaleb 2014; Wrestling: Alter 1992; Yoga: Alter 2004). Ann Game (2001) has proposed using embodiment and/or co-being to examine human-horse relationships, where riders and horses share moments of embodiment as one hybrid

creature, as in ‘embodying the centaur.’ While applied frequently to assessments of Western equestrian sport activities, I find that the Moroccan equestrian practice of *tbourida* does not follow the sentiment of ‘embodying the centaur’, although it does emphasize other forms of relatedness between rider and horse. In terms of physical connections, for example, the specialized saddle and harness positions the rider high and off the horse, in fact creating a sort of disembodiment. Nevertheless, in viewing the experiences of female *tbourida* riders and their position within the sports culture of Morocco, relational ways of co-being dominate the discussion.

For my analysis, I draw on the work of Barad to apply a term from physics – “intra-acting” – in order to focus attention on how natural and cultural practices matter to both humans and horses (2007, 33). By focusing on human and horse beings, co-being, and well-being, intra-action speaks to how both parties act on each other, and are continually changing each other. Intra-acting offers an alternative to “interacting,” or the implication that neither party changes from meeting, and likewise an alternative to the singular physical hybridity implied by ‘embodying the centaur’. Through this theoretical lens, horses cease being symbols or “passive reflections of human intentions” (Haraway 2008, 16). In particular, Maurstad et al. describe “three ways of relational co-being” through which intra-actions can be demonstrated in horse-human relations: (1) riders’ experience of co-being as being in sync, with inter-corporeal moments of mutuality as bodies sync with each other (Argent 2012; Evans and Franklin 2010; Game 2001); (2) riders’ experience of co-being as a kind of engagement between two agentic individuals—where riders describe themselves and their horses as two self-aware participants; and (3) riders’ understanding of the issues of co-being as becoming horses and human, and how

learning and adapting to being with each other is a form of co-shaping and domesticating each other (2013, 324).

KINSHIP IN MOROCCO

Ever since early anthropologists like Edvard Westermarck traveled to Morocco in the early 1910s, anthropologists—first the French during the colonial era (1912-1956), then an American contingent in the 1960s, and the eventual formation of Moroccan anthropologists today—kinship has been at the heart of anthropology and especially, the anthropology of Morocco. Ernest Gellner’s definition of kinship is perhaps the most telling about Moroccan society: “Kinship is to the tribe what bureaucracy is to a modern organization—the set of terms and techniques for allocating people to their social positions” (1969, 12). Kinship keeps society structured and helps interpret daily lives. Anthropologists have focused in particular on the role of gender within kinship, networking, patron-client relations, familial taboos, marriages, and family structures among the Arab and Amazigh in Morocco (Maher 1974; Hart 1976; Dwyer 1978; Geertz, Geertz and Rosen 1979; Rosen 1984; Munson 1991; Bargarch 2002). In ongoing revisions to ideas of kinship, numerous articles have proposed a role for technology and secrecy in creating kinship ties, and a continued reliance on kinship as a driver of contemporary Moroccan society (Baali et al. 1996; Ensel 2002; Gélard 2004; Newcomb 2007). Most of these authors construct lineage charts and fixate on the larger differences between Arab and Berber (Amazigh) forms of kinship as bounded by geography, with the Arabs predominantly in the cities, and the Berber tribes typically in the mountainous regions or the southern Sahara. Scholars have since critiqued this Arab-Berber divide that became prevalent in the literature after the

French colonial era, as there has been much intermarriage and cohesive mixing between the two groups over a long period of time (Becker 2006; Lorcin 1995).

Today in Morocco, most Amazigh tribes have adopted the Arab system of kinship of patrilineage, although in some cases, matrilineal kinship is still present in Arab culture (Gélard, 2004, 565; Maher 1974, 11). As Maher notes, pre-Protectorate understanding of lineage organization is hard to come by, although it is understood that tribes appear to have been territorial and composed of clans of varied regional origin, but these same are also presumed to have been fictionalized in order to justify greater cohesion during wartime (1974, 12). As Davis and Davis note, “Moroccan society is patrilineal, patrilateral, and patrilocal” (1989, 84). This means that familial descent is traced through the male family members, and the preferred form of marriage is between the children of brothers. After a couple marries, they establish their household with the groom’s parents or nearby his family. Within one village, there are several lineages of different origin, where the descendants of the males make up a group of 30 to 50 people, and only a few female kin (mainly older women, children, and unmarried women) related to the men remain with second-class status. In Berber groups, the prefix *Ait* means “brothers,” or people, and is used to refer to any named group from a nuclear family (Ait Addi our Hussein) to a confederation of tribes (Ait Yafelman), or to inhabitants of a specific territory or region.

The latter two—patrilateral and patrilocal—aspects of Moroccan kinship that Davis and Davis noted, are now slowly changing (1989, 84). Women who are working and/or going to college have more opportunity to meet men outside their patrilateral kin group and have begun to choose their own partners. Due to the work demands of the husband or the education of the wife in the middle class and elite families, and matching what I observed in the field, these partners

are likely to move around according to their economic demands, rather than living close to the husband's family. In 2012, the host parents I lived with were Amazigh from the Agadir region and they were patrilineal. The father was the oldest child of the oldest uncle and the mother was the youngest child of the younger uncle. However, of the three marriages I have attended of varying classes, all of them were exogamous, marrying outside their social group; one of my host sisters even married a man from Spain.

In Vanessa Maher's 1970s study of women and property in Morocco, she found that gender segregation and social stratification in work for men and women were important to the economic status of the family. While women functioned in an informal economic role, they used their networks for extra-market channels of economic and social help (1974, 222). Women's relationships among other women in patron-client relationships, or especially among kin, set a standard for behavior towards each other (Maher 1974, 121). If a woman was unmarried during the 1970s, she was considered *meskina*, or a "poor thing". She was thought to be the lowest of the low in terms of social standing in her community. Maher also observed that women belong to multiple, overlapping co-operative networks, and if she loses her place in one, she has others to fall back on. Her own 'kindred of cooperation' network is relatively indestructible (*ibid*). In the early 1970s, negotiating the matrilineal or uterine kin connection after a woman married relied heavily on a case-by-case basis, and her marriage was unstable until the wife produced children. Typically, after having multiple children, the woman asserted some authority in the household with her position solidified, and only then could she return to a deeper relationship with her matrilineal kin.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, in Sefrou, Hildred Geertz described three forms of affiliation in Moroccan relationships—family, friendship, and patronage—where all three are

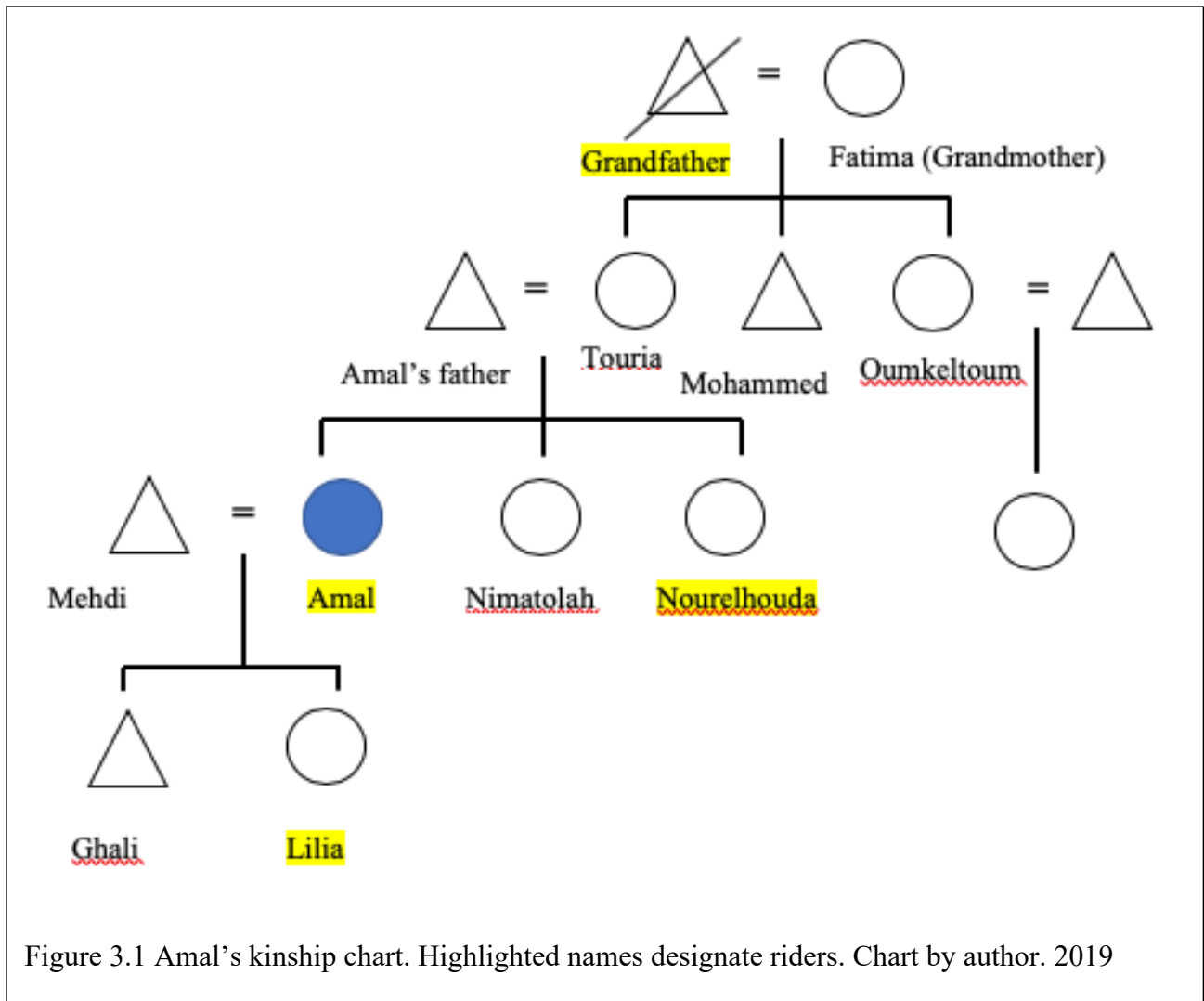
“fundamentally dyadic and expand into broad networks, and are contingent on personal action” (1979, 315). As Hildred Geertz observed, most of these groups become tangled or interwoven with individuals depending on reliable relationships that become connections to larger networks. Long distance relationships and as well as closer networks were equally important to individuals (Geertz 1979, 335). This also means that a person with a strong network within the three affiliations can use the strength of their networks for political and social advantage. However, Geertz notes that, “a person (specifically a woman) without these strong networks or ties is at a considerable political and social disadvantage” (1979, 338), if they marry outside their kin group and move away.

This study builds on previous works on kinship by emphasizing that familial kinships are fluid and raises the new question of kinship in relation to animals. For those men and women wishing to become riders, kinship is a tool, but also part of their identity. A rider’s identity is also linked with their horse. If a rider owns their own horse and does not have to borrow one, they become a co-being—an inseparable pair—making the formation of a team typically easier, because less horses have to be borrowed from other riders. As I will demonstrate with Amal, she and her horse Sharam Sheik have formed a co-being since she has owned him. As riders develop their networks with other riders, they also develop trust and sometimes loan their horse to fellow riders. An older *muqaddam* who did not ride loaned his two horses to a women’s troupe and accompanied them to their festival. This man was the husband of Amal’s mother’s best friend, Mina. Amal’s network stretched to family friends with authority in the *tbourida* world and also to the horses lent their support to her team. This is just one example of many different ways in which riders understand human-horse kinship and their external *tbourida* network. Depending on

a rider or potential rider's networks, it can be easier or harder to join a *tbourida* group and find a horse.

NETWORKING FOR *TBOURIDA*

In 2019, some 50 years after Geertz's study, kinship in Morocco is more heavily negotiated, with many more options for different living situations, marriage choices, and women's work available to both single and married women of different social classes. Like Cassidy's study of racehorse families at Newmarket in the UK (2002), I use female and male *tbourida* leaders as examples to demonstrate how marriage and kinship networks support an individual's interest in *tbourida* and horse ownership. I apply Geertz's description of dyadic relationships between family, friendship, and patronage relationships built into both local and long-distance networks in order to trace the initiation of a female rider's relations with horses. The first case describes patrilineal participation in *tbourida* through Amal and her subsequent marriage. The second case considers female networks in recruitment, and the variety of non-familial networks, both local and long-distance, that female riders draw on to form their teams. Finally, I discuss the means through which women are able to purchase and keep their own horses. I argue that the recruitment of new *tbourida* riders creates new ties generated by horse ownership and horseback riding.



Until her marriage in 2011, Amal lived in her father and mother's house in Kenitra. Amal's father is an automotive mechanic and the main breadwinner of the family. Her father was originally from Nador, in the North, with no relatives in Kenitra. As Amal told me, her mother, Touria, did not work outside the home, but stayed at home and looked after their three daughters—Amal the eldest, Nimatolah the middle child, and Nourelhouda the youngest. As Hildred Geertz notes, “ties between parent and child...are recognized to entail greater emotional commitment than do other kinds of links” (1979, 315). Amal's family lived close to Touria's sister, Oumkeltoum, and her husband's family, who also lived in Kenitra. During Amal's

childhood, she joked that she was spoiled and was given the opportunity to try many sports. Touria often drove her sisters and her to their grandfather's house in El Jadida. This demonstrates an unusual familial arrangement in the 1990s, where Amal's mother kept close connections to her matrilineal kin group both in Kenitra and in El Jadida, while Amal almost never mentioned venturing to Nador to visit her father's relatives. It was through this connection with Amal's maternal grandfather that she became involved with watching *tbourida*, because he was a *muqaddam* and owned horses. Amal did not learn how to ride until age 12. In 2001, she started taking lessons at the Kenitra Equestrian Club. The interest in horses and *tbourida* becomes a patrilineal tradition passed on through Amal's family.

Mehdi, Amal's husband, was also patrilineally inducted into the horse tradition. Mehdi was born in the Touarga quarter in the family housing for the Royal Guards, which surrounds the Royal Palace in Rabat. Mehdi's father was an officer in the mounted Royal Guard, competing in jumping and military horsemanship competitions. Mehdi grew up around these competitions and attended the Royal Military High School in Rabat, where he learned jumping and training of horses. He loved to show me his old photos because he looked much younger and thinner. Mehdi eventually became a horse trainer and breeder, traveling around Casablanca, Mohammedia, and Rabat. Here we see his father's interest in horses directly informing Mehdi's career choice. Mehdi eventually married a fellow equestrian, connecting his career and familial enjoyment of horses. Unfortunately, it did not last due to irreconcilable differences, and they divorced. As Amal tells their meeting, in late 2010, Mehdi contacted Amal by calling her horse-riding coach. He had seen her at several riding competitions and was interested in marrying her. She jokes that she had seen him, too, and while she was not interested, she took his call anyway. They exchanged phone numbers and talked a few hours each day. When Amal first told me this story,

she giggled and pantomimed the first phone calls she had with Mehdi. Eventually, they met for the first time for a real date. She recalled exactly what Mehdi was wearing and what she wore. She told me she realized they had a lot in common, and talked about life and future plans for hours on end. Several times, Amal missed university classes at Ibn Tofail University in Kenitra to spend time with Mehdi. For their engagement, Mehdi gifted Amal a horse, and they married in 2011. Mehdi and Amal lived in an apartment in Kenitra and also bought a farm outside Mohammedia 120 km away—an hour and a half drive by car. Amal worked several jobs in marketing and administration in Kenitra, but became pregnant soon after their marriage.

Because of her involvement in *tbourida*, Amal was soon recruited to work as a mounted police officer for the first cohort of women police officers in Morocco. She started police training six weeks after giving birth to her daughter. Amal told me she and Mehdi hired a nanny to care for Lilia, because Amal was out for work and Mehdi traveled for the horse training. I met this nanny who also accompanied them to *tbourida* festivals and tended to Lilia when Amal would ride. At the festival in Zagora in 2016, I kept hearing Lilia call Amal, “Mama Amal.” I asked Amal why Lilia called her that, and she said it was because of her time commitment at the police academy when Lilia was still an infant and Lilia spent a lot of time with the nanny. Lilia always heard Amal’s sisters and troupe members call her Amal, so she kept injecting the name “Amal” when she asked for her mother. Lilia was not breastfed because it had been difficult to feed and work. Shortly after the trip to Zagora in 2016, when Lilia was still three years old, the nanny’s attachment to Lilia became too overbearing and Amal had to dismiss her. At the next *tbourida* festival I attended in May 2016, I noticed Lilia had started calling Amal just “Momma.”

When Amal was pregnant with Ghali in 2017, she prepared to give birth in Rabat. Her obstetrician was located in Rabat and so were her in-laws. Mehdi’s parents lived in a villa in an

upper-class neighborhood in southeast Rabat. All of the preparations for Amal's birth, her subsequent recovery, and *sebou'a*, or naming party, would take place in his parent's home. Because Ghali was the first grandson in Mehdi's family, this was an important gesture for the patrilineal side of the family. While I do not know much about the details of Lilia's birth, Amal told me that for Ghali, the party was going to be much bigger. They had already slaughtered two sheep for the occasion and Mehdi was bursting with pride. Mehdi's older brother was in his late 30s to early 40s and still unmarried, so having the first male child of the next generation was important to Mehdi's family.

On September 19, 2017, Amal gave birth to Ghali. She stayed in the hospital for four days, and then transferred to her in-law's villa to rest and recover before the party. Her in-laws had given up the master bedroom for Amal, Mehdi, and Ghali. Lilia stayed at the villa, too, being taken care of by a nanny. On the 25th, the family slaughtered a sheep and read the Qur'an over Ghali, giving him his name in a small family gathering. The real party for friends, neighbors, and relatives commenced the next weekend. On September 30th, I arrived to the party early while Amal, her sisters, and friends were at the hair salon getting their hair and makeup ready for the party. When they returned, the women scrambled upstairs to get dressed in their *teksheta* (long, formal, adorned gowns). Amal was lavishly attired in a green velvet dress with gold trim. She wore a gold crown, necklace, earrings, and a gold belt. September was still a hot month so she waited quietly upstairs in the bedroom as the attendants dressed her, and the music started vibrating the entire house. Ghali was asleep in the crib next to the bed, not bothered by the pounding noise coming from downstairs. During the party, Amal descended the stairs carrying Ghali in her arms. Ghali was then passed off to Mehdi to hold, as Amal was lifted up in a decorated litter and carried around by attendants. The room was hot and steamy, and I saw Amal

tell the attendants to be gentle with her as she was still recovering. Throughout the night, Amal was fairly quiet and reserved, she was pale and did not bounce from person to person; instead, they came to her to give their best wishes. At the time of Ghali's birth in 2017, she told me she was determined to spend more time breastfeeding him than she had with Lilia.

In the case of Amal and Mehdi's marriage, they have always lived close to Amal's place of work and to her family. For large gatherings like this, Mehdi's family took priority because Ghali was the first male descendent of his generation. Amal's family was of course invited, but the party was arranged and paid for by Mehdi's parents. As Read and El Guindi notes, humans incorporate newcomers through complex ritual practices such as the *sebou'a*, even though the newcomers are already biologically kin (Read & El Guindi 2013,1). The naming ceremony where the Qur'an is read, the child is given their name, and a party is held, inducts the child into their father's lineage.

As Maher noticed, women depend on their kinship networks and their patron-client relationships with other women as a means of cooperation (1974, 121). Amal, who married outside of her kin group but also remained near her family, was able to maintain strong ties with her family but also build strong bonds with her in-laws. The same dependence on cooperation is true for the women in *tbourida*—they rely on their networks of both kin and friends to recruit women to join their all-female teams. Amal and Bouchra both started their teams with their sisters as the first members or riders. Both had begun riding with men before forming their own teams: Amal with all-male teams, and Bouchra with her father's troupe. Amal recruited her younger sister Nour, and Bouchra recruited her oldest sister and youngest sister to join her. This kindred co-operation gave the women a firm foundation upon which to build, because of the strength of the relationships between sisters, and then expanded to wider female networks

To reach other female riders, however, kin networks would have to be supplemented with local friendships and patronage. Amal, for example, told me she then reached out to her *tbourida* network to recruit riders. She had seen Sanaa and Fatima riding together in male troupes at various events and approached them first. Senaa and Fatima are not related; however, they had ridden together and supported each other over time when they rode in *tbourida*. It was true that Senaa's family had a long history of working with race horses; she had grown up around horses her entire life and had a no-nonsense approach to any horse, making her the perfect warm-up jockey. Senaa told me in an interview once that she liked the "crazy horses," so Amal always felt confident putting her on the most difficult or untested horses that had been borrowed from other teams. Amal trained the women hard before competitions in a weekend where they would drill on the ground with the rifles, and then in the saddle. Amal also took the time to question and recruit her friends at school. Jihane, one of Amal's best friends at university, was coaxed into meeting Amal at the Kenitra Equestrian Club for horseback riding lessons. As Jihane tells the story, she was not on a horse 15 minutes before she fell off, broke her wrist, and ended her *tbourida* career. To this day, Jihane supports Amal's team and travels with them to every festival, but mostly stays away from the horses. Amal also recruited another rider, Ibtissam, as the older sister of a university friend, Manar. Less personally connected, some women also contacted Amal through Facebook as her name was circulated in the media.

Similar to Amal, Bouchra first looked to her school friends and acquaintances to see if she could recruit other women to join her troupe. Bouchra approached Hanane Chorfan, who was a classmate at the local university. Hanane was loquacious, enthusiastic, and helpful in recruiting other women into the team. Bouchra, being a reserved person, let Hanane do a lot of the recruiting, which brought in Kaoutar and a few other women. Eventually, Aziza Bouabidi, a

woman a few years older than the girls, asked to join the team. Aziza's interest was mostly historical, she told me. She was from Meknes, which is home to one of the largest *tbourida* festivals in the interior of Morocco. Aziza had met Bouchra at a few festivals because Aziza was eager to learn about the tradition and study it in collaboration with Mohammed El-Kazzouli. Given the disperse nature of these connections, the women of Bouchra's team did not meet often to practice. Hanane told me they learned to ride here and there on trips to Bouchra's farm, but did not practice with the rifles. Often a team does not get a chance to practice with gunpowder. This led to a lot of accidents and falls at festivals. Organizing for precision was not the troupe's strong suit, although it showed the variety of connections that brought women onto the field.

Despite success in recruiting new women without horse experience in the family to the sport, it is more common for individuals to coalesce in teams based around a shared heritage in the sport. Halima Brahoui and Oumkeltoum, *muqaddamas* of Mohammedia and Khemmiset respectively, both had fathers and grandfathers with histories of riding in *tbourida*. When I interviewed Halima, she claimed *tbourida* was in her blood, which is what made her the best and solidified her claim as the first all-female troupe leader. Oumkeltoum, at the meeting of all the *muqaddamas* in March 2018, mentioned that her father did *tbourida* and was invited to the 2014 FEI World Equestrian Games, hosted in Normandy, to ride in *tbourida* the same year that the Barb horse was the Horse of Honor for the games, highlighted in the Opening Ceremony, and featured in *Around the World in 80 Horses* (Horse Reporters 2014). Similarly, Ibtissam Mahrini rode horses and enjoyed male-dominated activities such as hunting since she was eight years old. Like her father, she actively pursued riding in *tbourida*, but wished to ride with a male team. She trained very hard on her own for several months, so that she would be accepted into a male team and eventually, recruited her sister into occasionally riding. As the women riders' visibility has

grown in the past fifteen years and the laws have enabled women more independence, more and more young girls and women seek out the all-female teams via social media as mentors to look up to and to ask about joining or starting an all-female team as a second generation of women *tbourida* riders. Because this is the first generation of women recruiting and creating all-female teams, recruitment of siblings and school friends were some of the only ways to get women involved. Other women used sheer force of will to join *tbourida* teams by seeking out a group with whom to ride.

Female participation in a life with horses however is not confined to such literal ideas of familial connections. For riders Hajar Errami and her younger sister Hind, who live in Casablanca, their father did not ride in *tbourida*, but their attachment to *tbourida* comes from their mother's southern Amazigh heritage. They grew up speaking *Shilha*, a local Amazigh dialect, at home and they told me they were told stories of their ancestors riding in the *haraka* or cavalry movements, and using *tbourida* in tribal raids. However, they ride in a *tbourida* troupe that is not associated with their family or their Amazigh ancestry, instead riding with an Arabic speaking team outside of Casablanca. While members of Ibtissam, Amal, Hajar, and Hind's ancestors might have ridden in *tbourida*, their generational horse keeping is less consistent than for many male riders.

To build female teams, the seeds planted by kin networks have to be supplemented with local friendships and female-to-female recruitment. Additionally, as women generally remain in the periphery of family associations to horse breeding and horse training, participation in the sport still requires an actively imagined and performed connection to this tradition, whether one generation or several away. The typical entry into *tbourida* remains through a combination of

both matrilineal and patrilineal support and using the women's networks of family friends and school friends to recruit, form, and join teams.

These networks, moreover, allow the women riders to enter into new relationship with the horses that participate in the sport with them. For women like Ibtissam and Hajar, and even Amal early in her riding career, they all purchased and housed their horses because of their interest in riding, not through a consistent chain of familial ownership. For women who do not come from ancestral *tbourida* riding families, saving money, obtaining it from relatives to purchase a horse, or having a family member facilitate the purchase of a horse, is a common occurrence.

Over dinner in October 2018, Ibtissam told me the story of getting her first horse. "I got my first horse when I was thirteen. I don't know how I bought this horse. I said to my father I want to buy this horse, and I said if I don't get this horse, I'll stop hunting [something she and her father did together] or stop speaking, and he told me if you have the money you can get it. ... my father said I will pay for 50% of the price of the horse....so I go to my grandmother and said give me some money, I go to my mom, I go to my uncle, I go to my aunt, I go to everyone and they give it to me, and finally, I give the money to my father to buy the horse. I don't know what attracted me to [the horse], but I had to have him" (October 24, 2018). Her family lived in Bouskoura, 20 km to the outskirts of Casablanca, but it was more rural and enabled the housing of a horse. It was through the assistance of Ibtissam's family network and her father that she was able to buy a horse, learn to ride, and eventually participate in *tbourida*.

For Hajar, she said she saved up for the horse and her father also helped with the purchase of her black stallion named Haydar, but the problem for Hajar and her family was where to house the horse. Hajar and her family lived in a large apartment in Casablanca, with no

immediate access to farmland or a stable. Hajar told me she was determined to keep Haydar close, so her father built her a stall next to the apartment building behind the sheet plastic company that was housed in the bottom floor. At the outset, it looked like an old carport with a tin roof, but when opened, a horse was comfortably stalled with a walking area, complete with a table decorated with his horseshoes. Hajar and her sister Hind took care of him, feeding and watering Haydar every day, combing his mane, and drawing pictures of him. In order for Hajar and Haydar to practice *tbourida*, get exercise or go to festivals, her acquaintances on her *tbourida* team would come and trailer him to a field near by or the festival grounds. Keeping a horse in the city—especially a densely urban city like Casablanca—is extremely rare. Working equids (donkeys, mules and horses) are prohibited by law within Casablanca city limits, although in the outskirts of the city, I saw a marginal number of horse-drawn carts (Davis 2000, 56; SPANA). Keeping a sporting *tbourida* horse as Haydar did requires time and expense to feed and exercise him without incident.

In Amal's case, Amal told me her mother (and father) predominantly facilitated buying a horse and housing it at the Kenitra Equestrian Club for *tbourida*. Her sorrel stallion served her for the first six years of *tbourida*, before Amal became engaged to Mehdi and received a horse from him. While Amal's father is not actively involved in Amal's *tbourida* participation, it is through his labor and money that they were able to purchase riding lessons at the Kenitra club and a horse for Amal to ride. For all three of these women—Ibtissam, Hajar, and Amal—their parents enabled them to purchase and keep horses, but without a direct parental history of keeping horses.

HORSE-OWNING ACROSS GENERATIONS

For male *tbourida* teams, recruiting riders and keeping horses are fairly simple tasks. The men, like women, rely on three affiliations outlined by Hildred Geertz—family, friendship, and patronage—but also benefit from the inter-generational transfer of horse ownership as a key activity in forging these relations. Historically, when a *qaid* or a *sharif* was called to produce a local militia of cavalymen, he depended on the kin and friends that were rich enough to afford horses, and to those who owned horses, he gave patronage. Horses and *tbourida* were naturally part of a familial lineage creating an ancestral practice of horse keeping. The people that were given patronage could also have been considered friends (H. Geertz 1979, 360; Miller 2013, 6; Bennison 2004; Cook Jr. 1994, 30, 233). This crucial practice of forging of networks around horse ownership continued until the French relegated *tbourida* to festivals and celebrations only. As Moroccan life began to move away from farming and jobs were concentrated in cities, it was the sons, nephews, and cousins who moved to the larger cities, gaining other interests outside of raising and riding horses. Younger male riders are showing a pattern of being recruited by friends or through distant relations. Women might likewise join *tbourida* through their families, but then also join through their friends.

Yassine Bousellham's family had many generations of men in the position of the local *sharif*. His grandfather had been a *sharif* leading a troupe of *tbourida* riders in the 1960s and 1970s. After his grandfather died, his grandmother remained on the farm for many years. Yassine's father had moved to the city for work, raising Yassine, his sister, and his brother Reda in the city of Mohammedia, while still keeping horses on the farm with hired help who lived nearby. After Yassine's older brother, Reda, married, Reda and his wife took over the farm from their grandmother to raise horses on a larger scale and to give their grandmother some respite from tending a larger home. In March 2018, when I visited Reda and Yassine's horse breeding

operation on the farm, they had one stallion, six mares, and several new foals. Yassine even joked to me that he had sold his car to buy a horse, so now he was borrowing his sister's car in order to get to the farm.

When I met Mohammed El-Kazzouli in 2015 at a festival in Tit Mellil, he was working with Aziza Bouabidi, gathering, interviewing, and recording historical data to write a book in Arabic on *tbourida*. Throughout the *tbourida* season, he was a common figure to see in the VIP tents conversing with many troupe leaders and friends. To make up for his lack of participation through riding, he would observe, council, and converse with other *muqaddams*, and was key in introducing me to riders that I could interview and photograph. He also wrote a book of poetry about *tbourida* in Modern Standard Arabic. Mohammed told me that these traditions also persisted in his family, as all the male members of the family became involved in *tbourida*. Mohammed had been raised in Beni Mellal, in the south of Morocco near Marrakesh, in a horse-keeping family. His father was a *muqaddam* of a local *tbourida* troupe. In a family tree Mohammed drew for me (recreated in Figure 6.2), he could trace patrilineally and, in some cases, matrilineally how both sides of his family became involved in *tbourida*. When he was 23, Mohammed had started his own troupe of younger men, training them in *tbourida* and teaching them how to ride and shoot. Eventually, he had to move to Casablanca for work, which stifled his opportunities to ride in *tbourida*, being so far away from home.

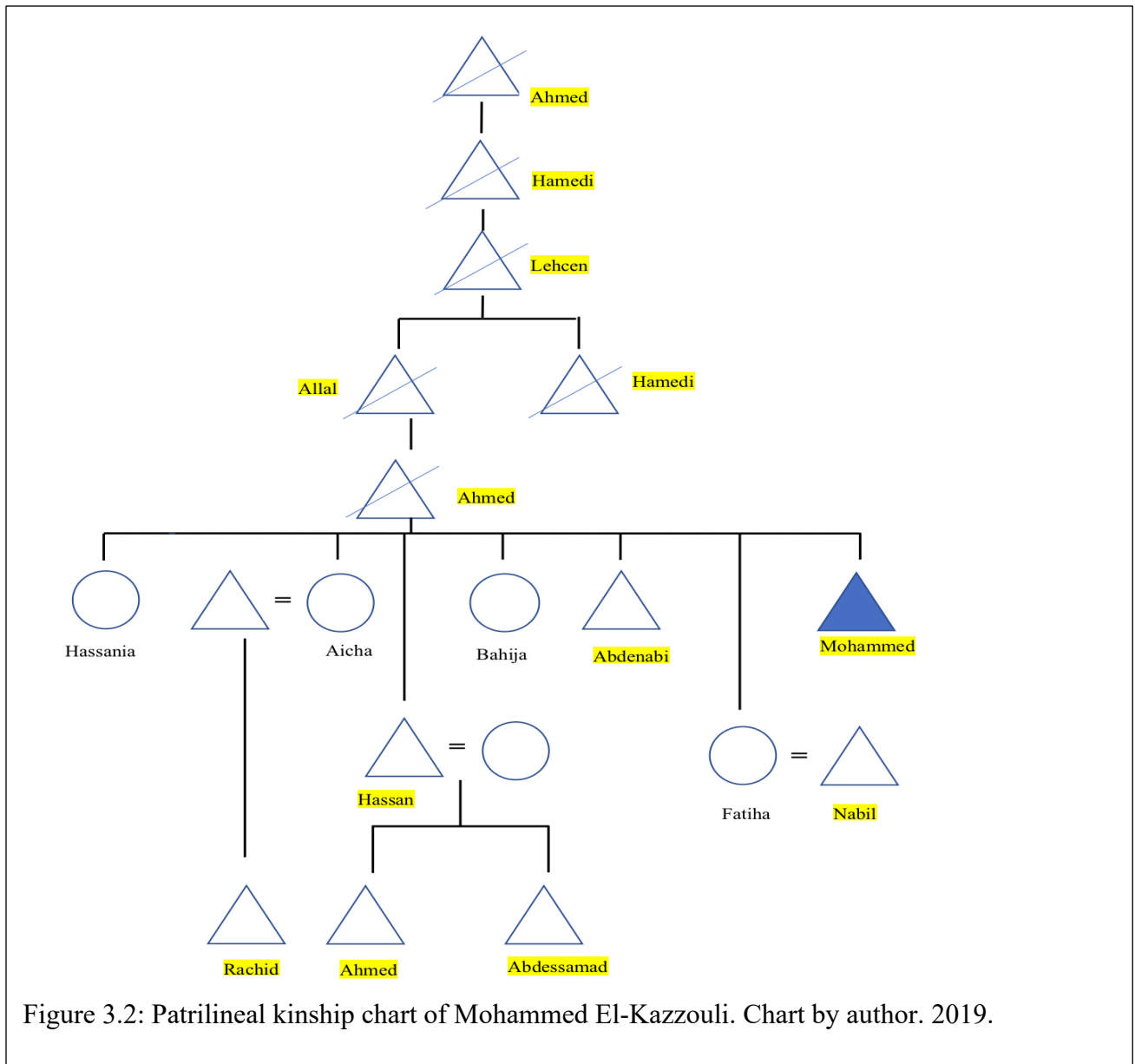


Figure 3.2: Patrilineal kinship chart of Mohammed El-Kazzouli. Chart by author. 2019.

For older *muqaddams*, trying to involve their families in *tbourida* was almost as difficult as Mohammed’s lack of opportunities to ride while living in Casablanca. Another Mohammed, *Muqadem* Mohammed served as a mentor to Amal, and his wife Mina had been a longtime friend of Amal’s mother Touria since childhood. At the *tbourida* festival in May 2016 in Arbaoua, the *muqaddam* loaned Amal two horses, and he and Mina accompanied the troupe. The *muqaddam* was nearing 80 years old, but still loved to ride. When I visited their farm in 2017,

Mina still doted on him and was very proud of their farm. He had divorced his first wife, while his second and third wives had died, before marrying Mina, his fourth wife. Mina had already been married once and divorced, but married the *muqaddam* 20 years her senior. They lived in a small family compound on their farm outside Kenitra. Two of his sons and their wives lived with him, as well as some grandchildren and great-grandchildren. In addition to sheep and chickens, the family kept three stallions in the stable—two flea-bitten grays and a dark black one. One of the flea-bitten grays had a miserable disposition. Mina warned me not to get too close to it or he would bite me, and sure enough, the horse took a few chomps in my direction. However, when the *muqaddam* mounted the horse, the horse stood still and patiently waited for orders from its rider.

When I asked what *tbourida* meant to the *muqaddam*, he said, “It’s my summer and my life.” He traveled less than he used to now, but he remembered traveling all over the country with his troupe to ride in local festivals. During an interview, he told me that in the 1990s, he was part of a troupe that went to France to give a demonstration of *tbourida*, and proudly displayed his *tbourida* trophies throughout his salon and home. Out of his four sons, only one rode in *tbourida*. When I asked two of the sons why they did not ride in *tbourida* like their father, they replied that it did not appeal to them, but luckily, the *muqaddam*’s grandsons were enthusiastic. Figure 6.3 (page 93) demonstrates how inconsistent the patrilineal line in horse keeping and riding in *tbourida* is for this family. The son of the *muqaddam*’s daughter took on the interest of his maternal grandfather. Similar to Amal’s introduction to *tbourida*, it is probable that the relationship between Hafida and her father fed into her son SiMohammed’s fascination with riding *tbourida*.

During my visit to their farm in 2017, there were several great-grandsons of the *muqaddam* (not pictured in the kinship diagram because it was unclear whose children they were), and the boys were eager to show me the horses, and assist their respective fathers with watering and feeding the horses. While one of their father's led the dark horse out of the stable, he put two of the children on the horse's back. One child was probably four and the other six or eight years old, but they hung on to the mane of the horse without any fear, and giggled with delight as the horse moved toward the water trough. Through growing up near and around horses, young children are inculcated into the family's history of horse keeping and involvement in *tbourida*. Typically, the girls learn to feed the horses but are not put atop the horses to ride, only the young boys. However, in Amal's family, both Amal and Mehdi indiscriminately put both her daughter and her son up on the horses as children and acclimatize them to the horses. Amal posts Instagram videos and pictures with her children engaging with the horses. From the children's first meeting of horses to their being seated atop horses at festivals, Amal demonstrates the relatedness between her, her horses, and her children.

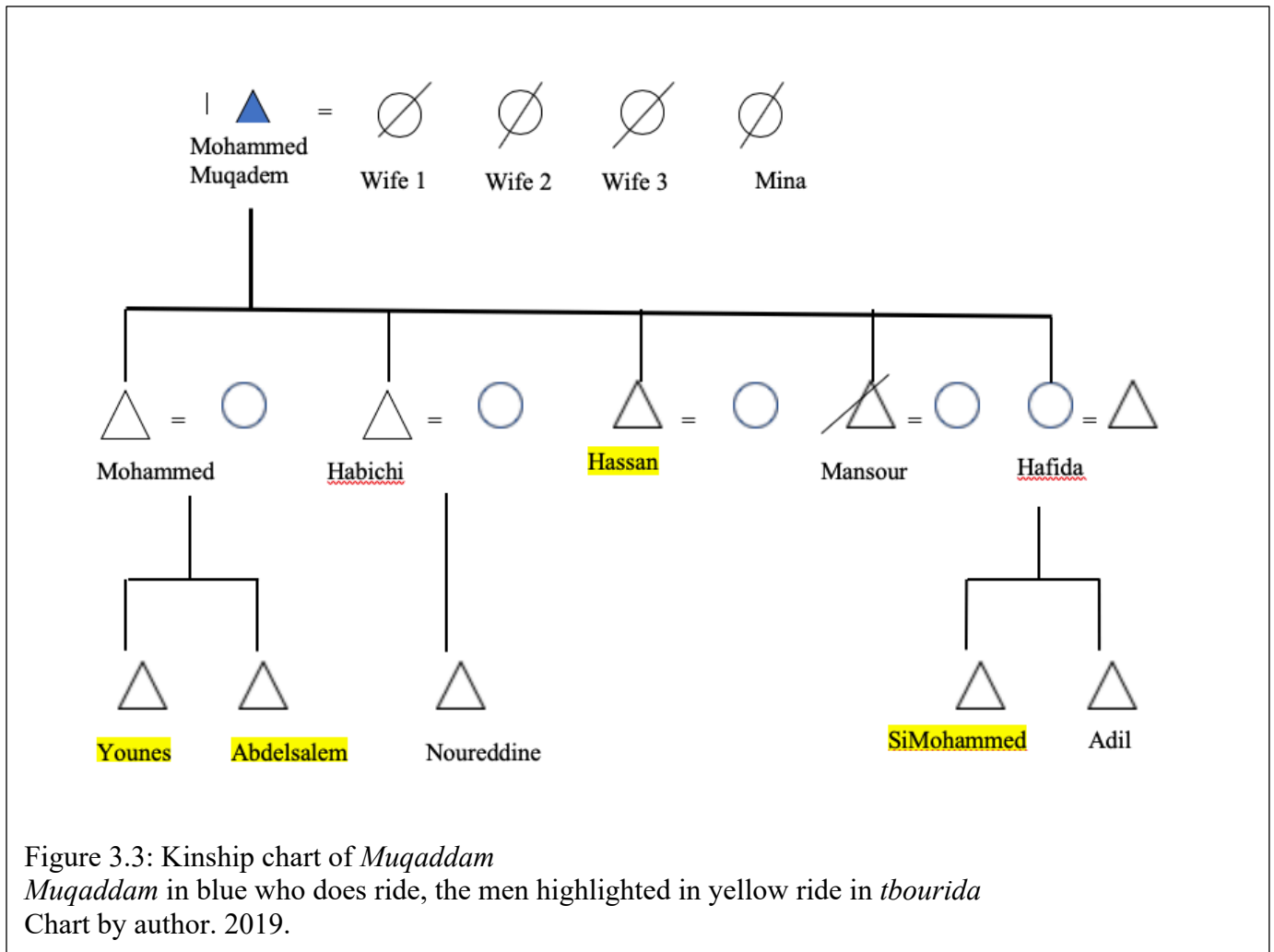


Figure 3.3: Kinship chart of *Muqaddam*
Muqaddam in blue who does ride, the men highlighted in yellow ride in *tbourida*
 Chart by author. 2019.

LEGITIMACY AS RIDERS

What does it mean to be an authentic *bardi(a)* (knight or rider) or *muqaddam* (leader)? In the case of the male riders, authenticity is barely questioned because have traditionally rode in *tbourida*, but for women if their family has a history with *tbourida* and horse keeping it gives them legitimacy to be on the field. If a woman’s family has a history of co-being with their horses—as a pair in battle—then it gives them a justification for why they would want to ride. Their legitimacy is also reliant on their skills as a rider and leader. When I asked Mohammed what he thought it meant to be a *muqaddam*, he responded in a technical sense: “They must have

good timing, watch the team and have a loud clear voice on the field, but also have the capabilities to organize behind the scenes and charisma is key” (Interview 27 Feb. 2018). When I asked Amal what it means to be a leader or *muqaddama*, she talked about the importance of understanding the tradition, skills with horsemanship, and the character traits she thought they should have. “When I started doing *tbourida*, I would listen to the old men that would gather in a circle. They were almost 90 years old and they would tell stories about hunting and war, and recite poetry. The young men don’t do that anymore. I learned from the men with experience in the field.” She also told me that learning from different *muqaddams* in *tbourida* was helpful in learning how to train and give lessons to the riders. Above, Amal mentioned that the changes in the authenticity of *tbourida* is shifting between generations as one sees the younger men associating the traditions associated with *tbourida* and equestrian display as a form of sport. As a young rider, Amal attempted to gather her knowledge of *tbourida* from the old men to understand the history as well as the techniques of riding. This ‘old form’ of authenticity helped her gain supporters and also positioned her as an exceptional rider. Most of the young men do not take the time to learn the history and older ways of *tbourida*. This knowledge gives her authority with which to argue her case for being on the *tbourida* field.

In discussing the traditions of *tbourida*, Amal emphasized that in the past, the troupes rode for *baraka*, or blessings, and not for money. This comment echoes a shift that Elizabeth Warnock Fernea recorded in early 1971-1972. When speaking with her neighbor, she described a local party organized for the Throne Day celebrations (held between the two attempted coup d’états during King Hassan II’s reign): “I described the dancing and fantasias in glowing terms. But Abdul Lateef merely nodded and said flatly that the horsemen and the dancers were probably rented for the day. ‘In the old days,’ he pontificated, ‘the people danced and rode for nothing,

because they wanted to show affection and support for the Sultan. Afterward, the Sultan would give them presents to show his affection for them” (1975, 224). Fernea’s husband Bob asked what the difference between then and now was. “‘There is a good deal of difference,’ said Abdul Lateef with dignity, ‘between being *rented* like a piece of furniture, and giving your talents as a free person, and being offered a gift afterward. It is then an exchange between a King and his people, not a commercial transaction between master and slave” (ibid). The King, being commander of the faithful, would bestow his *baraka* (as discussed in Chapter 2) by whatever gifts he gave the riders. While Fernea contextualizes this display of “bread and circuses” to try to quell the people during a strike, Abdul Lateef also makes an interesting point about how the *tbourida* had changed—becoming more for financial gain and less about the tradition of the display.

With more organized competitions focusing on *tbourida* as a sport, Amal and Abdul Lateef’s comments demonstrate the important questions circulating about legitimacy and authenticity, which are often discussed off the field. When I attended the meeting of the women *muqaddamas* in March 2018 at Bouchra Nabata’s farm, the subject of the legitimacy of riders became the topic of conversation. One person in attendance suggested that Amal’s claim in interviews to being the granddaughter of a *muqadem* did not give her legitimacy as a *muqaddama* of her own troupe. The rider questioned Amal’s lineage because she was not taught *tbourida* patrilineally by her father or her father’s father, but through her mother’s father. In most of Amal’s interviews, she only mentions her ancestral heritage with the sport in passing, before talking about her pride in the troupe, focusing on the present. The rider that brought Amal’s lineage into question was a female rider, whose father and brother both rode in their own troupes. Her comments were remnants of old rivalries from the early days of competing at the national

level. She aimed to personally critique Amal in front of the other women, giving herself more legitimacy because she had a direct connection to *tbourida*. Women in *tbourida* are constantly having to prove themselves in their male and female social networks, and even if they ride well and without mistakes on the *tbourida* field, their legitimacy to be on the *tbourida* field is still disputed.

The *muqaddamas* and their families form the foundation of an all-female team and often provide the horses or the connections to borrow horses for their riders. During my fieldwork, I did not hear much discussion between male riders about what made one *muqadem* more legitimate than another. However, among the various *muqaddamas*, there is different emphasis and label of authenticity placed on those who have the long familial history of riding in *tbourida* in contrast to the *muqaddamas* and the riders who claim only one generation or none at all. The female *bardias*, or riders, that are recruited into *tbourida* by their friends, are typically the first in their families to ride horses and most of the *bardias* are not able to afford horses, nor do they have a place to keep them. There are always exceptions with the women who ride with male *tbourida* troupes who may or may not have a family member who can afford to support or is interested in supporting their participation in *tbourida*.

Historically, legitimacy for men riding a horse was hardly questioned; if the men were rich enough to afford and keep a horse, they did. The horse-keeping tradition, paired with noble or more elite status, was passed through patrilineal descent, father to son. Now, in 2019, riders and leaders come from both new and old backgrounds of horseback riding and horse keeping. Being accepted as a rider is difficult for the women, and the critique about the legitimacy of the rider extends from both male and female sides. While the male riders often use the Qur'an to legitimize their stance against female riders, they also use the historical fact that men were the

primary riders during the wars. When talking to *muqaddam* Hadoui Al-Kenbouchi at a SOREC competition in March 2018, he specifically mentioned the dichotomy of women and men's work conditioning participation in *tbourida*. "During the *harka* (movement of a *tbourida* troupe), the men would ride and the women would provide food and drink.... *Tbourida* is an old heritage passed from my grandfather's father... I respect them (the women riders), they are the first... In the case of *tbourida*, we never saw our women in our tribe riding; historically, when we left to do *tbourida*, the women stayed out of it."

The tradition of only men riding, and of riding in *tbourida* as part of a family's heritage, presented one of the main arguments against women in *tbourida*. However, even Amal had opinions on who I should interview based on who were legitimate or "true" *muqaddams*. She gave me the names of famous leaders of the top-scoring teams at SOREC competitions, but also wanted me to interview the oldest *muqaddams* at festivals, suggesting that the younger leaders did not have the record or the background for reliable research. Amal was adamant that I talk to *muqaddams* and riders who had a long history in the sport.

One day over dinner in Rabat, I pushed back, explaining to her what I heard at the meeting of the women riders and asking her how she felt about the idea of being considered not legitimate because of her apparent lack of ancestral heritage (because she only mentioned one grandfather). Amal thought about this briefly, and then relayed one of her most profound replies: "A *muqaddam* from Mediouna (outside of Casablanca) named Hassan Bedaoui once told me, '*Sadaq khayr min sabaq*' meaning 'an honest person is better than the ancestors.' He meant that the honest person who rides *tbourida* for the love of the sport is better than those who do it for money and because their ancestors did it. I will never forget it. Doing *tbourida* with heart and with love is more important than the money at Dar Salam (the trophy class). This is how the

young people change *tbourida*.” From her response, I could tell this was not a new question, and probably it had bothered her during her early career in *tbourida*, but 15 years later she had accepted and believed the proverb the old *muqaddam* had taught her.

Sadaq implies that passion or faithfulness to the art is more important than lineage, and better than precedent (*sabaq*). “That’s one of the problems with girls in *tbourida* these days” Amal said referring to the proverb. The women want the prestige and lay claim to the family lineage, but their faithfulness and passion seem to be lacking. Amal told me she always used one of her best riders as the example for the other women of faithfulness. She said on several occasions, “many of the girls want to take pictures with the horses and do *tbourida* once for the fame, but trying to get them to stay as part of the team is difficult.” Amal was always reluctant to have a new rider join her troupe without having her practice with the team and judging her *sadaq* or honest passion for *tbourida*.

Amal’s discussion of the proverb, like Abdul Lateef’s comment about *fantasia* in the 1970s, shares a lot with the 90-year-old men who recite poetry and do *tbourida* for the love of the sport as a key element of legitimacy. Amal agreed that the *sadaq* of the riders can be found more in the festivals and *moussems* rather than the organized sporting events. Amal talked about the younger men doing *tbourida* competitions, “they can be showy but they won’t be like the old men who have *tbourida* in their blood—the bond with *tbourida*.” The *baraka* and *sadaq* that come with *tbourida*, like Abdul Lateef explained, were held in high esteem.

There are various discussions of legitimacy: Amal’s idea of passion for the tradition plus some ancestral claim to the sport, Abdul Lateef’s disgust for the riders who ride for the money rather than for the blessings bestowed upon them, versus Hadoui Al-Kenbouchi’s discussion of the traditional people who were designated to ride in *tbourida* when a group of men in a tribe we

called upon and only the affluent men had horses, and finally, Mohammed El-Kazzouli's discussion of the skills it takes to be a rider as well as a leader of the team. All of these examples, as well as others, show the importance of family networks in keeping horses, and show that those participating in these networks value lineage and tradition. However, as the sporting aspect of *tbourida* develops and women become involved, the non-monetary aspects of *tbourida*, such as valuing the older forms through the storytelling, wearing the traditional clothes, and performing at festivals, is becoming another form of accepted legitimacy.

As a woman, Amal's claim for a legitimate space in *tbourida* is thin purely because of her gender, but she builds her authority through various methods. Amal sought to and continues to preserve the tradition because she was mentored by several older male *muqaddams* who vouch for her. She learned the ways of these older men who participated in storytelling, who sat around and camped at festival sights, and sought notoriety through good performances. Most of the women who participate do not wish to change the format of the sport or completely do away with tradition. They merely wish to participate and uphold the tradition at the same level that the men do.

Questions about relatedness are essential to tracing the process of becoming a female *tbourida* rider in Morocco. Legitimacy as a rider might derive from family, friend, or patronage networks: the initiation through paternal line is symbolically important, and the passing down of horse-keeping traditions still exists in families participating in *tbourida*, even though many new riders and women, especially, enter through a variety of ways. However, to "become" a leader with legitimate authority, there is room for valuing tradition through the passion and faithfulness to the sport, as well as non-monetary rewards for participating in it.

Conversations about the experiences of female *tbourida* riders and their position within the sports culture of Morocco demonstrate that relational ways of co-being dominate the discussion. Riders depend on extensive networks, but also fashion a type of legitimacy as riders. Gaining this legitimacy might take place via kinship networks, but also might take place through a larger lens of relatedness. These forms of relatedness lending legitimacy to the rider extend to the partner in *tbourida*—the horse. In some cases, horses also belong to kinship networks in generations of horse keeping within a family. But other forms of relatedness are created once female riders, through mobilizing their networks, have acquired the animal. Moroccan riders often speak of horses as family, as ‘brothers’ or ‘children,’ and female riders likewise speak in terms that create relatedness. On one hand, the relatedness with horses serves as a substitute for direct family connections. But on the other hand, the horse presents an agency, intention and capacity for emotion that legitimizes the rider and their dedication to *tbourida*. In other words, the horse and relation to the rider form an important part of the co-being of a rider.

CO-BEING AS BEING IN SYNC

Maurstad et al. describe the first way of relational co-being as synchronized, inter-corporeal moments of mutuality, where bodies become in sync with each other or to create a “third language” (Brandt 2004; 2013, 324-325). Maurstad et al break down these synchronized inter-corporeal moments further into co-communicating through movement (2013); they cite Anne Game’s “becoming the centaur,” where the embodiment briefly creates one being (2001), and then Evan and Franklin’s description of synchronicity as practices of embodied rhythmic harmony (2010), “which take them beyond their individual selves.” This kind of synchronization is important in a sport like *tbourida*, where there are multiple actions such as giving the

commands, trotting the horses, and galloping the horses while standing in the saddle, raising the rifles, and then discharging them at the precise moment, while reining the horses to a skidding stop. Firing the rifles to create a single cannon-like sound, while maintaining control of the horse, requires mutual understanding or communication, and the understanding of horse and rider's inter-corporeal movements.

In the realm of human-horse communication, two actors—human and horse—speak two different languages, so they must use a third language devised together. Both humans and horses use their bodies and voices to communicate a range of commands, desires, and emotions. Humans and horses are not full partners in the sense that it is human who decides the language (of which some fundamental elements, including sounds and kicks, reach across human cultures globally). Because horses' bodies are highly sensitive, they use them to “transmit and receive information” to each other and humans (Brandt 2004, 305). Therefore, humans base their signals on concepts from animal behavior and what appears ‘natural’ to a horse, so these new material-semiotic practices can be learned (Birke et. al 2004). In this way, horses “communicate their subjectivity to their human partners throughout the process of establishing the language” (Brandt 2004, 307). Horses maintain a degree of agency by cooperating with their human partners request, turning away, kicking, or biting, depending on the provocation. Either way, such communication always includes responses on both the horse's and the human's part (Maurstad et al. 2013, 326). Horses even learn to read human facial cues and can recall them (Wathan et al. 2016; Proops et al. 2018). By monitoring human emotions, horses adjust their behavior or their responses accordingly.

In two visually different forms of riding used in the West, the goals of the horse and rider merge in order to achieve a level of synchronicity in their bodies. In Western Pleasure, as an

example, a human will teach a horse to respond to neck reining. The human asks the horse to turn left by opening the left rein away from the horse's neck and gently placing the right rein on the neck of the horse, while concurrently putting pressure with his leg on the right side of the horse, indicating that the horse should move away from the rein and leg pressure. As a horse is learning this response, it might require light tugging on the left rein and more pressure with the right rein on the horse's neck, before the horse understands what is being asked. Using neck-reining cues, human partners ask horses to engage in specific tasks like chasing cattle, remaining steady while the human ropes a cow or shoots at targets, and moving forward with confidence when asked to cross streams or rivers. In the case of dressage, the form of the language differs, while the process remains the same. Sensitivity and control of the body is equally important for both horse and rider. Pulsating pressure on the rein and small shifts in weight by the rider's seat communicate modulations in the horse's carriage, pace, and direction. Because both the horse and human have tasks to accomplish, these forms of communication are built from mutual understanding. Moreover, the aim of synchronicity in riding generates "bodily sensations" for both horse and rider. Csordas calls these paired sensations "somatic modes of attention" that can be further defined as "culturally elaborated ways of attending to and with one's body in surroundings that include the embodied presence of others" (Maurstad et. al. 2013, 326; 2002, 7-8). This somatic mode of attention therefore characterizes the "third language" humans and horses use to communicate through their bodies.

Humans develop a physical awareness of how to communicate their commands to the horse on the ground and in the saddle. Body weight and position on the horse, and pressure of the rein and leg are basic tools in any horseback riding activity, including roping cattle, mounted shooting, dressage, jumping, endurance racing, and traditional sports such as mounted

bullfighting, *tbourida*, and the Turkish *jareed*. In addition, common riding equipment such as saddle, bridle, and blanket are shared across styles, although appearances vary from the Western (cowboy style saddle with a roping horn in front), English (small, flat), Arab (tall front and back). Across different disciplines of riding and different “tasks” that horses and humans aim to accomplish, distinct “dialects” of communication between horses and humans also develop. Once the roots of the commands have been mastered, it is also necessary to learn the dialect specific to the discipline in which the person is riding.

These differences in style might be compared to dialects of Arabic. As other anthropologists have discovered, the Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) taught in the classroom and the various dialects spoken throughout the Arabophone world differ. MSA is no one’s native language and is not spoken on the streets, but is used in Arabic language news channels, newspapers, and formal writing. When I went to Morocco the first time, my Modern Standard Arabic was understood, but I could not understand Moroccans responding to me. The language was not fully mutually intelligible. Like Saudi Arabians coming to Morocco and trying to understand the Moroccan *Darija*, the language stems from the basics, but the backgrounds and styles are different. This phenomenon mirrors the riding styles and dialects around the Arab world. A horse trained in dressage may misinterpret the degree of pressure used by a Western neck-reining rider, and instead of backing up, will *piaffe* (trot in place). Despite a set of widely shared cues, it is when the horse and rider communicate the same way that mutual trust and communication is reinforced for both actors.

In *tbourida*, this degree of trust and successful communication between horse and human partners is perceived through the physical synchronization of horse and rider. The *sorba*, or team, must move as one, shoot as one, and stop as one. Evans and Franklin describe this

synchronization as “embodied rhythmic work,” or harmonizations that “take them beyond their individual selves” (2010, 180). Ann Game employs a discussion of momentary synchronization of bodies in the gallop or moving in perfect harmony to claims that humans and horses momentarily “become” a centaur – a single human-horse being (2001). Based on the mythical creature with the head and torso of a human attached to a horse’s body, becoming the centaur, however, essentially replaces the horse’s ability to respond with the bodily functions of a more logical or dominant human being. However, the goal of achieving such unification in a single mode of being cannot be confirmed without evidence from the horse. Perhaps the horse feels a physical synchronization with their rider, but more than likely, horses still subjectively or instinctually consider the 150-pound/68.2 kg human on their back still a passenger, rather than becoming one being with the horse. The goal of becoming the centaur represents an ideal and sensation that might be more closely related to the “dialect” of riding in an English saddle with a small, thin structure, allowing for more direct physical contact with the horse, or riding bareback (Game 2001). In contrast, the characteristics of the “dialect” of riding in the *tbourida* saddle suggest that becoming the centaur does not define the aims of synchronicity in this discipline of horseback riding. Instead, I prefer to follow Evans’ and Franklin’s idea of synchronization of horse and rider as embodied rhythmic work because of the matching emphasis on synchronization across the team members and the horses.

The *tbourida* saddle, or *serj*, differs from the typical English or Western saddle. Eastern and Western saddles are often fitted to specific horses and thus vary in measurements. As English saddles have thin, wooden trees inside leather coverings, this amalgamation of hard and soft is lightweight and flexible, allowing for close contact and sensation of the horse’s motion. Feeling these motions to achieve balance in the English saddle is important for advancing further

into more skilled types of riding such as jumping, dressage, or endurance. Metal stirrups attached to the seat with adjustable leather straps assist with balance and typically hang right under the belly of the horse so that the rider's legs also make direct contact with the horse's sides as their feet rest in the stirrups. The Western saddle is more similar to the *tbourida* saddle because the larger wooden tree encased in leather maintains the saddle's structure under rigorous tasks such as roping, calf wrestling, and carrying saddle bags for long-distance trail riding. To ease the pressure, the saddle, with attached stirrups and skirting, is placed on top of a thick saddle blanket or pad on the horse's back. The stirrups are typically made of wood, attached at the bottom of long, leather panels called fenders, and to allow greater ease of movement for the rider's leg also hang past the horse's belly area without making direct contact. Both English and Western styles emphasize placing only the ball of the foot placed on the stirrup, with the heels pointing down, to maintain a dynamic balance, in which a rider in either saddle type can clearly feel the movements of the horse underneath them as the horse moves between a walk, trot, and canter (or lope). The placement of the rider, their legs, and their ability to feel the horse are important to the experience of bodily sensation and somatic attention characteristic of these styles of riding.

Tbourida saddles, on the other hand, require assembly before being placed on the horse's back. They have thick, hard, wooden trees that are tied with a cord to a felt saddle pad at least a foot thick, and then covered with a thin layer of brightly embroidered skirting that is a meter long. An additional final embroidered covering is fit snugly over the saddle once it is placed on the horse. Stirrups are fastened to a metal ring connected to the tree with cotton rope. The brass stirrups are heavier than Western and English stirrups, and have a uniform length, rather than being adjusted to the rider. They hang right below the skirting of the *tbourida* saddle, set over the thick pad, and so are positioned high on the horse's ribs. Rather than balancing on the ball of the

foot, riders insert their whole foot onto the stirrup with toes pointed down and heels up, so they can stand up in the stirrup when it comes time to fire their rifles. The combination of the very thick saddle pad and the acute angle of the tree of the saddle position the rider up high, so that the rider sits almost two feet above the horse's back. This allows for no contact between the rider's body and the horse's body, and consequently a rider cannot feel the articulated movements of the horse's body beneath them.

The only contact the *tbourida* rider has with the horse's body consists of the pointed corners of the metal stirrups to urge the horse forward, and the cotton rope reins in their hands to give the horses their freedom to gallop, and to stop abruptly. The *tbourida* bridle is consequently a controversial item for non-*tbourida* riders not used to speaking this "dialect". Western-style and English bits vary in many respects, but their general construction is a metal bar (either solid or jointed in the middle for flexion) inserted across a bare section of the horse's gums and emerging at the corners of the mouth. Through training, the horse learns to hold the bit in its mouth, and even nibble at grass and eat around it. Because the Western and English riders have more direct contact with their horse's back, the use of minimalist bits is currently advocated for the horse's comfort. In contrast, the *tbourida* bit is complex and heavy. The brass bit does not sit across the horse's mouth but instead, reaches back in their mouth in a spatula-like shape, pressing down on the horse's tongue. This metal shape is connected to a round ring partially inserted in the mouth so that the ring encircles the lower chin on the horse. The slightest movement of the reins is transmitted to the horse's sensitive mouth and signaling the rider's minute changes in movement, so the rider holds the reins carefully when waiting in line for their turn down the field. When I asked Amal about physical contact with the horse in *tbourida*, she demonstrated the contrasting movements one should feel in an English saddle versus a *tbourida*

saddle. Her pantomime of the horse's movements almost sent me into a fit of giggles as she moved her butt in rhythm with an imaginary horse's trot. In a *tbourida* saddle, however, she said, "You sit just like this." She stood stock still in a crouched position over her imaginary horse. "You see? There is no movement. Just reins and feet."

It is precisely the lack of feeling of the horse beneath the *tbourida* rider that makes becoming the centaur impossible. However, there is nonetheless a synchronization or "rhythmic work" that occurs between horse and rider in *tbourida*; due to the nature of the competition, everything relies on the synchronicity of the team. As the horses and their riders line up on the field, the experienced horses anticipate the movements and commands. The opening order by the leader, or the *muqaddam*, sends a ripple of movement through the riders and their horses as they are urged forward. Some horses produce an exaggerated reaction to their rider's spurs and lunge forward. For other teams, a calm advance begins with a few walking steps forward, before asking their horses to trot. At approximately halfway down the field, the team raises their rifles and prepares to gallop to the finish line. For teams that have practiced multiple times together with the same horses, the horses join the rhythm of the others as they gallop forward. This rhythm of the horses' movements matches the synchronization of the riders poised to fire their rifles. As the *muqaddam* or *muqaddama* gives the order "HUP!" to discharge the rifles, the team fires, and then reaches down to stop the horses with the reins. Most horses do not need much cueing from the reins: if they have done this before, they instinctively anticipate a halt.

Of course, this synchronization represents the most ideal communication between horses and riders; riding, firing, and stopping. The added wild-card component of the horse, however, makes such consistency difficult to achieve, unlike other sports that count on synchronicity of performance among humans only, like synchronized swimming or drill teams. If the rider-horse

pair is out of step or misses a cue, it could mean loss of points, or it could lead to a misstep that ends in a physical disaster for both horse and rider (i.e. either tripping, saddle slipping, or running into another horse). On the other hand, when lined up well, and advancing down the line, many horses synchronize themselves. Through listening to the bells on their saddles, and looking at their movements from a sports camera, their movements match and anticipate the commands together with their riders and with the team (herd) of horses. The pair becomes the co-being, communicating together through movements and actions. For the teams that stick to performing and competing at local festivals and *moussems* (saint's day festivals), a good level of synchronicity might occur one time out of three. In the Society for the Encouragement of the Horse (*Société Royale d'Encouragement du Cheval*, SOREC)-sponsored competitions, perfect harmonization is the name of the game to be competitive. Teams practice for weeks on end to achieve this precision and beat their opponents, in the hope of going to the national competition in Rabat.

The challenge of achieving synchronization is one component of *tbourida*; but a very clear lack of synchronization was captured in early photographs of *tbourida*. In these instances, the *sorba*, or team, did not hold tight formations as they advanced forward. This shift in the value and meaning of synchronicity mirrors the development from military maneuver to competitive sport. When *tbourida* was used as a military practice, the riders depended on the disorder, dust, and din that they might use to confuse their enemies. This skill was used as a raiding tactic, before it was employed in the indigenous French cavalry, and finally turned into a sport during the colonial era. The synchronicity was not as important between riders and horses. The troupes of cavalry charged their enemies together and fired as one, but the importance of a straight line and movement as a whole mattered less. As it developed into a sport, a method of scoring the

performance was required to rank the teams, as opposed to which group was most successful during a raid. Synchronization between horses and riders, and teams as a whole, are now the keystone of the competitions and with it, the co-being of horse and rider became even closer.

CO-BEING AS ENGAGEMENT

Maurstad's second noted way of relational co-being involves intra-action. That is, riders experience co-being with their horse partners as a kind of engagement between two agentic individuals— instances where many riders describe themselves and their horses as two self-aware participants (2013, 324). Intra-action does not occur with all horse and rider pairs. This type of engagement relies on consistent engagement with one's personally owned horse. This is the case in Amal's relationship with her horse Sharam Sheik. While Amal and her horse represent two agentic individuals "intra-acting", the overall power dynamic is unbalanced. In this interaction between two different species, Amal, as his owner, holds distinct forms power over Sharam, controlling his food, grooming, and other care. Sharam, nevertheless, makes his wishes known to Amal, and she is actively made aware of his engagement in specific circumstances. In Amal and Sharam Sheik's case, this self-aware engagement between two inter-species beings can be both literal and figurative. I will discuss several examples shaping Sharam Sheik and Amal as two agentic individuals intra-acting: Sharam Sheik's value as an engagement present to Amal; an episode where Amal asks something of Sharam; an interaction of play; and finally an exchange between Amal and Sharam Sheik while she was pregnant with Lilia.

Beginning in 2002, when Amal first learned to ride, then as an unmarried *tbourida* rider, and later as a *muqaddama*, she borrowed many horses. But in 2010, when Amal agreed to marry Mehdi, he gave her a horse called Sharam Sheik, a four-year-old stallion with a glossy black

coat, as an engagement gift. Mehdi had purchased Sharam Sheik for approximately 141,000 dirhams (\$14,600 USD). His price reflected his good breeding, official papers, training, body composition, and conformation. Mehdi had trained Sharam to rear on his hind legs—a trick Amal likes to demonstrate at festivals. Amal told me that after years of borrowing other *tbourida* riders' horses, she was excited and proud to have her own horse. Amal also told me she knew Mehdi was the one to marry, because to be given a horse for *tbourida* as an engagement gift was a sign of being supported as a female rider in the male-dominated sport. Sharam is a six-foot tall Arab-Barb stallion. His shiny black coat creates a beautiful contrast to his four pinkish-white stockings (white hair growth in his coat) that come up to his knees. This pattern is called *qitar al-wad* in Arabic, or “a horse who crossed the river,” as if a river had washed off a black dye on his legs. His face has a white blaze reaching lengthwise up to his ears, but it does not stretch wide out to his eyes. A small, pink flesh-mark covers both nostrils, which makes it prone to sun burn in the summer. His mane and tail hang long and wavy. “He looks like a war-horse,” she says. Amal quoted some *hadiths* that prescribed black and white horses, especially ones that had at least three white legs and light lips, as being the best kinds of horses. Amal took great pains at festivals to help wash him, making sure his coat and legs were clean and resplendent. Many of her male *tbourida* friends were excited for her and complimentary of this new horse, while others tried to tell her the horse was not good or too young, or that his stockings were ugly. She never spoke to those men again. Although Sharam Sheik has no control over the purchase or sale of his own being, it is his meaning, what he represents in terms of Mehdi's relationship to Amal, and Sharam's relationship to Amal, which makes him a co-agent. There is an emotional or at least a behavioral attachment for Sharam to interact with Amal; she feeds him, she rides him and she pets him. Over the years, Amal has loaned Sharam Sheik to only trusted *tbourida* friends when

she is not riding, because she told me, she knows they will take care of him. In 2012, Sharam served as a horse model in the background of a kaftan photoshoot of Amal's sister, Nourelhouda, for *Oosra*, a Moroccan women's magazine. In 2013, when Al Jazeera came to Morocco to do a TV report on Amal and her women's troupe, the cameras focused in on Sharam as they interviewed Amal. Not long after the TV report aired, Amal told me she received a call from an Emirati, who offered approximately 386,000 dirhams (USD \$40,000) for Sharam Sheik. Even this large sum did not tempt Amal. Her reply was "He is never for sale. He will stay at home and Allah will take him," meaning only his death will part Sharam from Amal. Amal is clearly agentive by saying she will never sell Sharam Sheik, exercising her power over him, but also Sharam is left to be his semi-agential self to live and die naturally. Sharam and Amal's relatedness is emotional attachment. Amal's commitment to Sharam staying with his "family" until his last breath demonstrates Amal's sense of responsibility for him, like she would tend to an elderly parent or relative.

In other actions he does control, Sharam exercises more agency. In May 2016, while being interviewed for a BBC program, the reporter asked Amal to ride Sharam on the field in the early morning to get some shots of her riding. The day before, Amal and Sharam had ridden in a hot day of *tbourida*. Sharam's pent up energy from being stabled, and then tied up for a few days, had been spent in one day. Amal, wearing navy track pants and a t-shirt, rode him bareback. The cameraman asked Amal if Sharam could rear for the camera. After many attempts, Amal gave up, saying, "He doesn't want to do it today." Since I had observed many *tbourida* horsemen hit their horses with star spurs, causing gashes to their sides, or hit the horse's neck or head with the butt of the rifles, I asked Amal what she thought about this treatment. She replied, "He is like a big brother. I cannot hit him." The BBC reporter and cameraman were frustrated

that the horse would not perform for the camera, but Amal did not push him. After all, she needed him to ride in at least two more days of the festival. Amal acknowledges Sharam's agency by acknowledging that he did not want to rear, and in this way, she also realizes her co-dependency on him. Thus, even though in many senses Sharam's physical conditions are dictated at the will of Amal and the grooms that take care of him, he does exert his own will in certain aspects of his behavior, such as refusing to perform a command, and illustrating the two-way form of communication indicated by bodily or somatic experience. As Rebecca Cassidy notes about racehorses, "the horse is a particularly rewarding animal to attempt to control due to his feckless nature" (2002, 27). Horses maintain "sufficient independence" despite their condition as domesticated, companion animals, creating a struggle of wills between human and horses (ibid.). Riders and trainers can ask a horse to do an action a hundred times, and the hundred and first time will produce an unprecedented reaction; because of this factor, the horse always maintains a level of agency. Because of Amal and Sharam's prolonged work together they successfully illustrate a kind of co-being shaped by two agential individuals, but the reality is many riders are less reflective or self-aware to the give and take of the horse and rider relationship.

Play interaction is another kind of engagement of two agential individuals. During the same festival in May 2016 in Araboua, Amal was washing Sharam, using a hose to spray the water on his back and on his head. It was around noon and the day was getting hot. Sharam's last drink of water was about 7 am and he was eager to drink more. He jerked his head and flattened his ears as the water splashed him in the face. He turned up his lips to get the water into his mouth. Amal saw this and directed the spray to his mouth. The reporter was trying to ask questions as Amal played with Sharam, alternating spraying his face and spraying his mouth. The reporter distracted Amal with an interview question, and Sharam gently grabbed the end of

the hose with his lips, bringing the stream of water into his mouth. Amal giggled at him trying to get water and directed the spray at his legs, trying to refocus on the questions the reporter was asking her. Sharam grabbed the hose for a few minutes, getting some gulps of water before she promptly tugged the hose loose with a little “pop” from his mouth. Sharam wanted water and waited for the opportunity during this play interaction to sneak the hose into his mouth while Amal was distracted. Her giggles and facial expression assured him that this was okay. Stone (2010), Wathan et al. (2016), and Proops et al. (2018) have proven that horses can discriminate between humans they recognize and do not recognize, and also discern human facial expressions. By monitoring human emotions, horses adjust their behavior accordingly. They carry a lasting memory for emotions that are specific to people’s faces they saw, most importantly their owners and caretakers.

CO-SHAPING AND DOMESTICATING EACH OTHER

Maurstad et al.’s third and final way of relational co-being illustrates how riders and horses learn and adapt to being with each other, and this intra-action becomes a form of co-shaping and domesticating each other. As Amal’s relationship with Sharam Sheik developed, the meaning and ties ascribed to their personal relationship not only indicated a form of relatedness or self-aware agential interactions, like refusals or play, but also shaped each other’s living conditions and behaviors. Sharam and Amal’s engagement during her pregnancy and his interactions with her children demonstrate examples of Amal and Sharam domesticating each other over time. Amal and Mehdi’s farm outside Kenitra offers a good location for co-shaping and domesticating each other, because locations like farms or stables are where most intra-actions occur between horse and human.

In fall 2017, when Amal was pregnant with her son, I asked her about her family's feelings about the news of her baby. She told me everyone was excited. I next asked her if she thought Sharam Sheik knew she was pregnant and she relayed a story about her first pregnancy with Lilia. "With Lilia, I felt that my horse knew [that I was pregnant]," she said. "He was sniffing around my belly and he kept smelling me. I said to Mehdi 'Look! Maybe Sharam Sheik knows!' He kept sniffing and then he bit me! Then I said 'He definitely knows I'm pregnant and he's jealous.' In my mind, I said 'Wow, that's really interesting.' I feel that he knows." It is well documented anecdotally that animals with more acute senses of smell and hearing (dogs, cats, and horses) have been known to perceive human pregnancy due to the change of hormones. However, there has been no biological or animal behavior research to back up these observations. It is through this interaction that we see how a physical change such as facial expression or circumstantial signs of pregnancy (smells, sounds, sights) affects and co-shapes the relationship of the human and horse.

Amal was riding for work and competing in *tbourida* frequently after Lilia was born in 2013. Lilia and her nanny were often part of the entourage at *tbourida* festivals. The fellow team members would dote on and look after Lilia, as she scrambled around the tent. The women would scoop her up in their arms as they went about caring for the horses. As much as Lilia tried to wriggle away, she spent a lot of time around these large, overbearing horses. At the end of the *tbourida* days, riders would lift children up to other riders to get their pictures taken and get a short ride. Mehdi, Amal's husband, was always at the ready to hoist Lilia in the air to ride in the saddle with her mother atop Sharam Sheik. Now in 2019 at six years old, Lilia loves horses and her parents bought her a small pony to ride at the farm. Lilia told me her name was Hashema. Whenever the family goes out to the farm, the caretaker Khalid is at the ready to put a halter on

the bay (black mane, reddish brown body) pony, and lead Lilia around on her bareback. Lilia has a relationship with Sharam Sheik becoming another co-domesticated between herself and the horse. The family farm allows for these types of deeper relationships between family and horses to develop over time.

Before her son Ghali's birth in 2017, Amal and Mehdi had sold their farm in Mohammedia and bought a property closer to their home in Kenitra. They constructed a home on the new farm with a stable attached. The field at first was dusty and open, with no trees marking the boundaries, and a small shelter stood in one corner for a corral and its sorrel equine occupant. A few other horses, including a donkey and a pony for Lilia, were tethered outside. Now, this farm is also a place where Sharam Sheik has his "family." In spring 2018, Sharam sired a sorrel (red body) filly foal (a female newborn horse) with four white stockings, which Amal named Ghalia. Her son and Sharam's daughter were born close together in timing so she said she had to name Sharam's first offspring "dear" or "treasured", like her son's name. In 2019, Amal expects a few more foals from Sharam Sheik, but does not know yet if she will sell them or keep them. The first and foremost concern for Amal is her family's proximity to Sharam Sheik. If Amal kept the foals, Amal would continue to be co-shaped by raising horses in a new generation from Sharam, as well as domesticating (or taming) the foals that remain on her farm. Raising even a few of the foals would create new webs of relatedness between Amal and her family. These three ways of co-being are intimately interrelated, building off each other to create an interdependent language of communication through being in sync—through riding, engaging in activities together outside of riding, and finally, how these interactions shape or domesticate each other's lives.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I discussed the forms of horse-human “relatedness” and “co-being” developed by riders participating in *tbourida*. They interact within networks defined through family, friendship, and patronage, which affect both initiations into *tbourida* as well as horse keeping. Through three kinship charts, I examined how the *muqaddam* Mohammed El-Kazzouli in his mid-30s traces his horse keeping and *tbourida* lineage very clearly through one of a long line of descendants. I also provided the example of the *muqaddam* Mohammed in his 80s who, while an older figure in *tbourida*, has seen only a few of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren participate in *tbourida*. These two charts and the example provided by Yassine Bouselham illustrate the perceived importance of passing the horse-keeping and *tbourida* practice from older male relatives to younger ones. In the cases of the women riders, some like Amal and Bouchra claim a male relative who has participated in *tbourida*. Among female leaders this is more common: in order to start an all-female team, they need the support from their families, but also the access to horses and horse knowledge.

The families with lineages of horse keeping also have a close connection to their horses, which invites questions about the role of the horse-human intra-actions in the process of becoming a rider in *tbourida*. Using Amal and Sharam Sheik’s relationship as an example, I demonstrated three ways of co-being: through interactions on horseback in the saddle, on the ground, and with family members. Like human relationships, Amal and Sharam Sheik’s relationship-kinship is unique to the individuals involved, but similarities can be seen throughout the horse world and through human-horse interactions. As Franklin and McKinnon discuss, kinship between humans and animals involves both fixing and crossing boundaries (2001, 19). Amal and Sharam’s relationship illustrate this fixing and crossing-between, and ensures Sharam will never be sold: he is considered family and is an individual of great importance. Sharam has

ceased to be an animal commodity that is bought and sold and does not have any agency, but has an important part to play in Amal and Mehdi's family. As Cassidy also found in her study of families that breed and care for racehorses, horses are polysemic and ambivalent creatures (2002, 9). Horses are not mere animals, neither subject nor object, and neither fully cultural nor fully natural. Depending on their context and relationship to their human partners, they have held multiple meanings, both historically and in the modern day.

04 VISUALIZING TBOURIDA

During my fieldwork observing and interviewing Moroccan riders at *tbourida* festivals, my Canon 7D camera was constantly and conspicuously around my neck. Many riders mistook me as a photographer, even though I tried to correct them by explaining that I was there for research. Since there was typically only one female team per festival, I also usually took many pictures of the male *tbourida* troupes. The young men often flirted with me, smiling big for my pictures, giving me a thumbs-up, telling me what other photos I should get, or asking me for my number. The older men would pose for a picture and hold their horses still a little longer to make sure I had the perfect shot of the proud *bardi* or *muqaddam*.

While the previous chapter explained the historical and familial ties that have gendered *tbourida* participation, this chapter turns to examine the visual vernacular of the *tbourida* spectacle. Typical photos of *tbourida* are of men and produced by men at *tbourida* events. Male hegemony over the spectacle reaches far and wide, from the local spectator to the tourist who buys a postcard of a male *tbourida* troupe. Male *tbourida* riders are featured on postcards, they judge the competition, they are the participants (Figure 3.1), and they are the photographers of *tbourida*. Since the advent of the camera-phone or smartphone in the early 2000s, male troupes have also been able to document their own participation in *tbourida*, with the assistance of younger members. They take portrait photos with their smartphones, standing next to their friends and kin who are mounted on the horses.

In general the male dominates images of *tbourida*. But image-making for *tbourida* itself belongs to a longer, orientalist tradition which has contributed to the prevalence of specific kinds of images and photographs chosen by travelers and anthropologists to represent the military tactic and equestrian sport. Etchings and engravings of *tbourida* have illustrated American and

European travel novels since the early 1860s and continue to be a common image chosen for academic and informative books on Morocco (Burke 1976, Gellner 1969, Penell 2003). From early postcard depictions of Arab and Berber men and women, to the famous photo of *tbourida* by Paul Hyman included in well-known anthropological works on Morocco, the lens turned on *tbourida* has affected its image (Geertz, Geertz & Rosen, 1978; Slyomovics 2010). That is, the visual depictions that characterize *tbourida* are not simply representational, but illustrate the choice of visual media and the selection of images considered appropriate by viewers and participants in the sport.

If this history of image-making has shaped the visual vernacular of *tbourida*, then it is also true that the selection and preservation of representative images of *tbourida* more broadly belongs to Arjun Appadurai's idea of a mediascape. Mediascapes refer to "both the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, films, now social media) and the images of the world created by this media" (Appadurai 1990 298-299). In brief, a mediascape is a landscape of images: an "image-centered, narrative based account from strips of reality." These images, linked together, become "scripts...of imagined lives" (Appadurai 1990, 299). Using the concept of the mediascape, this chapter seeks to understand visual media influences on *tbourida* image-making from its earliest representations in paintings, to the advent of photography, and smartphones on social media. More particularly, I argue that the mediascape affecting image-making in *tbourida* has offered a selective narrative, both an orientalist and masculine representation of the event. My aim is to make a mediascape of women that evades the orientalist pitfall and creates a narrative that includes the women, their narratives, and the way they share their images.

Appaduari states that ethnoscares and mediascares, as well as other scares, are overlapping and not-water tight compartments. The ethnoscare is “a landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live” and these people in Appadurai’s argument affect the economics and politics of the nations to which they travel (Appaduari 1990, 297). Ethnoscares focus on the movement of people to other worlds and the affect of the relationships within their new surroundings. These are the people around which mediascares form and within the world where the *tbourida* riders and ethnographer interact.

In addition to analyzing the relationship between the history of image-making in *tbourida* and a particular mediascare, I also assess how these mediascares can be mixed with ethnography (Hawkins 2010, 9; Appadurai 1990, 299), generating a visual ethnography. By focusing on lived experience (Grimshaw & Ravetz 2009, xiv), visual ethnography collates a series of elements or “scripts” of the lives of informants not unlike those in a mediascare. Ethnography itself is “actively situated between powerful systems of meaning posing questions at the boundaries of civilizations, cultures, classes, races, and genders” (Marcus & Clifford 1986, 3). Especially today, when the ethnographer as participant-observer intends to avoid the omniscient objectivity assumed by early ethnographers to explore these crucial boundaries, visual ethnography attempts to maintain a reflective critique of the image-making process, while also sharing elements with the mediascare in creating a narrative about informants in the field. As Stephen A. Tyler writes, “a post-modern ethnography is a cooperatively evolved text consisting of fragments of discourse intended to evoke in the minds of both reader and writer an emergent fantasy of a possible world of commonsense reality and thus to provoke an aesthetic integration that will have a therapeutic effect” (1986, 125). To this end, I conclude the chapter by placing my own photos of women in *tbourida* into this larger history of image-making in order to contribute to an ethno-mediascare.

TBOURIDA AS ORIENTALIST IMAGERY IN PAINTINGS

The first mediascapes that came back from colonial expeditions were writings—articles, travel narratives, journals, sketches, and paintings emerging from the colonial perspective. These were easier to create, review, circulate, and display, because in the 1830s, cameras were still heavy, awkward, and expensive to take on expeditions. In the Maghreb, French Orientalist painters came to capture images during early colonial excursions and conquests into North Africa (Algeria 1830-1956 and Morocco 1912-1956). Frenchmen Eugène Delacroix and Eugène Fromentin sketched and painted watercolor works of North Africans and their horses that would later be turned into large oil paintings, only two years after the invasion of Algeria by the French. For half a century, Orientalist painters crafted pictures of such exotic and seemingly timeless places—a quality that would later follow in photography.

Appadurai has argued that “mediascapes created narratives of the ‘other’ and proto-narratives of possible lives, fantasies,” which would introduce a “desire for acquisition and movement” (1990, 299). Appadurai emphasizes the idea of the mediascape creating an ‘otherness’ which the reader consumes. For the Middle East and North Africa, this otherness often belonged to the Orient. As Edward Said notes, “the Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences” (1979:1). In the colonial case, this means that the colonial officials desired and reproduces these fantasies, projecting their desires onto the people they colonized.

Much Orientalist imagery originated with the translated collection of stories that formed *A Thousand and One Nights*. Antoine Galland’s French adaptation of the text (1704-1717) and then the English translation of the French text by an anonymous author, dubbed the Grub Street

editions, began to appear at the same time. This spread imagery of *djinns*, flying carpets, magical lamps, fantastical adventures, and flowing garments on maidens held captive by ruthless Arab and Persian men throughout Western Europe (Haddawy 1990, xx). Some of the adaptations or “edited” editions rewrote a few of the stories because they were considered too feminine (not adhering to Western principles of masculinity) or inappropriate for Western audiences (Haddawy 1990, xvii). From the early 1800s onward, a frenzy of other translations of this text from Syrian, Iraqi and Egyptian versions flooded Europe (Haddawy 1990, xvii). These translations and adaptations became a touchstone in Western popular culture for how they understood the Orient. Other translated works followed, such as *The Scented Garden*, dubbed the Tunisian *Kama Sutra* (Lyons 2008, vii). These translations offered another exotic and erotic glimpse into the Orient.

In 1832, Delacroix traveled to Morocco and Algeria to take a break from civilization and in an effort to see a more “primitive culture” (Wellington 1980). Delacroix’s watercolor in Figure 3.4 shows a scene of *tbourida* or *fantasia* being performed outside the main gate of Meknes. In the right central background, the taupe, arabesque walls of the city of Meknes are open. The Middle Atlas Mountains are in the far distance. The three riders, whose faces are visible, are on top of their horses and positioned in a line. The lesser visible two riders’ rifles discharge, creating a large cloud of smoke that envelops the riders. The most visible horse is a dappled gray, followed by a sorrel, and then a dark, presumably black horse. The rider, whose face the painter clearly shows, is attentive and forward. He is bearded, with his mouth agape, waiting and anticipating his shot, as his comrades have already fired their rifles. He wears a white *djellaba* and yellow pants. He leans over the saddle, crouched, and ready. The rider holds his reins to his left shoulder, pulling his dappled horse’s chin almost to its neck, while the other two horses have their noses pointed forward. The painting is situated perpendicular to the

tbourida, capturing the moment as they pass by the viewer.

Delacroix's paintings were the first Western depictions of *tbourida*, and art historian Tom Prideaux credits Delacroix with re-naming the powder play *fantasia* (1966, 112). Delacroix wrote in his journal describing the cavalcade as "disorder, dust, din...a thousand shots fired in our faces" (1939[1822-1863], 109-110). This watercolor was part of a collection of sketches called *Studies on Arab Encampment*, which showed scenes of horsemen, saddles, and tents. After his journey, he brought back his sketched images of the gunpowder games to create paintings depicting the Arab warriors. These early works fed into repeated subjects and themes of his oil paintings that he completed when he returned home, entitled *Moroccan Military Exercises or Fantasia* (1833), housed in the Fabre Museum in Montpellier, France, and *Fantasia Arabe*, housed in Städel Museum in Frankfurt, Germany (Peyron 1997, 2721).

Painter and writer Eugène Fromentin was largely influenced by Delacroix's paintings. In 1846, Fromentin made his first of three trips to Algeria, creating his own sketches and writing his own observations from his trips in 1846, 1847-1848, and finally, his last one in 1852 (Orlando 1999). Judging from the writing in his journal, Fromentin was enchanted by *tbourida*,

"Almost every day there are cavalry exercises in the hippodrome... Musket shots often awaken me. I hear galloping horses, the noise of sabers clashing against stirrups, and the sound of trumpet-like commands, clear and ringing. The riders maneuver in small squads, walking, trotting, or sometimes charging at a gallop. Lines of sharpshooters spread out along the edge of the field. The sun makes the burnished copper bands of the cannons shine; you can see a wisp of white smoke spewing from each weapon as it kicks back. The acrid odor of powder even reaches my house. In the meantime, officers who are off-duty proceed at a distance, working on the agility of their pretty horses, so

elegant with their narrow saddles, and delicately bridled as if with string. This is a daily spectacle. I don't like war, yet I feel myself thrilling at the smallest noise that puts the idea in my head...the movement of horses, is a moving thing, somehow marvelously at home in the cheerful setting of an African morning." (1999 [1874], 8-9)

Fromentin's admiration for the horses and powder play is evident, as he produced over 22 oil paintings featuring the North African horsemen and their mounts, including "Arab Horsemen," "Moroccan Horsemen at the Foot of the Chiffra Cliffs," and "A fantasia."

Both Delacroix and Fromentin's work were some of the earliest Orientalist paintings to return to Western continent. The colonial painters that came to Morocco and Algeria painted never-before-seen images, illustrating the Western cultural superiority over their colonial subjects by portraying the ancient traditions and timelessness of the faraway land. These images became representations of an entire people, stereotypes that the colonizers would take for reality. Both Delacroix and Fromentin conveyed a dream-like sensation through their writings and images of billows of powder and dust, horses, hoofbeats, and fire. The scenes of *tbourida* that came back to the continent were in essence a "European invention," a memory of antiquity, with romantic landscapes and "remarkable experiences" just like the new name it acquired—*fantasia* (Said 1978, 1).

ORIENTALIST PHOTOGRAPHY

Successful photography of *tbourida* remained fairly elusive to early travelers. In the 1800s, the difficulty was possibly due to the speed at which the event occurred or the limitations of the technology of the cameras available at the time, and the remoteness of *moussems* and their locations (if the photographer did not speak Arabic or French). In 1839, the daguerreotype

became the first camera to capture images of Egypt during the French expedition and the camera traveled with the colonizers to the Middle East and North Africa in the 1850s and 1860s, establishing classic and stereotypical images of the Arab man and woman that continues to the present day. Paintings and prints of *tbourida* circulated, but it was not until the 1960s, when cameras were finally fast enough to capture the images of the galloping horses, that *tbourida* became a photographic subject for anthropology.

One set of unusual photographic postcards from Algeria depicts an early scene of *fantasia*. Postcard number 6003, 6006, and 6029 in *Scenes et Types–Fantasia–L.L* are three known versions of the same event produced around 1909, where a photographer is depicted within the frame. Photo 6003 shows a troupe of horsemen moving from the right background of the card to the left foreground. The photographer is off to the right pointing his camera away from the horsemen, possibly aiming at his presumed assistant. In 6006, the horses have gathered in a circle in the middle of the card, with the riders' backs and their horses' rumps to the camera. The photographer is now standing outside the horsemen on the left of the card and looks at the camera. His camera and monopod are attached by a strap hanging from his neck. In 6029, the viewer gets the closest view of the photographer in the center of the photo. His camera is pointed at the white robed locals, as the horses move and blur behind the photographer. In both postcards, the photographer and his assistant are in the thick of the *tbourida* event, one shooting the *tbourida*, the other shooting the locals. But the viewer cannot see the faces of the horsemen. The photographer's lens is not strong enough or shutter speed fast enough to capture the riders.

These postcards are rare because, as Malek Alloula notes in *The Colonial Harem*, seeing the colonizer-photographer almost never occurs. Rather, photography played a significant role in building the collective imagination of the colonizers and reinforcing the visual representation of

their mastery and power over the colonized subjects (Behdad 2016, 8). Ali Behdad explains that Orientalist photography, like Orientalist paintings, forms “an imaginary construct, though always historically and aesthetically contingent; it is marked by iconic fractures and ideological fissures yet is nonetheless regulated by a visual regime that naturalizes its particular mode of representation (2013, 11). In this relationship between colonizers and colonized, the earlier Orientalist paintings created a trove of images to be imitated in Orientalist photography.

At the turn of the century, the advent of cheaper and more reliable postal systems, colonial postcards, newspapers, and magazines could be circulated across the Western world. Beginning in 1888, *National Geographic* was one of the largest and most circulated photo magazines that reproduced Orientalized images, creating a canon of how the reader should view Arab men and women. As Mallek Alloula notes, the photography that produced information about Algeria was truly a “pseudo-knowledge” (1986, 4). The images decontextualized Arab men and women, having them look picturesque but also backwards (Slyomovics 2012, 129). *Scenes et types* were common tropes in postcard images, as the colonial photographer coded the images with labels for the social and visual “types” depicted (Celik 2009,142). The dominating colonial male gaze feminized the non-Western indigenous people (Nochlin 1989, 43; Alloula 1986, 5). Arab and native men were depicted as either extremely lazy or irrationally violent, while women were hidden away but hyper-sexualized.

The literal and figurative sexualizing of photographic subjects became famous through photographs and postcards that came out of the colonies in Africa. To build on Sontag’s notion of the “camera as a phallus,” colonizers used the camera to “penetrate—if only vicariously—the women’s quarters in the Muslim house” (Said 1978,10; Melman 1992, 59). The photographer “bears witness to their confinement and incarceration” and portrays the imaginary harem, thus

allowing the viewer and photographer to turn the women into objects and possess them, as Sontag suggests (Alloula 1986, 21; 1977,10). Many of these postcards depicted women as closed off in harems (marked by barred windows or by the absence of men), wrapped in silks and jewels. They were bodies of pleasure, whether depicted smoking, dancing, or languidly undressed in various poses, although while outside the home, they were always veiled. In literary critic Barbara Harlow's introduction to Alloula's work on French postcards, she sees them as "no longer representing Algeria and the Algerian woman but rather the Frenchman's phantasm of the Oriental female and her inaccessibility behind the veil in the forbidden harem" (1986: vxi). These postcards reveal more about the viewpoint and fantasies of the colonizer as photographer, than they do about the women that were photographed. By photographing women, Westerners were opening the harem door, allowing viewers to gaze at the foreign women. Through anonymity and typifying, the French colonizers, tourists, and travelers, or anyone with a camera could possess these women.

If the French-produced postcards from Algeria crossed over into the pornographic, so did *National Geographic* (Steet 2000:37; Alloula 1986). At the turn of the 20th century, *National Geographic's* earliest photos depicted women as if they had leapt out of the pages of illustrated history, the Bible, or *Arabian Nights*. *National Geographic* took these postcards of Algerian women from 1900-1930 as facts, recreating, and reusing the aforementioned assumptions (Lutz & Collins 1993, 173). Women quickly became "hyperfeminized" (Steet 2000: 109). In images and representations of Arab women, the possession of photos served as a surrogate for and means to political and military conquest of the Arab world (Alloula 1986, xv). The magazine maintained that these photographs were educational and ethnographic, even though the images were posed, used false studio backdrops, and utilized the same models as the postcards. Essays in

National Geographic included photographs of languid Arab women looking dreamily away from the camera, exposing their breasts, looking out from barred windows, or standing in front of an open door. In 1917, *National Geographic* magazine published a photo essay by an unknown author with a photo almost identical to the portrait shots of tribal women in Oued-Naïls included in Alloula's book (1986:59-61). The French had made up rumors regarding the women of the tribe as ones who specialized in prostitution and enjoyed the occupation. The caption forced a sexual viewing of a woman depicted fully-clothed, yet undressed by the words of the author: "An Arab Shod with Fire: She is a dancer of Algeria and the slow, throbbing music of the Orient is just as necessary....as the jewels and coins with which she adorns herself" (*National Geographic* 1917:267). The writer's choice of 'throbbing' puts a sensual tone into the woman. She is sexualized and her expression had "calculated charm" as she smoked a cigarette, setting her apart from the "traditional Arab woman," instead making her "free", presumably for sex (Berger 1972).

If women were sexualized, typified, and possessed through photographic images, colonial and western images "othered" men by passionate violence or sensual indolence. Colonial and Western images categorized Arab, Berber, or Kabyle men as "others" in terms of race and dress, and used Islam to explain away every cultural aspect in the Middle East and North Africa. Arab and Berber men were reproduced as binaries of each other, plains/mountains, sedentary/nomadic, and usurping hordes/indigenous population (Lorcin 1995, 221). As Linda Nochlin notes, Orientalist depictions of men indicated that "their law is irrational violence...the Orientalist's violence by contrast is law" (1989, 52). Linda Steet concludes that "Arab bodies were built on ideas of animality" in *National Geographic* magazine (2000:86). Pictures of Arabs eating or reclining reinforced this notion of animality and savagery. Captioned photos in the magazine of

men surrounding a large plate of food would read “Using no knife or fork, the Arab takes rice in his right hand, squeezes it into a ball and bolts it,” or if there was food left over, the Westerner need not worry about waste because the food would “disappear ‘like snow upon the desert’s dusty face’ when the sheikh’s followers were turned loose on it with their fingers” (Van der Meulen 1932; Thaw & Thaw 1940). The idea of “turning people loose” and only using their hands instead of utensils created the imagery of them being locked up and hungry like animals.

Animality also followed the Arab man when he was sitting or lying down. In a 1971 issue of *National Geographic*, photographer Thomas Abercrombie used poses of young Moroccan boys learning the Qur’an or a man crouched by a lady in the famous square of Marrakesh, the Djema El Fnaa, listening to his fortune. Abercrombie leads us to believe that the Arab man’s crouching and constant lack of chair demonstrates that he does not or cannot use “civilized” furniture. As recently as 2013, photojournalist George Steinmetz’s photos in *National Geographic* on Libya included the inside of the home of Abdu Salaam Habi, showing him not sitting on the cushions, but perched, laying across the steps in the home as he opens the door to tourists (Draper 2013:54-55). As art historian John Berger argues for women in European nude paintings, the reclining position is part of the passive, feminized subject (1972), and similarly this languorous pose has been transposed to Orientalist paintings. Even after years of Maghreb countries’ independence, this additional layer of colonizer viewing the colonized contains visual evidence of stereotypes of Arab men as passive, lazy, and feminized.

Reports in *National Geographic* are built on the canonization of Orientalist images produced by artists like Delacroix and Fromentin since the 1830s and continued the French colonial objective by supporting the images of the Arab man as subhuman. The imagery from texts and paintings of Arab-Berber men depicted them as swashbuckling, with daggers between

their teeth, slashing at their enemies with their swords. This image was reproduced in the use of *tbourida* indigenous cavalry troops and maneuvers by the French armies. Early in the French colonial invasion into North Africa in 1830, the French Foreign Legion used foreign recruits to protect and expand the French colonial territory. Also known as the Army of Africa, the mix of Arab, Berber, and French settler-colonials and mainland citizens made up the ranks, including the Spahi cavalry that used *tbourida* techniques (Killingray & Omissi 2000). When General Daumas wrote about the Arab horsemen living in the desert, his narrative about the Emir Abd el Kader as a great horseman and warrior became a type to be emulated in this same tradition of being warlike and close to animals. In this next generation with access to photography, General Descoins of the French military likewise wrote a book detailing how to ride in the Arab tradition, and encouraged the usage of the Arab equestrian style, specifically *tbourida*, among their indigenous army (1924). *National Geographic* subscribers learned about the Arab world through authoritative voices drawing conclusions that “all Arabs...were warlike,” reaffirming the stereotype that had been produced many times before in the magazine (Simpich & Moore 1941).

At late as 1971, *National Geographic* writer and photographer Thomas Abercrombie described *tbourida* alongside his photo: “a dozen turbaned riders, twirling and firing their muzzle-loaders, screamed across the plain full-bore toward us. I looked for a place to jump. But reined in hard, the foaming horses thundered to a stop—seemingly inches away.” This piece almost mirrors an 1832 diary entry by Eugène Delacroix. In his journal, Delacroix had described the Moroccan *fantasia* as “disorder, dust, din...thousands of shots fired in our faces” (Delacroix 1939[1822-1863]: 109-110). Abercrombie uses the equestrian image to feed the fantasy of warlike Arabs in the Orientalist imagination. The text accompanies a large, color photograph foldout that depicts three riders on horseback. Two of the riders are bracing themselves for firing

their rifles. The rider on the far left discharges his rifle with a straight billow of red fire and white smoke emerges from it. The horses on the far left are still in motion as the master reins in the one in the center. Its dark grey legs are dug into the earth with its neck and nose thrust in the air.

CONTEMPORARY IMAGES OF TBOURIDA

In photo books that try to depict the vibrant and colorful architecture, landscape, people and art of Morocco for tourists or readers interested in the exotic culture and tradition of Arab or Bedouin life, at least one photos is reserved for the famous *tbourida*, often labeled *fantasia*. This image is tied to a long history of orientalist image-making that defines the colonial and oriental gaze in order to highlight the volatile, warlike, and animal instincts of the culture behind it. *Fantasia*, a word that the French and Orientalists used to index the image throughout the Western world, has become synonymous with this performance. More recently, Moroccan photographers and other amateur photographers now refer to the spectacle by the Moroccan term, *tbourida*. The images are similar, featuring the determined faces and the brace for impact, but the photographers are re-capturing *tbourida* and bringing the name back to the Moroccan public. Instead of being inspired by the fantastical, the word *baroud*, meaning gunpowder, resonates with connection to the horses, the riders, and the guns. Nevertheless, the stong history of orientalist image-making still influences these photographic representations of the event.

There are a few books that focus on photographing and explaining *tbourida* as an equestrian activity. Writer Annie Lorenzo and photographer Eric Preau concentrated on the history of horses, cavalry, and *tbourida* in Algeria, creating an instrumental, yet vague narrative without references. The French book follows the history, legends, work, play, costumes, trappings, hippology, and surrounding animal activities that accompany this equestrian tradition

(1988). Another book, *Maroc: les chevaux au Royaume* most likely commissioned by Princess Lalla Amina, former Moroccan Equestrian Federation president, takes a more horse-centered approach as *tbourida* resides in the periphery of the text (1990). The images of the horse breeding facilities, along with dusty scenes of *tbourida*, illuminate the text regarding ancient and modern Moroccan horse activities. Sedrati, Tavernier, and Wallet's book parallels Lorenzo and Preau's book to provide a geographic focus on Morocco with more academic flourish, citing sources and providing a mediascape spanning from early Orientalist paintings to Moroccan artist's renderings of *tbourida* (1997). The problem with these photobooks is that there is little ethnographic detail. Readers do not know the tribes or the teams in the photos. Most of the photos have no captions. These books become a new version of the *scènes et types*, telling the viewer what is going on, but leaving the image timeless and without context (Slyomovics 2012, 128-129). *Scènes et types* carry on with the stock of images that made the area recognizable to the Western audience, perpetuating a "pseudo-knowledge" of the region (Alloula 1986, 4).

In 2016, Moroccan professional and commercial photographer Darem Bouchentouf published a photo book entitled *Tbourida, Khayl wa Khayala (Tbourida, Stallions and Mares)*, written in English, French, and Arabic, as a photographic homage to the ancestral art. His images were taken in 2015 at the Salon du Cheval in El Jadida. Through eleven chapters, his images feature the horses, the *moussems* (only those with national competitions), the tents (*wtaks*), teams (*sorba*), the leaders (*muqaddam*), the powder and rifles (*baroud*), and close-up portraits of riders and their actions, all containing what he asserts are the traces of the secrets of *tbourida* (Bouchentouf 2019). While claiming that the photos show the symbiosis between the horse and rider during the various stages of the art, specifically focusing at the horses' stopping at the moment of the discharge of gunpowder, he refers only to the horse and male rider. The

photobook features young male riders in their clean costumes, smiling into the camera, looking off in the distance, or holding a solemn gaze. The older the person featured, the more serious and resolute are the looks directed to Bouchentouf's lens, but the portraits are uninformative about all the people who participate in *tbourida* outside of the troupes that make it to the national competitions. The photos have no captions with the names of the troupes or riders.

While photos of men reproduce the images of the orientalist tradition of *tbourida* as a representative type, both dreamy and warlike, the same is also true of photography about the new experiences of women in *tbourida*, which hyper-feminizes the women riders. Zara Samiry, a professional photographer born in Casablanca, photographed *Farisat El Hawzia* (Equestrian Knights), led by Bouchra Nabata, in 2015 for the Arab Documentary Photography Program (Estrin 2015). Samiry's captions of photos tell few specifics about *tbourida*, but generalize the women riders as "'Amazons' of modern Morocco." Most of her photos are of women *tbourida* troupes, but in this project, she displays an image of a group of four women in long, multi-colored sleeveless kaftans, their heads bowed down with their hair flying in front and behind them on a stage. On the side of the stage, a male *tbourida* rider, mounted on his horse, dances with them. The caption reads, "Some troupes are known for their sensual dances combining undulations of the body, belly dancing, and big hair movements; they have a nefarious reputation. It is not uncommon for male riders to enjoy the show and dance on their horses between the cavalcades of *fantasia*" (Image 8 of Samiry's project). Because the majority of her photos for this project feature female *tbourida* riders, it is easy for someone to mistake the female riding troupes with *shikhats*. The latter are female musical troupes that perform at weddings, celebrations, and *tbourida* festivals; the group of *shikhats*, or dancers, and the women who ride in *tbourida* are not the same. These two women's groups are mutually exclusive. While

both participate in a performance and often times at festivals or *moussems*, they are not interchangeable. For the undiscerning eye, Samiry reaffirms Western stereotypes of the sensual woman and confirms Moroccan expectations of women at these events (ibid). *Shikhat* are actually stigmatized for their loose behavior through dancing and long hair (Kapchan 1994). Featuring female *tbourida* riders and *shikhats* in the same project does not advance the purpose of celebrating the Moroccan “Amazons,” as Samiry believes. In fact, she re-Orientalizes the women she hopes to empower with her photos.

An example of this re-Orientalizing comes with the portrait of Bouchra Nabata, the *muqaddama* or leader of the troupe, posing on her horse, with a *niqab*-like drape covering her nose and mouth, and only her eyes are exposed. Neither Bouchra nor any of the women wear this covering during *tbourida*. It would obstruct Bouchra’s ability to call out commands to her troupe, and it does not hide the fact that she is a woman on the *tbourida* field. It is also not a question of whether Bouchra wishes to cover her face, because in three other photos she is depicted without a head or face covering. Leaving only the eyes exposed is a common Orientalist theme in photography, and Samiry’s work only serves to underscore these Western stereotypes through this posed image. Samiry also depicts a troupe member, in all pink, light cotton pajamas, looking into a mirror to put *kohl* on her eyelids. The *kohl* vial sits on a table beside the mirror and next to a half-used white compact of foundation on the table. The girl in the background is using a pencil to apply eyeliner. The caption reads, “Despite having a dangerous side, the riders wear makeup before each performance.” *Kohl*, or eyeliner, is a widely used cosmetic throughout the Middle East and North Africa region, and is worn for a variety of reasons, including beautification and warding off the evil eye. *Kohl* even has roots in the Sunnah, encouraging women to wear it (Parry & Eaton 1994, 121). Sunnahs include Sunan Ibn Majah in the Chapters on Medicine and

Chapters on what has been narrated concerning fasting. These denote that *kohl* is good for the eyes, can improve eyesight, and makes the eyelashes grow. It mentions the Prophet wearing *kohl* on his eyes and that it must be applied on the eyes an odd number of times. Feminizing the practice of applying *kohl* and foundation for *tbourida* is an overgeneralization of minimal makeup use. Riders do not wear eyeshadow, lipstick, blush, or mascara, for it would be ruined after a few runs down the field with the dust and gunpowder.

Even though Samiry's work is sponsored by the Arab Documentary Photography Program, many of the photos are posed, showing a heavier hand by the photographer. Three portraits of these women show very little about the practice of *tbourida*. Only the photo of the riders in pink costumes putting their rifles together, and smiling at the camera, gives the viewers the sense that this image was created and posed by its subjects. The captions do not offer an in-depth explanation as to why they are "Amazons" in her eyes. Samiry does not explain the dangers of playing in this male-dominated sport. While I am glad she features only two minimal shots that have male riders in her project, it is nearly impossible for the viewer to understand how outnumbered the women are compared to men on the field. Finally, using the word *fantasia* for the sport distances Samiry, as a native Moroccan, from the tradition and the project. *Tbourida* riders rarely refer to the sport of *fantasia* in conversation, except when speaking to a French or English speaker. *Fantasia* becomes synonymous with the Orientalist and Western word for the display, and linguistically alienates the tradition from its Moroccan roots.

AN ETHNO-MEDIASCAPE FOR *TBOURIDA*

As an anthropologist, I seek to create a multispecies, specifically equid-based, narrative within an ethnographic image-centered narrative. I have my camera on high-speed, continuous

mode captured dozens of pictures of the *tbourida* troupes speeding toward me. But capturing images of *tbourida* was not always so simple. Spectators and horse experts long argued over the positioning of the horse's feet during the gallop, and if there was a moment when the horse had all four feet off the ground. In the late 1870s, American tycoon Leland Stanford financed the project that featured the dozens of cameras it took to understand and photograph horses in motion, and solve the mystery of the gait of the horse. Muybridge's final compilation of the images, entitled *The Horse in Motion* (1878), gave undeniable photographic proof to the world (Solnit 2003). The photograph finally captured what the eye could not—specific motion, proving that the horse's gallop was an asymmetrical four-beat gait, where a horse's feet indeed momentarily left the ground. This kind of technological collaboration between humans and horses literally set into motion film and sport photography, shooting the fast-action frames that I used in capturing horses and riders in the Moroccan *tbourida*.

Traditional ethnography stems from a fieldwork mixture of participant-observation, interviews, and the culmination of fieldnotes into a text (Pink 2013, 34; Hammersely 1995,1). Ethnographic writing is not only a means of recording life as the anthropologists, but as a “form of writing” (Narayan 2012, 7) Geertz's “thick description” is hailed as the cornerstone of good ethnographic writing and helpful in making the anthropologists' observations of behaviors more comprehensible for the readers who are unfamiliar with the culture (1973). Anthropologists traditionally focus on the literary aspect of ethnography, explaining in vivid detail what they have done and observed, only secondarily using photos as illustrations rather than evidence. In this sense, photography is a supplement to observation and gathering accurate visual information (Collier & Collier 1986, 5).

Visual ethnography on the other hand strives to use photos as evidence: evidence of the

anthropologist's claims of being there, and evidence to back up the anthropologist's ethnographic writing – but they also become documents of their own. However, this does not mean that adding photos produces a visual ethnography. Anthropologist Barbara Wolbert has made this critique clear in early ethnographies. In Evans-Pritchard's *The Nuer*, for example, many of the pictures were not his own, and his photos gave the feeling of being omnipresent, without acknowledging the anthropologist's gaze (2000). Even today, with more photography being included in ethnographic work, the same critique can be made of photos from fieldwork inserted in ethnographies without much discussion. Photos in themselves do not produce an “ethno-mediascape.”

An example of this issue comes from photographer, Paul Hyman, who accompanied the Geertz' and Paul Rabinow, and his images of Morocco. Hyman's 1968 photos of *tbourida* around the area of Sefrou are some of the clearest images produced. Geertz and Rabinow invited the fashion photographer to join their cohort in Morocco. In a one-page entry, Geertz explained that he and Rabinow discussed their work with Hyman. They “offered him no thesis to document nor findings to illustrate” when he raised his camera to take a picture (1979). While including the black and white photos in the essay, as was popular at the time for serious rather than commercial photography, Geertz wrote: “most photographs in anthropological works are intended to illustrate something, to prove something, or to beautify something. These are not. They are intended to say something” (Geertz 1979).

What do ethnographic photos intend to say? Images that are beautiful or artful tend to elicit emotion, but as Susan Slyomovics and Paul Hyman articulate, it is the rapport of the photographer *and* the knowledge that accompanies the images that give them beauty and meaning (2010). Hyman's rapport with his “models” or subjects stemmed from wanting to make

them “feel good” in order to be confident in front of the camera, and therefore, “look good” in the photograph (2010). The moments between photographer and models are evident in the smiles, in the reaction to the camera, or the shoo-ing away of the photographer. Without the photos, we would have just the word of the anthropologists, but *with* the photos, we see faces, rapport with the photographer, and glimpses into everyday life in Sefrou. These photos become part of the image-making history of *tbourida*, and a foray into an ethno-mediascape.

“When we are afraid, we shoot. When we are nostalgic, we take pictures” (Sontag 1973, 11). As a photographer of *tbourida*, I find that my photos are impelled by both elements of fear and nostalgia. *Tbourida* is a simulation of a bygone violent activity, conducted in play with the spirit of fun and interest. Instead of the cold violence of Sontag’s camera-gun, I liken the cameras of the group of photographers to play cap-guns (figure 3.2). The cavalcade is reminiscent of tribal raids or *razzias*, and a military maneuver, but today in festivals, there is no enemy. Photographers, including myself, often capture *tbourida* in action to the side, so that the rider and the horse are in motion, braced for impact or reacting to the release of the powder, jaws clenched, faces askew. The troupe’s shots are fired in the air or in the ground, never directly at the tent in front of them. However, this ‘imaginary enemy’ could be the photographers at the finish line who are also shooting back at them. Lined up on the finish line, we are an unmoving *sorba* of photographers; we are afraid so we shoot, but we are also nostalgic; we do not want to miss the moments happening in front of us. If we get hurt, we want evidence; we want to remember.

Ethnographer Sarah Pink expounds on this role of photos as ethnographic evidence, believing that visual ethnography should relate the ethnographer’s experiences and observations “as loyal as possible to the context, the embodied, sensory and affective experiences, and the

negotiations and intersubjectivities through which the knowledge was produced” (2013, 35). Typically, the photographers stand or crouch near the finish line. Horses hooves get within five feet of our bodies as we wait, trying to capture the adrenaline-filled moments. There is always the possibility we might be trampled. Maybe a horse will jump over a barricade, or not respond to the reins pulling their necks back to stop them. The adrenaline of having to know when to shoot and when to scramble out of the way of the oncoming fire and stampeding hooves often leaves images blurry, or shot prematurely before the synchronized fire. With each run, the rider and photographer are covered anew in gunpowder and dust.

In capturing the image of *tbourida*, thus, the photographer also participates in the mutability, vulnerability, and mortality of the subject (Sontag 1973,11). *Tbourida* riders experience the same volatility, exposure, and scrapes with death that the photographer does, with the added variable of the horse. Riders are vulnerable to falling off their horses or being stung by the gunpowder; some have lost hands to an exploding rifle or fallen to their death. A common saying among riders is “a *bardi*’s (knight or rider) grave is always open.” The riders understand the risk, but do it anyway. The photographer with the camera is there to capture it all, becoming part of the *tbourida* mediascape.

In my time photographing the women, I worked to build rapport with the women, taking the photos they asked of me, but also showing them almost immediately the result of the photos. After attending festivals from 2012 to 2018, I was able to articulate in great detail what I was seeing, be able to show it in photos, and give them thoughtful explanations as well as captions. I constantly asked for input from my photographic subjects. My photos in the following chapter are as much a product of their suggestions and time in *tbourida* as mine.

In 2016, I curated 24 images for a small exhibition at the ALIF (Arabic Language in Fez) Riad in the *medina* of Fes. Thanks to the encouragement of Omar Chennafi, a Fassi photographer, I critically looked at my images and decided on the mediascape I wanted to create for a viewer. This would be the first time many foreigners and Moroccans would see images of women on horseback participating in *tbourida* and I wanted to create a visual ethnography that showed the women in *tbourida* from beginning to end. My images expand beyond Zara Samiry's images of the women as over feminized and orientalized objects, showing the women putting kohl around their eyes and holding their purses on their horses. Instead, I focused on the same rituals as Darem Bouchentouf does in his book on the men's *tbourida*. I brought women to the forefront of my work as they participate in the local *moussems*. My exhibition laid the ground work of what would become Chapter 5 and the photo appendix included in this dissertation. I have also used some of these photos for a small photo essay in the American Anthropological Association AnthroNews magazine that discussed the deeper connection between Amal and her horse Sharam Sheik. Both the exhibition and the Anthro News essay have become part of the print and online mediascape of *tbourida* (Talley 2019).

On a smaller scale, I printed out the photos and give them to the families as a way for them to have a tangible as well as electronic copy of the images. As I mentioned previously, Amal has a scrapbook of her early days in *tbourida*, but as social media has taken over, her scrapbook ends around 2010 (coincidentally the last year the women competed for the Hassan II *Tbourida* Trophy), when it became more common to have photos on Facebook. My photos become incorporated into her collection for her own narrative when she looks over the images with her family.

Many of these photographs I took over the course of my fieldwork, I share on social media, particularly Facebook and Instagram, for the women to post and re-post on their own profiles. Photos included in the appendix of the women in motion such as Figure 5.20, 5.21, 5.23, and 5.24 are commonly reposted and embellished with new captions and filters. The charges of the horses and the discharge of the rifles are important to the *tbourida* narrative for the women. Other images such as Aisha, an early leader in women's *tbourida* in figure 2.1 and Amal reading the Qur'an in figure 5.12 demonstrate a serious rider or knight— either with a solemn look or one that is actively reading the Qur'an. These images are favored for their meaning less for what a viewer can learn from them. This is where my images of a visual ethnography diverge from the idealized mediascape of the *tbourida* community. The interest of the *tbourida* community and the viewers have remained in the action of the event, not in the preparation or the practice for *tbourida*. From the beginning of *tbourida* imagery in Delacroix's painting (figure 4.3), this action imagery is omnipresent in the mediascape. My images of otherwise more mundane actions preparing for *tbourida* lead to discussion as to why not to post the images on Facebook or why those images are not important.

These action photos also allowed for discussion among the whole team. When I showed the team figures 5.21 versus 5.23—two separate discharges of the rifles, Amal could pick out who was off in their timing. This kind of photography was like a “instant replay” on ESPN, so the *muqaddama* could scold or adjust the rider that was not in sync with the rest of the *sorba*. As a photographer I became a catalyst for the younger members being corrected in their riding and shooting. Amal said “that's not a good picture, because they are not all firing together. You shouldn't post this.” I curated the images accordingly and did not post them on social media, but

I include them in this dissertation in order to illustrate the narrative of the *tbourida* images and the meaning they hold to my participants.

In figure 5.11, I showed Fatima (the woman in the picture) of her blowing down the barrel of the rifle. “I look like I’m smoking shisha!” she said laughing. I did not understand why she was doing it, so it led to her explaining the reason behind such an action—to make sure all the gunpowder was packed down and not sticking to the sides of the barrel. For me as the ethnographer, photography allowed me to explore actions and the consequences of seemingly mundane preparation for the women as well as the action photos so treasured in the *tbourida* mediascape.

CONCLUSION

Men are always depicted in the *fantasia*, as wild cavalrymen charging toward their enemies. These early images created a narrative that continued to be reproduced without context and fed into the Orientalist mentality of a fantastical, timeless warrior display. These Orientalizing themes continue forward into the reproduced photos of male riders as well as female riders. Typical, Orientalist photos of women were hypersexualized and fed into the narrative of secluded, but sexually available women. Even for contemporary Moroccan photographers capturing photos of the all-female *tbourida* troupes, it is hard to move away from these ideas of femininity and sexuality that are still reproduced. As women navigate their way into participating into *tbourida*, they still struggle for equal images as a counter narrative to the old Orientalist ways.

From these *tbourida* mediascapes, I move to visual ethnography—creating a narrative informed by ethnographic detail from participant-observation, interviews, conversations, and

showing and asking the female riders about the images I have taken of them. This role of visuality captures the experience of *tbourida* and incorporates years of fieldwork in order to create room on a new stage in image-making history for these female riders.

Photographers crafting a series on *tbourida* often get close to creating a mediascape, but without the captions or the accompanying text. Journalists get closer to constructing mediascapes when they cover a large *tbourida* competition or festival, but often lack the time to create the characters that drive a story. Anthropologists look for the narrative so that the readers can follow the lives of the characters, even the four-legged characters. In the last sense, *tbourida* events are places to form ethno-mediascapes.

05 PICTURING WOMEN IN *TBOURIDA*: A PHOTO ESSAY

“The sound of the gunpowder, the smell of the dust...the children playing, sitting in front of the people, seeing the beautiful embroidery everywhere...it was like a painting.”

“*Tbourida* is everything. It’s everything popular and Moroccan. The tents, the saddles, the bridles...it’s all Moroccan.”

(Amal Ahamri, In-home interview 07/16/16)

My photo essay creates an ethno-mediascape for *tbourida*, as a composite of many strips of reality, to illustrate the experience of a women’s troupe at a festival. These photos document the women’s presence in this male-dominated arena and create a record of their participation. As a photographer and anthropologist, I wish to illustrate *tbourida* with the background and familiarity of the spectacle from the people with whom I studied and traveled with at various times during fieldwork. The images of this photo essay illustrate two women’s *tbourida* teams, compiling photos taken over the course of six years of fieldwork, from 2012 to 2018. These photographs are ethnographic documents—captioned, not posed, uncropped, and not enhanced through filters, unless specifically noted in the captions. As sources of unique, empirical information, these photos illustrate a narrative about female riders that is rarely seen in advertising, photo books, tourist photos, postcards, or billboards (Figure 4.1).

The goal of the following essay is to create a counter-narrative to visual depictions of Muslim women by showing them as sporting participants, and giving voice to their knowledge about details that the typical visitor or tourist to this region would not see or hear. It accomplishes this goal by illustrating the female riders’ experiences through photography, while also including their names and perceptions of my images in the text. This interplay of images,

captions, and descriptions together make the argument that women are equal participants in *tbourida* throughout the set-up, preparation, and riding (Sontag 1977, 84).

Since the women do not have a competition class at the regional and national competitions, all of the images focus on non-federation competitions and gatherings such as local festivals and *tbourida* meets held at various locations and dates. The photos include multiple events and formats, such as an environmental festival in Zagora (January 2016), a small *tbourida* meet on Bouchra Nabata's farm (March 2016), and a saint's day festival or *mousse*m in Arbaoua (May 2016). The Zagora festival in 2016 focuses on Amal's team due to the amount of time I spent with the team prepping for and attending the festival. The small meet outside Rabat featured Bouchra's team, and allowed for mixing between the men's and women's teams in a manner that is not typical in most *tbourida* events. Unfortunately, the Arbaoua festival featured two camera crews and journalists who frequently photo-bombed my photographs, making them unusable for this essay.

The key differences between the local festivals and competitions sanctioned by the Royal Society for the Encouragement of the Horse (*Société Royale d'Encouragement du Cheval*, SOREC) or the Royal Moroccan Equestrian Federation (*Fédération Royale Marocaine des Sports Equestres*, FRMSE) are the funding and the structure of the events. The local festivals have more room for spontaneous and planned events surrounding the festival, as teams travel and stay at the local festivals for four to five days. In contrast, SOREC and FRMSE competitions usually last for one or two days. The SOREC and FRMSE competitions focus on the precision execution of *tbourida* and hold it in a more sterile atmosphere with a bandstand. In fact, the official SOREC website judges *tbourida* based on two main parts: the *hadda*, the salute and the handling of the horses; and the *talqa*, the gallop down the field that culminates in a synchronized

shot (2018). Today, with organized competitions, the money put into buying the best horses, the best saddles, the brightest costumes, and with the prize money of 500,000 dirhams (almost \$52,000 USD) for the Gold Medal in the senior class of *tbourida* and 100,000 dirhams (approximately \$10,300 USD), riders prioritize winning the prize money and the Hassan II Tbourida Trophy (SOREC 2018). By reducing *tbourida* to these components of judging and prize money, the bigger events actually show less of the buildup and surrounding action evident at smaller festivals.

All local *tbourida* events, in contrast, involve the surrounding communities. On the *tbourida* field, many aspects of Moroccan culture and life converge. Urban and rural people congregate, *tbourida* and dog (*saluki*) races take place, musical groups perform, and merchants lay out their wares—local produce, traditional crafts, clothing, and livestock. *Tbourida* festivals are often annual events that provide time and space for people, especially from rural areas, to gather and celebrate their community, but also encourage domestic and international tourism (Talley 2017). Thus, by photographing the women at these local festivals, a stronger ethnographic component emerges from the context behind the event.

When depicting *tbourida*, the horse rarely takes precedence over the human, but without a doubt *tbourida* is also an “equescape”: a construction of real and imaginary landscapes of human-horse cultures (Graham 2015). Building on Appadurai’s idea of mediascape, scholars studying human-horse relations are generating mediascapes that focus on horses and horse activities (Swart 2017; Graham 2015; McManus et al. 2013). Historian Sandra Swart’s examination of the South African “traditional horse racing festival” (2017), and Helgadóttir, Daspher, and Einarsson’s look at the *Landsmót*, or the National Icelandic Horse Competition, use the term “equescapes” to describe equine-centered festivals, (2016; 2006; 2010). At a *tbourida*

festival, the multitude of tents, the horses hobbled next to or behind the tents, the open dirt playing field for riding, water spigots or water sources for the horses, and the smell and presence of hay all distinguish this as a specific equestrian escape.

The order of the photos demonstrates how the event unfolds over the course of a festival. It uses a composite seriality, since events that I missed photographing at one event I was able to capture at the next one. (Photos of riders falling from their horses are especially hard to predict and photograph.) The images give an encapsulated view of what *tbourida* looks like to a spectator, a fellow rider, and through the lens of a photographer who is both a friend to the women riders and an enthusiastic ethnographer.

Wolbert emphasizes that for the photos to have ethnographic authority, they must “make their readers believe in presence and proximity at their fieldwork...turning everything on its head...and answering questions that have never even been raised” (2000, 338). My photos attempt to achieve this standard of ethnographic authority because while the photos are my own they are interwoven with a narrative that has been created with the help of my participants. The information within the photos complements the “thick description” within the text. The images and captions of the women riders give faces and names to the characters of my crafted representation. The female riders’ lived experiences are important to understanding difficulties, such as finding bathroom facilities and places to sleep, and triumphs, such as the last perfect discharge of the weapons on the *tbourida* field. These seemingly small details have larger significance when looking at their experiences in relation to men, and in particular to address the questions “that have never been raised” about their participation through text and photography. Specifically, the accompanying texts and captions draw attention to less visible unphotographable aspects of *tbourida*: challenges for female riders.

THE FESTIVAL GROUNDS

Transporting all the riders, families, horses, and equipment to a festival is a significant challenge. Depending on the location of the event, be it close to the riders' farms, or in another region, the leader of the troupe, the *muqaddam* or *muqaddama*, is responsible for coordinating the transportation. The horses are the first to go. The animals are led up a ramp and loaded into large grain trucks. Their heads hang over the sides, and the grooms hold them in place while four or five more horses are loaded. With the majority of the horses being stallions and prone to fighting each other, they are loaded alternating nose to tail, and are so close together that they cannot kick. If there is room, carpets, *banquettes* (Moroccan movable sofas), pillows, and horse tack (saddles, bridles, bits, and equipment) are loaded into any excess space in the truck.

Drivers and grooms accompany the horses to the festival, unload, tether, feed, and water the horses during the few days leading up to it. The area where they tether the horses is called a *r'bat*, from the Arabic word "to tie." The grooms tie the front hooves of the horses to a heavy cable that is pegged into the earth and leave the halters on the horses. The horses rest and relax after a long journey and before the weekend's activities (Figure 4.2). When they arrive, the grooms are also tasked with setting up the group's tent, or *khyaam*, if the festival or *moussem*'s organizers have not already pitched it. There are two types of *khyaam*, or tents; the *outaak* and the *koubba*. The *outaak* has a single flat ridge at the top, whereas the *koubba* is a tent that comes together at the top to create a cylindrical shape higher than the rest of the tent. They differ in ridge styles, but are always white or off white on the outside, with decorative windows and bright patterns in the shape of arabesque arches on the inside (Figure 4.3). As other teams gather and put up their tents, spectators can see the white pointed tops in the distance or driving past a

festival site. The men sleep in the tent or in the truck until the team's arrival the next day or the following day.

The team arranges the troupe's transportation to the festival. If the field is close by, they carpool, but if they are traveling from Rabat to Zagora (679 kilometers or 13 hours by bus), as Amal's team did in January 2016, they spend the night together at one of the farms, and then take a chartered bus or van. Not only do team members ride together on the bus, but also family members. Amal's mother often accompanied the troupe. Mehdi, Amal's husband, would drive separately to offer a support car for running to get groceries, or to pick up other riders or family members if they could not get the time off work to travel with the rest of the group.

Some festivals provide the major staples of food (sugar, oil, tea, flour, couscous), gas, and water for the team, but often the troupe has to provide its own means of feeding itself. As for the all-male teams, their families accompany them when they travel to *moussems* or festivals in the summer, providing cooking services for the whole team in a tent adjacent to or set a little apart from the team tent. At SOREC-sponsored competitions that occur in the middle of the week, the all-male troupes that compete hire two or three women to cook for them, instead of their own families. The cooking tents also provide a location for team members to change into their costumes, a separate sleeping place, and act as a partition between the sexes for sleeping at night.

Once the team arrives, no one is idle. Usually, they arrive in the evening from a long day of travel or come to the site after work. Two or three bare light bulbs strung across the inside of the tent illuminate the area that will be transformed. Rocks are cleared away from the floor of the tent and cheap Persian-style carpets are methodically spread out inside the tent. Once the carpets are set, everyone is required to take off their shoes and tread barefoot or sock-footed over the

carpet (see Figure 4.4). Saddle racks are set up and each saddle unpacked and put on display (Figure 4.5). The sofas, blankets, pillows, and suitcases full of costumes are strategically placed along the walls of the tent, and a table or two set up with folding chairs for the groups of riders and helpers to have breakfast or play cards. A few riders are tasked with feeding the horses and watering them, before everyone beds down for the night.

For the all-male teams, most of them stretch out in the tent on makeshift pallets with blankets and pillows. For the female teams, sleeping arrangements are trickier. The hosts of the festival usually arrange for sleeping quarters and bathrooms at a *dar shebaab* (youth center), or at a local school. In January of 2016, it was cold enough that the women did not protest having a warmer place to sleep and bathroom facilities. But in Arbaoua in May 2016, the schoolroom was rank and odiferous, with outside bathrooms. As a result, the troupe opted to sleep together in the tent (Figure 4.6). This proved awkward because the male grooms were sleeping in the tent as well, so imaginary boundaries were drawn across the tent for sex segregation. An older *muqaddam*, who was a supporter of the team and owner of a few horses the team had borrowed, and his wife Mina, who helped cook, strongly objected to being separated because, after all, they were husband and wife. They were undoubtedly older than the rest of the people in the tent, so without any objections from the younger crowd, their pallets rested on the imaginary gender boundary of the tent—with Mina on the women's side and the *muqaddam* on the men's side. Mehdi and Amal teased them about being Romeo and Juliet, especially since Mehdi and Amal, who are also husband and wife, slept separately during the festivals. Everyone stayed up past midnight chatting, catching up, and playing cards. I was usually one of the first ones to fall asleep, blocking the harshness of the light bulbs with a blanket over my face.

PREPARATION

In the mornings, I was the first to rise, listening to the calming snorts of the horses and rustling of hay. Everyone was asleep in big, blanketed piles on the floor (Figure 4.6). A few grooms next to the tents were waking up and tending to the horses. The spigots or water trucks would be busy during the middle part of the day so the earlier the grooms could bathe the horses, the more time they would have and they would not have to fight over the water. Grooms grabbed brushes, buckets, and hoses for rinsing the dust off the horses and making their coats shine. It was also the coolest time to wash the horses and give them water, before the heat of the day would risk upsetting the horses' stomachs. Grooms inspected the hooves of the horses, and pick them out, making sure the horseshoes are secure. If some of the riders woke up early enough, they would assist in washing the horses, but often the journey, set up, and talking into the dark hours of the night would persuade them to stay asleep as long as possible.

As the camp around the festival stirs, at 8:30 am or 9 am starting at the tent furthest away from the rest, a local musical group with a *shikyat*, or female dancer, would begin playing. The reedy sound from the *ghaita* (a Moroccan oboe with a double reed) and the methodic drumming would eventually get louder and louder until it was a few tents away, and the *tbourida* troupe members awoke to the now clear chants of the musical group. The musicians enter the tent as the riders sit around the edges and other members of the public passing by come to see the performance. As the musical group plays, older and more affluent members of the *tbourida* troupe put money in the *shikyat*'s dress or tip them with bills of 100 or 200 dirhams (approximately \$10 to \$20 USD) to the band members. When the band feels they have played enough and received their compensation, the *tbourida* troupe is awake and ready to start the day.

The riders rub crusty flecks of sleep from their eyes and rise to do their morning toilet. If the female riders are lucky, they have access to a nearby bathroom including sinks with running water and toilets that offer some privacy. Other times, at larger festivals where bathrooms are scarce, troupes resort to a bucket in a corner of the tent that has been partitioned for that purpose. The male teams have an easier time concealing and relieving themselves. Women riders sometimes resort to squatting between two open car doors or walking a quarter of a mile away from their tent to crouch behind a wall or abandoned building. Lack of toilets causes stress and anxiety for the women riders during their periods. The female riders usually avoid makeup for the day. Amal touted “sunscreen and *kohl* around the eyes, and that’s it.” With the dust from the field and the gunpowder falling on them, makeup would just further cake the dirt onto their faces. Male riders usually shave before coming to the event and lightly groom their mustaches and beards before the competition or festival.

On the first morning, the bleary-eyed team gathers around their *muqaddam* or *muqaddama* to complete the registration forms. They decide the line-up of the riders in accordance with their abilities and the horses they brought with them for the festival. The *muqadem* or *muqaddama* is always in the middle, distinguished by a different costume, saddle, and sometimes, color of the horse. *Tbourida* is a synchronized choreography of a team that demands solidarity and trust. The most experienced riders ride next to the *muqaddam*. The team relies upon these experienced riders to keep a tight formation, but it is also the most dangerous position: if they fall, they can easily be trampled so close to the other riders. The riders also might catch the firestorm of their teammates’ rifles in their faces and hands, but the *bardi*’s or rider’s training and experience generally protects them from these possible outcomes. The least experienced riders and youngest or inexperienced horses are placed on the outside of the *sorba*,

or team, line-up. When beginning the charge, most of the horses keep up until they are asked to gallop forward. During the early runs of the competition, the riders might have to break away from the group to “school” or redirect their horse, and with luck, they can catch up with the troupe before the discharge of rifles. If an inexperienced horse requires schooling, usually they throw their head or zig-zag away from the team and field. With young horses, some riders expose their horses to the crowds and noise for the first time this way, preferring to roughly kick the horse forward or in other scenarios, hit the horse with a stick or the butt of their rifle. Having the inexperienced riders on the outside gives them freer space in which to fall and avoid the other horses, and it also does not impede the team from finishing their run. After the team decides the line-up, it remains that way unless a rider or horse is injured.

While the team conducts its meeting, an attendant or family member brews tea in the *berrad* (teapot) over the flame from a propane tank and gathers the necessities for breakfast. Loaves of bread, butter, *vache qui rit* (Laughing Cow) cheese wedges, and strawberry jam are set out on the table, and hot sweet tea is poured and passed around. Cookies and oranges that riders obtained on the drive to the festival are also shared to supplement the breakfast. Riders try to eat as much as they can because the schedule for the day could leave them without lunch. After the team submits the registration paperwork and they have eaten breakfast, they slowly start to get ready (Figure 4.7). Some of the riders assist the grooms in readying the saddles, putting the bridles on the horses, and tightening the girths around the horses’ middles.

The *sorba* lines up in the tent in their riding formation, with the *muqaddam* or *muqaddama* standing and watching the team as they give orders. The leader drills the team, shouting orders and observing the team until they are satisfied. Next, an attendant hands out the caps for the rifles and the *muqaddam* or *muqaddama* takes their position in the middle of the

team (Figure 4.8). The cap creates a popping sound when a rider pulls the trigger, and when combined with the gunpowder, is an essential part to discharging the rifle during the spectacle. The team drills a few more times before the *muqaddam(a)* is satisfied.

Finally, the costumes are brought out. One rider or attendant is in charge of distributing the costumes to the correct person (Figure 4.9). The *muqaddam* or *muqaddama* dictates the colors worn for the day. Some troupes only have a few *djellebas*, a long shirt garment that goes to the ankles that are white and gray, and swapped out for the festival days, but other troupes have multiple colors. Amal required her troupe to wear green on Fridays, because it is the color of Islam. The various troupes have differing styles of costumes, depending on economic factors, the origins of the troupe (Arab, quasi-Riffian, or Saharan troupes, sometimes indicated by their names or costumes), and the preferences of the *muqaddam* or *muqaddama*.

The general costume consists of light cotton pants, or *sirwal*, and a light, embroidered cotton shirt, *qamis* or *djellaba*, worn over the pants. Southern Sahrawi *sorbas* wear the Amazigh *gandora*, a long flowing draped blue or white cotton robe over their pants and shirts. This is one of the only major costumes that distinguishes regional troupes from one another. Many troupes wear a long *burnous* or *selham*, a woven, typically white or black cape with fringe, over their shirts or *djellebas*. Sometimes the cape sits on the rider's shoulders, while other troupes prefer it hooded around their heads. When they are sitting on their horses, the capes almost reach the ground, and I often fear it will get caught under a hoof and drag the rider down, but did not see it happen. When the troupe gallops their horses, the capes fly dramatically behind them, catching dirt and gunpowder soot. Female *muqaddama*, such as Bouchra or Amal, wear a looser fitting *takcheta*, a formal dress with metallic embroidery, over pants. Female riders cover their hair in a turban style or a scarf meant to secure their hair. While none of the women call it a *hijab*, this

scarf or *foulard* adds a level of modesty. When the group prays collectively before riding, it acts as the necessary head-covering required for praying. Men have several head covering options: the *rizza* or *chane* is a white strip of cloth tightly wrapped around their heads, while southern *tbourida* troupes favor turbans to match their capes or *gandoras*' color. A pair of pull on boots with no external sole called *tamaug*, complete the ensemble (Figure 4.10). The boots easily slip into the stirrups of the saddle and can smoothly be ejected, if need be. While there is no sole or traction for the foot, the boots allow for full foot contact with the stirrups, giving the rider greater balance when they stand up in the stirrups to gallop their horse.

Next, most of the riders put on the last few pieces. Riders slip on ankle braces to protect their legs and ankles from rubbing against the stirrups, and to give them extra support as they stand in the stirrups before firing their rifles (Manar in Figure 4.10). Some riders add small pointed or ball spurs to their boots. With the saddle allowing minimal contact with the horse, spurs are a necessary implement for riders to motivate their horse forward. Another essential item most riders wear is some sort of hand protection. Riders use medical tape and wraps, cloth boxing wraps, leather gloves, and wrist braces to protect their shooting hand. The pullicue (space between the thumb and index finger) is the most vulnerable area when shooting. The more protection on the hand, the better, in order to keep the gunpowder from searing the hand that holds the rifle and causing the rider to potentially drop the rifle. Finally, the finishing touches-the accessories-are added to the costume. Either a dagger, a *khanjar* or *koummiya*, or a *nimcha*, a single-handed sword about a meter long in its sheath, is suspended on a long cotton cord that is draped diagonally across the body. A second cord is layered over the body on which hangs either a leather pouch called a *dalil*, or metal tin for a small *Qur'an*. Some teams still carry powder horns for decoration, even if they are not functional.

Once the horses are saddled and the riders have dressed, there is sometimes a great deal of downtime before actually mounting up. Riders take pictures together, talk, and help each other finish dressing. As soon as everyone is ready, a team member distributes the empty rifles and caps to everyone for drill, and to practice together prior to mounting. Other riders check their equipment to make sure everything will be safe or spend a few quiet moments to read from the *Qur'an* (Figures 4.11 and 4.12). Typically, the leader uses this time to give an encouraging speech or to remind the riders what they need to do to be successful.

MOUNTING UP

As the time nears to assemble on the field, the team, families, and attendants gather around in the tent. The group circles and begins to recite prayers. These prayers are done standing, with the hands in a position as though cradling a book in front of them. They ask God to protect them as they ride, to give them the courage to be successful, and to give the team success. Unless an older male leader is visiting the tent, no one leads the prayers, but instead they are said in unison. This prayer circle is unlike the typical daily prayers said five times a day, but is specific to this scenario. The children gather around the feet of their family and mimic the actions of their relatives. Following the prayer, it is time to mount their horses, and families and friends wish the riders luck by kissing the cheeks, hands, or foreheads of the riders (Figure 4.13). The mood becomes serious as riders check that they have everything before mounting. A quick team photo is taken before getting into the saddle (Figure 4.14).

The saddle, or *serj*, rests on a 10-inch thick, felt horse blanket on the horse's back. On top of the blanket sits the first decorative layer of saddle skirting (Figure 4.15 and 4.16). The skirt is rectangular and embroidered in bright colors or metallic thread in the four corners, with fringe

and bells around the outside. Next is a wooden tree that gives the saddle the seat shape with a foam cushion for the rider. The tree gives the saddle a jousting appearance, with a very tall and square seat back and triangular front, to hold the rider. The tree is only attached by ties that are threaded through from the saddle blanket into the skirting into the tree, and by a thin, cotton rope girth secured under the horse's belly. Finally, the decorative seat cover is worked onto the saddle for a snug fit. The brightly colored breast collar is attached to the tree of the saddle through big straps. The stirrups are arranged high on the saddle with the same cotton rope as is connected to the tree, just hanging low enough to have contact with the horse's sides.

While the horses are only secured with a line tied around their pasterns (or ankles), they stand still as they are saddled. Some horses have halters that are tied with a loose rope tethered to the ground, which keeps them from biting other horses in close quarters. First, the grooms or riders attach a decorative, padded neck collar halfway down on the horse's neck. They then loosen the halter and gently feed the bit into the horse's mouth (Figure 4.17). Riders often refer to the brass bit placed in the horse's mouth as the Roman bit. Instead of the bit going straight across the mouth, it juts in and lays further back on top of the tongue. It is also attached to an outside ring that encircles the horse's lower jaw. Euro-Western riders are quick to judge the harshness of the bit, but Moroccan riders and horse trainers support the need for this particular style. I asked Mehdi Aneur, a horse trainer and Amal's husband, about the bit, whether it was harsh on the horse. He replied, "Yes, it is hard, but it is necessary for *tbourida*. When you need the horse to stop, you need that control and sensitivity to bring the horse to stop with the team. Otherwise, the horse might continue running and run into the tent." Amal, a *muqaddama* or leader of a female troupe, also argued for the authenticity of the bit. "There are some teams and *muqaddams* who agree to change the bit, and use an English bit. It is easier on the horse, but by

changing the bit, it is not *tbourida* anymore.” The bit is attached to an embroidered headstall with eye blinders that fit over the horse’s ears, with matching, colored silk reins that are gently laid on the front of the saddle. Finally, a large browband is secured, via strings on the front of the horse’s head, to the headstall. The browband is principally decorative with embroidery, but the fringe also has the practical purpose of shooing flies away from the horse’s already partially obstructed eyes.

The riders and the grooms untie the horses and prepare to mount them. It will take one or two people to successfully get the *bardi*, or rider, onto the saddle (Figure 4.18). An attendant offers interlaced hands to act as a step for the left foot as the rider jumps with the right, propelling their knees onto the seat. Another attendant might lift just the right leg of the rider, allowing them to get the first knee onto the saddle. Riders grab the saddle by the edges, but are careful not to pull their full weight on the saddle because it is held by such a slender girth. As soon as the rider has their knees in the saddle, the riders adjust their legs astride the horse and make sure the girth is tight enough by wiggling to either side to ensure the saddle will stay on the horse. Grooms then hoist the rifles into the air for the riders to carry with them to the field. Before making their way to the starting line, family members give their final good wishes. Amal’s mother put dirt into the boots of some of the girls for good luck.

On the first day of the festival after the horses have been standing for several days, their pent-up energy makes them frisky—trying to bite, kick, and rush down the field. As a crowd gathers to watch the troupe and most of the horses have started down the field, Amal is the last one to mount and she gives the command for her horse, Sharam Sheik, to rear, dramatically raising his front legs in the air. This excitement builds anticipation for the crowd. Now they are sure to watch this all-female troupe.

The novelty of the all-female *sorba* also carries the burden to perform *tbourida* well. Rarely are there two female troupes at one festival, leaving all eyes on the single group. The *muqaddama* and troupe are under great pressure. In one instance, I traveled with Amal's troupe 13 hours from Mohammedia to Zagora for a festival. There was a misunderstanding as to how many riders the troupe would bring, as opposed to the whole entourage. The organizer of the festival repeatedly questioned the troupe, "Is this all the riders?" In essence, he was complaining that he was not getting his money's worth by having Amal bring such a small troupe to the festival. Most festival organizers try to invite at least one female team for the novelty of the spectacle. In January (usually off-season for *tbourida*), the troupe consisted of a total of nine female riders, when the typical male team for festivals had at least 20. Following this showdown, Amal was naturally angry on the bus ride back to the place the troupe was staying for the night. She was ready to pack everyone up and go home, but instead she encouraged her teammates with phrases such as "We will show him" and "We will be the best team on the field." With the stakes raised, the all-female troupe had to persevere. If they did not succeed in the following days, the reputation of the troupe and in some cases, all-female troupes after theirs, would be in jeopardy of never being invited to this kind of festival again.

As the *sorbas* make their way to the field, they know this is the longest waiting process. Like most horse shows and competitions, 'hurry up and wait' is the name of the game. If the festival is in a field close to a grove of trees, troupes gather as close as they can while trying to remain in the shade; otherwise, they sit on their mounts in the sun (Figure 4.19). Water trucks drive up and down the field, sprinkling the field to control the dust. They carefully water the fields so as not to flood the field. If the field is too wet and soggy from rain, the risk of horses slipping, sliding, and falling is too great and troupes must wait a half day or more for the field to

dry. If the field is too dry, the hooves of the horses kick up so much dust that it covers the riders and the observers, getting grit in everyone's eyes and mouths. The field quality varies from festival to festival. The large fields at the exhibitions in El Jadida and Rabat are raked and churned with tractors every day to provide the smoothest and best ground for the horses. SOREC sponsors the regional qualifier competitions near local *haras*, or stud farms, such as the facility in Meknes or outside the *haras* in Bouznika, where there are lots of open flat fields used for grazing goats and sheep. Rural festival fields in Arbaoua, Zagora, and Temara are cleared of large, sharp rocks and watered, but are usually just farmer's fallow fields.

Troupes from the Sahara segregate themselves to keep other troupes' stallions from mounting their mares. The Saharan troupes have a long tradition of riding mares. When tribes used *tbourida* for raids on others, the mares would confuse and excite the other tribe's stallions, making them more difficult to handle. The troupes are lined up in their charging order, one troupe behind the other, spaced out near the starting line, but not too close to the gunpowder tent. The gunpowder tent is set up in a corner near the starting line. It is highly controlled with police, gendarmes, and metal barricades to prevent horses from running into it and to keep children and other people out. Only grooms and attendants associated with the troupes are allowed to go into the tent. Large plastic buckets hold several hundred pounds of the black, flammable powder. Assistants to the troupe are busy measuring the small handful of gunpowder that they will tightly ram into each *mukahla* or rifle. Using a plastic funnel and holding it tightly to the barrel of the rifle to create a seal with their hand, the attendant slowly pours in the powder. They then insert a thin metal rod and ram it down the long barrel of the rifle multiple times. For festivals, no balls or bullets are inserted as they once were for the purposes of warfare. Gently, the attendant secures the hammer of the rifle and cautiously carrying the rifle, walks back to the *bardi (a)* or

muqaddam(a), raising the stock of the rifle for the rider to carefully grab the barrel. These rifles are specifically made for *tbourida*, ensuring standardization and safety among the riders.

Artisanal craftsmen shape and sand the wood used for the stock of the rifle. The barrel is about four feet long and attaches to the hammer and trigger mechanism. The artist wraps metal around the barrel, securing it to the stock to give it a decorative effect. Pieces of camel bone dyed with orange henna or pieces of mother of pearl decorate the sides of the stock. The whole rifle is painted black to create a uniform effect with the other rifles of the troupe. These newer rifles tend to be safer because the wood is stronger. Older rifles can give out, splitting during a discharge, sending splinters, metal pieces, and gunpowder in all directions, and in some instances, causing injury.

An announcer at the end of the field calls the order of the teams. If the festival is well funded, attendants at the start of the field hand a lavalier microphone or headset with transmitter to the *muqaddam(a)*. The microphone is patched to the large speakers so the team and the spectators can hear the orders by the *muqaddam(a)*. Occasionally, the microphones are too far away for a good signal and the relay is full of static and inconsistencies until the troupe draws nearer to the speakers. The large competitions rely on the strength of the *muqaddam*'s voice to give the orders without a microphone. One at a time, the teams advance down the field for the first run. The *muqaddam* gives a command, such as “*yahafid Allah*” (“May God Protect You”) or a phrase invoking the name of God. The team moves at a trot with their horses in a line, their rifles resting on their right shoulder, then raised up (Figure 4.20) and again lowered back onto their shoulders. The team does not discharge their rifles this time. This entrance is called a *techouira*, or the presentation phase, where the troupe acknowledges the judges and the spectators. As the troupe continues forward, the *muqaddam* vocally signals the team to raise their

rifles in the air. Using their right hand, the *bardis* raise their rifles into the air and lower them at another signal. This is the first exercise the horses have had since leaving their farms and they are very excitable after being tied up for a long period of time. At the next signal and by the time they reach the midpoint of the field, the troupe gallops. They repeat this action of raising the gunpowder rifles for a third time. As they near the finish line, the *muqaddam(a)* gives the word to rein in their horses. The delivery of these orders and the charisma and oratory style when the *muqaddam* call their riders is called the *tesslima* (Bouchentouf 2016, 132). The riders twirl their rifles like batons, the barrel swooshing down toward the ground across their body to the left, and then back again on the right side, and one more time with the barrel of the rifle pointing down on the right side of the horse. The riders then bow in unison to the esteemed guests and judges in the VIP spectator tent. The troupe is met with applause, but the audience saves the cheers and ululations for the truly spectacular display of gunfire.

As the announcer in the spectator tent gives the name of the troupe and riders, the *sorba* files off to the side, one by one, and ambles back with their horses nose to tail to the starting line, out of the way of the oncoming troupe. After all the teams have presented themselves to the judges, they return to their lineup. Riders conduct final checks on the tightness of the saddle, shifting their weight and wiggling to make sure the girth is tight enough. Next, they check the placement of the stirrups, standing up and sitting down, and raising their rifles in the air to make sure they have a free range of motion. The troupes that did not previously have time to load their rifles with gunpowder now gather their guns before their turn to ride down the field. Typically, this is when the audience starts to hear the discharge of the gunpowder rifles. If a troupe attendant has loaded the wrong amount of gunpowder in the rifle, they must discharge it and start again. These first few shots are good test shots for the horses that might still be skittish around

the gunfire. Most of the other horses remain stock-still, prepared for the noise that comes with this activity.

The time comes for the first round for the troupes to start their run down the field with live rifles. *Sorbas* of different regions and backgrounds use their own particular style of twirling and moving the rifles as they advance down the field. Referred to as different *medrasa(s)* or “schools.” The different styles include *Meknesi*, *Chechaouia*, *Saharawi*, and *Spahia* focusing on regional or military affiliation. According to Mohammed El Kazouli, a *tbourida muqaddam*, and also a *tbourida* historical scholar, the troupes passed down the styles to their younger members, keeping them distinct and different from other groups in the region. Today, when riders form new troupes in Morocco, especially with members that do not have a familial history of riding in *tbourida*, they adopt a style they like.

Many *muqaddams* begin with *Nasser Allah!* – “May God give us victory” – to order the troupe forward. As the troupes advance down the field, their starting position is the same. The horses, at a tight trot, bob their heads high and low with the long hair of their forelocks and manes flipping with the tassels of their bridles. The horses’ movement jingles the bells that have been attached to the decorative breast and neck collars. The riders stand in their stirrups, absorbing the bouncing in their knees and they look unmoving atop their mounts, as the rifles rest on their shoulders. The *muqaddam(a)* gives the vocal signal to speed up – *Yahfid’allah* or “May God protect us;” older *muqaddams* typically give long yells (not ululations) to illustrate their next movements together. At the signal of “ooooooooo – *Mukahal*,” (“ooooooooo rifles”) the horses spring forward at a gallop, and the tossing and twirling of the rifles begin. As the riders hold the rifles in the air, the *muqaddam* yells “Ya Hafid, Ya Hafid” “O protector, O protector.” With the reins gathered in one hand, the riders twirl and some throw the rifles in the air, and

catch them before discharging them in unison – the *talqa* or discharge – all the while maintaining their balance in the saddle as the horse runs.

At rural festivals, the first discharge of the rifles is a series of ‘pops’ across the line of the team, instead of a booming, unified volley of fire. The majority of the troupes discharge their rifles in the air above them or behind them (Figure 4.21), but the Saharan tribes fire their gunpowder rifles at the ground, just missing their horses’ legs. The residual powder burns on the field, leaving the dark earth smoking even as the troupe exits the field. During these first runs, less experienced riders might not even discharge their rifles due to a horse misbehaving, a near fall, or being tangled in the reins. The worst offense a rider can commit is arriving late to the finish line and discharging their rifle alone. The second great offense is falling off their saddle. At the national competitions in Rabat and El Jadida, the first discharge of the rifles nears perfect unison. Only seasoned spectators and fellow *bardi(s)* can judge the minor faults of the *sorba*.

By the time the first round of firing has started, a large crowd gathers around the festival. At SOREC-sponsored events, the spectators are almost only male, with female VIPs sitting in the front tent. The male members of the family, crew, and spare riders gather on top of vehicles to watch the spectacle. The gendarmes put up movable fence barricades, keeping the children and people from wandering onto the field. On either side of the field, local Moroccans will stand eight people deep to get a glimpse of the action. People sit 10 to 14 deep on the diagonal corners of the VIP or judges’ tent, with not an inch of ground exposed, to see the blast of rifles. Mustachioed vendors haul large pots of coffee or beat-up Styrofoam coolers with a strap over their shoulder, weaving in and out of the crowds, calling, “Qahwa, qahwa!” or “Le glace, le glace” (ice cream, ice cream). The *gerrab* (*qerrab*) or water bearer, a fixture at anything considered Moroccan and traditional, jingles as brass bells hung on their uniform sway with their

walk. The goatskin skein full of water sloshes quietly under their arm and brass cups hang down the front of their bright red costume. In most *medinas*, or walled-cities of Morocco, the *gerrabas* are men with faded red attire and a bright straw hat hung with red and green tassels to shade them from the hours in the sun. Around Rabat, a lone *gerraba* named Rita, the only female water bearer I have ever seen, offered a drink to spectators. She gave a dimpled-cheek smile with every cool cup of water she pours. Rita and other *gerrabs* attend local festivals to ply their water trade to the spectators. Not only do the *gerrabs* offer water for a few dirhams, they will pose with festival-goers for a small tip. As they wend their way through spectators and customers, their tall bright hats bob among the sea of faces. Officials give a special pass to those with a large camera and lens, so photographers move back and forth freely inside the field, not having to navigate around spectators. The older photographers bring small foldable seats to perch on, as they await the arrival of the next *sorba* down the field.

While both local and national *tbourida* festivals have barricades (usually!) to keep spectators off the fields, the SOREC-sponsored qualifiers and national competitions situate spectators at a greater distance away from the fields by using a metal barricade and a fence. Only approved photographers, riders, and VIPs who are given badge passes are allowed free movement around the field and barricades. Water sellers and informal vendors are banned from the premises, and spectators either bring in their own food and snacks, or must resort to the inflated price of concessions offered at the competition grounds. *Moussems* and rural festivals allow for the audience to be much more intimate with the riders. Spectators are even allowed in the unfurnished VIP tents in the days leading up to the presentation day, when local celebrities and officials will present prizes to the troupes.

The second and third runs of the individual troupes take 20 to 45 minutes between each run, leaving the riders and horses baking in the sun and heat, smelling of sweat, dirt, and manure. The third rounds conclude the SOREC-sponsored qualifying and national competitions, but smaller festivals purchase enough gunpowder for the troupes to make as many runs as possible over the course of the weekend's festivities. This might mean each *sorba* has five or six runs in a day. To Amal, the amount of play is preferable to the prestige of the event. "I don't go to Moussem Moulay Abdullah Amghar because it is expensive to get there and there are so many troupes. You might ride once or twice a day." She tells me she wants to make the experience last, and the smaller festivals offer more enjoyment.

Judges record points based on synchronization, organization, costuming, and the horses. The formal scores are important at SOREC-sponsored events for determining which troupes will go forward in the semi-regional and national competitions. Festival officials give the winning troupes small prizes of money, medals, or plaques and the other troupes receive certificates of appreciation.

Medical and ambulatory services wait at the finish line in case there are any accidents. Danger in this sport is omnipresent. Unlike typical sprains or injuries of contact sports, broken bones, burns, and falls are staples of *tbourida*. The medical personnel position themselves off to the side of the field with a stretcher at the ready to take an injured rider off the field. Other medics run and quickly bandage a hand as a troupe exits the field. Common injuries include powder burns, bruises, and gashes from the unexpected and unintended recoil of the rifle. Often times, the saddle girth around the horse's belly is loose, causing a rider to lose his or her balance and fall (Figure 4.22).

While the team is on the field, some local spectators ask one of the people in the troupe's tent if they might use a corner of the tent, unoccupied with everyone watching the troupe, for their daily prayers. Riders typically leave their valuables in the cars, but often there are bags of personal belongings around the tent. Those who come in to pray leave their worn shoes at the edge of the carpet, and recite the *Dhuhr* (noon prayer) or the *Asr* (the afternoon prayer). If the women in the tent are making soup for tomorrow's breakfast, the aroma wafts to the less fortunate people around and they humbly ask for a bowl of soup. At an event like this, all eyes are on the troupe and their entourage, so the women sit the person down with a bowl of *harira*, or soup, and a spoon. Charity, being a pillar of Islam, is not a significant inconvenience, especially when there is still a large vat to be had in the second tent.

The spectacle continues until twilight. When the riders can barely see the spectators' or judges' tent at the end of the finish line, it is time for their last run of the night (Figure 4.23). They might have had a little water and snacks between runs, but they do not leave the field until they finish their final run. Audience members gather around to celebrate their favorite troupe. Women's song-like chant "*sla-wesslam*" in praise of the Prophet comes after rounds of ululations celebrating their favorite troupes. In areas that have never before seen a female troupe, their curiosity leads them to take pictures with troupe members. Musical groups go between the *sorbas* and play their rhythmic songs, and the troupe begins to dance. The riders are still in the limelight and cannot rest just yet. Local people and family members of the troupe hand their children up to the riders to take a photo of their child with the *tbourida* rider (Figure 4.24). The minute the child starts crying, it is exchanged for another for the next picture. Finally, the riders might take a short tour with their own children in the saddle with them to acclimate them and

desensitize the child. In just a few short years, those children (almost always the male children) will be riding their own horses in their family's *sorba*.

At last, the crowds disperse and the riders can dismount. The horses, having galloped and stood in the sun all day, are calm and quiet. Riders and grooms can easily lead them to their spot to be tethered. The work is evenly divided. If the night is cooling off, the riders go to change out of their sweaty costumes and put on clothes for work and sleep. Grooms and family members are on hand to start unsaddling the horses, piece by piece. The tack and accoutrement are carefully placed back on the saddle racks, and saliva and sweat wiped from the bit and the blankets. Grooms lay hay on the ground for the horses, which their noses eagerly push through to find the sweetest bits. They eat hungrily, as their riders put on their warm pajamas and cold-weather boots.

Two at a time, the riders bring the horses to the nearest spigot or water truck, along with a bucket to let the horses drink. The riders do not let the horses drink in the heat of the day. If they consume too much cool water while their bodies are still warm, the riders know the horse could cramp, colic, or develop an ailment. The horses are offered as much water as they want in the evenings, consuming half of their six- to ten-gallon daily intake. While the horses are being watered, the female members of the entourage have been preparing the evening meal. In the adjacent tent, attached to the main tent used for socializing, eating, sleeping, and displaying the saddles, women are cooking the meals or warming up a premade meal, placing a large tagine on top of a propane tank with a grill attachment or a low burning fire near the doorway. While the team was preparing themselves in the morning, the women spent hours peeling vegetables, stirring big pots, and fluffing couscous or tagliatelle noodles for *sefa* (a sweet and savory dish of chicken over noodles with powdered sugar and cinnamon). When everyone gets back to the main

tent, the women serve three or four large tagines to groups gathered around. Some riders choose to sit around a table; others gather in a circle on the floor. The women hand out spoons, but usually the formality is a moot point. With a quick “*bismillah*,” or grace, the hungry riders tuck into the dish with their hands. Only a few crumbs are left on the plate, and the riders pick up the bits of bread and food on the table and help clean up.

Conversation flows from the successes (or failures) of the day. Troupe members help each other clean any scrapes and cuts received on the field, or pick out the gunpowder that landed on their faces. They joke that if they leave the gunpowder in their skin, it turns green. Other troupe members play card games to amuse themselves or use *sebsi* pipes. These thin brass pipes are usually stuffed with a marijuana-derivative and smoked to relax after the exciting day. Local *muqaddams* and *m'aellems*, or masters, visit and make conversation with the troupes. A rider in the troupe might gather their fellow members together for the *Isha* or night prayer, the last prayer of the day. Groups talk until midnight or later, as they arrange pallets around the tent, and one by one, the members of the troupe shuffle onto a pallet and fall asleep under the bald, dangling light bulbs above them. Blankets and arms over their eyes shut out the light, and they are quickly asleep.

The next morning, no one is quick to rise. If it is a Friday, there is no powder play until after the *Jumu'ah*, or Friday prayers at noon. This allows some recovery time. At a *mousse*m, or saint's day festival, riders and locals visit the tomb of the saint and the adjoining mosque. The troupe's attendants serve a quick breakfast and the riders are then on their own to tend the horses and wander the area. The women again spend all morning preparing couscous, the traditional Friday meal. The vegetables are peeled and the chickens are in the pot by 9 in the morning, in order to accommodate a large group at 1 or 2 in the afternoon. After the meal and a quick nap by

the riders, the spectacle begins again. If it is a qualifying competition for the Week of the Horse in Rabat, the competition might only be a day or two. Unlike SOREC-sponsored qualifying competitions, the first few days at festivals, or *moussems* are more like practice days leading up to the big finale on the Saturday, when the event has the most attendance and audience.

The Friday and Saturday mornings are also used for other events such as dog racing. The Moroccan *slougui* is a thin, lanky hound shaped like a greyhound or whippet that is kept for racing and hunting, and is found in a few regions. The *mousssem* of Moulay Abdellah Amghar near El Jadida holds falconry exhibitions in between the *tbourida* spectacles (Moussems Moulay Abdullah 2019). The Doukkala region is the home of the Qwassem tribe, the only tribe to have a royal *dahir*, or decree, to take falcons from the wild and use them for subsistence hunting. It is often a perfect market day in the nearby area for farmers and vendors to sell their goods, from cactus fruit and clothing, to terra cotta tagines of varying sizes. Smoke and the aroma of grilled meat and onions greet visitors as they roam between the tents. Large vats of cooking oil sizzle with fresh *sfenj* frying. The chefs of these golden treats expertly hook the doughnuts and turn them over to continue frying, or hook them out of the vat to be dipped in sugar. Young men have set up games with air rifles, while carnival workers construct a small-scale Ferris wheel. In some festivals, officials assemble a lighted stage for musical performances in the afternoon and evenings, between and after the *tbourida* spectacle. Other people line up outside a charity tent where an eye doctor is expected to come and treat a swarm of people, and hand out eyeglasses for free. Local news teams and camera crews gather and interview riders, spectators, and vendors. They feature comments from the leaders of the troupes and the festival organizers, and their reports will air on the local and regional news channels.

The final day of the festival concludes the spectacle. All the teams are wearing their best and brightest (and usually the last clean!) costume for the finale. The crowd is invigorated as troupe after troupe displays the best synchronization yet, and ululations of women spectators fill the air. One man who sits near the finish line is known as *Baa Thami*. When he feels a troupe has had a good run and a perfect blast of rifle fire, he scampers to the finish line with a large terra cotta jug filled with water. He lets out a prolonged yell and bends over with the jar of water perpendicular to his head, letting the water splash out on top of his head. With the jar empty, he hurls it to the ground in front of him, breaking it in multiple pieces. If the jar shatters into pieces on the first round, all is well and he has judged the team correctly. If *Baa Thami* has to try to break the jar again, he becomes a spectacle unto himself, creating laughter and merriment for the onlookers. At other festivals, a man known as *Baa Khair* yells and encourages the crowd to cheer for the troupes. He waves his jacket and runs in front of the troupes before they get close to the finish line. Both men are typically horse owners and former *bardi*. They give 100-dirham notes to the *muqaddams* of successful troupes. Mohammed El-Khazouli explained that these men used to be the early judges of *tbourida* and now they are a folkloric remnant.

As the day comes to a close and the sun begins to set, the top troupes are chosen and given plaques, medals, and/or certificates. Depending on the amount of gunpowder left, the *muqaddams* are asked to form a *sorba* for a final run down the field together, or all the troupes gather together, forming a border around the field. At the signal of the winning troupe's *muqaddam*, they all fire their weapons in a final simultaneous blast. The crowds let out one last long cheer for the troupes and the festival.

If the festival concludes in the early afternoon, most troupes break down their tent and start to load their horses to go home. If the festival ends in the evening, troupes sleep one more

night in their tent or accommodations, and prepare to pack up the next day. Depending on their entourage, the riders toss their clothing in their bags, carefully help pack up the saddles, load the horses, and roll up the carpets in the tent. The field has now been properly churned up and any specks of green grass growing have been beaten into the dirt or nibbled to nothing by the horses. Horseshoes that have been thrown from a horse on the *tbourida* field litter the area. Bits of plastic and wrappers from candy bars cover the ground where the spectators stood. There is an urgency in the air to get the troupes packed up and returned home, so they can rest before going back to work the next day. For some riders, it is back to school (high school or university), but for many older men, they return to work in the big cities. At regional fairs, it is back to the farm to tend to the livestock and crops. At SOREC-sponsored events, it might mean just a few days or a few weeks of rest for the riders, until the next big competition leading to the qualifiers and finals for entry into the Week of the Horse or Salon du Cheval. Since 2010, there has not been a women's class to compete for the National Hassan II Trophy for *Tbourida* at the Week of the Horse, hosted at the federation's headquarters in Rabat. However, members of the female troupes attend these events to support their brothers and male friends competing in the national competition.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this essay, I have illustrated women's participation in the Moroccan *tbourida* festival. These photos allow the reader to understand and visualize female participants at this traditional sporting event from the early mornings to the last ride of the evening. Through this photo essay chapter and thick descriptive narrative of *tbourida* based on interviews with the female riders and participant observation, I showed women, who until now, have not been

featured in photos of *tbourida* as legitimate riders (Figure 4.1). Through photos, the women in *tbourida* get a place in an eque-mediascape. The images show team members wishing each other luck with hugs and kisses, and gathered around eating breakfast together. Even as these images and explanation describe *tbourida* and highlight their particular struggles, larger problems that surround the women and their ability to freely participate as an all-female team, or with mixed co-ed teams at the regional and national level. My photos represent one form of visual documentation that women participate in and affirm their place in *tbourida*. The photos expand the current visual ethnography that previously only contained men and are informed by the women and the experiences working with them. The images and others in the appendix allow me to produce a full-visual ethnography that offers a counter narrative that does not sexualize the women, but documents them as legitimate riders within the festival environment. In the photos, the women utilize the same equipment, horses, and ridings techniques, as the men, but still struggle with navigating the particular double standards to which they are held. Returning to Wolbert's idea of ethnographic photography as answering unasked questions, I tried to answer as many questions as possible with the help of the women I photographed. Some of the women were quiet about wanting their right to be on the *tbourida* field as equal players as the men. Others were more vocal among their peers, but they all shared in their passion for the horses, their team, and their cultural heritage.

CONCLUSION

When I started doing my dissertation research in Morocco in 2015, I knew I also wanted to create a documentary aspect to visually demonstrate *tbourida*. Gabriella Garcia-Pardo, a filmmaker at National Geographic (now freelance) traveled to Morocco with me several times to focus the film on Amal Ahamri, my main research participant and the main female *tbourida* rider highlighted in this dissertation. Over the course of four years, we ran into scheduling difficulties as Amal's pregnancy and our own schedules have made filming difficult to wrap up. After Amal's pregnancy, she went back to her job riding for the mounted division of the Surete Nationale. She and her work colleagues prepare for a mounted spectacle each year for presentation at the Salon du Cheval in El Jadida in October. The amount of hours Amal puts into this training however leaves her with little time for pleasure riding with her *tbourida* team. She has not ridden in a *tbourida* since the festival I attended in 2016 in *Arabaoua*. Instead, in spring 2019 Amal has returned to jumping and represents the Surete Nationale as one of the only female competitors. This takes up most of her weekends from early spring until late summer.

When asking Amal when she will ride in *tbourida* next the answer is "this summer *inshallah*." Currently her family and her job take priority, but that does not spell an absolute end for Amal or her team. In the absence of Amal's leadership on the field, her teammates continue to participate in *tbourida* and ride horses with other female and male troupes and occasionally borrows her horse Sharam Sheik for festivals. With Ramadan taking place in May in 2019, it allowed for a whole summer of *tbourida* festivals each weekend for my participants to ride in and watch. The largest festival, Moussem Moulay Abdullah Amghar outside El Jadida will have the largest numbers of *tbourida* riders they have ever had and the most women riders to date.

Other younger all-female troupes are popping up around the country, filling in where Amal and her fellow riders have started to leave.

In terms of *tbourida* as a whole, while the all-women's class has not been reinstated, the sport is moving forward in other ways to include women – if not on the field, then in the judges' cohort. As of 2018, Salon du Cheval director, Mehdi Bouyalitene informed me that SOREC (Société Royale d'Encouragement du Cheval) has started training its first female judge, who would be ready to start work in 2020. Perhaps with some gender diversity entering in at a top level could make a path for women to appear on the national competitive field again.

Another stride for SOREC and the Royal Equestrian Federation (FRMSE: Fédération Royale Marocaine des Sports Equestres) is the 2019 UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) application for *tbourida* to be added to the register of good safeguarding practices (Ben Saga 2019). *Tbourida*, alongside the application for *Gnawa* music, will be considered for the registry in the December 2019 committee meeting in Bogota, Columbia. In 2008, UNESCO already added the festival of Tan-Tan in the south of Morocco, which features *tbourida* as one of its biggest spectacles. Currently, the ICH features many human-animal sporting heritage activities such as falconry (in Morocco as well as across Europe), a camel coaxing ritual (Mongolia), and many horse-centered activities such as equitation in the French tradition (France), shrimp fishing on horseback (Belgium), *charrería* rodeo (Mexico), and Chovqan– a traditional Karabakh horseback riding game (Azerbaijan). In 2018, UNESCO accepted Oman's proposal of the camel and horse racing known as *ardha*. It appears, therefore, the chances of UNESCO ICH accepting *tbourida* are likely. But what does that proposal say about the inclusion of women in *tbourida*?

The women riders of *tbourida* still are exceptional women in a male-dominated arena and it is unlikely to change very quickly. Although their numbers are steadily growing, until the women have more support from their families, from their male counterparts, and have a female patron in a seat of power, this will present many issues. Moroccan women who are interested in sports will still need to use all five strategies at their disposal (merging athletics and Islam; work within gender segregated areas; adhere to clothing regulations and cultural norms; get their parents and family's support; and finally, being active in their daily lives) to navigate their way through the sporting world.

As women navigate the sporting world, they also develop relationships with family, friends, and horses, and the struggle for legitimacy as riders among long-time horse-keeping families in *tbourida*. As riders and horse owners, both men and women observe each other becoming co-beings with their horse partners, and form bonds of relatedness similar to familial kinship. Horse ownership leads to a deep inter-species relationship through riding, grooming, interactions, and longevity on the farm in many cases. Tribal and ancestral connections to *tbourida*, keeping horses for war and then for pleasure, lends legitimacy among male and female riders, but exceptions are often overlooked for the men. Women, on the other hand, must prove themselves worthy to be on a horse and on the field.

Overall, it is the male-dominated viewpoints like those above, as well as the imagery that still dictate the view of *tbourida* as a sport and culture belonging to the patriarchal domain. From the first Orientalist visual reports, paintings, and later photos, the men have always been portrayed on horseback and to whom this cultural practice belongs. The Orientalist painters and photographers created a dominant visual narrative without understanding this history and background of what they were seeing. The new name of *fantasia* served to 'other' the

horsemanship maneuvers into a fantasy of who Arabs and Amazigh people were and how it fit into the Orientalist narrative. The images came with little explanation of where the practice came from and why it is performed. My photo essay, therefore, serves to as a counter-narrative not only to demonstrate the women riders on the field, but also to explain the details of what occurs throughout *tbourida* and give as many meanings as possible, hopefully in the process answering as many questions as possible.

Examining equestrian practices, their structure and their place within society offers a deeper look at gender, kinship, and image-making of these traditions and sports. The photos serve as a visual ethnography and an equescape, visually joining ethnographical detail to a horse sport with the intention of telling a story with characters that reads easily and informs my reader. This research offers a platform on which scholars can compare equescapes in the non-Western world. Today, more women in the non-Western sector are riding in traditional male equestrian sports and ensembles such as Mexican women in the *escaramuza charra*, female equestrians in Oman participating in the Omani Royal Cavalry, and even the Saudi Arabian negotiating her right to compete in the Olympics in jumping.

As I finish this dissertation after finally getting the change to ride in *tbourida* with Ibtissam Maririhi, I think of the importance of human-animal relationship and how much anthropologists can learn through people's relationship to their work animals, food animals, and nature. I will continue to explore the deep roots of being, connecting and understanding the cultural implications of being close to animals. The more humans are conscious of their relationships to animals and nature the more they can do to preserve the cultural heritage linked to these animals, but also move forward to accept the various roles they have in our lives.

PHOTO APPENDIX

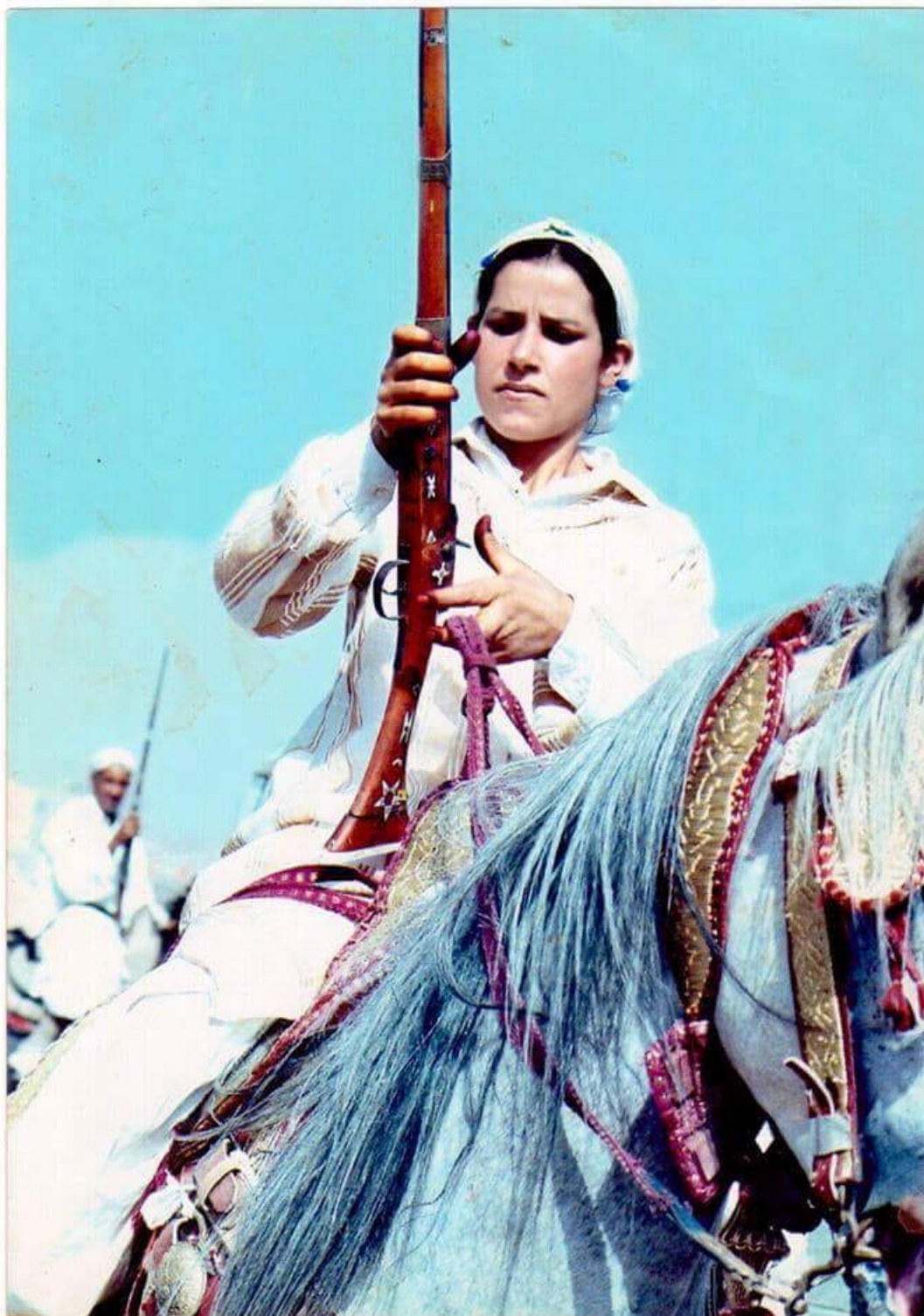


Figure 2.1. Photo of Aisha Bebedia participating in *tbourida* in 1980 at age 26. Photographer unknown.



Figure 2.2: Amal Ahamri projected onto a cut-out figure of a police officer. Salon du Cheval, October 2018



Figure 2.3: Hanane on the left, driving, keeping an eye on official SOREC competition broadcast on Facebook live the phone placed on the radio dashboard as Bouchra (on the right) watches the Facebook live broadcast from a friend on her phone. April 2018.



Figure 4.1 A troupe about to pull the trigger at Bouznika's regional qualifying competition for the National Hassan II trophy. 2018.



Figure 4.2: “The cameras are our rifles! We are our own *sorba* of photographers” Gwyneth Talley and photographer Mariem Naciri jokingly raise their sports lenses in the air, like the *tbourida* rifles. Outside Rabat. March 2016. Photographer unknown.



Figure 4.3: “Fantasia ou Jeu de la poudre, devant la porte d’entrée de la ville de Méquinez” (Fantasia or Powder Games, in front of the entrance gate to the city of Meknes by Eugène Delacroix. 1832. Watercolor, 0,15 m x 0,27 m. Louvre Museum, Paris.



Figure 5.1: Fatima, Nourelhouda, and Saida holding their gunpowder rifles riding their horses back to the starting line at a Moroccan *tbourida* festival in Zagora. January 2016.



Figure 5.2: Horses are tethered by their ankles and halters in front of the team's tent in Arbaoua. May 2016.



Figure 5.3: Ibtissam (on the left) and her sister Yasmine (on the right) wait for the men to construct the team tents (in the *outaak* style) at the festival grounds in Oued Merzeg. July 2019.



Figure 5.4: Shoes are forbidden on the carpets. The tennis shoes mark the entrance and exit of the tent. Zagora. January 2016.



Figure 5.5: Seven saddles on display at the entrance to the team's tent. Six saddles match and the *muqaddama*'s saddle stands out as distinct (fourth one from the right). Zagora. January 2016.



Figure 5.6: Curled up in the corner of the tent, the women of the team have segregated themselves from the men. The tent is open and the blankets keep any evening chill off the women as they sleep Arbaoua. May 2016.



Figure 5.7: Senaa (far left) wraps her arms around Amal as she eats breakfast. Bedia (in the *hijab* on the right) looks on. The grooms gather for a quick breakfast of bread and tea before the festivities start. Zagora. January 2016.

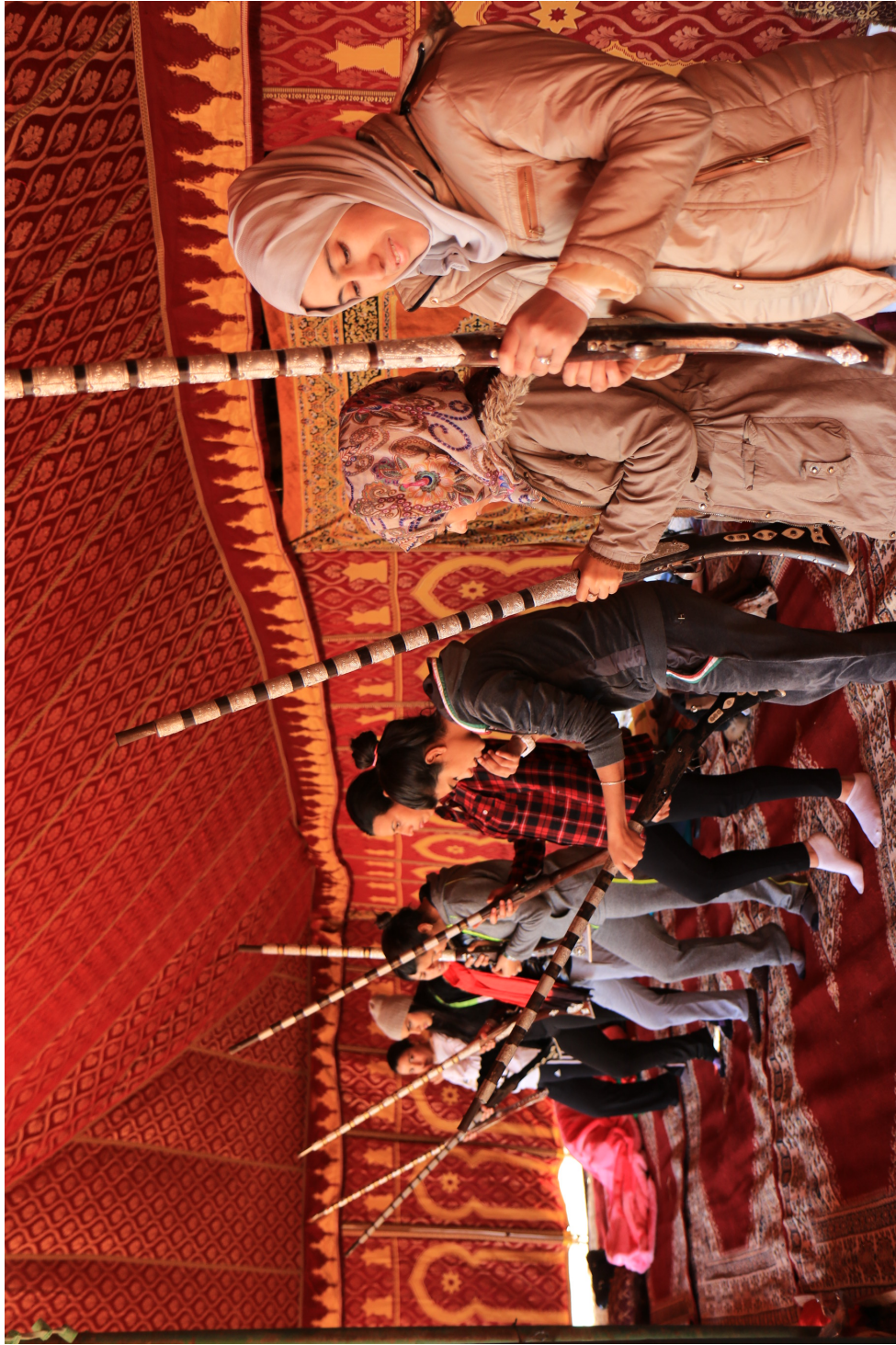


Figure 5.8: Amal's troupe puts the caps on the rifles to begin practicing and drilling. From left to right, Saida, Nourelhouda, Fatima, Amal, Senaa, Manar, place the cap and prepare the rifles, while Khadeja (pictured in *hijab*, second from right) a novice, sees how it is done. Bedia (in *hijab* on the far right) inspects the cap and smiles for the camera. Zagora. January 2016.



Figure 5.9: Fatima arranges and distributes costumes. Zagora. January 2016.



Figure 5.10: Manar (on left), Fatima (middle), and Bedia (on right) in various stages of readiness. Manar wraps her hand for protection. Fatima pulls on her boots, and Bedia, checking her phone, waits for the signal to mount up. Zagora. January 2016.



Figure 5.11: “I look like I’m smoking *shisha*!” Fatima giggled as she saw this photo. She breathes down the barrel, forcing any leftover gunpowder particles down to the bottom of the barrel. Build up in the barrel could have dangerous consequences. Zagora. January 2016.



Figure 5.12: Amal takes a quiet moment, mouthing the words as she reads from her pocket *Qur'an*. When she is finished, she puts the *Qur'an* away and leads the team in a group prayer. Zagora. January 2016.



Figure 5.13: Kisses for luck. Saida (on left) spies my camera as she and Bedia (on the right) go in for good luck kisses on Fatima's cheeks. Zagora. January 2016.



Figure 5.14: The obligatory posed group photo of the troupe before mounting. From the far left stands Sanaa, Saida, Fatima, Touria (Amal's mother), Amal in the center wearing white, her daughter Lilia in blue in front of her, Manar, Bedia, and Nourelhouda, all in green. Zagora. January 2016.



Figure 5.15: A male rider adjusts his saddle after mounting. All parts of the saddle aside from the wooden tree are visible. The saddle has a high back and front to secure the rider in the saddle along with a decorative breast plate across the horse's front. Bouznika. March 2018.



Figure 5.16: A typical saddle with embroidery. The padding on bottom holds the rider at least 8-12 inches off the horse's back. The embroidered skirting on top of the padding, then a wooden tree (not pictures) covered with another skirted layer of embroidery. A breast collar is attached to the main part of the saddle on the sides. Zagora. January 2016.



Figure 5.17: Fatima fastens the bridle on the horse's head. Mehdi Tazi (not pictured) had to help her get it on the horse because it was throwing its head in protest. Zagora. January 2016.



Figure 5.18: A rider from *sorba* Farisat Hawziyat of Rabat gets help mounting, with the stump of a tree and a hand from an attendant. Rabat. March 2016.



Figure 5.19: Bedia (back to the camera) and Nourelhouda wait in line with their troupe until they are called to advance on the field. Zagora. January 2016.



Figure 5.20: Amal's troupe advances down the field with the rifles held above their heads. Zagora. January 2016.



Figure 5.21: Amal's troupe makes an uneven discharge on an early round in *tbourida*. Zagora. January 2016.



Figure 5.22: A female rider picks herself up after falling off her horse. The saddle, loosely hanging from her horse's withers, demonstrates the risks of not securely tightening a girth. Rabat. March 2016.



Figure 5.23: Night Fire. The troupe delivers a near perfect volley of fire to end the evening. Zagora. January 2016. (Photo was brightened to show detail.)



Figure 5.24: Amal rides near the crowd with daughter Lilia (age 2) after a successful evening of *tbourida*. Zagora. January 2016.

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