A century of hands : work, communities, and identities among the Ayt Khebbash fossil artisans in a Moroccan Oasis

Tanabe, M.

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J'ai horreur de tous les métiers. Maîtres et ouvriers, tous paysans, ignobles. La main à plume vaut la main à charrue.

Quel siècle à mains ! – Je n'aurai jamais ma main. Après, la domesticité mène trop loin. L'honnêteté de la mendicité me navre. Les criminels dégoûtent comme des châtrés : moi, je suis intact, et ça m'est égal.

Une saison en enfer, Arthur Rimbaud (1873)

To Mutsuko Tanabe

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There are many more individuals in Rissani, Tafraoute, Erfoud and Ar-Rachidia who, out of generosity, offered me valuable information and hospitality. For the reason of privacy, I cannot name them but I wish to acknowledge all the people of Morocco who helped me realise this project.

March 2015, Leiden

List of Illustrations

Note on transcription, transliteration and the use of pseudonyms

Instances of Berber and Arabic in this thesis are transcribed and transliterated in the following way:

- All proper nouns (names of places, persons, tribes, etc.) are transliterated according to their official spelling, to their spelling on the Michelin map, if present, or to the spelling provided to me by my informants. If the official spelling is uncertain, the proper noun is treated as a normal noun and transcribed as outlined below;
- All Moroccan Berber and Arabic terminology is transcribed from its spoken form to Latin script, making use of diacritical marks and IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) symbols where necessary. In these cases, /ḍ/ /ṣ/ /ṭ/ are pharyngealised equivalents of d, s and t; /ḥ/ is a voiceless pharyngeal fricative (the Arabic phoneme *ḥāʔ*); /ʔ/ is a glottal stop (the Arabic phoneme *hamz*); and /ʕ/ is a voiced pharyngeal fricative (the Arabic phoneme *ʕayn*);
- All instances of Standard Arabic are transliterated according to the standard international system of transliteration of Arabic, combined with the symbols outlined above.
- Unless otherwise stated, all interviews in this dissertation were conducted in the Tamazight language.
- To guard the privacy of my informants, pseudonyms are used for all locals that appear in this thesis.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Aim and Scope of Dissertation

This study analyses the everyday practices and the processes of multiplicious identity formation in Amazigh mineral and fossil artisan communities, focusing on the Ayt Khebbash group in Rissani and Tafraoute. It is an ethnographic attempt at documenting the ways in which the artisans transform their work-based identities in the context of the postcolonial development of the Tafilalet region of southeastern Morocco.

The Tamazight-speaking Ayt Khebbash group from the Ayt Aṭṭa tribal confederation previously lived a nomadic life herding animals, before the development of the capitalist market economy which arrived with the French conquest of the Tafilalet in 1933. During the Protectorate period, the Amazigh herdsmen started to work in the local French-run lead mines, in the process of their integration into the wage labour economy. After the Moroccan independence, the labour out-migration of the male population from the Ar-Rachidia Province to the cities was accelerated by the drought of the 1980s, when increasing numbers of Imazighen abandoned their nomadic ways of life and found their cash income, first in the local towns of Rissani and Erfoud, by engaging in fossil sculpting. This work was supplemented by their seasonal migration to Nador and other large Moroccan cities, where they worked as construction labourers. By the end of the 1990s, many of the Imazighen turned to barite[1] mining in the Ar-Rachidia Province, in the wake of the European financial crisis which resulted in the declining prices for fossil. The conditions of their works in the three domains, fossil sculpting, construction labour and barite/lead mining, are inflicted with accidents, health problems and low return for their labour. The ways in which the Amazigh artisans deal with the contradictions experienced in the three domains of work in the context of the new socio-economic environment is the focus of this research.

The chapters are designed to address the question of how the Ayt Khebbash artisans identify themselves and others through everyday work and participation in different communities, what is their relation to the space, and how they deal with the discourse power of the state and the perpetual forces of capitalism. In Morocco, not only people

1 Barite is a mineral with varied crystal forms and colours, commonly used as a weighting agent for drilling fluids in oil and gas exploration to suppress high formation pressures and prevent blowouts. Other uses are in radiation-shielding cement, glass ceramics and medical applications. The mineral is found in several localities worldwide, including Europe, China, India, the Americas and Morocco.

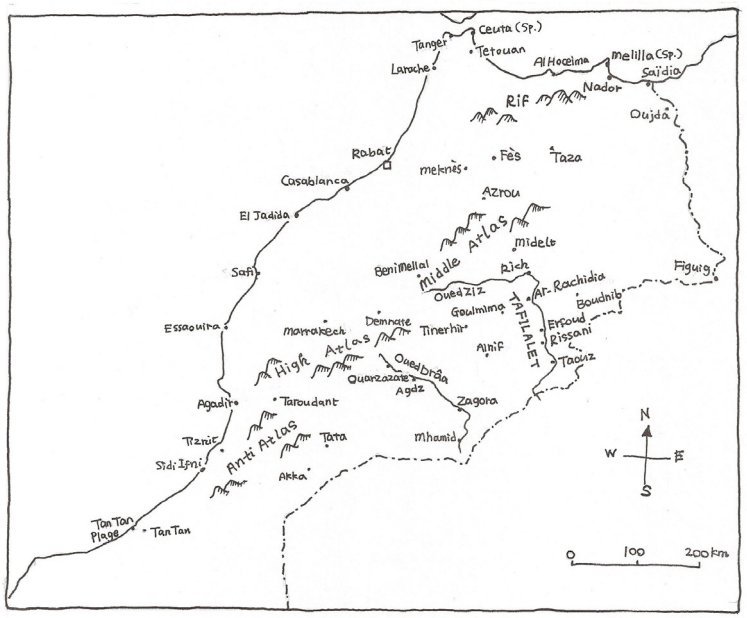
who engage in craft-work, but also miners are called *artisan* (from French *artisan*), because the word indicates manual work and the miners used to work with bare hands at the beginning of the Protectorate period. Therefore, I will use the term 'artisan' for fossil sculptors, construction labourers and barite/lead miners alike throughout this dissertation. In order to stress the dynamic nature of the identification processes among the artisans, I shall examine in detail various forms of their work practice, kinship ties, ethnicity and overall routes of travel from one profession to another, within the domain of their everyday lives.

In the context of this research, my primary interest is not in the collective 'Amazigh' identity projected by urban and international Amazigh activists, nor in the French colonial division of Arab versus Berber ethnicity.[2] While the collective Amazigh ethnic identity is for the most part based on delineated ethnic and political criteria, by the term 'Berber' or 'Amazigh' I just refer to Berber language speakers. In terms of personal identity, on the other hand, it greatly depends on shifting complexities of everyday life, such as situations at work, or how people imagine that others see themselves. I argue that the Amazigh artisans from the Ayt Khebbash group in Rissani, a town in the Tafilalet, do not have an essentialised Amazigh identity, but rather see themselves contextually through social interactions in everyday work and in relation to external power structures. Therefore, my aim is to provide an alternative view of Amazigh identity in the Tafilalet through the analysis of work as social practice, so as to understand the local notion of being Amazigh in the course of socio-cultural transformations.

Post-independence Morocco has witnessed accelerated rural-urban and inter-rural migration in the 1960s and 1970s (map 1-1). In the Tafilalet region, endowed with rich mineral resources, rural life has been transformed by the villagers' involvement in mining and artisanal work in and around towns such as Rissani, Alnif[3] and Erfoud, accompanying the rise in national production quota of silver, lead, zinc, barite and

2 The literature on the social and conceptual framework of Arab/Berber categories is abundant. See for example, Rosen 1972; Hoffman 2000a; Crawford 2001; Rachik 2005.

3 Alnif used to belong to Ar-Rachidia Province (Meknès-Tafilalet administrative region) until 2009 when the town was included in the newly created Tinerhir Province (Sous-Massa-Drâa region). The town is known for trilobite sculpting and the majority of the population consists of Tamazight speakers. Due to Alnif's historic relevance as a 'Tafilalet town' of fossil craftwork, it will be treated as a 'Tafilalet town' in my dissertation. However, Alnif is excluded from the Meknès-Tafilalet region since 2009 in the statistics of the Ministry of Energy and Mining presented in chapter five (tabes 5-1 and 5-2).



Map 1-1 Morocco

fossilised stones since the 1970s. Although fossilised stones used to be a symbol of misfortune and curse in local legends, they acquired commodity value due to the increasing demand from the West. Accordingly, the Ayt Khebbash men of the region transformed themselves from a nomadic herding population with a localised worldview to artisans, conscious of the world market in which their labour is sold.

However, as discussed in the ethnographies of Taussig (1980) and Nash (1972; 1979a; 1992) in the cases of Bolivian miners, local belief systems, such as the concepts of space and time, are constantly reinforced in the Ayt Khebbash artisans everyday practice at work. In Rissani, the Tamazight-speaking population live and work together with their kin-groups and those from the same area of origin, creating a 'village' within the town. Also, they typically maintain endogamous marriage patterns in an effort to preserve their tribal identities. In other words, the contemporary environment of capitalist production and the Western notion of commodity values are combined with beliefs in 'traditional' values from the nomadic past, which means that the kin-built social order is structurally durable and is strengthening the individual identities.

In this globalising socio-economic context, the cities and towns of the Tafilalet form a social field where people experience their daily lives as being subject to the contradictions of modernity. What characterises this modernity is the trinity of powerful institutionalisations, namely the nation-state, capitalist market economy, and organised Islam. Under the influence of these forces the fossil sculpting emerged in the 1970s as a distinctively 'modern' sector of artisanal work in the Tafilalet. The majority of fossil artisans in Rissani are Tamazight speaking Ayt Khebbash labour migrants from the nearby villages, such as Tafrokht, Melhaj, Taouz and Tafraoute, whereas all of the other 'traditional' artisanal sectors such as woodwork, pottery and basket weaving are inherited by the Arab families, that are older inhabitants of the *qṣur* surrounding the modern town quarters.

My question here is how the existing local practices and social relations change the meanings of the globalising discourses. The everyday lives of the Ayt Khebbash artisans are totally penetrated by the national and global cultural commodities and practices, hence the hybrid cultural formations are observable in the course of the articulation of locally embedded practices in relation to industrial capitalism and neo-liberal discourses. So how does the new work environment of the Ayt Khebbash artisans transform their self-perception and social relations?

To answer this question, I shall first examine the process of daily practice and the relationship between actors, goods and tools by critically adopting the framework of the 'communities of practice' presented by Lave and Wenger, which I will discuss in section three (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998[4]). This is to set a hypothetical 'space' where practice generates and sustains. This community does not refer to kin groups, tribes, villages or regions, nor does it indicate the institutional frameworks such as school, factory or bureaucratic organisation. For Lave and Wenger, it is a notion for understanding practice as participation in a broader framework of the social world, which is the reflexive community (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). Although the community model has its limitations when analysing the multiplicious aspect of identity formation, it remains important with regard to the understanding of apprenticeship as a process of participation in the social practice.

4 See also Wenger, Etienne and Snyder, William M. 2000. 'Community of Practice: The Organizational Frontier', *Harvard Business Review* January-February, 139-145; Wenger, Etienne, McDermott, Richard, Snyder, William M. 2002. *Cultivating Communities of Practice.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Press.

Second, I shall focus on this participation as a 'work-based' identification process, for the world of work is the epitome of 'modern' lifestyle away from the village. The newly emerging sectors of fossil sculpting and barite/lead mining, opposed to work oriented towards the natural order in the pre-industrial epoch, can be regarded as a partially modern system implanted in the local society with the logic of the world capitalist system. However, it should be stressed that work is not embedded in the system, but work itself is a social practice, wherein acting agents acquire new knowledge, techniques and lifestyles, in the multiple processes of confrontations and contradictions. In other words, work is a human action performed by artisans as everyday practice and constructed interactively vis-à-vis the social conditions of the work environment. Therefore, the focus of this research will not be on labour migration *per se*, but the ways in which the migrant artisans construct, reconstruct and transform their identities through everyday work in the context of the globalising socio-economic landscape of the Tafilalet region.

Third and finally, by drawing on evidence of field data, I shall contend that the contemporary social relations are actively reorganised by the practice of traditionalisation. As explained by Dell Hymes, people endow particular aspects of their experience with meaning that symbolically links them to their past, in the process of their social life, which he calls 'traditionalising' (1975). In rural Morocco, the Ayt Khebbash artisans understand their situation and transform it by strengthening their sense of belonging to their tribal origin, so as to overcome their difficulties and contradictions in everyday life. For this reason, the artisans do not assimilate or conform to the structural conditions, but instead hold on to their customs which they consider 'traditional' and are important for them on symbolic, emotional, social and economic levels. I shall argue that these historically formulated and reformulated tribal identities remain to be an integral part of the multiplicious identification processes of the Ayt Khebbash artisans, which is deeply connected to their participation in work and their articulation of discourses.

1.2 Relevant Literature and Theoretical Framework

In order to situate my research in the context of past anthropological work, I briefly review the study of practice in Middle Eastern anthropology.[5]

5 For an overview of Middle Eastern anthropology, see also Eickelman 2002: Ch. 6.

Within the discipline of anthropology, the functionalist analysis of African tribal societies was pioneered by Evans-Pritchard (1937; 1940). Later on, Emrys Peters studied the Bedouin tribal society of Cyrenaica, in which he stressed the complex interplay between colonialism, the local Sanusi brotherhood and the so-called 'segmentary' societies (1967; 1976; 1984). Although heavily influenced by his predecessor Evans-Pritchard, he challenged the assumption of Bedouin society as segmentary and static, and insisted that it should be situated in a wider political and economic context. In the same period, Ernest Gellner worked on Moroccan Amazigh society, highlighting the egalitarian and 'democratic' traits of tribal life, the symmetrical diffusion of power, and the elective nature of leadership in relation to the supreme authority of saints (1969). Also, he stressed the segmentary lineage model[6] as an important tool to understand the Amazigh tribal structure, the point of view of which was also confirmed by David Hart in his studies of the Ayt Waryaghar in the Rif and the Ayt Aṭṭa tribe of southeastern Morocco (1976; 1981; 1984).

Whereas Gellner and Hart focused on structural aspects of Amazigh tribal society, Jacques Berque stressed the dynamism and flexibility of tribal structures as well as the ambiguity of social relationships, while abandoning the colonial assumption of an Arab/Amazigh division (1955). He asserted that the spread of Islam contributed in altering the local conditions and that it blurred the ethnic boundaries. His work remains relevant to the analysis of social dynamics in the globalising environment of today, and still poses posing a resounding critique of generalised Amazigh ethnicity (Cf. Pouillon 2001; Rachik 2012).

Shifting further away from the classic theoretical paradigms of structural-functionalism, Pierre Bourdieu focused on the articulations between the practices of social actors and the larger structures and systems that constrain or transform those practices (1977; 1987 [1979]; 1990). Not only did he shed light on the everyday practice of social actors as a cultural process, but he also put the issue of power and inequality into concern. For instance, in his research of the Algerian colonial economy, he clearly demonstrated that migration is the product and expression of historical and international relations of material and symbolic domination, and that such relations 'structure' the economic practices of the peasants' daily lives (Bourdieu 1962; 1963; Bourdieu and Sayad 1964; Bourdieu and Wacquant 2001).

6 For the critiques and discussions on segmentary lineage model, see Munson Jr. 1981; 1989; 1993; Gellner and Munson Jr. 1995; Hart 1996; Eickelman 2002; Pouillon 2005.

However, practice theory has its own limitations. Much as De Certeau stressed the repetitive and unconscious aspects of daily life (1984), so did Bourdieu assume that *habitus*, the deeply buried structure that shapes people's dispositions to act in ways to accept the dominance of others, is internalised and inaccessible to consciousness (1977; 1987 [1979]; 1990). In other words, although practice theory remains important when analysing the relationship between internal dynamics and external forces of colonialism and capitalism, it fails to acknowledge social *transformation* while overstressing the structural aspect of social reproduction.

In addition, the cultural complexity, ambiguity and contradiction of human agents in relation to domination deserve more attention. As Geertz pointed out the difficulty of applying the Western model of individual to Moroccan society (1983), we must move away from the Western ideological construct of unified and freely choosing individual. Our focus should be on the capacity of human agency to interpret, evaluate and to formulate projects, without losing sight of the cultural, historical and political construction of the non-Western 'self' (Ortner 2006: Ch.2). It is the contextual analysis of acting agents in relation to their socio-cultural condition that we should now turn to.

In the case of the Ayt Khebbash artisans in southeastern Morocco, I argue that movement and work in several different domains throughout their lives are an integral part of social practice and identity formation. As in the words of Clifford, they 'dwell in travel'; people are constantly in transit, since their survival is a process in 'displacement, tangled cultural experiences, structures and possibilities of an increasingly connected but not homogeneous world' (Clifford 1997: 2). Their work-based identification is never limited to a single domain of work nor to a particular geographical space, which contradicts the classical assumption that the artisans are nailed down in a circumscribed location and that artisanal work is a 'rooted' profession. On the contrary, in the case of the fossil sculpting and barite/lead mining domains in the Tafilalet, it is largely an invented tradition created during the French Protectorate period and the subsequent expansion of world capitalism, wherein the nomadic Amazigh population sought for wage employment, solely for the purpose of their daily subsistence. In contrast to Eickelman's analysis (1985) of artisanal tradition in Morocco, the fossil domain is unrelated to Islamic science, but a product of European cultural hegemony. In order to sustain their volatile existence, the Ayt Khebbash artisans swap their professions according to the changing demands for minerals in the international market. However, their life-long travel – working in the French-run lead mines, then

moving on to fossil sculpting, and eventually engaging in construction labour in the large cities before returning again to Ar-Rachidia Province to exploit the barite mines – is maintained through the contested process of traditionalising modernities, which is an unpaved route directly connected to their nomadic past.

With such a historically formulated social practice in mind, we find that their identification processes entail a complicated experience of inner contradiction and clash with one's historically situated self and body. This is because participation in the social practice entails complicated interactions involving a historicised self, formulated through constant repetition of practice within one's personal history (Hodges 1998). We should take into consideration that local history as practice encompasses social participation, and that identities are cultural productions formed through the processes of hesitating, appropriating or refusing participation in practices that situate one's self and others. As Holland and Lave argue, identities live through the practice of identifications and those historical struggles are a 'crucible' for forging identities (2001: 3). In other words, identity and culture are both part of the complex historical processes entangled in the relations between actors' intimate self-making and participation in local practice.

For this reason, it is vital to focus on the aspect of identity created through practice within power relations. This is because the identification of acting agents occurs in the process of contradiction, confrontation and resistance while interacting with others and the outside world. As Laclau argues, coincidental identities are constantly endangered, and therefore can only be formed against contradictions within the power relations, and constructed identities are a set of numerous elements articulated with one another (Laclau 1990: 32). In short, identity cannot exist without discourse practice and exercise of power in all aspects of everyday practice.
As I have pointed out earlier, the identification processes among the Ayt Khebbash artisans in the particular locality of the Tafilalet involve intense conflict and confrontation with modern discourse power and forces of institutionalisation. The identities of the Ayt Khebbash artisans are formulated vis-à-vis the concrete administrative, social and economic forces, as well as against the encompassing discourse power of the West.

The economic importance of fossilised stones was discovered in the Tafilalet region in the early 1970s, due to the local Amazigh nomads' encounter with foreign geologists

and tourists. They first started digging out fossilised stones such as trilobites[7] and goniatites[8] along the carbonated strata from the Silurian and Devonian period, which were conveniently located near the towns of Erfoud and Rissani. The Amazigh nomads of this region, mostly from Ayt Khebbash group, eventually created the method of effectively visualising the stones using cutting tools, and then finishing with sand polish and oil treatment. In 1971, as the national interest in fossil craftwork increased, the Ministry of Energy and Mining installed electric machines in the urban centres, which encouraged the Amazigh people to migrate to towns such as Erfoud, Rissani and Midelt, equipped with water and electricity (*Etude sur le secteur des spécimens minéralogiques et fossiles* 2002: 27-50). At this time, the national and international market demand far exceeded the production, and so the new industrial units were created not only in the region, but also in Marrakesh and Casablanca. On the other hand, many of the Amazigh migrants continued to find work in small-scale *ateliers* owned by their kin groups or friends. Following the drought from 1981 to 1985, the mineral and fossil sector saw a dramatic expansion in the Tafilalet as increasing numbers of Imazighen were forced to abandon their pastoral lifestyle in and around the village to find subsistence in this sector.

What we can understand from this historical process is that the social relations which can be seen in their workplaces could not have been born out of the autonomous change within the local society, but is a product of the world capitalist system. Therefore, in the context of a modernising and globalising socio-cultural environment, it is vital to focus on the Amazigh migrants' newly acquired artisanal work as social practice. This is because the world of work epitomises the intensely conflicting field which has become divorced from home, family life, religious life and other diverse activities of the Amazigh migrants. As opposed to their former nomadic life, the kinship group is not always a producing unit of work, for they have come to engage in 'modern' work where groups of people from different families and ethnic origins interact in the workplace. As Bourdieu has discussed in his analysis of the changing notion of time among the Algerian peasants who became migrant workers in the city, the eco-

7 Trilobite is a fossil group of marine arthropods, from early Cambrian (521 million years ago) to Devonian period. Their sizes vary, but the typical size is from 3cm to 10cm.

8 Goniatite is a type of ammonite from middle Devonian period, dating back to 390 million years ago. Ammonite (scientific name: ammonoidea) an extinct group of marine invertebrate animals in the subclass ammonoidea of the class cephalopoda. The name ammonite derives from the spiral shape of its fossilised shells. It existed from the Devonian period to Cretaceous period.

nomic practices in the modern workplace have a crucial impact on the identification processes in the view of wider international relations of domination and inequality (Bourdieu 1962; 1963; Bourdieu and Sayad 1964).

For Morocco, the relationship between work and identity has been discussed by David Crawford in his study of a village in the High Atlas, which focused on the daily practice of work as labour, a protracted experience driven by poverty (2001; 2006; 2008; 2009; 2010). Based upon his strenuous participant observation in the Agoundis Valley of southern Morocco, Crawford demonstrated the daily subjective experience of hard labour as an important component in understanding their identities and the social organisation from which they are exploited. My current research is largely inspired by this momentous study of Crawford on the daily work and local identity among the Tashelhit-speaking farmers, which provided crucial insight into local notions of time, space and power from the perspective of labour, as well as questioning the overarching assertions of collective Amazigh identity promoted by the urban and international activists.

In the case of the migrant artisans in the towns, I shall argue that work is not only about the compelling necessity of survival, but also about the circulation of information, role-playing, and about the artisan's relationship to his tools and goods. The product he creates can be a projection of the self, and work as social practice is a meaningful process in which the worker affirms or transforms his personal significance and identities. For example, the Ayt Khebbash artisans often refer to the manual tools, such as a pickaxe or a hammer, as an extension of their hands, or even a 'lover' they parted in favour of the modern electric machines that they call a 'car', in need of constant care and maintenance. These expressions symbolise their idealised nostalgia for the village life they left, and also their pragmatic view on the current life in town.

It is also important to note that the work practice in the Tafilalet is strictly and unequally gendered. In my present research, the focus is limited to the male domains of wage-earning work and the perspective of gender and domestic roles shall not be explored. Fossil sculpting and various mining works are all performed by men, as well as labour migration to the cities outside Ar-Rachidia. Local women are not supposed to engage in any sort of wage-earning tasks, with the exception of home-based embroidery, carpet weaving and kaftan sewing promoted by local and international NGOs. Arab women have a centuries-old tradition of basket-weaving, merely to earn small

pocket money on market days. Although not prohibited, it is extremely rare to find female school teachers of local origin, because women are not encouraged to pursue higher education or a career. The phenomenon of female labour out-migration to the cities is a practice non-existent in Ar-Rachidia Province region, except for those abandoned by the family and working as prostitutes.

The subject of gendered identity among the Ayt Khebbash women in the Tafilalet has already been studied by Cynthia Becker in her ethnographies of female embroiderers and carpet weavers (2000; 2006). However, in her study she ignores the aspect of commodity production and how the female domain of artisanal work was linked to the formation of the capitalist market economy. On the other hand, the research of Claire Nicholas (2010; 2014) on the Moroccan female embroiderers' work practice and the transformation of gender roles in Marrakesh provided insight into the process of wider socio-economic transformations. She argued that the identification process of the migrant workers' involves the politics of 'tradition' in post-colonial state formation and socio-economic development, as they come to encounter foreigners or development actors, with backgrounds in varied skill, expertise and ethics of work (2010; 2014). Therefore, the shifts in how local artisans make sense of their crafts, and the ways in which they participate in work projects should be observed in relation to the political manipulation of discourse power and the intensified circulation of crafts in the commercial markets.

The literature on artisanal traditions in Morocco is vast and extensive (Cf. Ibish 1980; Amahan and Cambazard-Amahan 1999; Chikaoui 2002; Gaultier-Kurhan 2003; Buob 2009; Pieprzak 2010). It is a domain well studied in the French scholarship since the establishment of the Protectorate to understand the local craft industries for the purpose of economic development in a colonial framework. In recent years, Irbouh (2005) studied the impact of colonialism and the ways in which the craftspeople were turned into a subordinate labour force that served the interest of the colonial state, and how the standard of French visual arts was implemented in the process of weakening the power of the local guilds. However, the scope of these studies was limited to the cultural politics of colonialism, without attention for the identification processes of the artisans in relation to wider socio-cultural transformation.

As the study of work-based identities among the artisans is a theme little explored in the current anthropological literature on Morocco, the present study attempts to fill

in the gap in the analysis of everyday practice in the post-colonial localities by focusing on the processes of identification in the Amazigh work communities. By doing so I shall highlight the contradictions of discourse practice through an ethnographic description of the actors' complex experiences of hesitation, non-participation, resistance and agreement as ever-lasting processes of repetition and reconstruction.

1.3 Conceptual Tools

1.3.1 Work, Agencies and Identities

Every social being has a life of multiplicity and each social context creates shifting realities, in which the agents can become discontinuous and contradictory. Practice in daily life is more fluid than linear, since decisions, actors, plans and issues go through ever-changing processes whereby meanings and identities are reconstructed. While we should take into careful consideration the dialectic relationship between the structural constraints of society and agents discussed by Bourdieu (1977; 1990) and De Certeau (1984), we must explore the transforming aspect of the cultural, historical and political construction of agencies and identities in the local context.

In particular, taking into account the vital function of work in human activities, work could become the central focus in the analysis of social practice. Émile Durkheim undertook a pioneering study on work in industrialised capitalist society, in which he discussed the relationship between the division of labour and social inequality (1893). Later on, a significant amount of anthropological and historical research has been done on how the division of labour and control over labour processes are linked to social relations within the workplace and to the workers' places of origin (Cf. Mintz 1960; Wallman 1979; Burawoy 1979; Nash 1979b; 1989; 2008; Applebaum 1984a; 1984b; 1992; Gamst 1995; Kocka 2010). However, these previous researchers were inclined to emphasise the labour relations accompanying the spread of capitalism, such as worker and management relations or labour movement, and they gave little attention to the work itself performed by migrants as social practice.

In this research, I argue that the everyday practice at work cannot be reduced to the system, but is a human action involving complex processes of cultural hybridisation in the course of the social participation of the acting agents. The concept of 'work' itself is highly contested in different cultures; hence it is not easy to give a precise definition. In southeastern Morocco, Tamazight language speakers have a general concept

of work, *lkhdemt* (Tamazight), or *khedma* (Arabic), with a very broad connotation. In a strict definition *lkhdemt*/*khedma* used to mean 'clean' work at office or school which does not include physical labour. However, in daily conversations the terms are used to indicate whatever income generating activities, as opposed to *shughl* or *shughl lbit*, which means housework. More precisely, there are terms such as *tawwri*, meaning manual labour, and *tammara*, which indicates physically stressful labour. In my research, the term 'work' generally refers to the local notions of *lkhdemt* and *khedma*, which include the human activities designed to achieve or produce something, but exclude the domain of *shughl*. It is not my intention to create a binary opposition between industrial and non-industrial work, or to draw a sharp definition referring to specific types of work. Instead I use the term in a broader sense to focus on work primarily as a human action and not as part of a institutional, technical or ecological system, for the purpose of highlighting the practical context of the local artisans' identification processes. As said before, I intend to look at the changing nature of work under the impact of globalisation, its political relevance and cultural meaning from the daily experience of the local Ayt Khebbash artisans.

In order to analyse the processes of work as on-going identification processes, I shall adopt the 'communities of practice' model (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998; Wenger and Snyder 2000; Wenger and McDermott 2002) which sees 'participation' at work as a central focus of practice. This is because, according to Lave and Wenger, cognition and communication in, and with, the social world are situated in the historical development of on-going activity (1991: 51). They stress the socially negotiated character of meaning and the concerned character of the thoughts and actions of persons-in-activity, claiming that learning, thinking and knowing are 'relations among people in activity in, with and arising from the socially and culturally structured world' (Lave and Wenger 1991: 50-51). In short, the world is socially constituted by the objective forms and systems of activity on the one hand, and agent's 'subjective' and 'intersubjective' understandings of them on the other (Lave and Wenger 1991: 47-58). Therefore, participation is based on situated negotiation and re-negotiation of meaning in the world, which indicates that understanding and experience are in constant interaction.

As Lave and Wenger focused attention on the ways in which participation is an evolving, continuously renewed set of relations, they cite the apprenticeship among the artisans as a typical example of participation in the communities of practice, wherein

the actors acquire practical knowledge through imitating and learning the necessary techniques (Lave and Wenger 1991; Lave 2011). They call this learning process 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave and Wenger 1991), for the newcomers are first given a legitimate but peripheral position as a learner in the *atelier*, and through this process of participation in the communities of practice they progressively move to the centre to become a skilled artisan.[9]

In my present research, the term 'community' refers to the conceptual definition of Lave and Wenger's 'communities of practice' (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). The significance of this community model lies in its conception as a mode of activity sustained by people's participation, which is far from the traditional sociological notion of 'community' that shares a common culture in a substantial manner. The communities of practice do not have institutional boundaries, but create different kinds of boundaries through a 'repertoire' of manner, ways of thinking, professional language, etc. (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). Hence, this model highlights the complicated relationship between institutional boundaries and community boundaries, which is crucially important in the understanding of the complexities of social interactions.

In the analysis of the Ayt Khebbash artisans' apprenticeship in fossil sculpting, the 'community of practice' model shall be critically adopted in order to shed light on the ways in which people's practice are organised and transformed through 'mutual engagement' and 'negotiation'. In this context, 'identity' can be defined as the image and position of the self that the acting agents build within the communities of practice. Wenger discusses identity in terms of the relationship between 'identification', which coheres to the membership consciousness within the communities, and 'negotiability' which generates various meanings through the activities (Wenger 1998: 197-202). This notion of identification depicts the individuals within and outside the communities as negotiating the 'ownership of meaning' whilst immersed in the dynamic process of identification (Wenger 1998: 207). This dynamism is heightened, as the notion of legitimate peripheral participation implies, at the peripheries of the communities. However, Wenger does not discuss the identification processes of the agents which are influenced, defined and restricted by external forces. His notion of

9 For a critique concerning the application of the concept 'legitimate peripheral participation' to contemporary workplaces in advanced industrial societies and to the institutional environments in which people work, see Fuller, Hodkinson, et.al. 2005.

the communities of practice is limited in a sense that it presupposes homogeneity within and outside the communities in the processes of identification.

In discussing the identification processes of the Ayt Khebbash artisans through their apprenticeship in fossil sculpting, engagement in barite/lead mining and construction labour, the notions of 'dis-identification', 'marginality' and 'non-participation' presented by Diane Hodges (1998) also become crucial. This is because, contrary to Wenger's community model, the identification processes involve complicated interactions with the historically situated self, which cannot be reduced to a simple process of negotiation. As discussed by Hodges (1998), participation in the communities can be a challenge under the pressure of a hegemonic system, such as the bureaucratic complications which hinder the artisans in obtaining authorisations for mine exploitation. In the case of apprenticeship in fossil sculpting, I present the examples of physically handicapped artisans and those who are unable to become *mʕallem*-s (skilled artisans), and by so doing I shall argue that the notion of dis-identification implies the processes of 'multiplicious identifications' (Hodges 1998) through experiences of conflict, contradiction and exclusion.

1.3.2 Discourse Practice – Traditionalisation

Stuart Hall states that the social construction of the identification process involves the articulation between discourse power and the 'subjects' who can speak to it (1996: 1-17). In contrast to Bourdieu (1977; 1987 [1979]; 1990) who assumes *habitus* as rather generative, the theoretical paradigm of the identification process proposed by Foucault (1975; 1979), Laclau (1990) and Hall (1996), suggests the reality of confrontation between people's practice and the powerful force of discourse practice. In the context of my research, I shall use the term 'discourse practice' to indicate the ideologies and power relations involved in discourse. In discourse analysis, language is the primal domain of ideology which connects and restricts the agents with/from the social world. The ritualistic repetition of specific political and capitalist ideologies through social media and foreign business ventures has seemingly established consistent values in rural Morocco under the discourse power of the modern West. The European imposition of scientific values and consumer tastes on fossil crafts is one example of this. However, as Butler (1993) contends, we should not ignore the fact that under the restriction of discourse power, the self can de-construct the speech to emerge as a renewed political agency.

Therefore, I argue that the identification processes of the Ayt Khebbash artisans are not solely constructed through participation and non-participation, but also through practice within the power relations. For instance, in the course of the struggle for their rights over the tribal territory in Kudyet Draoua, which I shall discuss in chapter four, the Ayt Khebbash artisans formulate and reformulate a sense of belonging to their tribal roots, but this identification process is intricately connected to the very real social and administrative pressure from the local government or other ethnic groups they face on an everyday basis. This relationship between discourse power and multiplicious process of identifications of the Ayt Khebbash artisans shall be highlighted through observation of traditionalisation in their daily practice.

I understand 'tradition' here not as a bounded and authentic cultural element, but instead as a process in which every person and group makes an effort to give a specific quality to the elements of culture that establish a continuity with the past. According to Hymes, who first introduced the concept of 'traditionalisation', people selectively endow certain aspects of their experience with ascribed meaning and label them as 'traditional', in order to elevate them to a special status (1975). It often becomes an obligation for the group to repeat the practice to perform their identity and meet the requirements of that group (Gilman 2004). In other words, 'tradition' is invented so as to create continuity between the past and present, through repetition and rhetorical associations (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Handler and Linnekin 1984). One of the examples is the changing patterns of marriage in the village Tafraoute, which I shall discuss in chapter three. Before the establishment of Sidi Ali Commune and the first communal election in 1992, inter-clan marriage was a common practice among the Ayt Khebbash tribal members. However, the electoral rivalries divided the population in two groups, one consisting of Irjdaln and Ayt Amar clans, against the Ayt Taghla clan on the other side, and inter-marriage between the two groups has become less common. In other words, the political rivalries born out of the modern electoral system created duality within the village, a 'tradition' that did not exist before when the inter-clan conflicts were resolved by the *amghar* (tribal chief).

Likewise, the local belief system and practices are changing in the course of the country's modernisation process and the meanings of 'tradition' have been transformed in the context of rural-urban and inter-rural exodus. However, this seemingly contradictory aspect of the identification processes should not be reduced to the binary opposition of tradition versus modernity. My present ethnography of identification focuses

on the multiplicious ways in which people respond to these binary oppositions and contradictions of discourse practice. Faced with the complexities of secular existence in the towns and villages, how do the Ayt Khebbash artisans create new meanings in everyday life against the discourse power of state and world capitalism? In what ways can the practice of traditionalisation can be a weapon in their multiplicious process of identifications?

1.3.3 Articulation of Communities, Local Politics and Development Organisations

Drawing on local histories and evidence of social change in the Tafilalet, I shall discuss here the relevance of communities, local values and beliefs in the context of wider social and political processes. The issue of migration is closely linked to development and modernisation, since there are specific organisations pursuing specific project objectives, such as foreign companies, local government or development organisations. As Crawford argues, the projects launched by these organisations as well as government policies of 'modernised' education have greatly affected the local people's cultural perception of 'self' (2006: 285-296). The expansion of roads and other infrastructure enabled the government to become more involved in the remote villages, and increasing numbers of previously nomadic Tamazight-speaking people came into contact with Arabic-speaking inhabitants of the towns, where the interaction between local politics, development projects and language became prevalent.[10]

In Tafraoute, the social change can be observed after the implementation of rural development projects, resulting in the recent establishment of three associations promoting local income-generating activities – fossil sculpting, carpet weaving and cumin/henna production. The villagers' interaction with NGO agents and tourists transformed their consciousness of the need for political and social manipulations from their side, in defence of their economic interests. Nowadays most of the once monolingual Tamazight-speaking villagers speak and understand *darija* (Moroccan Arabic), the dominant public language in Morocco. Also, those Ayt Khebbash people who abandoned village life quickly acquired fluent command of Moroccan Arabic in Rissani for dealing with a 'modern' work environment in the national society. A limited number of Ayt Khebbash male villagers and town inhabitants also learnt to speak French, in order to sell the fossil crafts to foreigners or to work in tourism. This was

10 On the subject of changes in linguistic patterns associated with change in regional and communal identity in relation to political manipulation, see Holes 2005.

one of the necessities for them to assimilate into the dominant culture in the process of being absorbed into the labour market. Simultaneously, however, they display a strong sense of solidarity and belief in their tribal roots, such as preserving their rituals, networking and speaking Tamazight within their linguistic group.

In the light of this expanding movement and social interaction, how can we understand the transformation of Moroccan identities described as 'contextualised self'(Geertz 1983), the 'selves' who gain definition from associate relations they are imputed to have with the society that surrounds them? How can the Moroccan conception of 'person' among the Tamazight-speaking artisans be implicitly or explicitly defined and re-defined in their articulation with larger processes of social change?

1.4 Fieldwork

The fieldwork of anthropologists is similar to the profession of paparazzi, and is also comparable to a 'parasite', in a sense that the task involves a long-term infiltration inside the local cultural context. Our result is entirely dependent on the acceptance, generosity, and openness of the local people whom we decided to be our target without their initial consent – we dwell on the body of others. Furthermore, the understanding of local affairs does not come from short-term formal interviews, but is fostered through experiences in daily interactions, small incidents we encounter, and through becoming a quasi-kin member of a local family. The days I spent in a family house receiving and observing the guests coming by, the time I spent strolling around the *suq* and sitting long hours in the café talking to all kinds of local men, my own apprenticeship in the artisan's *ateliers*, and the ways in which I socialised with this alien but familiar environment are the composing element of my story of the Ayt Khebbash artisans in Rissani and Tafraoute.

My initial encounter with Morocco dates back to 1998, when I took a short break away from my study in Britain. This ten-days-encounter with the robust landscape reflected against the glaring sun struck me to believe that I belonged to this place; despite all adversities that followed, I needed to come back to Morocco again.

My almost religious adherence to Morocco and Islamic culture led me to the belated second visit in 2007. Following several visits during 2008, I found a job as a study skills teacher at al-Akhawayn University in Ifrane in January 2009 – thanks to the generous support of the director of the university library and former dean of the Faculty of

Humanities, Professor Abdelhamid Lotfi - which enabled me to stay in Morocco and learn about local culture. Besides teaching, I audited a course of 'Berber Culture and History', which was basically a brief introduction to this domain of research. Since I wished to find time to learn Arabic and see the reality of Moroccan life, I quit my job and moved to Casablanca in June 2010, and worked for an NGO that provided support to street children. One of my aims of being in Casablanca was to start learning Arabic, so I took a three months language course in Moroccan Arabic and a two months course in Standard Arabic. Simultaneously I had a part time job at the newly founded Lebanese International University in Casablanca (which abruptly closed down in 2012 due to their business failure). I had spoken to the then-dean about whether I had a possibility to be affiliated to a Moroccan university in order to carry out a research project. Thankfully, he put me into contact with Professor Abderrahmane Lakhsassi of the Moroccan Centre for Social Sciences at Hassan II University - Aïn Chock. This institutional local belonging enabled me to carry out my fieldwork in the Tafilalet and to stay in Morocco until January 2014.

I moved to Rissani in October 2011 and rented a house of a local Tamazight-speaking family. My landlady Fadma was originally from Taouz and was an Ayt Khebbash member, her husband was from Mecissi, and had an Ayt Isfoul tribal background. Together they had four sons, plus an elder son from Fadma's previous marriage, who worked as a primary school teacher in Erfoud. Two of the couple's sons had left Rissani five years earlier to work in Spain, and one was studying Arabic language at the university of Ar-Rachidia. Since the husband was a driver and construction manager, he was often travelling elsewhere in Morocco. On a daily basis the house was inhabited only by Fadma and her youngest son, who was handicapped and went to a special class in the primary school nearby. I quickly became the best friend and family member of Fadma's household, and she often told me I was like a daughter that she wanted but never had. Likewise this family house had become the base of my fieldwork in Rissani until the end of my stay.

The Secretary General of the Rissani Municipality, Dr. Benchad El Alaoui, had kindly introduced me to the artisanal tradition of Rissani, and told me that most of the Amazigh population in Rissani worked in the domain of fossil sculpting and barite mining. Since my objective was to study Amazigh culture, I decided to focus on the fossil and mineral artisans. The fact that Rissani was an Arabised town inhabited by diverse ethnic and linguistic groups also lent special depth to the research, rather than

the towns exclusively inhabited by Tamazight-speaking groups. Upon my request Dr. El Alaoui introduced me to the then-president of the association for fossils and minerals. Thereafter, my participant observation started from the family and friends of this artisan, extending to the village of Tafraoute and the Riffian city Nador, which was a major destination for labour migration of the local artisans.

My stay in Rissani lasted from October 2011 to January 2014. Of the two years and four months I was based in Rissani, sixteen months were exclusively devoted to fieldwork. Much of the time outside this period was spent writing up the draft chapters in my room, making several trips to Casablanca and Rabat, including a one-month stay for a Standard Arabic course over Ramadan in 2012.

During the first three months in Rissani I was preparing myself to settle down, such as buying furniture and extending my local contacts, as well as travelling to Casablanca and Rabat to obtain necessary documents to write the geographical and historical background chapter. The only fieldwork I managed to do at that time was a survey among the fossil artisans concerning the parliamentary election. I briefly went back to Japan over the New Year period, and then in February 2013 got Youssef Hasnaoui to agree to work with me as my assistant. Simultaneously, I found a neighbour who kindly offered me to teach the Tamazight language. I had no former training in Tamazight, so I had to learn the language along the way during my stay in Rissani.

The ways in which I collected my field data was largely by conducting informal interviews in the *suq* ('market') café, family house, fossil *atelier* ('workshop') and in the streets of Rissani, Erfoud, Kudyet Draoua and Tafraoute, which I did on my own and sometimes with Youssef. Youssef was from a local Ayt Khebbash family, fluent in Tamazight, Arabic and French, with a law degree from Moulay Ismail University in Meknès. At the beginning my knowledge of Tamazight was rudimentary, so the primary language I used in interviews and conversations was Moroccan Arabic, except for some family information gathered in Tafraoute which was in Tamazight. French was only useful when talking to educated people, since most of the Ayt Khebbash artisans were unschooled and spoke only Tamazight and Moroccan Arabic. The in-depth interviews done with Youssef were largely in Tamazight. He first transcribed the numerous recordings in Tamazight and then translated them into French. The selected data used in this dissertation were translated into English by myself from the transcribed Tamazight/Arabic and French translations.

In addition to the informal interviews I used quantitative methods, such as surveying ethnic and family background, year of migration and domestic economy, by randomly visiting a selected number of houses in Rissani, Kudyet Draoua and Tafraoute. Furthermore, during the first half of 2013 I took an apprenticeship in a fossil *atelier* in the Moqaouama Quarter, approximately three days per week, as a method of participant observation. I washed the small fossil objects and polished them with sand paper in order to experience and understand how the artisans engage in everyday work and commercial transactions. A substantial part of chapter four is dedicated to the analysis of apprenticeship. However, in the years 2012 and 2013, there were virtually no new apprentices wishing to start learning the skills in fossil sculpting, so my data are based upon the interviews of the artisans' past experience of learning, together with my own lengthy observation in the *ateliers*.

In order to collect data for the chapter on the village, I made five visits to Tafraoute during my stay in Rissani, on three of which I was accompanied by my assistant Youssef. Each of the trips took approximately five to seven days, and we stayed in the family house of one of the *muqaddam*-s[11] of Tafraoute *tiwjdidt* (new Tafraoute quarter). I have chosen this village firstly because it was the home of a great number of Ayt Khebbash artisans in Rissani, and secondly because of the influence of Tafraoute-born business people on local politics. The most intensive research was done from September to November 2012, when we gathered information concerning kinship, migration, history and politics of the village. We investigated the dealings behind the communal election, drew the genealogy maps of selected families, found out the ways in which the existing associations were established, and visited forty households to understand the situation of labour migration. And most importantly, we recorded several life histories of the villagers and the legend of the Ayt Khebbash tribe told by a man aged over 90 years old, on the rocky hilltop off the road connecting Tafraoute *tiwjdidt* and *taqdimt* (new and old Tafraoute quarters).

For the data concerning labour migration outside of Ar-Rachidia Province, I travelled to Nador in January 2014, accompanied by two Rissani friends who had experience working there. I had already spoken to several Ayt Khebbash men in Rissani who had been in Nador, since so many of the fossil and barite artisans in Rissani had temporarily earned money in construction work, and the great majority seemed to have spent

11 *Muqaddam* is one of the village-level local representatives of the Ministry of the Interior who reports to the *qayd* (meaning overall authority, the commune-level government representative).

some part of their lives in Nador. Therefore, it was important for me to observe the Ayt Khebbash artisans' connections to the outside world and how this linkage was changing over time. Since my time was limited, I concentrated on talking to a few construction workers who were family members of my Rissani friends and visited their homes and workplaces, as well as going to the offices of the Province and the Employment Service (*Délégation d'Emploi*) to get a general overview of labour migration and economy of Nador.

1.5 Thesis Overview

The dissertation consists of the present introduction, four main chapters and a conclusion. The main chapters are divided according to space – Tafilalet (Ar-Rachidia Province), the village Tafraoute, the town Rissani, and *reḥla* (open space). In Tamazight language, *reḥla* means 'living as a nomad in an open space', and the term *irḥaln* (nomads) derives from this word, meaning 'people of the open space' or 'people in transit'. This is the environment wherein the Ayt Khebbash artisans vindicate the tribal identities and their means of dealing with their contradictions of life. The geographical space will be intersected by historical time, on regional, national and transnational levels, while outlining the mix of expulsions and compulsions in the life-long mobility of the people who continue to be *irḥaln*.

The second chapter 'Orientation to the Tafilalet' situates the life of Ayt Khebbash artisans in the geographic and historic milieu of the Tafilalet, Ar-Rachidia Province region. I shall first discuss the demographic and economic profile of the Ar-Rachidia Province, followed by an analysis of the ethnic diversity and heterogeneity the inhabitants, and how that relates to the identities of Ayt Khebbash artisans living in an increasingly globalising environment of the towns. Drawing on an example of the parliamentary elections which took place in October 2011, I will argue that the personal identities of the Ayt Khebbash people are strongly attached to their tribes and to their home villages, and for this very reason a regional specificity is crucial in the analysis of their identification processes.

The third chapter, 'Imagining *tamazirt* ('homeland')' is an ethnography of Tafraoute, the home village of many of the Rissani fossil and mineral artisans. I document the ways in which the village was formed in the 1960s when the nomadic population started to move in, by quoting local myths and legends. Through the analysis of various life histories of villagers, I will demonstrate that the village of Tafraoute is a modern

creation, produced out of drought and as a result of the local resistance against the French military advance, followed by the border dispute with Algeria in the 1970s. Furthermore, I shall examine the villagers' external links and marriage patterns and the impact of labour out-migration on the domestic economy, by citing the cases of a family who engages in fossil and barite works. I will also observe the impact of specific development projects and local politics, focusing on bureaucratic exactions for various things and services, how these are viewed in different ways by different people, and how they relate to changes in cultural perception of 'self' among the villagers.

The fourth chapter, 'Sculpting the town', focuses on the Rissani artisans' apprenticeship and commercialisation of fossil crafts. I shall first examine the development of fossil extraction and sculpting work in Rissani in the context of environmental factors and the local history of French colonial rule, in order to situate the practice of Ayt Khebbash men in the historical process of herding, agriculture and mining works. Second, I shall analyse the apprenticeship of fossil artisans as a process of participation in the social practice, by using the notion of 'legitimate peripheral participation' within the 'communities of practice' developed by Lave and Wenger (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). This is to demonstrate that work is a social practice wherein acting agents acquire new knowledge, techniques and lifestyles, in the multiple processes of confrontations and contradictions. Third, I will examine the ways in which fossil sculpting and its commercialisation were affected by the global economic crisis and state policies, and how artisans responded in a continuous effort to create their new 'traditions'. I will then look at another community of practice they engage in outside of work, which is strongly related to their tribal identity and historical memories from the nomadic past: the community of political protest formed in opposition to the local government's sales of tribal land. By so doing I shall highlight the ways in which the practice of everyday life, which is strongly attached to tribal identities, opens up new possibilities for understanding social identifications among the Ayt Khebbash artisans of the region.

In the fifth chapter, 'Exploring *reḥla*', I shall look at the Ayt Khebbash fossil artisans' shift to barite mining in response to the world economic crisis. As the demand for barite in the international market started to rise in the 2000s, increasing numbers of fossil artisans started to move into the mining sector, either temporarily or permanently. There are several artisans who had previous experience working in mines of lead, zinc and barite, as mine exploration has been closely related to central state policy since

the French Protectorate period; for those it was a return to their previous work. Also, I will examine the historical process and current situation of labour migration to large cities, discussing the example of construction work in Nador. This is to demonstrate the transformation of the local connections to the external world. Through analysis of the migrant artisans' creation and re-creation of 'traditional' time and space, I intend to highlight the ways in which they experience participation and non-participation in shifting social landscapes, within the ever-complex process of migration, modernisation and globalisation.

In the sixth and final chapter, I will draw some conclusions trying to answer the questions I asked in this introduction. By discussing the concrete example of the ongoing social change and its effect on the local artisans' consciousness and household economy, I shall point out the reality of their continuous double dependency: as a wage labourer within/around the commercial enterprises and as a national of a third-world nation in the capitalist market. I will conclude that the local Ayt Khebbash artisans counteract and redefine this vulnerability in their own terms and by their own initiative, using their home-grown forces of control in everyday practice.

Chapter 2 – Orientation to the Tafilalet: Geographical and Historical Background

2.1 Introduction

The geographical term 'Tafilalet' for the southeast of Morocco originally derives from the name of a small oasis at the parting point of the River Rheris and Ziz, and was often applied to the stretches of the Ziz Valley by the colonial ethnographers. In a broader sense Tafilalet includes the whole administrative region of the Ar-Rachidia Province, although the local notion and usage of the term varies considerably (Mezzine 1987: 21). In this dissertation the term Tafilalet (greater Tafilalet) indicates the Ar-Rachidia Province, and the Tafilalet oasis in the Ziz Valley (map 2-1). The Tafilalet oasis is approximately fifteen km wide and about twenty km in length, enclosed by the Ḥamada du Guir to the east, where the reliefs of the hills are replaced by the *ḥamada*, the rocky desert plain mainly consisting of calcium, with scarce vegetation only suited for modest grazing of goats and dromedaries. To the south lie the golden dunes of Erg Chebbi, and to the west is Jbel Sarhro and Ougnat consisting of granites and limestones, which descends progressively to the east until the Jbel Ougnat completely disappears into the alluvial plains.

One of the dominant environmental characteristics of the Tafilalet is the extreme dryness of the weather. The annual winter snowfall in the eastern High Atlas Mountains, Jbel Ayachi, and on the basin of the lakes provides the vital source of water for the sedentary agriculture in the valleys of upper Rheris and upper Ziz. The eastern High Atlas accounts for approximately two-thirds of the entire High Atlas chain and is considerably drier in climate compared to the rest. The precipitation is received as annual snow falls from November to April, which provides the water reserve for the entire year. Apart from the sedentary agriculture, pastoral activities constitute the primary occupation for the population of the eastern High Atlas. Further in the south, the amount of precipitation drops considerably: in the oasis town of Erfoud it can be no more than seventy mm/year and in Rissani as little as 59 mm/year. Because of this scarcity of water the agriculture of southeastern Morocco would not have been possible without irrigation technology. Both rivers Rheris and Ziz consistently receive water provision from the melting snow of the eastern High Atlas, which flows as an avenue of greenery for more than a hundred km through pre-Saharan Morocco. This has made the oasis of Tafilalet a connecting point to Sudanic Africa through trans-Saharan trade since its medieval days of Sijilmassa.

This chapter situates the life of the Ayt Khebbash artisans in the geographic, demographic and historical context of the Ar-Rachidia Province region. I shall first look at the demographic and economic characteristics of Ar-Rachidia Province with particular reference to Rissani, a pre-Saharan town on the southern edge of the Tafilalet where I carried out my fieldwork on the Ayt Khebbash artisans. By so doing I will highlight the regional characteristics of the Tafilalet as well as providing a background for the subsequent discussion on the impact of labour migration on the traditional patterns of socio-ethnic stratification. Secondly, by drawing on the past anthropological and historical literature, I shall discuss the ethnic diversity and heterogeneity of the inhabitants of region and the question of what the historically formulated *taqbilt* (Tamazight for tribe, *qabila* in Arabic) mean to the work-based identification of the Ayt Khebbash artisans in towns of modern days.

It is a controversial question in anthropological literature whether 'tribe' – 'segmentary tribal organisation' in particular – did exist or do continue to matter in the analysis of Moroccan society (Cf. Geertz 1979; Munson Jr. 1981; 1989; 1993; Rosen 1984; Gellner and Munson Jr. 1995; Hart 1996; Eickelman 2002; Pouillon 2005). In the context of the Tafilalet, I will argue that the notion of 'tribe' is locally reformulated in the process of personal identification through work, and in the collective endeavour to control the resources. As I shall discuss later in chapter four by citing the example of a land dispute in the Erfoud region, the Ayt Khebbash artisans' sense of tribal affiliations is not only loaded with symbolic meanings, but also related to material pursuits, such as the claim of property rights based on tribal units. As Eickelman argues, the local concepts of tribal identities emerge primarily through social actions and are therefore constantly shifting, and not formally articulated in ordinary situations (2002). However, the practical notion of tribe and other concepts of social identities, such as linguistic categorisation, implicitly and explicitly structure the Ayt Khebbash people's everyday activities, such as their claims to property rights, electoral choices, work and marriages.

In the final section of this chapter, I shall conclude that the transformation of the personal identities of the Ayt Khebbash artisans is inseparable from the post-independence centralised state-building process and the expansion of the world capitalist economy. The social identities of the inhabitants of the Tafilalet remain strongly attached to their 'tribes', and these shifting tribal identities continue to influence and shape the local notion of 'Amazigh-ness' and the ways in which they attach mean-

ing to different identifications, such as being a 'Muslim' and a 'Moroccan citizen'. The practice of everyday work is a component of social identification within the tribal milieu of the Tafilalet, by which the locals conceive of their relationship to others and acknowledge their group boundaries.

2.1 Demographic and Economic Profile

Ross Dunn claimed that if southeastern Morocco had a capital, it was the Tafilalet oasis[12] (1977: 84). Once a centre of long-distance trans-Saharan trade and the homeland of the Alaouite monarchy, the fertile oasis has supported a relatively dense population, and it serves as a meeting point for numerous tribes, clans and *qṣar* communities in order to strengthen their otherwise fragmented social relations. In the Ar-Rachidia Province there are more than four hundred *qṣur* nestled amidst the palm groves, forming a picturesque chain running alongside the valleys of the Ziz, Rheris and Guir rivers. A *qṣar* (pl. *qṣur*) was a fort-like structure of housing found in the Tafilalet, as well as in many other parts of the pre-Saharan area. Inside, the residents occupied two or three story mud brick dwellings, which formed a walled village with a single entrance. Each *qṣar* functioned as an economic unit whose members shared various resources, though the arable land was privately owned.[13] The majority of the pre-Saharan population lived in the oases, except for those herding transhumant or nomadic groups. They were grouped in patrilineages depending on social class (Dunn 1977: 44). Dunn estimates the settled population of this region in the 1960s at approximately 67,000, living in 164 *qṣur* (1977: 84).

Due to its economic and defensive functions, the *qṣar* played an important political role, such as providing a venue for the annual election of the *amghar* (tribal chief), and the *qṣur* often allied with one another or with the Amazigh nomads living in the surrounding area, depending on their interests. They also collectively owned the canals and the rights to water. The majority of the *qṣur* was inhabited by the Arabs while the lower Ziz Valley and the plains by Ayt Aṭṭa and Ayt Izdig Amazigh nomads; this is

12 For an overview of publication on the Tafilalet region and the oasis, see: Wahīhī, Saʿīd. 2011. *Tīfilālit al-kubrā. Muqāraba bībliyūghrāfiyya*. Al-Ribāṭ: Jāmiʿa Muḥammad al-khāmis-al-Swīsī, Manshūrāt al-maʿhad al-jāmiʿī li-l-baḥth al-ʿilmī.

13 For an analysis of a *qṣar* dwelling population in pre-Saharan societies, see also: Moussaoui, Abderrahmane. 2002. Espace et sacré au Sahara : Ksour et oasis du sud-ouest algérien. Paris : CNRS ; Nijst, A. L. M. T., et. al. 1973. Living on the Edge of the Sahara: A Study of Traditional Forms of Habitation and Types of Settlement in Morocco. The Hague: Government publ. office.

Map 2-1 Ar-Rachidia Province

why the Tafilalet oasis is called 'the Arab island in a Berber sea'.

The harshness of the climatic conditions of the Tafilalet can be characterised by its extremely low precipitation, high temperature, and *sherqi*, the dust storms. The *sherqi* blows mainly in spring and summer, but may occur any time during the year, lasting for few days to several weeks. The scorching summer heat can reach 49 degrees Celsius and the winter can be as cold as five degrees below zero.

Despite the harsh natural conditions, agriculture remains an important economic activity for the inhabitants. The northern extent of the Sahara closely follows the northern escarpments of the *ḥamada* (stony desert) that encircles the Tafilalet, which marks the southern limit where river water of a non-Saharan origin is utilised for agriculture (Joly 1953: 70). The human settlement emerged in this relatively inhospitable environment by development of irrigation technologies counter-acting the problems of drought and flood. The Ziz is a river that frequently dries up during the year, but it can also flood as a result of rapid snow melt during spring. In the past, the flooding of the Ziz disrupted human life while replenishing the water table of the date palms,

before the construction of a dam at the provincial capital Ar-Rachidia (previously known as *Qṣar es-Suq*) in 1971. It was estimated in 2009 that 60,000 out of 7.7 million hectares in the zone under the responsibility of ORMVA/TF (Office Regionale de Mise en Valeur Agricole/Tafilalet) in Ar-Rachidia Province were irrigated (*Office Regionale de Mise en Valeur Agricole/Tafilalet* 2009). The rest consisted of access road (45 per cent) and uncultivated land (52 per cent).

We shall now look at the topographical and geological characteristics of the entire Ar-Rachidia Province. The province covers 60,000 square km, and is geographically bound by the province of Figuig to the east, Beni Mellal, Azilal, Zagora, Ouarzazate and Tinerhir[14] to the west, Khenifra and Boulemane to the north and by the Algerian border to the south. The province shows a physiographic feature of inclining, from the northeastern edge at an altitude of 2000 m down to southeastern edge at an elevation of 600 m. According to this topography, the province can be divided into three areas: 1) mountainous area, 2) intermediate area, and 3) plain (desert/oasis) area, as shown below.

Table 2-1: The main agricultural activities in the three areas in Ar-Rachidia Province

Category	Altitude	Main water source	Agricultural Activities
Mountainous Area	About 2000 m in mountainous	Rivers and springs	Fruit trees mainly apple, cereals and fodder crops are planted and livestock like sheep and goat is raised by pastoralists.
Intermediate Area	1000~1200m in Plateau	Inlet from the traditional canal and pumping	Various production systems for date, olive, cereals, beans, fodder crops and vegetables.
Plain (Desert and Oasis) Area	600~800m in plain	Flooding water and Khettara irrigation system	Dates are mainly cultivated, also cereals, fodder crops, vegetables, cumin and henna.

Source: *The Study on the Project of Rural Development in Errachidia Province in the Kingdom of Morocco*. December 2009. Tokyo: Sanyu Consultants Inc. Padeco.

14 As mentioned in chapter one, Tinerhir Province was created to the west of Ar-Rachidia Province by the administrative division of 2009. However, for historical and cultural reasons I conventionally use the provincial boundaries (map 2-1) before 2009 to highlight the regional integrity of the study area.

The mountainous area include higher Ziz, Guir and Rheris valleys (High Atlas), the intermediate area is the middle Ziz, Guir and Rheris (Ḥamada du Guir), and the plain area consists of the plain of Tafilalet, lower Ziz and Todra (High Algero-Morocccan plateau). Located in the north of the Anti Atlas, from Ar-Rachidia to Boudnib, the morpho-structural units are varied: anticlinal arch excavated by water erosion of Precambrian and Archaean formations, Apalachian relief stretches through the mountainous zone where alternate monoclinical crests of Archaen formations (Jbel Bani, Jbel Ziz) and depressions (plains of Drâa, arch structure of Daya-el-Maïder, Zemmoul) form pine-plained multi-folded structure of the Jurassic era (Lias and Dogger epochs). At the southern edge of Atlas highland, the plateau-piedmonts zone with altitudes of 1500-2000 m is located, consisting of limestones and granites. Further southwards lies the intermediate zone, where the vast plateaus meet the western edge of the Sahara, bordered with crests. Thereby a stony stretch of desert called *kem kem* (Continental intercalaire) extends into Daoura and also to the Drâa (Cf. Joly 1962; *The Study on the Project of Rural Development in Errachidia Province in the Kingdom of Morocco* 2009).

The plain zone, which is the focus of my research area, is located further south: the major part of the Tafilalet region including the towns of Erfoud and Rissani, where the greatest oasis of Morocco extends over thirty km from north to south, and five to sixteen km from east to west. The black desert plateau called *ḥamada,* consisting of tertiary deposits and calcareous Mesozoic stone, extends both southwards and northwards from this area. The desert zone is situated in the southern-most fringe of the Ar-Rachidia Province. There, an undulated plateau with an altitude of 900 m rises, where both sand dunes and rocky *ḥamada* expand in between synclinal remnant hills of the Ordovician and Silurian eras, characterised by sandstone formations, containing horn-shaped fossils and trilobites.[15]

Rissani is located at the southern edge of the oasis, serving as a connecting point across the Sahara into Sudanic Africa. The market town is known for various artisanal traditions, which gives the impression that the inhabitants are living on commercial and artisanal works at first sight. However, agriculture also remains important to the overall economy of the town. According to the statistics of Rissani, administered by the Municipality Moulay Ali Cherif which includes 133 nearby *qṣur*, about 40 per cent

15 The geological data derives from unpublished sources and interviews obtained from my visits to the Division des Affaires Economiques, Province d'Ar-Rachidia and the Ministère de l'Energie et des Mines, Direction Régionale de Meknès in Ar-Rachidia.

of the active population engages in agriculture, 50 per cent in commercial activities, and 10 per cent in artisanal work (*Monografia baladia moulay ali cherif* , 2009). The agricultural terrain covers 13,000 hectares with 11,650 hectares irrigated land, producing the necessary wheat and vegetables – epitomising the fact that without irrigation, there is no agriculture in the Tafilalet. Another major resource contributing to the local economy are the date palms owned by the Ministry of Finance (*ʔarādi makhzaniyya*, meaning government-owned land). The palm grove in the Tafilalet is renowned to be the largest in the world, and more than 1,400,000 palm trees produce high-quality dates, while the tree itself is used for basket weaving crafts. Cultivation of the palm grove is the backbone of all agricultural activities in the Tafilalet, for it creates a micro-climate which helps the growth of other plants and crops such as olive trees, wheat, vegetables and forage (Tilioua 2003). Although a new industrial zone is planned, so far there are no industries in Rissani. The local economy is dependent on agriculture, animal herding, petty commerce and some artisanal work such as leather crafts, woodwork, basket weaving, pottery and fossil sculpting.

The artisanal sector is considered an important economic activity in Ar-Rachidia Province as a whole, following agriculture, commerce and tourism. Although the exact number of people informally engaged in artisanal work is hard to obtain,[16] it is estimated by the Artisanal Delegation that approximately 4700 people in the province are working in this sector, and 2608 people are in the process of apprenticeship (2009). Major artisanal activities include traditional weaving (women), traditional and modern sewing (men and women), fossil/marble processing (men only), traditional tanning (men only), carpentry (men only) and iron processing (men only) (table 2-2).

In particular, fossil/marble processing is considered to be a regional specialty of Ar-Rachidia. Fossil artisans are concentrated in Rissani and Erfoud, the towns located close to the layers and quarries of fossilised stones. The items produced in this sector vary, such as tables, boxes, ashtrays, washbasins, plates and other decorative items. There are both handicrafts and semi-industrial production modes, but the majority falls into the former category. Of the finished and semi-finished products, 90 per cent is sold abroad in the international market, such as in France, Spain, the US, Germany, Switzerland, the UK and Canada.

16 This is because most of the *ateliers* and shops of the artisans in Ar-Rachidia Province are not registered.

Due to the lack of an industrial sector, labour out-migration to urban centres is an important factor influencing the economy of the Ar-Rachidia Province region. The population census of 2004 states 195,440 urban inhabitants and 361,172 rural inhabitants, showing the steady rural-urban population movement when compared to the census of 1994 and 1982.

Table 2-3: Population of Ar-Rachidia Province

		1982		1994		2004
	Milieu	Population	Population	Household	Population	Household
Ar-Rachidia	Urban	64,731	155,280	25,537	195,440	35,528
	Rural	356,476	366,837	50,941	361,172	53,866
	Total	421,207	522,117	76,478	556,612	89,394
Total region Meknès-Tafilalet	Urban	626,225	965,682	187,157	1,202,487	254,963
	Rural	885,821	938,108	142,134	939,040	156,485
	Total	1,512,046	1,903,790	329,291	2,141,527	411,448

Source : *Monographie de la Région Meknès-Tafilalet*. Novembre 2006. Royaume du Maroc Haut Commissariat au Plan, Direction Régionale de Meknès.

The demographic dynamic is, as a matter of fact, a reflection of the lack of substantial economic activity, especially with regard to the absence of employment opportunities for the youth. Despite the economic potential of the rich mineral resources, the mining sector is not providing sufficient income for the local population, and the extreme climatic conditions of the mountainous and pre-Saharan area allow very limited agricultural activity.

In terms of urbanisation rate, Ar-Rachidia Province shows a modestly higher rate than that of national average. With the formation of several small towns and cities, the urbanisation rate surpassed 50.7 per cent in 1994 and reached 58 per cent in 2008, in contrast to the national average of 51.4 per cent and 57 per cent. Except for the provincial capital city Ar-Rachidia (77,000 inhabitants in 2004, with an annual population growth rate of 2.1 per cent), the other towns in the province are small with approximately 20,000 to 50,000 inhabitants, with an average population growth rate of 2.6 per cent (*Objectifs du millénaire pour le développement, rapport régional 2009*

Meknès-Tafilalet). Although there are no records kept, the inter-rural migration rate began to accelerate in the 1970s due to droughts and the openings of work opportunities in artisanal and other sectors in the smaller towns.

Apart from inter-rural migration, rural-urban migration was usually limited to domestic destinations, such as Nador, Tanger, Casablanca and Agadir, since the Ar-Rachidia migrants played the role of replacing the out-going labour force to Europe from large Moroccan cities.[17] An exact record of labour out-migration from the Tafilalet to other regions does not exist, yet one can see the effect on the lives in the *qṣur* of the oasis. According to interviews and observations in Douar Sifa, Qṣar Tabassamt (villages near Rissani) and Tafraoute (a village southwest of Taouz), most of the young male inhabitants are unemployed, living on occasional income from construction or mechanical work, while performing agricultural work in the fields. The domestic income is dependent on the family members working in large Moroccan cities or abroad. From the household furnishings and equipment one can see the family's living standard in the villages, depending on the income of the family members working as labour migrants elsewhere.

In addition to migration, there are also other societal factors altering the human landscape of the Tafilalet: the liberation of the *Ḥaratin* (sing. *Ḥartani*) class, which we also find in the other oases of the pre-Saharan region, and the population growth, which is a common feature country-wide (Miller 1995). The term Ḥaratin designates a category of dark-skinned agriculturalists living in the oases of Morocco, Mauritania and Algeria, who are not descendants of slaves. It is a marked characteristic of the oasis societies in the northern Sahara, that the subordinate status of people called Ḥaratin has been incorporated into the elaborate social hierarchy which includes traditional literati and religious authorities, nomadic or transhumant population groups, freemen and slaves (Ensel 1999). The 'institutionalised racism' and inequality was the foundation of the agricultural system in the oasis (De Haas 2010: 16-18). Due to their marginal social status, Ḥaratin historically played an important role in performing hard agricultural labour in the Tafilalet oasis, such as ploughing, weeding, cultivating and harvesting, as well as keeping the *khettara* system, the subterranean irrigation system maintained by annual deepening and re-levelling (Miller 1995: 62). The system

17 For the theme of international migration in socio-cultural change in the oasis societies, see De Haas, Hein. 2003. *Migration and Development in Southern Morocco: The Disparate Socio-Economic Impacts of Out-Migration on the Todgha Oasis Valley*. Ph.D. thesis. Nijmegen: Radboud University.

Table 2-2: Number of people employed in artisanal sector in Ar-Rachidia Province

Number by Cercle

Cercle	Number of craftsmen / women	Number of apprentice / trainees
Ar-Rachidia	1,545	903
Erfoud	906	569
Rissani	907	430
Rich	444	275
Goulmima	750	404
Assoul	129	26
Imilchil	52	1
Total	**4,733**	**2,608**

Number by domain

Domain	Number of craftsmen/women	Number of apprentice/trainees
Textile	605	612
Wood	1,216	608
Leather	242	70
Metals	402	303
Food	251	148
Building	432	165
Plants	127	-
Clay/pottery	335	131
Others	1,123	571
Total	**4,733**	**2,608**

Source: Secrétariat d'Etat du Ministre du Tourisme et de l'Artisanat charge de l'Artisanat, Delegation Provinciale, Ar-Rachidia 2011.

was developed to extract underground water far from the *qṣur* and fields by digging wells, connected by a tunnel sometimes as long as ten km. This *khettara* system has been mostly abandoned by now. Furthermore, another task once performed by the Ḥaratin was the pollination of the date palms, which was essential to life in the oasis where the cultivation of the date palms is one of the central human activities. As a result of the liberation of the Ḥaratin group from agricultural labour, the number of date palms is in decline, apart from the effect of a virus called *bayyuḍ*, which severely affects the palm trees.

In the Tafilalet the population growth rate is much lower than the Moroccan average national rate. According to Miller, the Rissani population grew from 2844 in 1960 to 3565 in 1971 to 4985 in 1982 (1995: 63). The statistics of the Municipality Moulay Ali Cherif show that the Rissani population in 1994 reached 18,450, and numbered 20,469 a decade later (2009: 21). The population growth in Rissani and the development of new housing quarters stretching outside the confines of the *qṣur* are the visible indicators of the effect in Ar-Rachidia Province.

2.3 The Inhabitants of the Tafilalet

The Tafilalet is culturally and ethnically diverse. There were *qṣar* dwellers and transhumant groups, among which social class distinction was much more pronounced in the former category. The most important groups are: the Shorfa (sing. Sherif), an Arabic speaking population who claim to be descendants of the prophet Mohammed, the Murabiṭin, who insist they are the descendants of reputed *marabout* (holy men), the Aḥrar, literally meaning 'freemen' (non-Shorfa, non-Murabiṭin Arabs), Igramen (Amazigh Murabiṭin), the Amazigh groups such as Ayt Morghad (Goulmima region), the Ayt Izdig (Rich area), the Ayt Aṭṭa (Aoufouss to Merzouga area), the Jews (until

mid-1960s), the dark-skinned Ḥaratin who worked as agriculturists and date-harvesters in the oasis, and the non-Ḥaratin black population Ismkhan, who were brought from Sudan during the epoch of trans-Saharan trade as slaves by the Amazigh captors.

2.3.1 Languages

Moroccan colloquial Arabic is the general spoken public language in most major towns in the Tafilalet, such as Ar-Rachidia, Erfoud and Rissani, except for the towns where the majority of inhabitants are Amazigh, such as Alnif, Goulmima and Tinejdad. The major Berber language in the Tafilalet is called Tamazight, which is a variant also spoken in the plains around Meknès and Fès, in the Middle Atlas and the central High Atlas. In Morocco there are two other main Berber language variants, Tarifit in the Rif, Tashelhit in the western High Atlas and the Sous Valley. Most Imazighen living in or around the Arabophone towns are bilingual in Tamazight and Moroccan Arabic. Few of them are literate in standard Arabic or French, depending on their educational level.

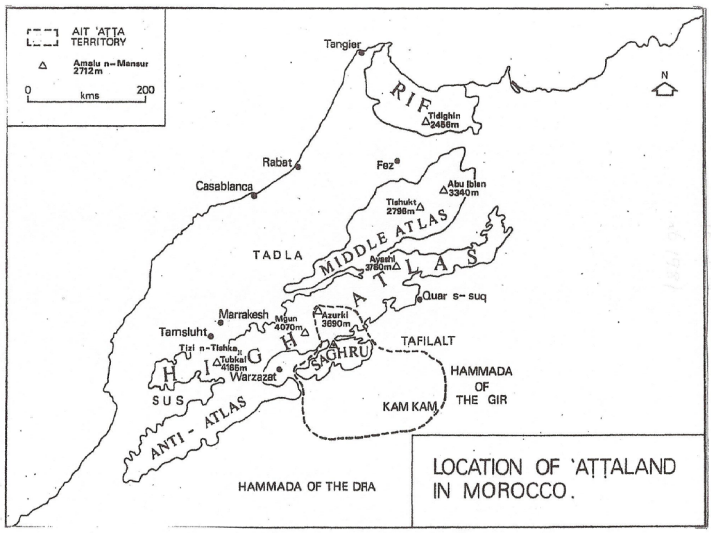
2.3.2 Shorfa and Murabiṭin

The two Arabic-speaking groups, Shorfa and Murabiṭin, held the most prestigious positions in the oasis communities, and respect for them is still prominent at present days. The Shorfa were believed to be descendants from the prophet Mohammed, through the lines of Moulay Idris of Fès or Moulay Ali Cherif of Rissani. The latter, who was the founder of the Alaouite dynasty which came to power in the seventeenth century, is the major group in the Tafilalet. Most of the Shorfa are found in the *qṣur* of Wadi Ifli district. Murabiṭin were believed to be the descendants of holy men who were revered because of their spiritual powers as 'friends of God'. The existence of such holy men is a common feature among the Moroccan tribes, who form lineages or clans apart from the tribal lay community. The members of the holy man's lineage were responsible for maintaining his tomb and arbitrating conflicts, both inside and outside the tribe, for which they received offerings from their followers (Gellner 1969). Occasionally they built the religious centres called *zawiya*, which played a role as a sanctuary. The groups most well known in the Tafilalet are the Aoulad Sidi al-Ghazi, the Aoulad Abu Ziyan of Kendasa in the lower Guir Valley, and the Aoulad Sidi Moulay Karzaz of the Saoura Valley (Dunn 1977: 43). Both the Shorfa and Murabiṭin used to be strictly endogamous, occasionally a son was permitted to marry outside the group, but a daughter never was, in order to maintain the holy descent line.

2.3.3 Ayt Aṭṭa and Ayt Khebbash

The majority of the Amazigh nomads living in and around the Tafilalet oasis belong to the largest tribal group of southern Morocco called Ayt Aṭṭa. They are distributed over the area of Beni Mellal, Ouarzazate and Ar-Rachidia, historically living a transhumant or nomadic life and speaking the Tamazight language of the Middle and Central High Atlas and of the pre-Saharan area. They remained independent from the central authority until the French 'pacified' the region, after an intense warfare in the Jbel Sarhro and in the central High Atlas in 1933. According to the detailed ethnography on the Ayt Aṭṭa political organisation by David Hart, members of the group are believed to be descendants from a single common ancestor called Dadda Aṭṭa (grandfather Aṭṭa), who was born in the Sarhro and was killed in a battle against a group of northwestern Saharan Arabs (Hart 1984: 4-5). The commonly known legend tells that Dadda Aṭṭa had forty sons, who lost the battle against the neighbouring tribe Ayt Seddrat. All the sons were killed by the Ayt Seddrat, but they left 39 grandsons and one granddaughter (Hart 1981: 11-15). By the sixteenth century, the grandsons of Dadda Aṭṭa spread all across southeastern Morocco, building up their territorial base while engaging in occasional warfare against the surrounding Amazigh tribes and the sedentary Arabs. The legends as such provide justification for the tribe's organisational cohesion, described by Hart (1981; 1984) and Gellner (1979) as a 'segmentary lineage system'.

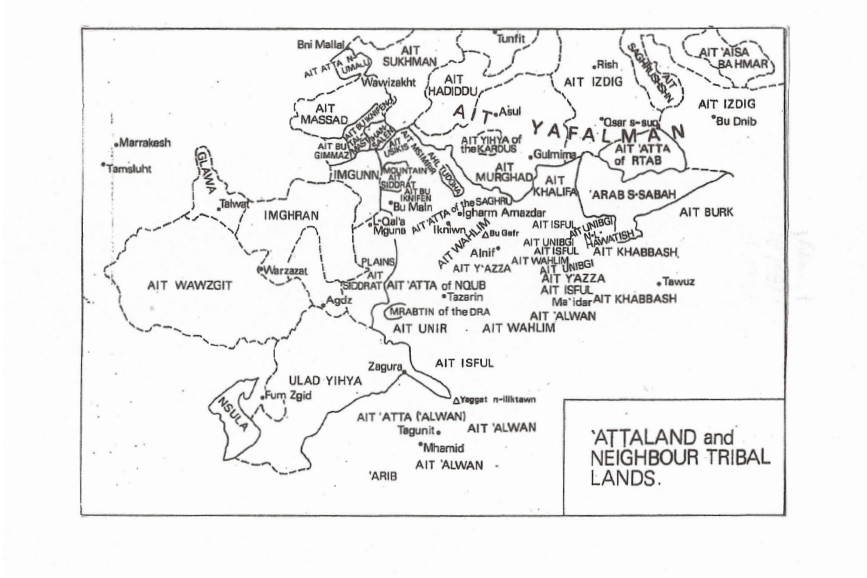
The Ayt Aṭṭa tribespeople, especially their fraction Ayt Khebbash, are the focus group in my dissertation, for they constitute the majority in the domains of fossil sculpting and mining in Rissani. In the 1960s, detailed analysis of the segmentary tribal organisation of Ayt Aṭṭa was done by David Hart (1981; 1984), followed by the historical research on colonialism by Ross Dunn (1972; 1977), the study on the Ayt Aṭṭa revolt by Spillman (1936) which focuses on the Drâa Valley rather than the Tafilalet, the archaeological research on Sijilmassa by Lightfoot and Miller (1996; Miller 2001), and the geographical and anthropological study of the Tafilalet region by Fernand Joly (1951; 1953; 1962). Recent ethnographies include the study on Ayt Khebbash concept of honour by Marie-Luce Gélard (2003; 2008; 2010), and the historical research on art and gender roles of the Ayt Khebbash women by Cynthia Becker (2000; 2006). Although the Ayt Aṭṭa tribe and southeastern Morocco have been studied in this literature, the socio-economic transformation of the region and the effect of global capitalism and migration on the everyday lives of people have, surprisingly, been neglected. The research of Claude Lefébure (1986) on the Ayt Khebbash people's involvement in lead



Map 2-2 Location of Aṭṭaland in Morocco. Source: Hart, David (1981).

mining during the Protectorate period gives insight into the previously nomadic population's gradual sedentarisation in towns from a historical viewpoint, but he did not study the identification process of the Ayt Khebbash miners from the perspective of work. In my present research, I look at the transforming life of Ayt Khebbash people through the lens of work practice, and by following their life-long travel routes from animal herding in the Aṭṭa lands to mining, sculpting and brick-laying in the new world of the commodified labour market.

The Ayt Aṭṭa land, as the 'roots' of Ayt Khebbash artisans, is bound by the Drâa Valley to the west, the Dadès, the Todra and Rheris valleys to the north, and the Ziz Valley to the east (map 2-2). Most of the Ayt Aṭṭa and its fractions were pastoral transhumants, but also possessed a *qṣar* or a house. They were normally situated in the economic centre of their region for usage as a market, or as regular lodgings. They put up their tents near the *qṣar* where they housed their slaves. Many of the Ayt Aṭṭa preferred to live in their black tents for four to five months during the year, a few metres away from the *qṣar* (Spillman 1936: 63). The tents were made of wool or camel hair, black in colour and designed to protect them from summer heat and winter chill. Spillman, who observed the Ayt Aṭṭa tribe in the 1930s, notes that their diet was extremely frugal, consisting of flat bread, dates, dried figs, milk and sugar (1936). It was rare for them to

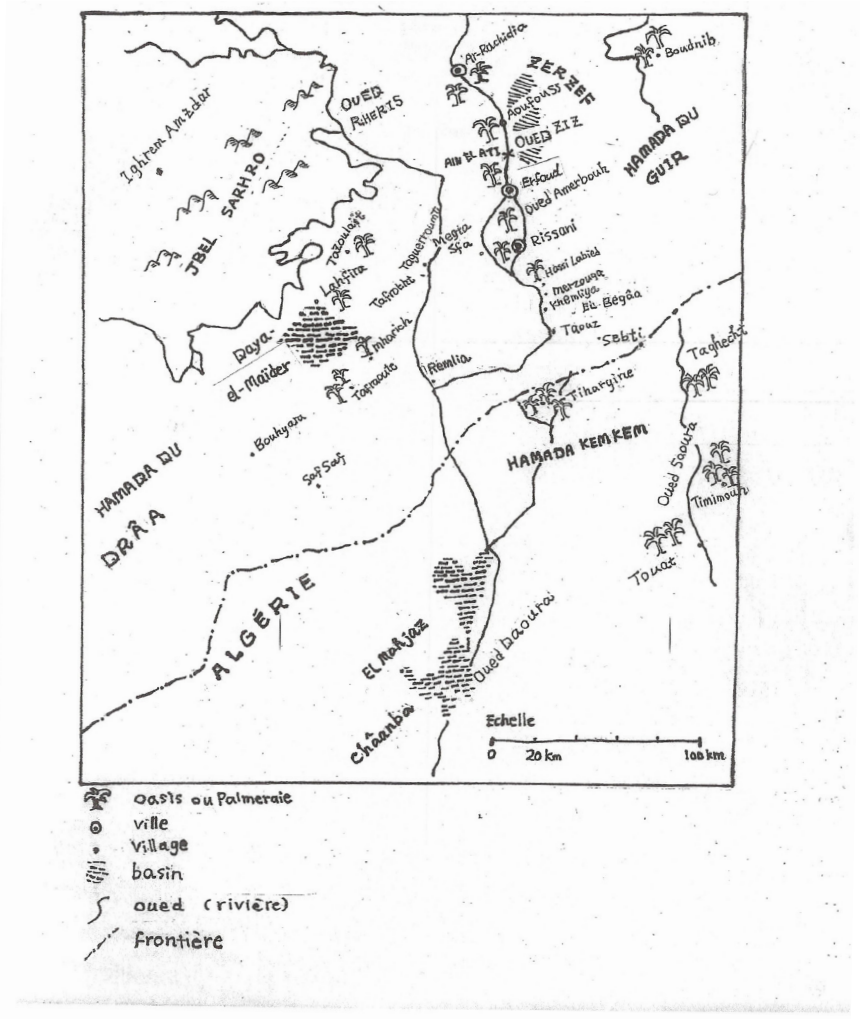


Map 2-3 Aṭṭaland and neighbour tribal lands. Source: Hart, David (1981).

eat much of lamb, goat, beef or camel meat, and the consumption of wheat or coffee was considered a luxury, and even fruits and vegetables didn't have much place in their diet (Spillman 1936: 67).

Joly (1951) claimed that the Ayt Khebbash subsistence was different from the other Ayt Aṭṭa, that they were nomadic year round and herded camels. However, this overarching assertion is highly questionable, since the 'Ayt Khebbash' group itself is large and diverse, with different Ayt Aṭṭa clans and black population joining them and becoming members in the course of time. My own observation is that the Ayt Khebbash consisted of both nomadic and transhumant groups, but to avoid confusion, I shall use the all-inclusive and generic term 'nomad' and 'nomadic' to address the Ayt Khebbash people's mobile, animal-herding lifestyle.

The Ayt Aṭṭa expanded to the north in search of pastures for their sheep, but their deployment to the Drâa Valley and to the Tafilalet were said to be a result of requests from the Ḥaratin, the black population of the oasis who engaged in agricultural labour and date-palm cultivation, who were seeking protection (*tamurt*) against the chronic attacks of other tribal groups (Hart 1984: 4-7). The Ayt Aṭṭa was the dominant group in the Tafilalet and in the Drâa, and they established patron-client relationships



Map 2-4 Desert and oases of Ar-Rachidia region

with the other groups which fell under their protection, such as the Jews, the Ḥaratin, non-Ḥaratin blacks, and the Arab tribes. For example, the Jews could be bought and sold by the members of Ayt Aṭṭa lineages or clans in the Drâa Valley until the French 'pacification' in 1933. The relationship was described as 'serfdom', rather than slavery, because of the dependence of the clients on those protectors (Hart 1983; Ensel 1999). A Jewish client could move into his patron's apartment in the *qṣar*, by paying annual rent in gifts, and sometimes contributed to his patron's reception or ammunition ex-

penses These patron-client relations continued until the mass out-migration of the Jews later in the 1960s (Hart 1984: 125-127).

According to Hart, the Ayt Aṭṭa had several Arab tribal client groups, such as the Beni Mhammad in the Tafilalet and the Drâa, and the Aarib south of the Drâa bend (1984: 144-146). Arabophone tribes were present across the plains of eastern Morocco, the lower Guir valley, and the Zousfana-Saoura corridor (map 2-3). The major tribes in this zone were the Bani Gil and Aoulad al-Nasir on the high plains, the Daoui Mani and the Aoulad Jarir in the lower Guir and Zousfana areas, and some other small groups in the mountains of the *qṣur* (Dunn 1977: 36). For example, the eastern Rguibat paid a fixed annual toll of fifteen dromedaries to the Ayt Khebbash, in order to have access to the Drâa and Tafilalet markets, at least until the 1930s (Hart 1984: 144). The social structure of the Beni Mhammad in the Tafilalet resembled that of the Ḥaratin, such as the institutional borrowings from the Ayt Aṭṭa, the annual election of tribal chiefs by rotation and collective oaths and so forth (Hart 1984: 144-146). They even referred to themselves as *brabar* ('Berbers'), not as *ʕarab*, a fact which reflects their clientship and dependence upon the Ayt Aṭṭa.

2.3.4 The 'African' Ethnic Category

The monograph (2009) of the Municipality Moulay Ali Cherif states that Rissani is inhabited by three 'races' (*al-ʕunṣur*): Amazigh (Ayt Aṭṭa), Arab (Shorfa) and African. Within Morocco, the term 'African' is often used to indicate the dark-skinned people, whether Moroccans or sub-Saharan Africans. In the Tafilalet, 'African' means either Ḥaratin or Ismkhan. The Arab and Amazigh categories also consist of diverse ethnic backgrounds, for there are both black and white Arabs and Imazighen (Cf. De Haas 2010). In this case, skin colour also matters in the social hierarchy; people prefer to marry with lighter skinned groups. Otherwise, there are some Ḥaratin who bought the 'Shorfa' title and consider themselves as 'Arab-Shorfa', and there are Ismkhan who adopted the surnames of their former Amazigh captors/employers, speaking Tamazight and considering themselves Amazigh in a broad sense. A number of Ismkhan became Amazigh – as is the case for some of the Ayt Khebbash – upon their marriage or at the time when they obtained freedom from their former Amazigh captors/employers, by going through a ritual of animal sacrifice. When being asked about their *taqbilt/qabila* (tribe), their usual response was that they were '*gnawa*' (meaning the people who perform *gnawa* music or people from Guinée), Ayt Khebbash or African. The term Ismkhan is not considered an insult, in contrast to the term Ḥaratin. Even

though, contrary to Cynthia Becker's claim that the term Ismkhan is used for the positive construction of group identity (2002; 2006), they are not always proud to call themselves as such, especially in the case of Rissani inhabitants. The majority of those I talked to preferred to identify themselves as members of Ayt Khebbash group.

Some of the non-*Shorfa* and non-*Murabiṭin* Arabic speaking people call themselves *Aḥrar* (freemen), in order to distinguish themselves from Ḥaratin or 'slaves'. In addition, about five per-cent of the population of Rissani's modern quarter consists of Dwiminiaa, the Algerian dialect Arabic speaking agriculturalists who originated from Oujda, Bouârfa, Boudnib and western Algeria. Overall, the population is divided in two linguistic categories, although language does not constitute an impermeable ethnic boundary: Arabic speaking groups and Tamazight/Arabic bilingual groups. The Rissani inhabitants primarily recognise their ethnic boundaries according to this linguistic divide, and skin colour. This means that each group is endogamous in principle within the three *al-ʕunṣur*: Arab, Amazigh and 'African' (black) categories.

2.3.5 Ḥaratin

As mentioned before, the Ḥaratin are considered to be among the oldest inhabitants in southeastern Morocco. They were dispersed throughout the Tafilalet and usually worked as labourers for the sedentary groups of higher social status, and for Ayt Aṭṭa and Daoui Mani. Some of the Ḥaratin owned property and were independent farmers. The Ḥaratin as manual labourers serving others were situated at the bottom of the social hierarchy, and these classifications still hold meaning even after their liberation in the 1930s upon arrival of the French. The term Ḥaratin derives from an Arabic word *ḥart*, meaning crops such as wheat, vegetables and dates, and Ḥaratin indicates the people who harvest them. Although the term itself does not have negative connotations, calling someone a *Ḥartani* is considered as an insult in present days.

Several of the *qṣur* in the region had only Ḥaratin inhabitants, and they were mostly bilingual in both Arabic and Tamazight, since they needed to communicate with their protectors who were both Arab and Amazigh nomads (Hart 1984; Ensel 1999). The Ḥaratin were said to be 'tribeless', for they did not have any tribal or clan system, which was considered one of the reasons of their low social status.[18] For this reason

18 For the analysis of social hierarchy in the North African oasis, see also Villasante-de Beauvais, Mariella. 1996. *Groupes serviles au Sahara: Approche comparative* à *partir du cas des arabophones de Mauritanie*.

they traditionally fell under the jurisdiction of the Sharia rather than that of customary law (Hart 1984: 130).

According to Jacques-Meunié, who studied the Ktaoua-Mhamid area in the Drâa Valley, the Ayt Aṭṭa and the Ḥaratin formed a patron-client relationship called *raʕaya* (Arabic term equivalent for *tamurt* in Tamazight, meaning 'to pasture', 'to guard' and 'to protect)' (1982). From the side of Ayt Aṭṭa, this relationship entailed offering protection against depredation of other tribes. The Ḥaratin in return worked for them as agricultural labourers and date-harvesters, while also receiving one-fifth of the total harvest. In the Drâa Valley, unlike in the Tafilalet, the Ayt Aṭṭa had almost monopolised the region as protectors so that this system of *raʕaya* was highly institutionalised (Hart 1984: 133-135). In contrast, the *qṣur* under control of Ayt Aṭṭa were limited in the Tafilalet oasis, since other groups such as Ayt Morghad and Ayt Izdig were also prominent. Furtheremore, the *qṣur* in the region were densely populated and the people were to some extent capable of defending themselves rather than totally relying on the protectors.

2.3.6 Ismkhan

The other dark-skinned population of the Tafilalet is the *Ismkhan* (a Tamazight word meaning 'slave'). They still allow themselves to be called this way until present, albeit discreetly, claiming their ancestry to Bilal, an Abyssinian slave freed by the Prophet's uncle in the seventh century. On certain occasions, if not on an everyday basis, they distinguish themselves as an 'ethnic group' who possess a special healing power, demonstrated during the annual *Ismkhan* festival in Khemliya, a desert village on the south of Merzouga (map 2-4).

Unlike the Ḥaratin, who represent an ancient population of the Tafilalet, the Ismkhan have arrived recently from the Sudan, mostly two or three generations ago. They are descendants of the enslaved people brought during the trans-Saharan trade, usually having darker skins than the Ḥaratin, since very little intermarriage has occurred with the other ethnic groups. The trade itself traces its origin to the ninth century, when material goods such as gold, ivory, ostrich eggs, salt and clothes, as well as human beings were exchanged across the Sahara.[19] The enslaved black Africans in Morocco

Paris : CNRS ; Marouf, Nadir. 1980. *Lecture de l'espace oasien*. Paris : Sindbad.

19 According to Lloyd Cabot Briggs, in the middle ages the Europeans were also active in developing

typically worked as domestic servants, cooks and concubines with wealthy families (Lydon 2009). Slavery was abolished by the French upon the establishment of the protectorate in 1912, but it continued in the Tafilalet until finally the French took control of the region in 1933.

Prior to the French arrival, the Ayt Aṭṭa usually guarded the caravans leaving and returning to the Tafilalet, and they enslaved Sudanic Africans en route. The captured Ismkhan worked for the Ayt Aṭṭa families, for example by herding flocks or fetching fire wood and water, and depended financially on their captors. They adopted the Tamazight language and Ayt Aṭṭa customs and belief systems. Upon the age of marriage they were often freed and entered into a patron-client relationship, which required payment from the annual harvest or animal sacrifice. After the French conquest of the region in 1933, the Ayt Aṭṭa were no longer in control of their territories and the slavery and patron-client relationships started to dissolve. The Ismkhan were freed but left without means for survival, so most of them started working in the lead mine of Mfis run by the French (Becker 2002: 103). They formed the village Khemliya near the mines, and a large number of Ismkhan started to live together for the first time. Becker states that it was at this time they invented their collective identity as 'slaves' who claim to be the descendants of Bilal and who possess a healing power through rituals (2002). Nowadays, however, very few Ismkhan remain in Khemliya since most of them left for towns such as Rissani and Erfoud to find salaried jobs. In fact half of the population in the village of Khemliya consists of white Imazighen, contrary to the popular image projected by the *gnawa* music festival that it is a '*gnawa* village' exclusively inhabited by a black ethnic group.

2.3.7 Jews

The Jews used to be a major ethnic group that co-habited with others in the Tafilalet. The oasis had a Jewish population of about six thousand in the late nineteenth century, and their largest quarter (*mellaḥ*) was in a *qṣar* of Rissani. In the whole of Morocco the Jewish groups were to be found in secluded quarters, the *mellaḥ*, where their social and cultural activities were confined to their groups. The poorer Jews lived in mountains and towns, mostly as small-scale artisans and shopkeepers, or hawkers or

commercial relations with the people of south-western Sahara and the western Sudan. In the early fifteenth century the Portuguese under the leadership of Prince Henry the Navigator established commercial outposts in the Western Sahara (Spanish Sahara), and began to extend their trading operations southward and by 1448 built up a flourishing slave trade all along the Atlantic coast of West Africa. See Briggs 1967.

peddlers (Pennell 2000: 34-35). The wealthy Jews, descendants of the Sephardim families who were expelled from Spain in the late fifteenth century, were rabbinical and group leaders who became influential bankers and merchants with a strong connection to the political power (Deshen 1989: 8).[20] In the Tafilalet, the Jewish settlement existed since the eighth century A.D. According to Jacques-Meunié, however, the Jews lived in great numbers in the east bank of the Ziz River as early as in the second century B.C., and they were the wealthiest inhabitants of the region (1982). The Jews lived inside the *qṣur* of the Tafilalet, and the Jewish merchants played an important role in the medieval trans-Saharan trade of Sijilmassa, when they controlled much of the trade in Sudanic commodities between the desert posts on the fringes of the Sahara and the Mediterranean coast (Levtzion 1982: 255).

Several documents illustrate that during the Middle Ages the Jewish network based on kinship and religious ties operated between the northern edge of the Sahara and the Mediterranean (Goitein 1967; Jacques-Meunié 1982; Levtzion 1982). In collaboration with the Kharijites, they established a complementary trade system of which the Jews controlled the routes between Almeria, Fès and Sijilmassa along one route and Fustat, Qayraouan and Sijilmassa on another route. The Kharijites controlled the route from the southern Maghrib across the Sahara to Tadmekka and Awdaghust. Together they created '*la civilisation citadine*' (Jacques-Meunié 1982), which prospered from the ninth to eleventh century. The Jewish community of Sijilmassa maintained close relationship with Qayraouan, Fustat and even as far as Baghdad, contributing to Sijilmassa's reputation as a centre of learning with highly educated and cultured inhabitants. Although the economic prosperity of the Jews was threatened during the epochs of Almoravid and Almohad conquests, they continued the commercial activities to the nineteenth century well after the destruction of Sijilmassa in the sixteenth century. During the French protectorate period the Jewish communities scattered over the Ziz, Rheris and Guir valleys, while mixing with the other Arab and Amazigh inhabitants of the region. However, most of the Jewish population left for Casablanca, Israel, France and Canada by mid-1960s, and the *mellaḥ* in the towns are now inhabited by Arab and Amazigh families.

20 Most of the Moroccan Jews emigrated to Israel, France, the US and Canada during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict of the 1950-60s. However, neither King Mohammed V nor the leadership of Istiqlal Party were anti-Jewish. Many Moroccan Jews supported the Istiqlal Party and there was a Jewish minister, Léon Benzaquen, in the first government, and a number of Jews with university degrees played a major role in the state administration. See Pennell 2000, Ch.8 and Levy 2005, p.140-145.

2.3.8 Social Hierarchy

As is clear by now, the Tafilalet inhabitants are ethnically diverse, with a marked social hierarchy permeating the entire social structure. Despite the historical evidence of inter-marriages between different ethnic groups, it is not the norm in post-independence Tafilalet, especially when it comes to the inhabitants whose lives are confined to the region. Although people who have access to urban centres such as Casablanca and Rabat, or have family members living abroad, tend to be less concerned about the partner's ethnic background, there are strong tendencies to marry within each of the three 'official' ethnic groups, and certain occupational characteristics correspond to the groups. For instance, since the liberation of the Ḥaratin group from agricultural labour in the early 1930s, many of them turned to the occupation of butchers, welders and mechanics in Rissani, jobs others generally avoid to choose. Also, many have migrated out of the Tafilalet to cities such as Casablanca (Miller 1995). Therefore, one can find that all the butchers and most mechanics are Ḥaratin by origin, while a great majority of fossil sculptors, taxi drivers and the flock sellers in the *suq* are Imazighen who started to move into Rissani from the late 1970s in search of cash income. On the other hand, the rest of the artisans, merchants, civil servants and politicians are mainly white Arabs, who usually dominate the more privileged positions in the townscape. The hierarchical social structure of the past, according to the ethnic and linguistic divides, continues to influence the modern-day occupational differentiation in Rissani, which is further reproduced by endogamous marriages.

The division of labour seen in modern day Tafilalet towns is largely the historical continuation of the past, with the privileged white Arab families at the top of the social strata. The prefix 'Moulay' (equivalent to Sir) is used to address the Arab men from 'noble' (Shorfa) background, and by extension to address unknown people on the street with respect. This is not to claim that social mobility is absent, for a few people from the former Ḥaratin group became school teachers, or presidents and active members of local associations. Several Ayt Khebbash people made a fortune in barite mining or illegal smuggling and became influential in local politics, as I shall discuss later in chapter three. However, it holds true that the Ḥaratin and other dark-skinned groups are still either explicitly or implicitly discriminated against and are generally confined to certain domains of work which others will avoid.

2.4 Historical Background of the Tribal Identity

In this section I turn to the historical background of the tribal organisation and the subsequent development of a collective Amazigh identity in the region. The notion of 'tribe' itself is highly contested, and tribal identity is something that local people, authorities and ethnographers create and use in different contexts for different purposes. In the case of the Ayt Aṭṭa, Ayt Morghad and so forth, 'tribe' may be defined as the group which claims descent from a common ancestor. The identity of the ancestor of the group is sometimes known, with elaborate legends associated, such as in the case of the Ayt Aṭṭa as the descendants of Dadda Aṭṭa, a tribesman who presumably lived in the sixteenth century in the Jbel Sarhro. The groups which are socially and politically dominant often elaborate such legends into ideologies and use them to fix political alliances with members of other tribal groups and to enhance their position vis-à-vis state authorities (Eickelman 2002). In other cases the founder of the tribes could be unknown, members only refer to a legend of venerated holy men. Some of the non-Shorfa, non-Murabiṭin Arabs created the category *Aḥrar* (freemen), to distinguish themselves from Ḥaratin or slaves, although they do not have an explicit 'segmentary' lineage organisation that bonds them together.

Furthermore, in the Tafilalet, people often identify themselves in the idiom of kinship rather than with their place of origin itself. The Arabic speaking tribe Beni Mhammad referred to themselves as 'Berbers' in order to strengthen their relationship to their protectors Ayt Aṭṭa, which was a reflection of the fact that tribal identity was fostered primarily in order to protect the interest of the group. As the recent case of the Ismkhan shows, whether the kinship was real or fictive holds little importance, so far as their claim to be a member of the agnatic group was socially accepted. Based on the local tribal system, they claimed themselves to be descendants from a common ancestor (Bilal), but in fact the group was built upon a toponomy principle. Heterogeneous populations brought from different areas of Sudanic Africa merely came into the same village Khemliya and occupied the territory: that eventually became the basis of the group identity in question. Furthermore, the Ismkhan, especially those who live in towns, consider themselves to be members of the Ayt Khebbash; they are thus integrated into the dominant Tamazight-speaking group who were their former captors and employers. Evidently, group identities based on kinship or fictive ties functioned as a unifying principle to create bonds between people who had common social, economic and political interests. People do not always emphasise their relations to one another through patrilineal descent, but also through the concept of *qa-*

raba (closeness) (Eickelman 2002: 136), which can develop through cooperation with one another, real or fictive kinship and patronage arrangements, and other bonds of mutual interest. This group identity, which can be called 'tribalism', still holds its place in post-independence Morocco, and this sense of affiliation can become more important in the age of labour migration and globalisation.

In post-independence Morocco the influence of tribal groups were dramatically reduced and very few tribes remain acknowledged as political entities. However, the social, economic and to some extent political actions of the inhabitants of the Tafilalet remain strongly 'tribal' in the marriage patterns, occupations and so forth. Tribally organised people inhabited Morocco for centuries. Shoup states that the Arab Sherifian, the Saadian (1554-1659) and the Alaouite dynasties (1666-present) also grew from solid tribal support along with that of some Sufi brotherhoods (2006: 125). The Saadian had support primarily from the Maʕqil Arab tribes in the Drâa Valley, and Jbel Bani of the Anti Atlas, whereas the Alaouite dynasty was backed by both Arab and Berber tribes in the Tafilalet and Angad (Shoup 2006: 125-126). In short, the close collaboration between the Moroccan State and tribal groups has been an important theme throughout the history of the country.

At a linguistic level, the collective Arab/Amazigh consciousness is also prominent in the Tafilalet, not only in areas such as Alnif, Tinejdad and Goulmima, where the majority of the inhabitants are Tamazight speakers, but also in towns of Rissani, Erfoud and Ar-Rachidia, where Moroccan Arabic is the public language. Historically, the Berbers considered themselves as members of a tribe, within an Islamically conceived and permeated world, and not as members of a linguistically defined ethnic group (Gellner and Micaud 1972; Rosen 1972). However, due to the French colonial 'divide-and-rule' policy which forcibly drew a division between Arab/Berber ethnicity, and the influence of recent Amazigh activism in defence of Berber cultural identity, the collective identity as a linguistic group started to uphold its rights in the Tafilalet (Rachik 2005; Hoffman and Miller 2010; Maddy-Weitzman 2011).

Morocco has been inhabited by tribally organised peoples for centuries, and this tribal organisation has changed profoundly throughout the ages. The country was brought under Umayyad control in 705AD, and Shiite and Kharijite Islam became accepted among the Amazigh tribes. The political unity of Islam did not last long, however, for in the 770s Muslim Spain became independent under a refugee prince of the

Umayyads, as well as Tlemcen (Algeria) and northern Morocco, where the arrival of a second refugee from the East in 788 established the Idrisid Dynasty in Fès (Brett and Fentress 1996: 88-89). The Kharijites ruled Tlemcen (to 790) and Sijilmassa in the Tafilalet, and the Ibadiyya established their own government at Tahert in western Algeria. In the meantime, the Imazighen of the south identified themselves with the new religion independent from the imperial government of the original Arab conquerors.

The Islamic influence extended to the principles of state formation, settlement, trade and commercial transactions. Especially the commercial incentives dictated the occupation of southern Morocco, such as the oasis towns in the south and southeast of the High Atlas: Sijilmassa in the Tafilalet, Tamdult in the Anti Atlas Mountains, Igli in the Sous Valley, and Massa on the Atlantic coast south of Agadir. These towns housed many of the Arab-Muslim immigrants from the north, part conquerors and part merchants driven to exploit the silver mines in the Anti Atlas, and most importantly the gold of western Sudan which was brought across the Sahara from Ghana (Brett and Fentress 1996: 90-91). This long distance trade of the Islamic world brought the whole of Morocco into the grasp of Islamic civilisation, supplying the country with new rules, regulations, obligations, permissions and prohibitions. As the Islamic influence was tied to the growth of trade and trade relations, the establishment of Muslim market towns was mostly welcomed and the tribal Imazighen professed their faith to gain admission.

In the Tafilalet, Sijilmassa was founded in the middle of eighth century by Kharijite Zanata Berbers, who forced the population of the area to resettle within its walls. Since the end of the tenth century the Zanatas belonging to the Maghraoua tribe controlled the city, who continued to dominate the western Saharan trade route (Abun-Nasr 1971: 93). The Kharijite kingdom survived on networks of trade with other Kharijite settlements in the North African desert and with Fès, based upon their Islamic ideology. They did not impose strict religious codes to the people, which encouraged the incoming of non-Kharijites as well as Jews.

In 1054 the Almoravides conquered Sijilmassa, who imposed ultra-orthodox Sunni Islam and the Maliki school of law. Even West Africa, like Ghana, connected to Sijilmassa by trade route, became the focus of Islamic conversion by the Almoravides (Miller 2001: 33). Driven by practical interests, the Arabs and Berbers cooperated with each other in Sijilmassa, conducting trade and administering government. The Ḥaratin did

the manual labour and accounted for the majority of the population. The numerous Jews held special positions as traders and merchants in precious metals (Miller 1995: 60). According to Miller, due to the political and spiritual transformations, the Saharan gold trade increased whilst Sijilmassa and the Sudan became components of the loosely united Almoravide empire, and other west African countries such as Takrur (lower Senegal River area) and later the empire of Mali became more involved in the trans-Saharan trade (2001: 33). Because of the rise of these new African economies, which were connected to the north by Almoravides, followed by the Almohads and the Merinides, Sijilmassa's economic and spiritual independence declined.

The unifying thread between different peoples throughout Morocco became, as seen in the case of Sijilmassa, the religion: orthodox Sunnite Islam of the Maliki rite. The dynastic political power, as with the current ruling Alaouite family, became centred in the Sultan who was allegedly a descendant of the Prophet Mohammed. The Sultan controlled a court and ministers, and deployed an army which also served as a tax collecting force (Hart 1972: 27-28). However, the territory called *blad l-siba* (land of dissidence), largely mountainous area and the desert, remained entirely tribal, and the free people seldom if ever paid taxes to the central government. The tribesmen maintained their own forms of socio-political organisations with little or no interference from the state – the Ayt Aṭṭa had never known the authority of the *makhzen* before the French occupation in 1933.

In the tribal regions of Morocco such as the Tafilalet, the linguistic divide between Arabs and Berbers was far less important compared to the relationship between agnatic groups, and such a group seldom acknowledged any unit wider than the tribe itself. In the protectorate period, however, the French colonial policy of state-building enforced the division between two ethnicities, epitomised by the *ḍahir* (royal decree, Standard Arabic: *ẓāhir*) of 1930,[21] commonly known as *ḍahir berbère*, in which they divided Morocco in the so-called 'Arab/Islamic/Urban' Atlantic Plains and the Berber/Tribal/Atlas Mountains. This forced division was based upon the French notion of *le berberisme*, influenced by Robert Montagne and other colonial ethnographers' study of the tribes in southern Morocco, in which they claimed the European/Christian origin of the Berbers, and the Arabs as 'invaders' who imposed Islam upon them. Such

21 The *ḍahir* was based upon the 1914 decree that stated France's intention to retain customary law among the rural tribes, and was intended to regulate the functioning of justice in tribes of Berber custom, who did not always follow Islamic law. See Hoffman 2010.

fabricated myths promoted the tribal identity among the peoples living in the 'Berber' zone to keep them separated from the 'Arab' zone (Maddy-Weitzman 2011).

The Native Policy Council administered Morocco's cities and its tribes by appointing *pasha*-s to urban governorships and designating tribal chiefs as *qayd*-s (meaning overall authority) (Hoisington 2000: 64). Several of the pioneering studies on the Moroccan tribal system were undertaken in this period, including the important work on Moroccan tribal structure and social relationships by Jacques Berque (1955).[22] Also, commissioned by the French *Mission Scientifique*, *La carte des tribus* (The Tribal Map) was published in 1933, which fixed each tribal group to designated geographical areas to create 'official' boundaries (Hart 2000).

The French military progression into the Moroccan *blad l-siba* took time since the establishment of the Protectorate in 1912, for General Hubert Lyautey, the Governor General of Morocco (1912-1916, 1921-1925) had been ordered to send most of his troops to the front in France at the outbreak of World War I (Trout 1969: 241). The Ayt Aṭṭa uprising in the Tafilalet (1918-19) was barely suppressed with the help of the Glaoua *pasha* of Marrakech, El Haj Thami, who acted as the head of the army of 10,000 and crossed the Atlas and marched through the Dadès and Todra valleys up to the Tafilalet, joining the French troops of Boudnib in January 1919 (Trout 1969: 242). Since then the 'pacification' of southeastern Morocco was left to native forces of the *pasha* of Marrakech, an operation which was finally completed by the surrender of the Ayt Aṭṭa tribe after the intense siege of Bou Gafer in Jbel Sarhro in 1933 (Dunn 1972; Hart 1984).

Around that time, the newly introduced *ḍahir* of 1930 designed by Protectorate officials came into force, and much of the communally administered land was confiscated by the government and sold to the French (Vinogradov 1974). In the post independent period, state administrative policies further partitioned rural lands into smaller areas for effective control. The rural commune (*jmaʕa*), which is the immediate level of government administration, has become a local organ of the *makhzen*, in contrast to the role it played as a tribal court in the pre-protectorate period (Hoffman 2000a: 89). During the French protectorate period the *jmaʕa* was still headed by an *amghar* (tribal chief) agreed upon annual elections, and the population lived according to lo-

22 Jacques Berque highlighted the dynamism and flexibility of tribal structures, as well as posing a critique on the colonial assumption of Arab/Amazigh division. He stressed that the spread of Islam had contributed in altering the local conditions and had blurred the ethnic boundaries. See Berque 1955.

cal custom and Islamic norms (Buskens 2010: 92-93). After the independence in 1956, however, the council member was replaced by the government employees appointed by the central government, in order to effectively implement state policy and administer the social and economic life of the individuals. In short, the territorial component which defined the tribe – the land – which was linked to the affinity based on clan and lineage, rapidly dissolved before the new social, political and economic system and the role of the tribe was reduced to personal and group identity.

In post-independence Morocco, the process of centralisation of power necessitated a further breakdown of the tribal system, such as confiscating lands of the *qayd*-s, the former tribal leaders, and making them mere government employees under direct control of the Ministry of the Interior. Between 1958 and 1960, the commune system was extended to the rural areas, in an attempt to break the political, economic, and social power of the tribes by replacing it with a new affiliation to the local areas and to the central government (Shoup 2006: 134). Furthermore, the first constitution in 1962 defined rural communes as legitimate local units, while abandoning the tribal category as a political entity. This was a reflection of the nationalists' hostility towards the French use of rural tribal chiefs in administering the country. They claimed that Arabic should be the official language of Morocco and that tribal customary law was also subject to abolishment, replaced by a judiciary law implementing *sharia*, in an attempt to unify the Moroccan national community as 'Arab' and 'Muslim', pledging allegiance to the Alaouite throne (Buskens 2010; Wyrtzen 2011). In other words, the newly created administrative boundaries and nationalist ideology corresponded to state objectives, challenging the geographical and linguistic contours of individual identities based on tribal affiliations (Hoffman 2000a).

As we have seen, the political, ethnic and linguistic categories within Moroccan society are fluid, while state incentives tried to fix them to make the people eligible to French colonial rule and the subsequent government after independence. Imazighen were generally considered as marginal, and their tribal relationships as disconnected from the wider society. The proliferation of Arab nationalism in the Middle East and North Africa further denied the significance of Berber languages, by emphasising the connection of the Arabic language to Islam as a symbol of national unity. States of sub-Saharan Africa acknowledged Berber languages as among the national languages, since Arab nationalism was absent there (Camps 1996). Their linguistic distinctiveness was regarded as insufficient to form a politically influential ethnic identity, until

the proliferation of the Amazigh cultural movement that took hold of Morocco in the 1990s. Influenced by the international Berber community of Paris, Algeria and of the world wide web, King Hassan II promised to incorporate a Berber language programme in public schools. The World Amazigh Congress took place in the Canary Islands, where world delegates agreed on the promotion of Amazigh identity and culture.

The Institut Royal de la Culture Amazighe (IRCAM) was founded in 2001 upon the decree of King Mohammed VI, with the objective to develop Amazigh culture and language in Morocco. This was a response to international and domestic pressure to create an image of a transparent state of social justice and human rights, and an attempt to incorporate the Amazigh movement into the national politics of development. As a gesture to counterbalance the expanding Islamist movement, the Moroccan state recruited a large number of Amazigh militants with advanced degrees from different associations and ideological fractions to incorporate them into the Institute's research centres (Silverstein 2010). As a result, the establishment of IRCAM divided the Amazigh movement into opposing groups, those who support the institute's policy and those who were against it. The activists recruited to the institute were often denounced by their former allies as been transformed into the representative of the state, to work for the interest of global Arab nationalism.

It is important to note that, regardless of their political visions, the promoters of Amazigh identity are highly educated, capable of speaking a conceptual language readily accessible to the international audience, and are often far removed from the socio-economic reality of the mass Berber speakers. The Amazigh cultural movement is articulated with complex cultural politics that crosses religious, ethnic and racial categories of belonging. For example, by taking a philo-Semitic position and allying themselves with the Jews, the Amazigh activists of Goulmima in the Ar-Rachidia Province present themselves as Europeans in origin in an effort to distinguish themselves from Arab Muslims, who have often been stereotyped in the West as being close to fundamentalists (Silverstein 2011). Furthermore, Silverstein argues that the Amazigh activists' philo-semitism is a racial project in order to claim hegemonic power and maintain distinction from the black population who accumulated wealth as migrant workers in Europe, and became increasingly influential in local politics by means of land acquisition (2010; 2011; 2013). In other words, the Amazigh cultural movement often signals the activists' cosmopolitan inclusion by scaling up of local

rivalries to national and transnational levels, using the medium of global languages of 'human rights' and 'development', in order to compete for local dominance. Therefore, the 'Amazigh culture' and 'Imazighen' categorized and defined by the activists does not represent the reality and interest of the largely illiterate Berber language speakers of rural Morocco. As I mentioned earlier in chapter one, Amazigh activism is not the focus of my research, for it is a world apart from the everyday life of ordinary Imazighen in the Tafilalet. Instead, I look at the construction and reconstruction of identities among the Amazigh artisans through work practice, and the local notion of being Amazigh which is fostered through different experiences from the activists.

Crawford and Hoffman's statement (2000: 126) that the majority of rural Berber speakers are not involved in the Amazigh movement holds true in the Tafilalet. It is estimated that in Morocco some 40 to 45 per cent of the population speak one of the Berber languages, and 50 per cent of Moroccans are counted as rural residents (*Caractéristiques Démographiques et Socio-économiques de la population : Rapport National*: 2004). In the case of Rissani, the Tamazight-speaking population is normally aware of the international Amazigh movement and influenced by it, but in terms of their collective identification, there are important differences compared to ideology promoted by the activists. For example, the Tamazight-speaking fossil artisans, although the sense of antagonism against the Arabic speakers does exist, are not keen to promote Tamazight language with their children for pragmatic reasons, and the identity on a tribal level is more pronounced than the global discourse of Amazigh identity in their everyday social interactions, a point which I shall elaborate in the following chapters.

In other words, the personal identities of many local inhabitants of the Tafilalet remain to be 'tribal', even though the tribe as political institution has largely been dissolved.[23] According to my survey conducted among 50 fossil artisans in Rissani (age from twenty to 51 years old), of the 32 married men, only one was married outside his ethnic group. It is estimated roughly that there are about 300 people working in the domain of fossil sculpting in Rissani. Within the 50 sample population, 49 were Amazigh (Ayt Aṭṭa, mostly of the Ayt Khebbash sub-group) and one was Arab, and the one Amazigh artisan in his mid-forties, Addi, responded that his marriage to an

23 Ait Hamza notes that in Dadès-Todra area, local tribal organisations called *jamʕa* or *majlis* (council of elders) can control social actions and decisions of the inhabitants, such as controlling land use, water and pasture. See Ait Hamza, Mohamed. 2002. *Mobilité socio-spatiale et développement local au Sud de l'Atlas marocain* (*Dadès-Todgha*). Passau: Verlag Gmbh.

Arab woman from Meknès was a hard-fought romance in which he won her hand against all adversities: he met strong opposition from the bride's family who preferred the woman to marry her cousin within her own extended family. With this notable exception, the great majority of the sculptors preferred to marry within their own tribal sub-groups, strictly observing the customary law such as *tafargant* (Tamazight term meaning respect), a rule of abstinence of inter-marriage between certain Ayt Aṭṭa sub-groups and clans. This marriage preference among the Rissani fossil artisans demonstrate the fact that the tribal group is still an important social unit in the process of personal identification among the Tafilalet inhabitants.

Following the French occupation of the Tafilalet in 1933, the region became more integrated into the larger national entity due to infrastructural development and subsequent ease of travel, army recruitment and an economic crisis that forced the male population to migrate to the cities. After independence, especially following the implementation of the Five Year Plan of industrialised agricultural development in 1968, the Moroccan economy started to disintegrate due to a lack of food production for the domestic population and the high inflation rate that reached 17 per cent in 1974 (Pennell 2000). It was during this period that the rural inhabitants' migration to Europe and Moroccan cities started to accelerate, which involved the Berber speakers' concomitant Arabisation. However, in spite of all the demographic, economic and social changes, the assimilation of Tamazight speakers into an Arabic-speaking environment is by no means a straightforward process. For many of the Imazighen the tribal frame of reference has hardly changed, whilst adjusting oneself to modern economy and this social identification is practiced through the medium of language.

Linguistic value in a society is largely based upon its hierarchical role in the labour market, for the dominant language exerts authority upon other minority languages (Bourdieu 1991). The second generation of the Rissani fossil artisans hardly speaks Tamazight fluently, and it is all too common that the Tamazight-speaking parents converse in Moroccan Arabic at home with their town-born children. At primary schools, only three to four pupils out of thirty in a class do speak some Tamazight, and the newly introduced Tamazight language curriculum is not improving the situation, for the school teachers who are supposed to teach the language are normally Arabophones. They are trained only an hour per week to teach Tamazight. Added difficulty is the Tifinagh script adopted by IRCAM and the Ministry of Education in which the text is written: none of the Arabophone teachers, nor Tamazight speakers (perhaps

with the exception of highly educated urban intellectuals) have ever seen this mode of writing in their lives and at a glance of the text book the Imazighen resign to the fact that 'Tamazight is so difficult', as if it was not their mother tongue but another arcane foreign language. Ironically, the adoption of Tifinagh script has added another barrier against the promotion of the Tamazight language, for the instructors cannot teach the language they are unable to read while the Tamazight-speaking parents cannot be language helpers for the same reason. All in all, state ideology could not solve the salient economic reality in which the Tamazight speakers live; they need to speak Moroccan Arabic in public space, and learning standard Arabic and French will give them better chance for upward mobility. As a result, the Tamazight language programme at school remains to be an ideological façade of the authorities which in fact hinders the actual learning and use of Tamazight.

However, the local political economy of Tamazight and the TV, radio and music mediums are powerful forces that encourage the survival of Tamazight language. Although the school programme of Tamazight language teaching proved to be unsuccessful, among the first generation Tamazight speakers living in towns the language continues to hold an important social value, precisely because they learnt it orally, without going to school and writing in Tifinagh script. If we consider the significance of oral culture in rural Morocco, as opposed to literacy, the local value attached to unwritten conversation and poetry can be seen in a different light, even though modern schooling and the state administrative system both have an invasive impact which place standard Arabic as the language of authority and Moroccan Arabic as the public language. As Hoffman argues, both the economic and the symbolic rationale cannot fully explain the reason why Berber languages in rural Morocco continue to be a vibrant vernacular in social practice (2000b). Therefore, the political economy of Tamazight should include a 'constellation of valuations of several organisational systems' that the Tamazight speakers associate with Tamazight-speaking places, the valuations of which defy the abrupt shift in moral systems under the condition of migration and globalisation (Hoffman 2000b; 2008). In other words, tribalism, which is a social identification expressed through language and articulated in terms of language itself, contains no inherent impediment to progress. Rather, such an identification can become stronger under the modern condition of 'de-tribalisation', in which individuals seek for the security of kinship and family relations against the uprooting socio-economic transformations of global capitalism.

2.5 2011 Parliamentary Election and the Rissani Fossil Artisans

The geographic, demographic and historical overviews demonstrate the fact that the Tafilalet has a regional integrity as well as that it is highly diverse and heterogeneous in terms of natural conditions and the ethnic composition of the inhabitants. The political, economic and social relations of the *qṣar* inhabitants and Amazigh nomads fostered over centuries continues to influence the discursive construction of group boundaries in modern town life. The previous discussion on tribal identity brings me to the final point that work-based identification among the Rissani fossil artisans is a form of social differentiation which should be placed in the context of historically formulated local organisations. Putting it in another way, the domain of fossil sculpting itself is an encompassing product of world capitalism on the one hand, but on the other also a local 'craftwork' of tribally based human endeavour for survival. The Imazighen arriving in Rissani and Erfoud typically start their apprenticeship at their own agnates' *ateliers*, until they are ready to embark on their independent family business by renting their own garage with their brothers or friends. When they have accumulated enough experience and money, their family in their home villages will arrange for them marriages with women within their own lineage or clan. Their strong attachment to tribal identities defies the state incentive that de-tribalisation is the necessary step in the move towards urbanisation and modernisation.

However, neither the tribal identity nor the broader sense of Amazigh consciousness are ever completely fixed, as the contextual factors continue to influence the formation and re-formation of personal and collective identities. The social identity which we see as 'tribal' or 'traditional' are in a constant process of invention and development, which is intricately connected to places where people work, as they move between *reḥla*, towns and cities as wage labourers. The strong associations the Ayt Khebbash people make with *tamazirt* (land, place or homeland) and *l-ʕa'ila* (extended family) are reconstructed in the context of the wider socio-economic transformations wherein they recognise the group boundaries in relativity through the medium of Tamazight language.

Let us now look at the recent electoral choice of the Tafilalet inhabitants in the light of the discussion of tribal identity. On 25 November 2011, the national parliamentary elections were held in Morocco in an increasingly turbulent political climate that swept the entire Middle East and North Africa. As expected, the Islamist party of Justice and Development (PJD) won the overwhelming majority of 107 seats, leaving the

Istiqlal Party[24] far behind with a result of a mere 60 seats. My intention here is not to analyse Morocco's fractured party politics, but to shed light on the ways in which the local residents of Rissani responded to this election and its relation to tribal identity issues. First and foremost, the political choice directing the local inhabitants was their strong support for the PJD. Their principles of non-violence, democracy, constitutionalism and allegiance to the Alaouite monarchy, as well as their emphasis on Islam in education and civic culture to consolidate Morocco's cultural identity appealed to most who favoured political and economic reform without radical change in social life. Here the ethnic background issue was irrelevant to the choice of candidate, just as the PJD candidates in the Ar-Rachidia Province were simply considered as Islamists, without much reference to their ethnic backgrounds. Mustapha Zemmouri, who won the largest share of 21,054 votes together with a fellow PJD member Youssef Alioui, is a Zemmouri Berber from Khémisset who grew up in Ar-Rachidia. In the entire Ar-Rachidia Province Zemmouri is a minority tribe and Mustapha's support ground does not come from a tribal base but from wider social strata including both Arabs and Berbers who trust PJD as the forerunner of economic and social development of the country. In the electoral choice of PJD candidates among the Imazighen of Ar-Rachidia, their identities as Muslims and citizens of the centralised Moroccan state were ever more present in search of pragmatic solutions to problems people were facing in everyday life.

However, with regard to the choice of non-Islamist candidates, my source provides evidence that the Arab/Berber divide, tribal issues, as well as local power politics and corruption played a decisive role. According to my survey conducted among fifty of the Rissani fossil artisans, the overwhelming majority (95 per cent) responded that they would vote for either Brahim Amraoui or Mubarak Izulayn (both from an Amazigh background), with the former being slightly more popular than the latter, being a new face on the local electoral scene. Amraoui was the current president of the rural commune Taouz and also a primary school teacher in Erfoud, coming from an Ayt Khebbash family. His campaign strategy was to put his 'Amazigh-ness' associated with a 'clean' (non-corrupt) image to the foreground, rather than promising concrete issues or providing views on policies. Many of the fossil artisans who worked for his campaign claimed that he did not bribe people to gain their votes as the Arabs would do, because he was an Amazigh. There is not enough evidence to make an over-

24 Istiqlal (Independence) Party is the oldest political party in Morocco, founded in 1944 during the struggle for independence from France and Spain.

arching statement that many of the artisans favoured Amraoui because he was from the same Ayt Khebbash background, but at least the tribal identity played an important role, as did their sense of distinction as Imazighen against the Arabs. In Rissani, located 30 km north of Amraoui's home village Hassi Labied (also called Adrouine), in six of out of 23 ballot bureaus he came the close third following the two Islamist frontrunners Zemmouri and Alioui.

Although Amraoui did very well as a first time candidate, in fact the majority of Rissani votes, after the PJD candidates, went to the wealthy and politically influential local merchants Amin El Yahiaoui and Hassan Zoubir, both from an Arab background. In Tafraoute, a Tamazight-speaking village in the Sidi Ali Commune at the southernmost end of the Ar-Rachidia Province, the former president of the Sidi Ali Commune worked for the campaign of Zoubir and another wealthy merchant for El Yahiaoui, dividing the overwhelming local votes among these two candidates. Tafraoute is the village of origin of many of the Rissani fossil artisans, and the inhabitants' clan backgrounds are Irjdaln, Ayt Taghla and Ayt Amar, which all belong to Ayt Khebbash group. However, it was the complicated local political relations and intense bribing campaign that dictated the inhabitants' choice, rather than tribal affiliation or whether he is an Arab or Amazigh. The electoral corruption (*l-reshwa l-intikhabiya*) was less blatant in this election, but it was still a common practice for wealthy candidates to give out money to win votes. As the wealthy and locally influential candidates tended to be from an Arab background, many of the Imazighen associated the 'un-Islamic practice' *l-reshwa* with Arab-ness, but the Arab informants would claim that the Berbers would do the same if they had the money to bribe.

This leads me to the final observation of the contested and often situational boundaries of the Arab/Berber divide. The fifth successful candidate Mohammed El Alaoui, was from an Arab Shorfa family who grew up in Qṣar Tigida, a small village at 10 km distance from Goulmima. He was the president of the commune Mellal, located close to Tinejdad, as well as a successful entrepreneur based in Ar-Rachidia. As his surname suggests, El Alaoui's family was from the Rissani area from which most of the 'Alaoui's', including the current monarchy, originated. However, due to the Tamazight-speaking environment in which he was raised, his first language was Tamazight and all of his entourage considered him to be an 'Ayt Aṭṭa'. In his family, intermarriage with the Ayt Aṭṭa was a common occurrence and for this reason the ethnic division did not mean much for their social identification. It is rather common among Shorfa families living

among the Imazighen, that the Arab/Berber divide is more of a linguistic matter, to the extent that Shorfa that are fluent in Tamazight cross the ethnic boundaries and they are socially accepted as Arabs who are Ayt Aṭṭa at the same time. This is an example of a 'Berberised Arab' in the milieu of Goulmima where Tamazight language is publicly dominant, as opposed to Rissani where the Imazighen are 'Arabised'. So in El Alaoui's case, his electoral campaign was not considered or judged from the perspective of Arab-ness or Amazigh-ness – he was supported both by Arabs and Berbers for the very reason of the discursive boundaries he projected, which epitomised the historical and social dynamics of the Tafilalet itself.

2.6 Conclusion

As discussed earlier, the creation and reinforcement of a 'Berber' ethnic category dates back to the Protectorate period. Since the 1990s, the notion of 'Amazigh-ness' promoted by the international activists and intellectuals started to influence the ways in which the local people define and re-define the boundaries of their symbolic groups. We have seen in the example of the electoral campaign that standardised conceptualisation of the ethnic categories appeared in some situations. For example, Imazighen typically associated 'un-Islamic' (*ḥaram*) practices, money and racism with the Arabs, while linking their own 'Islamic' (ethical) behaviour, ancestral land, and ethnic pride to the Berbers. This symbolic identification occurs when the Imazighen experience difficulties with state institutions, and are forced to acknowledge their social exclusion.

I have discussed in this chapter the dominance of Arabic language at schools, and the dominance of Arabic-speaking merchants in local politics. This is undoubtedly related to the centuries-old social hierarchy formulated in the pre-Saharan oasis town, which continues to bind the socio-ethnic stratifications, and structures the actions of the individuals. This is not to say that the Imazighen in Rissani necessarily live in opposition or hatred against the Arabs, although each group keeps their marriages endogamous. They co-habit and cooperate, while limiting their social interactions with other ethnic groups. The interactions of the Tafilalet tribes, clans and the *qṣar* communities have largely been contingent upon economic considerations, and up to present days their social ties to different groups are formulated in defence of their uncertain economic life. In Rissani, the diverse and conflicting local interests together with the colonial and post-colonial policies fostered a very complex pattern of social relations among the inhabitants. In this historical context, the Imazighen situation-

ally created and manipulated several patterns of discourses against the others for the convenience of their everyday life, moving back and forth between the contested facts and images.

This Tamazight language-based ethnic identification is a by-product of the social interaction with the globalising economy in which local people are progressively integrated into the modern centralised nation-state. However, the local identification processes are grounded in people's own understanding of the new socio-cultural environment, and in their complex construction of several ideas, based upon their own versions of history. The colonial, nationalist and Amazigh activist narratives of histories all forward a homogenised and essentialised vision of 'Europe' versus 'Islam/Arab', or 'Arab' versus 'Amazigh', which often represent the interests of the urban elites in power. As I shall elaborate in chapter five, the rural Imazighen are aware of multiple agencies and divergent power relations; not only Arab nationalists and Islamists but also Berber-speaking elites and intellectuals' control of media, educational programmes and other resources. The Imazighen of the Tafilalet villages and towns therefore participate in the national process of integration in a paradoxical way, as their positions as artisans or wage labourers are constantly shifting and as their movement is expressed as both displacement from one location to another, and in continuity of their participation within the imagined *tamazirt* ('homeland') and tribal affiliations.

Because of these conflicting processes of identification, the Imazighen create and redefine the boundaries of their symbolic group, which is not always based on 'official' administrative designations but rooted in locally shared conceptual frameworks in which they are situated. Since the conceptions of 'tribe', 'patrilineal descent' or 'closeness' are relative and change with actual social arrangements, the groups involved legitimise their new relations by shifting the ways in which they identify with their ancestors, land, and links with particular saints (Eickelman 2002: Ch. 6). As Anthony Cohen forwards, group boundaries exist in the minds of its members, and should not be confused with geographic or sociographic assertions of fact, by extension, the distinctiveness of group and thus the reality of their boundaries, similarly lies in the mind, in the meanings which people attach to them, not in their structural forms (1985).

To conclude, an understanding of the geography, demography and history of the Ar-Rachidia Province region provides a background to make sense of the identifica-

tion processes of Rissani Ayt Khebbash artisans in their everyday work. The powerful force of globalisation and capitalist economic development compelled the Imazighen to migrate to nearby towns and urban centres in search of cash, which did not only affect the local economic structures but also their cultural world views. Accordingly, they have crafted out their own practical conceptions of 'tribe', which helped them to make sense of what it means to be an 'Amazigh', a 'Moroccan citizen' and a 'Muslim', in the process of engaging in and withdrawing from the mutually constitutive worlds of modernity and tradition.

Table 2-4: The 2011 Election results in Ar-Rachidia Province

	Name	Party	Town/Village	Ethnic background	Number of Votes
1	Mustapha Zemmouri	PJD	Ar-Rachidia	Zemmouri (B)	21,054
2	Youssef Alioui	PJD	Erfoud	Shorfa (A)	
3	Amin El Yahiaoui	RNI	Rissani	Shorfa (A)	9,627
4	Hassan Zoubir	PPS	Rissani	Ulad Hiya (A)	8,889
5	Mohammed El Alaoui	PT	Ar-Rachidia	Shorfa (A)	6,914
6	Hmad Taous	PSU	Goulmima	Ayt Morghad (B)	5,655
7	Brahim Amraoui	MDS	Hassi Labied	Ayt Khebbash (B)	4,983
8	Mubarak Izulayn	UNSP	Aoufouss	Ayt Izulayn (B)	4,588
	total# votes for 18 candidates				80,557

1-5: Successful candidates
A: Arab, B: Berber
PJD: Parti de la justice et du développement (Justice and Development Party)
RNI: Rassemblement national des indépendants (National Rally of Independents)
UNSP: Union socialiste des forces populaires (Socialist Union of Popular Forces)
PPS: Parti du progrès et du socialisme (Party of Progress and Socialism)
PT: Parti travailliste (Labour Party)
MDS: Mouvement démocratique et social (Democratic and Social Movement)
PSU: Parti socialiste unifié (Unified Socialist Party)

2-1 Rissani town centre

2-2 Rissani *suq*

Chapter 3 – Imagining *Tamazirt*

> 'In *tamazirt* [village, land or homeland] we can trust each other. It's like my family. But here in Rissani I have to be careful, because it's a town [not because we live with the Arabs]. I will not allow my daughters to marry the Arabs, though. But for one from Tafraoute, he can work and settle down in town … because I myself was in the village before, and asked the hand of a girl who lived in town, and her family had accepted … We sold the land and moved to Rissani. I prefer living here, but I feel it's dirty compared to my village. *Tamazirt* is beautiful, even if it's far away, and without electricity, water or telephone when I left.'
> <Lhou, 14 June 2012, Rissani>

3.1 Introduction

Among the Rissani fossil and barite artisans, the standardised discourse of *tamazirt* as an eternal ancestral land, which is a source of tribal pride and identity, is commonly heard in contrast to their current life in town (*tamdint*) which is full of 'dirt' and insecurity. They appreciate and enjoy the living standard of Rissani, such as tap water, electricity and easy access to the *suq*, but associate a negative image with the town and conclude that it is the place where one cannot be one's 'true self'. When migration and sedentarisation became a new way of life among the Ayt Khebbash people of the Tafilalet, they began to organise their lives around the departures and arrivals, from/to the imagined *tamazirt* and imagined *tamdint*. The narratives that connect the Ayt Khebbash migrants to their *tamazirt* at the same time help them establish a connection to the destination, which means they are creating a new social space wherein their actions are justified within a trans-local context.

The home villages of the Ayt Khebbash people are, in fact, a fairly 'modern' creation, as a result of the administrative and economic changes on the national and international level, which led the previously nomadic Ayt Khebbash groups to seek for permanent settlement in the form of villages, and eventually in towns. One of the examples is Tafraoute of Sidi Ali Commune, a small desert village located on the southern end of the Ar-Rachidia Province, which is the 'place of origin' for many of the Ayt Khebbash artisans in Rissani. The village started to take its form in the late 1960s, when the first group of Ayt Khebbash nomads started to settle down. There were numerous water holes in the pre-Saharan area, but except for the oasis of Tabelbala, which was occupied by Algerian forces in 1910, the oases were uninhabited by sedentary settlers

(Trout 1969). The nomadic population in the region were the Ayt Khebbash, Ayt Alwan (belonging to Ayt Aṭṭa group), Aarib, and the Ayt Oussa, all of whom had interests in the oases to the immediate south of the Atlas ranges and whose southward migration was affected by the seasonal precipitations in the northern part of the Sahara. During the resistance of the Tafilalet tribes against the French forces, many of the Ayt Khebbash people started to move westwards, from the Bouhyara and Sarhro region to the Tafraoute area, in search of water and refuge. The first settlers dug the wells in Tafraoute, Ighef n Ighir, Ramilia, etc., and found that the water was suitable for drinking and agriculture. Some of the current inhabitants of Tafraoute are from the surrounding Sidi Ali region, whereas some others took refuge from Tiharyine or Daoura when the border dispute between Morocco and Algeria broke out in 1978.

In 1934, after the French finally conquered the Tafilalet, the government of Paris decided a joint Algero-Moroccan control of the Western Sahara (Cf. Dunn 1977). During the Protectorate period, the 1564 km Algero-Moroccan border had been officially defined only as far as Figuig, and the rest of the disputed territories such as the iron-rich Tindouf were *de facto* controlled by the French military presence (Ruedy 1992). After independence, Morocco claimed the Western Sahara, and occupied the northern part of the territory in 1975, while Mauritania occupied the south. When Algeria recognised the Saḥrawi Arab Democratic Republic as an independent nation, the Saḥrawi resistance movement, Polisario, moved to the Tindouf area in Algerian territory. In 1976 Morocco broke off diplomatic relations with Algeria, and the border was closed, which resulted in the two countries' enduring proxy war for the next ten years (Zoubir 2000). At this time the nomadic tribes who settled down in the disputed border area were forced to evacuate the villages by the Algerian army, and many of them were arrested and sent to prisons in Algeria.

In this chapter I shall discuss in what ways the lives of the Ayt Khebbash artisans were transformed from subsistence agriculture and herding to the newly created domains of fossil extraction/sculpting, tourism and barite mining, in the context of these processes of administrative and economic changes. I will first draw the geographical contours of the village Tafraoute, followed by the locally believed 'history' and myth of the village formation, in order to reveal the ways in which oral history functions to justify the political relations between the existing clans. Second, I shall discuss the political system of the village during the Protectorate period and after Moroccan independence, for the purpose of highlighting the ways in which the inter-clan and inter-per-

sonal relationships have been transformed by the administrative change brought by the Moroccan state. Thirdly, I shall turn to the subject of the village's incorporation into the global capitalist economy by discussing the Ayt Khebbash people's involvement in new domains of work and their identity transformations vis-à-vis the foreign and domestic cultural and economic influences. Lastly, I will analyse the local political tension which resulted from the village's increasing involvement in regional and national politics. This internal tension was created by the local electoral candidates who attempted to use their clan background to gain support from the group to which they belonged, which resulted in stressing the differences between the clans. The villagers responded by 'traditionalising' their social interactions and marriage patterns, in order to defend their own interest. Throughout the chapter, I pay particular attention to the local people's narratives, their own versions of histories and biographies, so as to shed light on the Ayt Khebbash artisans' processes of identification as part of the wider socio-economic changes, and how they traditionalise their daily practice in response to the local politicians' new administrative manoeuvres.

3.2 Tafraoute Since the 1960s: Original Settlement and Its History

Prior to the French conquest of the Tafilalet in 1934, the Ayt Khebbash nomads and the Arab population of the *qṣur* lived in a patron-client relationship to ensure mutual survival. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Arab farmers and the Ismkhan paid the Ayt Khebbash in animals or grain each year in order to receive their protection from raids and abductions. By the time they entered the war against the French, several Ayt Khebbash men started to assemble their forces in a single space and therefore many of the slaves were freed, and the former patron-client relationship started to disappear. In 1936, the commander of Taouz Post notes that the Ayt Khebbash 'finally started to get out of their problematic attitude of contempt and arrogance' (Lefébure 1986: 144), indicating that the final 'pacification' of the Tafilalet tribe was accomplished.

By this time, many of the Ayt Khebbash people were cultivating wheat on the vast plain called Daya-el-Maïder and the other alluvial basins nearby, the territory considered to be their tribal land. The cultivation was further encouraged by the Bureau of Indigenous Affairs, to increase the density of cultivation to five or six times. Lefébure notes that in 1962, 7939 persons had the right to about thirty centimetres in width and five kilometres in length, vertically, in the sense of the underground water current (1986: 147). An Ayt Khebbash man who emigrated from Tafraoute to Rissani in the

Source: Google Maps 2012

Map 3-1 Tafraoute

1980s recalls that most of the original population of his home village started agricultural activities in 1964, either in the oasis surrounding the village or in Daya-el-Maïder where they planted wheat. In fact, long before the existence of Tafraoute, the Ayt Aṭṭa tribe used to gather at Daya-el-Maïder after the seasonal flooding of the Oued Rheris, where they decided each family's lot for cultivation. They originated from the Sarhro Mountains just like other fractions (*khems*) of Ayt Aṭṭa, and like the Mhamdi (Arab Shorfa), who were also considered members of Ayt Aṭṭa. An Ayt Khebbash man explained that their history of wheat cultivation in this area dates back to two thousand years ago, even if they are considered nomads whose core livelihood is based on animal herding. He recalled that he used to transport their harvest to the mausoleum of Sidi Ali, as all the families in the region used to do by assembling caravans. According to several Ayt Khebbash men who used to cultivate the area, Daya-el-Maïder was divided into five plots for the five fractions of the Ayt Aṭṭa tribe. They came from places as far as Ouarzazate or Boulemane to cultivate wheat, but in 1965 a conflict rose due to the arrival of other people such as Imlwan, the Tamazight-speaking Ḥaratin population from Achbarou, Azequr and Alnif, who claimed their plot of land. Due to this conflict and the severe lack of water, all agricultural activities were completely abandoned by the 1980s.

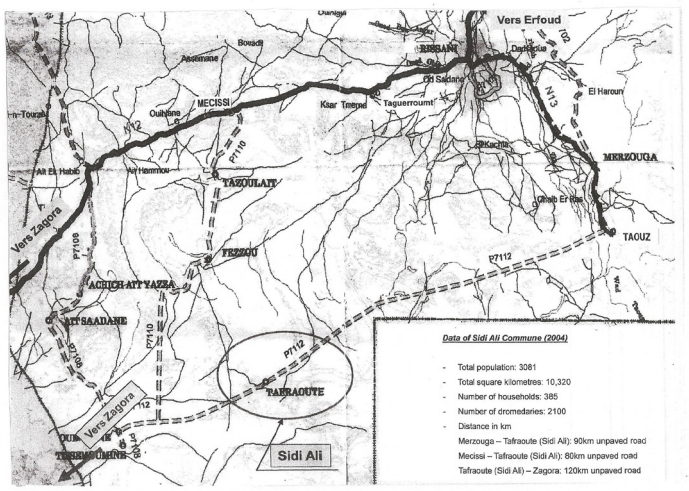
In the meantime, many of the Ayt Khebbash men who abandoned agriculture started to work in the lead mines. The mining activities of the region date back to the 1930s, when the Mining Centre of Mfis established by the Protectorate government started to recruit the local population as a labour force. There were several mines in the Taouz and Tafraoute region, where French engineers opened the veins of lead and galena deposits, and passed their report to the Service for Indigenous Arts in Fès. In turn, according to Lefébure, the French ordered the Ayt Khebbash to extract three tons of galena per month (1986: 148). And when the international demand started to favour lead, the Mfis mine managed to produce 300 tons of lead per day. Lefébure estimates that there were more than 2700 Ayt Khebbash artisans, who worked with Dwimniaa and Ismkhan (1986: 149-150). The mine provided 8 per cent of the Moroccan national production in the 1950s. An elderly Ayt Khebbash man, who is blind, and currently living in Rissani, told me about his experience working in the French mines of Mfis in the 1950s. His village of origin was Taouz, but later he moved to Mfis in search of wage labour:

> *Lahcen*: 'We used to dig out the lead to sell it to the French companies.'
> *Question*: So it's the French who showed you the lead?
> *Lahcen*: 'Yes, at first we just collected the lead on the ground surface, then we observed how others did. We dug two to three metres … like that it became my work. I worked for the French company and then for myself. We lived in Mfis and then in Khemliya for a long time … Once we found very good veins of lead [in Mfis]. That's what we call *le pain de ni ni* [*lban di nini*, a variety of lead]. There were times when we earned millions [of centimes] per day. How could we not be satisfied? But sometimes we worked for more than two months without any income. In such case we became impatient and angry. One day in Chaïb er Ras [a village in the south of Rissani], we worked, then the motor fell down there [into the mine]. But fortunately nobody was injured.'
> *Question*: What was the difference between the French company and working on your own?
> *Lahcen*: 'In the company they got everything, and we are labourers. After the French left, we started to work for ourselves. We dug the well [the veins] with manual tools. But you know in another time [the Protectorate period] the company mobilised 400 or 500 workers, and they were well equipped with all the machines … In our independent work, we extracted four or five *qantar* [400 or 500 kg] maximum.'

Question: Did you work in another domain before?
Lahcen: 'I was in Khemliya, we cultivated wheat on the non-irrigated land [relying on rain water]. But my job since childhood had to be the mining work, I worked for 50 years as a responsible for handling explosives.'
<22 January 2013, Rissani>

As in the experience of Lahcen, many of the Ayt Khebbash people abandoned agriculture and herding as their primal source of subsistence, and looked for wage labour, first in the French-run lead mines, then as independent miners of lead, barite and fossil, depending on international demand. The natural environmental factor as well as colonialist and capitalist forces were the motors of the accelerated rural-urban and rural-rural migration of the Tafilalet inhabitants since the 1930s. Three types of labour migration can be discerned: 1) military conscription by the colonial government; 2) labour recruitment; 3) voluntary migration. The military conscription caused a large number of men to leave the Tafilalet, which accelerated rural-urban migration. On the other hand, the labour recruitment by the colonial administration encouraged rural-rural migration, as seen in the case of Lahcen and several Ayt Khebbash miners. The third type, voluntary migration, involved two destinations; a largely Arab population moving out into large cities, either permanently or seasonally, and a predominantly Amazigh nomadic and village population flowing into the Tafilalet towns seeking for wage labour and permanent residence. In this chapter I shall focus on the migratory stage prior to the rural-rural migration to regional towns; the first stage of sedentarisation of the Ayt Khebbash nomads in the villages.

The village of Tafraoute is situated on the south of Daya-el-Maïder, on a desert basin surrounded by black granite mountains (map 3-1). The name Tafraoute means 'the basin (in the middle of mountains)' in Tamazight, which explains why there are several villages called 'Tafraoute' in Morocco. The Tafraoute in question is often called 'Tafraoute n Sidi Ali', to distinguish it from other places with same names. It was the home of three Ayt Khebbash clans in the 1960s, and continues to be the *tamazirt* of those who eventually moved out to Rissani later on. The village is divided into two areas – Tafraoute *taqdimt* (old Tafraoute) and Tafraoute *tiwjdidt* (new Tafraoute). The former existed as a settlement since the early 1960s, and the houses display 'traditional' characteristics of the region, whereas the latter was built during the 1970s after an increasing number of nomads started to move in due to the Algerian border dispute. For this reason one can observe a marked architectural difference between the two



Map 3-2 Data of Sidi Ali Commune (2004)

areas of Tafraoute: the houses in the new village were built with concrete blocks reminiscent of town buildings in Rissani or Erfoud, which is different from the 'traditional' style commonly seen in Tafraoute *taqdimt*. There are approximately seventy houses in each area, of the total of 140 houses only 120 are said to be actually inhabited. The population of the entire village can be estimated at about 840 people.[25] It consists of three Ayt Khebbash clans: Ayt Taghla, Irjdaln and Ayt Amar. There are very few Ismkhan and Hassani Arabs, who are integrated into one of the three major Ayt Khebbash clans and therefore regarded as members of the Ayt Khebbash.

In the early 1960s the Tafraoute inhabitants used to be self-sufficient, by cultivating wheat, carrots, turnips, and *lfeṣṣa* as fodder for animals, with sales of henna to obtain fuel such as natural gas for motors to pump up underground water. A Tafraoute inhabitant in his early forties recalls his family history as follows:

> *Zaid*: 'We used to be nomads, my parents used to be [nomads]. Our surname Amharich comes from our home village Mharich [located to the northeast of Ta-

25 This estimation was made by the *muqaddam*-s of Tafraoute *tiwjidt*, and complies with my own calculation, assuming an average of seven persons in each household.

fraoute] where we used to engage in agriculture in the 1950s. There was a military post which we call Bouziane, he [my father] used to bring them [the soldiers] things like turnips, carrots that we produced, to exchange these for cereals, cans of sardines, etc. In this period, they used to see us coming from the village straight ahead since there weren't these fields [that hinder the view].'

Question: Did your parents work in the fossil craftwork?

Zaid: 'In the beginning, they worked in lead extraction in Lemrakib. Their wells had reached a depth of almost 80 m [they worked for a long time]. Myself, I worked in the domain of fossils [in the 1980s] at first it was goniatite, then I shifted to sculpting trilobites, before I got employed as a technician at the school where I am now.'

<17 October 2012, Tafraoute>

The work cycle of Tafraoute villagers corresponds to that of the Ayt Khebbash artisans in Rissani – only that the major village out-migration stopped since electricity arrived in 2007. The presence of electricity allowed the villagers to use modern machines for fossil sculpting and also allowed the use of water pumps. The drinking water supply arrived slightly earlier in 1997, although the provision is limited to two hours per day, which means that the villagers have to stock up water early in the morning when it is available from either private or communal taps. Although the living standard is a far cry from that in towns, the villagers still appreciatively say that if they compare to former times, when women had to travel on the back of the donkeys to fetch water from remote wells, the situation has improved significantly. However, the subsistence economy based on agriculture had already come to a halt in the early 1970s, for the very limited availability of water was not sufficient for the fields to grow wheat and vegetables, without the use of costly pumping machines. The groundwater became increasingly salty and scarce since then, and most of the villagers abandoned their fields and palm groves in search of cash income in fossil, lead and barite mining, as well as engaging in tourism and illegal smuggling of goods in and out of Algeria.

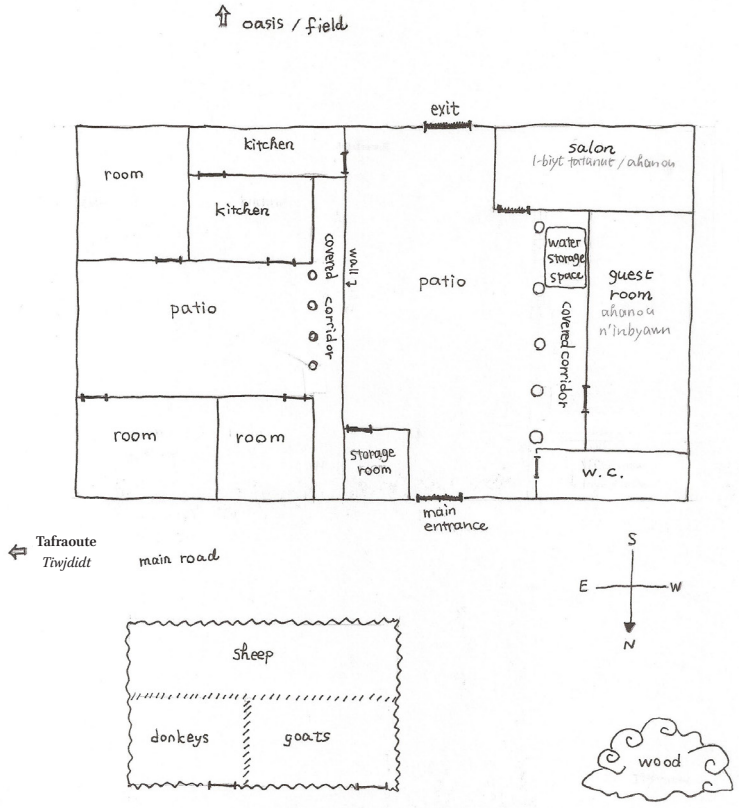


Figure 3-1 House in Tafraoute *taqdimt*

3.3 The formation of the Village: From Myth to Algerian Prison

According to the local myth, the Ayt Khebbash group has migrated from Tunisia and has Arab Shorfa roots. One can see in this claim of origin that Islam and the 'noble' bloodline associated with Arab Shorfa groups has been the dominant value in the region with which Ayt Khebbash people historically identified themselves, especially prior to the arrival of the Amazigh cultural movement in the 1990s. Several versions of myths concerning the Ayt Khebbash group exists in the region, but here I took one complete version of an oral legend told by a 92-year-old Ayt Khebbash man in Tafraoute, who is locally revered as a 'living history'. The first Khebbashi, called Sidi Mhammed, was from Seddrat (Sarhro Mountains) where he was found and raised by the local Ayt Yahya tribe. He eventually got married to a woman from Seddrat who bore four sons. The eldest was called Daoud, or 'Arjdal' (the one who limps) – because he used to walk with a limp. The second was named Mohammed, and since he had a long and dense beard, he was nicknamed 'Alḥyan' (the beard). The third one, Lahcen, was squint-eyed, so was called 'Azulay' (the one who has a squint). The youngest son was called Amar, and didn't have any nickname.

Azulay and Alḥyan were jealous of the goats and other animals the eldest son Arjdal owned, and they plotted to assassinate him. The youngest, Amar, heard about this plot and told his father Sidi Mhammed. When he heard this, he was infuriated and asked God to curse the two plotters. It is locally believed that because of this incident the Izulayn (sing. Azulay) and Ilḥyan (sing. Alḥyan) clans have decreased in number; only a few Izulayn with the surname of Bokbot exist in Merzouga, and the Ilḥyan almost vanished in the Tafraoute region. Furthermore, in memory of the goodwill of Amar, it was decided that all Ayt Khebbash reunions should not take place without the presence of Ayt Amar clan members, since the day Sidi Mhammed said to Amar, 'My son whose words were blessed by God, all the reunions (and decisions) without you should never be valid'. Based on this story of Sidi Mhammed, every single gathering of Ayt Khebbash requires the presence of an Ayt Amar clan member, a symbolic practice that has continued even after the replacement of the tribal political system with the commune system.

As explained in the myth, four clans were present in the Tafraoute region in the 1960s: Irjdaln, Ilḥyan, Izulayn and Ayt Amar. Later on, the Ayt Taghla group (a fraction of Ayt Aṭṭa), one of the major clans in Tafraoute now, came by and joined the Ayt Khebbash. Their arrival is explained in the following legend about the Ayt Taghla having

escaped from the Sarhro Mountains because they killed a local tribal member and got into conflict. They first settled down in Imaoun, and set up their tents in Tamasint, south of Bouhyara. One day they were informed that their dromedaries were stolen. Alarmed by the news, a tribesman called Ou Baydir went to Ouyhian, an Ayt Amar, to tell him that it had been already twenty days since the disappearance of the dromedaries and he needed the help from the *shaykh* to pursue the thieves. Ouyhian told this to the *shaykh* Hmad Ou Mhammed, who refused by humiliating Ou Baydir by inserting his two fingers into the sides of his beard. Infuriated, Ou Baydir was obliged to leave on his own, with three Ayt Amar members and one Irjdaln, who had also lost his dromedary. The other tribal members in Tafraoute remained indifferent by saying 'It merely touched the wool (*tusad g tadut, jat f lewber*), meaning the bullets did not penetrate the skin, thereby conveying that they did not really matter because the Ayt Taghla were merely 'foreigners'.

The dromedary thieves were Arabs from the west (Hassani Arabs). Ou Baydir and the persecutors arrived at Iguidi, when Moha Ou Amar asked his companions to stop. They ate and drank, and afterwards Moha Ou Amar climbed the dunes just before the sunset where he found the thieves, the glittering reflection of the swords against the sun betraying them when they were trying to kill an animal. He returned and told the Ayt Taghla men what he saw. As soon as they heard the news, they opened fire against the thieves. Startled, the thieves pleaded, 'Peace, here are your dromedaries, our souls! (*ksatagh, hann ilghman nnun aynagh, ha larwaḥ nnegh*), to which the Ayt Taghla replied, 'lay down your arms and leave! (*nnan asn ayt taghla sersat lemdafi at teddum s ibṭṭan nnun*), but the thieves refused, by saying 'death is a destiny, but dishonour is not! (*lmut fard o lefdiha mahi fard*)'. They fought until sunrise, and there were some casualties on the side of the Arabs. They got back their dromedaries, except for Ben Yacoub, a Rajdali (Irjdaln), who did not find his animal among the recaptured dromedaries. He insisted that he could not return home without his animal, and asked the group to give him a few elite members to go on pursuing the thieves. Finally he found them, but the Rajdali died in the battle and the others returned without recapturing his dromedary.

Although the Ayt Taghla had recuperated their dromedaries, they were not happy that the Ayt Khebbash did not offer them a helping hand when they were in trouble. As soon as they returned from the battle, they decided to pack up and leave the region. When they arrived from the Sarhro Mountains, there were only two households, but

now their tents had increased to forty households. Two or three days before returning, the Ayt Taghla informed their women to collect the household objects they had left at the Ayt Khebbash while absent in order to leave. Moha Ou Amar, the Ayt Amar, told the Ayt Khebbash people that they were wrong to let the Ayt Taghla leave, since they had lived with them for a long period of time. He feared that the Ayt Taghla, who knew about the Ayt Khebbash territory very well, would enter the territory of Ayt Ouahlim, their enemies, and eventually would lead them to attack the Ayt Khebbash. Therefore, the Ayt Khebbash agreed to call the Ayt Taghla back.

When Moha Ou Amar went on to search for the Ayt Taghla, he reached a place called Taghbalt where he found only an old man. Moha said, 'Mohammed Ou Brahim! Return!' but the old man replied, 'I don't find any reason to do so, we have stayed there for a long time and believed we were united, but alas, there was nothing…now the Ayt Taghla went on to find their *qṣar* of origin. Wait until they return'. The Ayt Taghla found their *qṣar*, by asking the young men, who they did not know, but they brought their father, a man with wounds on his face and his eyebrows overshadowing his eyes to the degree that he could no longer see anything. After lifting his brows and fixing them with pieces of cloth so that he could see, he told them 'It's here from where you have left, if you want to stay in the *qṣar*, come and contribute to the reconstruction because it is so small that we cannot afford to live with so many people. If you prefer to stay nomads in this mountain or others, it's your territory'. When Moha Ou Amar arrived, he asked Mohammed Ou Brahim to lend or sell him one of his animals. He went on to sacrifice the animal in front of Ayt Taghla, and they agreed to come back to Bouhyara and reunite with the Ayt Khebbash. So all the clans arrived in Bouhyara and built their tents, when a swirl of *sherqi* (sand storm) came and blew away the tents of Ayt Taghla on to those of Irjdaln … when they rebuilt the tents, the same phenomenon happened three times again. Upon seeing this, the Ayt Amar said to Irjdaln, 'You Irjdaln and Ayt Taghla and Ayt Bourk (also known as Ayt Ali) take the half, and we, Ayt Amar, Ilḥyan and Izulayn shall take the other half (of the plot)'.

For the people living in Tafraoute this oral history explains the way in which the major clans came in and claimed their territories, and how the Ayt Taghla clan, which did not belong to the Ayt Khebbash group, came to be part of it through the mediating efforts of the Ayt Amar clan. In present days, the Izulayn and Ilḥyan clans have disappeared from the Tafraoute area; the two major clans are Irjdaln and Ayt Taghla, while the Ayt Amar is a minority clan. Since the local concept of history is not structured by

a strict chronology, it is not clear when exactly the 'incident' concerning Ayt Taghla's arrival in Bouhyara occurred, although it might have been sometime before the 1930s. However, the melange of myth and history reveals the organisational principle behind the local hierarchy: Firstly, it lends religious and political authenticity to the Ayt Khebbash group by claiming their Arab Shorfa roots. Then, the myth gives an elevated status to certain members of Ayt Amar clan, which justifies their political privilege. Furthermore, it demonstrates how the group boundary of 'Ayt Khebbash' is constantly negotiated and renewed according to the local geo-political manoeuvres.

Before the French colonial period, due to drought, several of these nomadic tribes who used to live around Bouhyara started to move towards the west in search of fodder. During the war between the Ayt Aṭṭa and the French army in the Sarhro Mountains, which culminated in the battle of Bougafer in 1933, they found refuge in Goulmime, and most of the tribes stayed there for roughly three to four years before returning to the southern Tafilalet region in 1934. An elderly man in Tafraoute recalls they gathered in the west when the French army was in the Sarhro, and most of the Ayt Khebbash groups in the Tafilalet followed suit after the French army occupied Rissani in the Tafilalet. Although it was because of the drought that they had moved into this area, the Ayt Khebbash man claims he was one of the 45 men, consisting of Ayt Seghrushen and Ayt Khebbash combatants, who 'ambushed the French army passing by Goulmime and assassinated ten soldiers and robbed their arms'.

> 'The French patrol circulated around the region to make the tribes surrender, they sent the soldiers to the *shaykh* and *muqaddam* of the tribes, but we surprised them en route, we saw their camps, and then we escaped to the west … the French did not shoot us, but the people of the adjacent village did shoot at us, because the French gave them weapons. They opened fire but when they saw we were not a huge group, they let us go …'
> <Abdelali, 6 December 2012, Tafraoute>

When the Ayt Khebbash returned to the southern Tafilalet, Morocco was already occupied by the French army. A French officer called Charian accompanied the tribe until they arrived at their original territory in 1934. They arrived in Daoura and returned to their nomadic lives, whilst engaging in agriculture in Lahfira with the help of Imlwan (Ḥaratin, the Tamazight-speaking black population) who worked for them. They cultivated wheat there, and from time to time returned to Daoura and lived there for

several years. Eventually some families moved into Ighef n Ighir and Tafraoute and started building houses, while still leading a nomadic way of life. As mentioned earlier, the first inhabitants of Tafraoute say they moved in from Ighef n Ighir and bought a plot of land in the 1960s.

One of the major factors which accelerated the migration of the Ayt Khebbash group to Tafraoute was the Algerian border dispute in the late 1970s, when the nomadic population living around Daoura, 700 km southeast of Tafraoute, was expelled from their territory. It was in this period that Tafraoute started to take its form as a village. Assou, one of the first settlers, claimed that it was his brother who solicited the government to help the nomads, to build their houses to settle down, who were refugees because of the Algerian border dispute:

> 'I don't know the exact year [when Tafraoute *tiwjdidt* was formed], but it was after the Algerians expelled us from Daoura. The nomads found refuge here, they needed houses to settle down. My brother El Haj Yidir spoke to the authorities … The *makhzen* built twenty houses, five in Saf Saf and twenty here. It was my brother who was the responsible [*shaykh*] of the tribe in this period, and so the authorities gave the keys to him. Once the houses were constructed, the authorities decided to pay a visit – my brother bought a female dromedary for 6000 DH and three sheep, he gave a *sadaqa* ['gift'] to them! And they gave him the keys of the houses, so he sent them to all of those who had registered before, who came from Daoura. Like this we have also lived in Ighrem [Tafraoute *tiwjdidt*] for a long time.'
> <Assou, 6 December 2013, Tafraoute>

The Ayt Khebbash moved into Tafraoute, Lahfira and Ighef n Ighir and engaged in date palm cultivation, agriculture and animal herding, while building their own houses and eventually settling down in the villages. However, there were also several cases in which the nomads had fallen victim to the war, when they were captured and detained in Algeria for many years without trial. During my third visit to Tafraoute in October 2012, I encountered a villager in his late fifties, Lhou, originally from the Saf Saf region. He told me about his 21 years of exile in the Algerian prisons since the war broke out in 1976, until his final release in 1997. He was born in Kem Kem (Saf Saf region) to an Ayt Taghla family in 1955, and was leading a nomadic life herding his animals. In 1976, when he was near Remlia watching his dromedaries, all of a sudden the Algerian army arrived and confiscated his 200 goats and 31 dromedaries (his

entire livestock). He recalls how he was firmly blindfolded and imprisoned in several locations before he arrived in Bechar (Algerian territory). According to him, he was in a group of 500 prisoners among whom he encountered several captives of Polisario. Displaying his handcuff wounds on his wrists, he told me about the severe torture he underwent during the first few years, such as beating, being put on electric chairs, and countless humiliations:

> 'They didn't really interrogate me. Questions like, "Do you like Hassan II" … etc. It wasn't something concrete. Mohammed [his cousin captured together with him] and I were put into an underground cell together for four months … later we were taken out and met the military people [the Moroccan prisoners of Polisario], there was no more torture … just hunger. Three years [out of the whole period in prison] were not bad, the years of [President] Boumediene, the food was not terrible … after that came Boudiaf, who also treated us well, but he just governed six months and then was assassinated. Then came Liamine Zéroual. The period when we suffered a lot was during the reign of Chadli Bendjedid, for twelve years …'
> <Lhou, 18 October 2012, Tafraoute>

He finally returned to Morocco with the help of the Red Cross in 1997, first being transferred to Agadir. He stayed there for eighteen days for medical treatment, and then moved to Rabat before he finally returned to the Tafilalet. At his time he found that his former wife had remarried during his 21 years of absence and he met his daughter, who was still in the womb of her mother at the time he was captured, who had grown up and gotten married. He claimed that he did not receive much support from the Moroccan government, except for a transport licence in 2004 and a job as border guard. The compensation was not enough for living, so he rented out the transport licence at the rate of 850 DH per month. For housing, he had not received anything until present, and his job as border guard lasted for only three years from 2007 to 2010. At the time of our meeting he was jobless, but since his cousin Mohammed had spoken to the responsible person of la Promotion Nationale, he was called to Ar-Rachidia and was offered to work for the local administration of Tafraoute as a temporary employee. From then on he started to receive 450 DH per two weeks, plus 850 DH of rent for the licence. He had only three animals at home and lived with his second wife and two daughters.

Much later when I encountered Lhou's cousin Mohammed in a café in Rissani, he refused to talk about the way in which he was captured and taken to Algeria, but he confirmed that the health care and material conditions had not been too bad over there. He only said that they were tortured for three consecutive months before the authorities decided to put them together with Moroccan soldiers who had been either captured by Polisario or by the Algerian army at the border. During the years in exile the Algerian authorities had 'stolen' their well-being, 'violated' their youth and they had become poor. He told me not to ask about the torturing because he was frustrated by the fact that Algeria did not have pity on them, nor offer them compensation, and the only proof of 'torture' was that they spent twenty years in prison without any trial.

Many inhabitants came to Tafraoute *tiwjdidt* shortly after the Algerian independence (1962) when the flood water swept the fields and arrived at the foot of the mountains. An old villager claimed that at that time 'there were only wolves' around in the arid landscape which is now dotted with some seventy houses. When we look at the way in which the settlement was formed, it is clear that Tafraoute is a fairly recent village, which has been set up because of drought and two wars against both French and Algerian forces.

3.4 Political System

Before the rural and urban communes (*jamʕa*) system was introduced in the Tafilalet region in between 1958 to 1960, it was the *ayt l-ʕashra* (the tribal court consisting of elected members) – represented by ten Ayt Khebbash men – that resolved political and other disputes. This system, enforced by the French colonial government, was abolished at the time of Moroccan independence in 1956. Usually, it was the colonial authority (also called *makhzen*) which demanded the tribe to choose the ten representatives, who should be respectable individuals. In addition, the *amghar n tazigzawt/tamazirt* (*shaykh* of the greenery/land) was elected every year, unlike today, when the *shaykh*-s and *muqaddam*-s appointed by the central government stay in their positions for life. An elderly Ayt Khebbash man remembered that the tribal chief, the *amghar* of the entire Ayt Khebbash group, existed by the time of the historic combat of Bougafer in 1933. The last *amghar* before the central government's intervention in local politics was Youssef Ou Hmad Ouffa from the Ayt Lahcen group of the Ayt Amar clan. As noted earlier, there were four primordial Ayt Khebbash clans in Tafraoute – Ayt Amar, Irjdaln, Izulayn and Ilḥyan. According to the tribal norms, the amghar had to be chosen from the Ayt Lahcen of the Ayt Amar clan, or from the

four groups within Irjdaln – Ayt Brahim, Ayt Khoya, Ayt Kherbouch and Inoguden. The other Ayt Amar groups such as Ayt Hafi and Ayt Hami were excluded from the candidacy, as well as the Ayt Kara and Ayt Yacoub of Irjdaln and the entire Izulayn and Ilḥyan clans.

In the epoch of *ayt l-ʕachra*, which lasted from the French colonial period (1934) until Moroccan independence in 1956, each clan started to choose their own *amghar,* who was in principle elected every year. Bassou, an elderly Ayt Khebbash man born in 1923, recalls the day when the tribal delegates returned from Rabat in order to discuss the issue whether they needed to elect multiple chiefs from each clan:

> 'We had chosen Ourahma and Hmad Assini [in the *ayt l-ʕachra* period]. Ourahma was chosen by the tribe, but Ou Assini was only chosen by the Irjdaln. I was present [at the meeting], we gathered [nine people] in the house of a Soussi in Erfoud. Four Irjdaln had returned from Rabat at that time. After the lunch we asked the late El Haj Mhammed [Ou Yahya] to prepare us tea. Ou Attou said to the *shaykh* [*amghar*] Hda n Alla: "Don't be angry, we went to Rabat and we said to the ministers that the Ayt Khebbash are divided into two sides, that of Ayt Amar, Izulayn and Ilḥyan, and of Ayt Taghla and Irjdaln, and that there are two *shaykh*-s on one side already but none on the other side" Before, the *shaykh* was elected for one or two years. Hda n Alla interrogated about the reply of the minister: "What did he tell you?" Ou Attou replied: "He told us that Ourahma was chosen by the tribe so Hda n Alla will be chosen by the *makhzen* to serve him".'
> <Bassou, 27 October 2013, Rissani>

From then on the *shaykh* was chosen by the *makhzen* to serve the interest of the central state and to decrease the power of tribal authorities. The last *amghar* of the entire Ayt Aṭṭa confederation was Ou Hafi, who is said to be responsible for the dispersion of the tribe. It is often told in local legend that the reason for the dispersion is that the *amghar* did not observe the rules of warfare when they fought against the Shorfa in Achich (in the Alnif region). When the Ayt Aṭṭa gathered in Achich, the home of Ayt Iazza, in order to choose a new *amghar*, a pregnant woman put a crown made of herbs on the head of Baha Ouhra, the new *amghar*. At this moment, the new *amghar* stroked her face, which meant an insult. There were a few tribesmen who observed this from a distance, and they said to others that the *amghar* was trying to threaten them. When they ended the meeting and the new *amghar* climbed on a horse, he

threw the end of his *bournous* on his shoulders, which could also be interpreted as a threat.

At the time of this incident, the five fractions of the Ayt Aṭṭa were still united, so they all went in the direction of Touroug in order to drive out the Shorfa from Qṣar Agni. The Sherif Sidi Abdellah of Agni was informed that the Ayt Aṭṭa had arrived. So he warned them that he would shoot them first, and he put gun powder in the cylinder and asked his fellow to bring him a date seed, since he did not want to kill anyone by using the real ball. When he shot, he ordered the Shorfa to go and attack the Ayt Aṭṭa and chase them away until they had passed the river, telling them not to cross the boundary of river. But the Shorfa did not observe the order of their chief, and went across the river. At that moment the Ayt Aṭṭa counter-attacked them and killed 42 Shorfa, finally succeeding in chasing them away from the *qṣar*. However, although they won the battle, the fact that they attacked the Shorfa is said to have brought them bad luck, which resulted in the dispersion of the Ayt Aṭṭa tribal confederation. This story again reveals the symbolic power of the Shorfa in the Tafilalet, and the identification of Amazigh nomads with the Arabo-Islamic authority.

The difference between the tribal chief (*amghar n ayt khebbash* or *ayt aṭṭa*) and the chief of the greenery/land (*amghar n tazigzawt/tamazirt*) is that the former is the political authority of the entire tribe, whereas the latter is specifically responsible for the management of the land, especially the fields. Before the modern commune system was installed, the *amghar n tazigzawt* played an important role in resolving various conflicts such as border disputes of fields and plots of land.[26] The tribe gathered together to hold a *jmaʕa* in order to divide the land, when all the population around Tafraoute were nomads. Each period the people returned to the place decided by the *jmaʕa* to distribute the plots of cultivation to every household. For example, the *amghar* paid a few men to trace the fields of hundred metres in width and the length just running to the foot of the mountains, but generally left one part of the plot boundary open. Then, if another person arrived, they would measure the adjacent hundred metres and this field would become his property. In that way, when the field was irrigated with rain water or flux, the tribe would gather again to divide it in the same ways the Ayt Aṭṭa cultivated in Daya-el-Maïder.

26 For Ayt Aṭṭa tribal organisation in general after independence, see David Hart, 1984. *The Ait Aṭṭa of Southern Morocco: Daily Life and Recent History*. Wisbech, Cambridgeshire: MENAS Press, p. 187-190.

During the French colonial period the Bureau of Indigenous Affairs was established, but the local political system survived until Moroccan independence, albeit in a re-organised form, when the Tafraoute region was attached to the rural commune of Taouz. Since then the tribal system started to dissolve, as the *amghar* of the entire tribe was not elected any longer and people started to bring the conflicts directly to the authorities:

> 'We can say that the influence of the tribe has ended; since it no longer has the power … there is state authority instead. Before, until the 1980s, when problems arose, such as the animal of A that entered the field of B, etc., the owner of the fields would warn the owner of the animals, and when he could not tolerate [the situation] he would bring the animal found in his fields to a communal yard, near the mosque over there [pointing to the direction of Tafraoute *taqdimt*]. In this case, to get back the animals, the owner had to pass by the *shaykh* [*amghar n tazigzawt/tamazirt*].'
> <Said, 5 December 2013, Tafraoute>

Said, now in his early forty's, recalled the 1980s when he was a herder. When asked who was the *shaykh* (of greenery) then, he replied he knew several including the one who made him pay the *izmaz* ('almond', signifying a payment, such as a fine):

> 'I had the habit to bring my goats to the other side of the river. I sometimes felt stressed, I could not sleep, so I went out for distraction, to look for *aḥaydus* [collective dance] … in the morning I had to bring my goats [back home]. I resisted falling asleep until nine or ten, and then I slept in the shadow of a tree, because it was summer. When I woke up, I turned my head … here and there … there was nothing! I followed the traces [of dung] … Later, I no longer followed the traces, when I woke up and I did not see my goats, I knew that they were at the communal yard of the tribe [in Tafraoute *taqdimt*]. Many times before, once they entered the fields of Ayt Haddou, or another time that of Aoujil, the *shaykh* had brought them to the yard.'
> <Said, 5 December 2012, Tafraoute>

Later, he said he did find his animals, and had to pay the *izmaz*, 2 or 2.5 DH per goat. 'I remember I paid 50 DH (1,000 ryal). It's like when we pay 300 or 400 DH nowadays'. After this incident he was physically punished by his father, since he had to make his

son 'pay' what he had paid. 'He made me pay in another way – the stick', he laughed. During this period, it was not only *izmaz* that was a form of payment, but also the obligation of banquet invitations. The 'punishable' one had to invite six to eight people of the tribe (or village) for lunch or dinner as a form of compensation.

The *amghar/shaykh* of the greenery was responsible for the fields, and he was usually elected on a Friday decided by the *ayt l-ʕachra*, in a ceremony where the elected one was decorated with a crown of green branches, such as *lfeṣṣa*. Still now the *amghar n tazigzawt* and the *bab n umur* (meaning proprietor of the land/fields, his actual function is settling disputes) exist as a part of the informal political system. For example, in 2012 the *shaykh* of Magamane in Tafraoute *tiwjdidt* was Amar Ouddou from the Ayt Amar clan. From Magamane (Tafraoute *taqdimt*) to Aqqa n Turza (the boundary of *taqdimt*), there is one *amghar* who is responsible for the fields, and from there to the north another *amghar* is in charge, so there are three *amghar*-s within the whole of Tafraoute. They collect 'tax' from the people to pay the *fqih* ('imam'), since traditionally it is the tribe who has to pay him. The *amghar*-s choose four collaborators (vice-*amghar*) who collect the money according to the group of houses, and bring it to the *amghar*-s who will then give the money to the *imam*.

In addition, there is a representative of each group of houses called *bab n umur*, which is chosen by the people of each quarter, such as Ayt Magamane or Ayt Udika. When there is a problem, the *bab n umur*-s get together and inform the *amghar* (they do not represent the clans but belong to the quarters). Still now, the conflicts among the inhabitants which are not too disruptive or dangerous do not require the intervention of the authorities, but are brought to the *amghar*, such as the cases of animals entering others' territories. The *amghar* will meet his collaborators and decide the amount of fine in almond (*izmaz*) which should be paid by the 'transgressor'. Although the *amghar* of the entire Ayt Khebbash or Ayt Aṭṭa has not been elected since independence, the remnants of the political system based on tribal units is present in the functions of the *amghar n tazigzawt*/*tamazirt* and the *bab n umur*, as they continue to resolve small problems related to the fields, based on their understanding and observation of social rules related to the neighbourhoods. This system, however, was complicated by direct state intervention through the rural commune, which brought the tribal people under the jurisdiction of state law rather than allowing them to live their lives according to their customs.

In summary, the independent Moroccan state inherited the system of strong central control from the colonial administration, and the tribes as political units were effectively dissolved, since the decision making power was held by the elected commune councils instead of tribal councils. The new administrative system led to the emergence of inter-clan tension, since the *amghar*-s were no longer in the position to resolve serious disputes, and people found themselves in a new social, economic and political context wherein they had to adjust to sectarian politics and modern electoral system, which, ironically, divided the villagers based on clan affiliations.

3.5 Relationship Between the Clans and External Links

In this section I will discuss the marriage practice and the labour migration patterns in Tafraoute. By taking the collective marriage in 2012 as an example, I will first shed light on the external connections established by the villagers through the movements of women. This is followed by an overview of another form of external links created by the migration of male villagers to regional and national economic centres.

3.5.1 Marriage in Tafraoute

The marked characteristic of the marriage pattern in Tafraoute is village endogamy. The villagers practice 'collective marriage' once a year. Most engaged couples wait until September to get married in a collective ceremony subsidised by all the villagers' donations. It is the way to express solidarity and also to cut the expense of food and other provisions necessary for the occasion. As the table shows, most of the brides are chosen within the village or from close proximity (e.g., Ighef n Ighir, Remilia, Lahfira, Lembidiaa), and some from Merzouga-Taouz region (Merzouga, Jdayd). Mezguida is a *qṣar* in the Rissani area, but it does not necessarily mean that the bride came from the *qṣar* itself, but from the surrounding desert, i.e., from a nomad family. There was one bride from Rissani, which is rare because the usual population movement is from village to town. However, this bride was married to a paternal cousin from the same Boumeshoul family from the Ayt Taghla group, which is a common case of inter-cousin marriage.

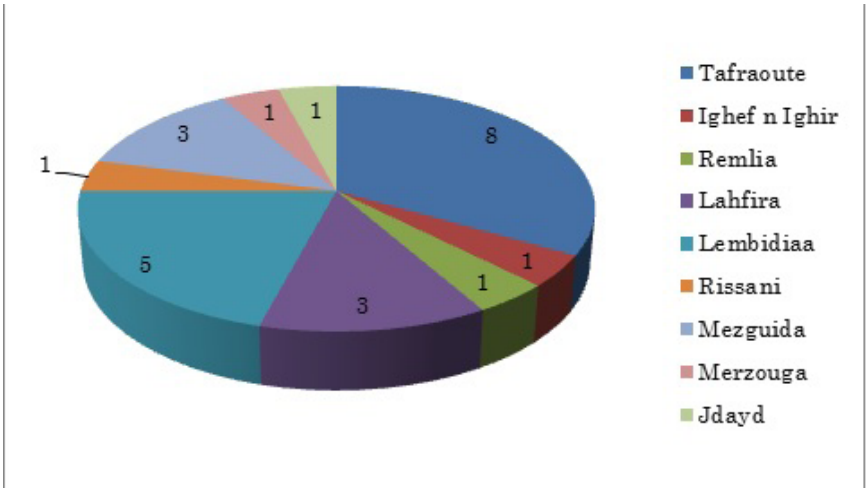


Table 3-1 The home villages of the brides in Tafraoute (2012)

Total: 24 women married to 24 men from fourteen families in Tafraoute *tiwjdidt* and *taqdimt*. Data collected on the annual occasion of collective marriage, 3-5 September 2012.

A second characteristic of marriage in Tafraoute is a very high rate of clan endogamy. Thirteen of the twenty-four couples were married within the same Ayt Khebbash clans, four of which were cousins. At the same time, intermarriage between different clans was still not exceptional, such as Irjdaln and Ayt Taghla, although the number has diminished in recent years due to the political tensions created by the election, which I shall discuss later in this chapter. Although Ismkhan and Imlwan are 'integrated' into one of the Ayt Khebbash clans through the ceremony of animal sacrifice, they do not intermarry with the fair-skinned Ayt Khebbash: as in the case of marriage in Rissani, inter-ethnic marriage is extremely rare to the point that it does not exist in the Tafraoute/Sidi Ali region.

Table 3-2: External connections established by marriage

Family	Distant places	Villages/Towns in Ar-Rachidia	Tafraoute
Ould Ali (Ayt Amar)		Sister: Douar Draoua (Erfoud) Sister's husband from Ighef n Ighir	Wife (Ayt Amar)
Ou Moh (Irjdaln)		Son: Douar Draoua (Erfoud)	Wife (Ayt Taghla, cousin)

		Daughter: Ighef n Ighir	Daughter
Ou Saadane (Irjdaln)		Daughters: Lembidiaa (cousin)	Wife (Irjdaln)
Ou Chaouech (Irjdaln)		Sister: Kem Kem	Wife (Irjdaln)
Ayt Bouni (Ayt Taghla)	Sister: Alnif	Wife: Lahfira (Ayt Taghla)	
Ou Mouch (Ayt Amar)		Sister: Rissani	Wife (Irjdaln)
		Sister's husband from Ouzina	
Ou Baqadir (Irjdaln)		Daughters: Rissani, Douar Draoua (Erfoud)	
Ou Brahim (Irjdaln)		Son: Douar Draoua (Erfoud)	Daughter (Irjdaln)
		Daughter: Rissani	
Bouni (Ayt Taghla)		Daughters: Merzouga	Wife (Ayt Taghla)
Ayt Daoud (Ayt Taghla)		Daughters: Ighef n Ighir, Kem Kem	Wives (Ayt Taghla)
Ayt Assou (Ayt Taghla)		Daughter: Erfoud	Wife (Ayt Taghla)
Ou Ali (Ayt Taghla)		Daughter: Rissani	Wife (Ayt Taghla)
Ayt El Qayd (Ayt Taghla)		Daughter: Rissani (cousin)	Wife (Irjdaln)
Ou Youssef (Ayt Taghla)		Daughter: Missour (married to an Arab)	Wife (Ayt Taghla)
Ayt Ali (Ayt Taghla)		Wife: Kem Kem (Ayt Taghla)	
Ou Ali (Ayt Taghla)			Wives (Ayt Taghla)
Boumeshoul (Ayt Taghla)		Wife: Kem Kem (Ayt Taghla)	
		Daughter: Kem Kem	
Azigane (Irjdaln)		Wife: Remlia	
Boumrour (Irjdalin)			Wife (Irjdaln)
Ayt Yacoub (Ayt Amar)		Daughter: Douar Draoua (Erfoud)	Wife (Ayt Taghla)
Ayt Baha (Ayt Taghla)		Daugter: Douar Draoua (Erfoud)	Wife (Ayt Amar)
		Sisters: Remlia, Rissani, Merzouga	

Data collected from 17-19 October 2012 among 23 Tafraoute inhabitants.

Furthermore, most of the Ayt Khebbash women marrying out from Tafraoute remain in close proximity to the village, usually within the Sidi Ali Commune or the Ar-Rachidia Province region, creating connections between their extended families or with another Ayt Khebbash clan (table 3-2). Their external links are geographically limited

to the Sidi Ali, Taouz, Rissani and Erfoud region and remain within the networks of Ayt Khebbash clans, with very few exceptions of men out-migrated to towns and marrying Arab women.

3.5.2 Labour Migration

In recent years seasonal labour migration has become rare in Tafraoute since nowadays the wage difference between large cities and the Ar-Rachidia Province region is not so great, which means that many young men prefer to work near their home village. Typically, they work as drivers, construction workers or fossil artisans in Rissani or Erfoud and come back to the village during *ʕid* holidays, such as the end of the month of Ramadan or the feast of sacrifice, or get married and settle down in towns. As seen in table 3-2, a number of villagers emigrated to the 'illegal' settlement, Douar Draoua in the southeast of Erfoud without purchasing the land, and engaged in fossil work and other seasonal jobs in the informal sector. Several mountains with barite mines in the Sidi Ali region started to provide a source of income for the villagers since the early 2000s, to the extent that labour migration to towns and cities became unnecessary for most of the families. During my second visit in 2012, I accidentally came across the former president of Rissani's fossil co-operative in front of a house that occasionally provides photocopying service to the villagers. He had some papers in his hand and apparently came back to his village to get the authorisation for barite mining from the rural commune. His son was still active in the fossil domain in Rissani, working as a president of the association, so it seemed that the father had moved into the barite business, which resulted in 'reverse labour migration' from town to village. Furthermore, the illegal smuggling of cigarettes and goods from the Algerian border allowed some villagers to make a fortune, as in the case of one of the most influential political figures of the village, Hamid Ou Moh, who lived in Erfoud. Some others worked in tourist transportation and later on built small hotels in the village.

Summarized, the circular, seasonal and rural-rural labour migration patterns of Tafraoute inhabitants are colonial and post-colonial phenomena, and the process of economic development and modernisation is associated with the increasing movement of economic agents from agriculture and herding into informal artisanal/commercial sectors. The local population's incorporation into the wage labour economy since the Protectorate period resulted in widening inequalities between the households, and the newly rich villagers started to control the local politics, dividing the population into two opposing political groups. As I shall discuss later in this chapter, the in-

ter-personal and inter-clan networks created by the town inhabitants from Tafraoute continue to influence the regional politics of Ar-Rachidia, which further accelerated the endogamous marriage patterns of the villagers.

3.6 Work, Village and the Development Project

As noted earlier, Tafraoute in its early days used to be primarily an agricultural village where the Ayt Khebbash people cultivated date palms, wheat, cumin, henna, and other vegetables. However, nowadays, a significant number of date palms is 'dying' for lack of irrigation, and many of the villagers have abandoned agriculture altogether in search of better income-generating activities. Corresponding to the drought-epoch of the 1980s, the water has become increasingly salty, which has made it unsuitable for agriculture. Each household needed to purchase a water pump, and dug their own wells, since the boundaries between the fields were clearly marked and the households did not share water. The only exception was the field near Tafraoute *taqdimt,* which was never exploited by individuals but divided by the tribe into *tagurt* (small rectangular plots), so that each family would cultivate wheat when the land was irrigated by the river. Otherwise, the land in Tafraoute was taken by the Ayt Khebbash families randomly, settling in on a first-come first-served basis, determining their territories and digging their own wells. By the time of my visit in 2012, approximately 20 per cent of the village population was still engaged in some sort of agricultural activities, whilst many of the people were oriented towards the extraction of barite in the nearby mountains. When I asked a villager how was life back then, some fifteen or twenty years ago, he replied that he felt that the natural environment used to be far better, although life improved in terms of infrastructure or the way people thought. There is a certain nostalgia in the way how people describe the past, as they claim that before there was agriculture and sweet water close to the surface. In the past they used to produce and sell the harvest, there were more domestic animals, wheat, cumin and henna, but now there is 'nothing' at all, except for that 'horrible salty water'.

Back in the 1960s up to the 1970s, the major income generating activity used to be agriculture and lead extraction around Lemrakib and various other locations. As already stated in the previous chapter, in the 1970s fossils were discovered as commercial objects and the extraction work became a popular occupation in Tafraoute in the 1980s, replacing agriculture and other mining activities. A fossil artisan who migrated to Rissani from Tafraoute in mid-1990s said that he had known for long time that there were fossils on the surface of rocks, but they were really 'discovered' in the 1970s when

Europeans started to come and commission them to extract the goniatites and trilobites from the mountains. Corresponding to this period of 'fossil as primary revenue' in the 1990s and 2000s, major labour out-migration to nearby towns or large cities took place.

By the time of my visit there were only four men still working in the fossil domain, as the majority of male villagers had started to work in barite mines since the late 2000s, although the Association Konouz for fossil sculpture was established at the initiative of JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) in 2010. Two other associations were created at the same time; the Association Ayt Aṭṭa for cumin and henna, and Association Dar Sania for carpets and local crafts. By the time JICA came up with the project, using INDH (Initiative Nationale pour le Développement Humain, 'National Initiative for Human Development') as a platform, the rural commune of Sidi Ali was chosen to be one of the five communes in the Tafilalet region in which the project of rural development was to be implemented, in order to promote local income generating activities. This is because nowadays, in Morocco, it has become common to create associations to conduct politics and to promote economic interest at a local level. For example, JICA, together with the Artisanal Delegation in Ar-Rachidia, aimed to valorise the local crafts as 'national heritage', and to educate the young population to acquire artisanal skills in carpet weaving or fossil sculpting. The objective of this project was mainly linked to rural tourism, aiming at making 'every aspect of daily life' a source of revenue, such as incorporating traditional bread-baking, carpet weaving, fossil sculpting and the performance of folklore music in organised tours for tourists.

In 2012 I made regular visits to the fossil association where the artisans work to ask questions on the ways in which they used to work, and to observe how they work presently. Hmad (35), was one of the fossil artisans who usually worked in the *atelier* inside the building of association in Tafraoute *tiwjdidt*. He used to be a nomad, herding animals around Remlia before he moved into Tafraoute *taqdimt* in 2000. Living with his wife who was from the same clan Irjdaln and with their four children, he worked exclusively in the fossil domain now, while his parents were still herding dromedaries in Ouzina. His three brothers emigrated to Merzouga, one worked as a camel guide for tourists, one was a driver and another a seasonal worker. Like other artisans, he started with fossil extraction in the mountains, then gradually learnt how to sculpt using hand tools such as a hammer and chisel, fixing the piece in the cylindrical chunk of trees known as *ziyar*. Following the first three years of work he gradually started

to earn well, since according to him there was still demand for fossils from 2003 to 2005, which allowed him to sell at high prices. The demand started to decrease in the past three years (since 2009), but the fossil association could not help him with commercialisation. He claimed, however, that they helped him enormously in terms of improving the work environment, providing him with electric machines such as a '*chicago*' (a type of electric chisel, made in Germany or the US), and a peaceful workplace. He works on three to four pieces of 'matacantina' a day, but only one piece if they are 'felinix' or 'facobs' (different species of trilobite). As for 'pretoce', he can finish up to twelve pieces per day. 'Pretoce' is locally called *izan* (flies), because they are numerous and therefore 'mass produced'. 'Felinix' is the most rare and sought after species of trilobite, which can be sold at a price of 1,000 DH or more. Hmad told that his revenue depended on the demand, starting from 1,000 DH and up to 3,000 DH per month. 'Life has gotten better after we started to use *chicago*', he says. 'It is better than going to the mountains (for extraction)'. He did not miss his place or origin, for he considered Tafraoute as his 'home'. 'The place of work is my home (*tamazirt*)', he said. 'I work without distraction or obligation. I don't work for others, so I am free'.

Apparently the establishment of association in 2010 had dramatically improved the work environment, but due to the decreasing international demand for their merchandise the cost of extraction and tools started to weigh on the artisans' household budget. The president of the fossil association, Youssef (27) explained about the costs and difficulties in extracting raw materials. He was from the rather influential Taghlaoui family (Ayt Taghla clan) and had just gotten married in the collective marriage in 2012:

> *Youssef*: 'When we go to the mountains [for extraction], we need to buy the food provisions first, then take our tools with us; the pick axe, shovel and hammer in order to break the rocks, and we also have to buy a glue to attach the broken pieces. We need to work several days before arriving at the mine.'
> *Question*: How many days it takes until you arrive at the veins?
> *Youssef*: 'It depends on the veins. For 'matacantina', for example, we need a week or more before starting on the vein, then you break … for such as 'sertaguis', we bring a dredger. In addition, we need to look for a mean of transportation to go to the mountains. There are some who go by bike, I usually rent a car.'
> <7 December 2012, Tafraoute>

A hammer costs about 250 DH, a pick axe 80 to 100 DH. The food expense is approximately 250 DH, and they have to pay for the transport which is 300 DH or more. The place of work in the mountains is about twenty kilometres away from the village, and once they go there they have to stay for at least a week. That is the most difficult part of their work, for the sculpting is relatively less tiresome, although they experience hardship when it comes to commercialisation. In Tafraoute, the artisans have to sell the finished products to intermediaries in Rissani and Erfoud since they cannot find sufficient numbers of customers in the village, except for the foreign tourists who buy directly from the association.

Youssef claimed the budget of the association had already been 'exhausted', and that he had to pay with his own money for various activities, including many phone-calls, and an exhibition in Merzouga in which he participated. 'The Association must have its own revenue, in order to make the young people learn the work', he insisted. He seemed to believe in the continuity from one generation to another, and that the youth should make an effort to develop the fossil domain, despite all adversities in commercialisation, and the effects of the European financial crisis. He talked about his efforts in preparing the papers to participate in exhibitions abroad, such as in the US, France or Germany, which should, in his opinion, lead to more people getting involved in the fossil work.

In the case of Youssef, his household budget was not so tight, since he lived with his four brothers, their wives and children in the same house. All of his five brothers worked in barite extraction at Rask Mouna, including the one who lives separately in Rissani. They earned 30,000 to 50,000 DH per month, apart from the month of Ramadan, depending on the market. Their household account book (table 3-3) represented a typical consumption pattern of an 'average' rural family in Ar-Rachidia Province which was neither poor nor affluent. Much of the expenses were food, including 'luxury' items such as coffee, with occasional spending on clothes and children's school books. The brothers did not share the expenses for *fourgonette* (mini-van) rides to visit the Rissani *suq*, or other small personal shopping ,so they are not represented in the table. When it comes to the barite extraction costs, those who established their independent business, such as in the case of the Taghlaoui family, they had to pay the monthly authorisation charge to CADETAF,[27] gasoline for the lorries and compressors,

27 Ministère de l'Energie et des Mines, la Centrale d'Achat et de Développement de la Région Minière du Tafilalet et de Figuig (C.A.D.E.T.A.F.)

and the salary of workers (table 3-4). Although the monthly expense in barite mining was enormous, they made about 10,000 to 20,000 DH profit per month, which was a good amount of money in local terms. While Youssef remained in the fossil domain, his brothers moved on to seek for other work, to be prepared for the changing international demands and economic situation in Europe, as in the cases of many other Rissani artisan families.

Table 3-3: Household account book of Youssef Taghlaoui's family in Tafraoute

Number of household members: 20

Type of family: Extended family household

Occupations (five married brothers): Fossil (one), Barite (four)

	Item	Quantity (per month)	DH
Food	potato	15kg	60
	tomato	15kg	90
	onion	15kg	30
	carrot	10kg	35
	grape	15kg	120
	apple	15kg	150
	pomegranate	15kg	90
	flour	75kg	180
	cooking oil	5litre	80
	meat	10kg	160
	salt		1
	sugar	4 cones	60
	eggs	10	10
	tea	1kg	50
	coffee	1/2kg	30
	condensed milk	1/2kg	100
	jam	2 bottles	20
	cumin (home-grown)	250g	0
Other	gas	1large, 2 small	64
	washing powder	10kg	150
	soap bar	10 bars	60
	medicine (aspirin)	5 boxes	5
Total of household expense			1,545

barite extraction costs	45,190
Total including barite extraction costs	46,735
INCOME	
Fossil	3,000
Barite	30,000-50,000[1]
Total	33,000-53,000

Data collected on 14 November 2013, Tafraoute.

Table 3-4: The expense in barite mining of Youssef Taghlaoui's family (per month)

Item	Quantity	DH
gasoline for compressor	100L	1,000
gasoline for lorry		15,000
food (five workers)		2,600
gas (for cooking)		90
drinking water	1,000L	4,000
workers' salary		15,000
CADETAF authorisation		7,500
TOTAL		45,190

Data collected on 15 November 2013, Tafraoute.

The initial role played by the three associations established in Tafraoute was well appreciated locally, in terms of providing resources and places to work. The Association Dar Sania for women's handicrafts has been particularly successful so far in providing local women space for work and for young girls a learning environment, not only for crafts, but also for Arabic lessons for small children of the villagers and nomads. However, when it comes to linking the local produce to tourism – generating income by selling the crafts and agricultural products to the tourists – there are a number of unresolved problems which are hindering successful implementation of the project. Firstly, young villagers are unwilling to work in the domains of fossil extraction/sculpting and agriculture since they are considered to be jobs linked to 'by-gone days' – the common preferences for work have already shifted to barite mining and tourism.

The development project that has been implemented by the local government and JICA aims at tourism promotion, which makes it sound as if tourism is a promising domain of work, and that locals can earn their living in the hotel business and tours,

which does not necessarily involve selling local crafts. But in fact tourism in Tafraoute remains to be a modest source of income. The village is in 'the middle of nowhere', some 90 km to the southwest of the popular tourist destination Merzouga and 120 km to the east of Zagora. The roads to both places are rocky, stony and incredibly bouncy unpaved 'routes'. As a result, the tourists who stop by the village are limited to French and Spanish people with land rovers who just stay overnight en route from Merzouga to Zagora or vice versa. In addition, the 'tourist resources' – the ordinary life of people and handicrafts – were merely promoted by the JICA at the time of the establishment of the associations and therefore lacked a continuous local effort to advertise their objectives. Since then people have already forgotten about it and do not endeavour to propagate these any further. What is left were overtly inflated prices specifically created for foreigners, for many of the locals came to believe that whatever they would do or sell to tourists should be a 'major source of income', for the rest of the time when they would not see tourists.

For example, during my first visit to Tafraoute in 2011, I asked a local woman if she could show me an *aḥaydus* performance. Delighted, she went out to gather four women of the village and brought them inside the house to make them perform. They sang and played with the drums for half an hour, in a joking way which was far from 'authentic' and then asked me to pay 'whatever price' I wanted. However, when I gave them a 100 DH note – which I considered still a touristy price but not too much – the women were infuriated and insisted that the other tourists gave them more, 500 or 1000 and up. This infuriated me as well, and when the women saw I turned purple, they lowered the price and insisted I would give them 100dh each, 400dh in total. It commonly happens in touristy places that the villagers get used to receiving inflated amounts of money or gifts from foreigners in return for mediocre performance or service of whatever sort. When I talked to the villagers about this incident, they replied, 'Yes, these days people have changed. Once they get a sum of money without much effort, they cannot go back to where they were before. They got lazy'. One can also say this is a 'positive progress', that indeed tourism is generating more income for the locals. However, if the tourists do not feel comfortable to pay the amount of money for what they were offered, it will negatively affect the village reputation, and therefore cannot become a long-term solution for establishing a solid income base. When local resources become 'products' for a global market of tourism, they have considerable social and cultural impact on the interactions of tourists and the local people. As my experience demonstrates, the manipulation of what is perceived as 'authentic' cul-

tural elements to satisfy the needs of tourist consumption through their commodification, paradoxically may have the opposite effect of making those elements less attractive to tourists.

Furthermore, while there is ample evidence demonstrating that the development of tourism is real and has been moderately sustained over the past few years, there is also indication that the growth is rather limited. Although there are more visitors to the region, the average number of nights spent in the village hotels has not increased at all; in fact it has remained stable from one to two nights.[28] Therefore, tourism provides limited benefits to the villagers, and accordingly people working for fossil sculpting and agriculture (cumin and henna) have not yet found a way to effectively commercialise their products, since the majority of the tourists are just 'passing through', without paying much interest to the souvenir objects. By the time of my latest visit in November 2013, two of the three associations, Dar Sania for carpet weaving and Ayt Aṭṭa for cumin and henna, had already closed down due to 'budget problems' after they had spent the initial budget allocated by JICA and INDH. This project failure could be attributed to the lack of understanding of local cultural and social norms on the side of JICA, and also the people's lack of positive effort in commercialising the products. However, the primary reasons hindering the sustainable development in Tafraoute is the lack of interest and involvement of the 'economically relevant elite' from the local and the central government. In fact many of the local elites are interested in personal empowerment by investing primarily in projects outside of the village and keeping the rest of the villagers 'poor', in order not to cede more power to the opposing political sect. It is a well-known fact that Hamid Ou Moh, the wealthy merchant from Tafraoute, invested in a gasoline station on the road to Merzouga, where many buses and tourist vehicles pass by, but does not contribute to the improvement of infrastructure in the Tafraoute region. These complex interactions, between national institutions, local authorities and economic elites as emerging social and political forces, are an undercurrent to the social and cultural 'displacement' and contradictions the villagers are experiencing in everyday life.

28 According to the information from the twenty local hotels located in Tafraoute *taqdimt* and *tiwjdidt*, even during the high season the majority of the tourists only stop by for a night or just have lunch and continue on road without sleeping in the hotel. One of the reasons for this is that the village is isolated in the desert without paved roads, making it difficult for tourists to access.

3.7 The Cold War: Election and the Invented Conflict

The most striking question which is generally avoided by the local authorities is 'Why are there no roads to Tafraoute?', or, if we assume that there are roads at all, 'Why do they remain unpaved?' It is not only that the villagers suffer from the lack of water, but also that they are left isolated in the desert with 130 km of rocky distance to the nearest town Rissani.

With the introduction of the rural commune and modern political system of 'democratic elections' in the late 1980s, the village entered the epoch of severe rivalries between the clans. The first election took place when the Sidi Ali Commune was established in 1992, at which the village chose two candidates from different clans. Baha Amraoui, who was from the Ayt Amar clan, was an influential merchant in Tafraoute who had made a fortune by working in the field of tourist transportation. On the other side, Yidir Ou Hda from Ayt Taghla was chosen to represent the interest of RNI (The National Rally of Independents), and later of PAM (Authenticity and Modernity Party). The first round ended in the victory of Baha, creating tensions between the clans, notably Ayt Amar, the clan of the elected president, and Irjdaln, against Ayt Taghla. This was because the two rivals used their clan backgrounds a base of support for their political parties, which emphasised the 'differences' that did not really exist before. A Tafraoute resident claimed that before the election started, there was 'no discrimination' based on whether somebody was Ayt Taghla, Ayt Amar or Irjdaln, but a sense of solidarity existed thanks to the presence of the *amghar*. However, since the commune system was introduced, the dual opposition emerged as each candidate started to manipulate the population in order to dominate the commune. For example, it seems that Ayt Taghla was 'alone' on one side, but in fact they also gathered some Ayt Amar and Irjdaln, even if they were very close to the antagonists. In other words, the tension prevalent in the village was not an internally emerged clan or tribal conflict, but a consequence brought about by the centralisation of the Moroccan state and the implanted modern political system aiming at dissolving the tribal identities. A villager described the consequence of the emerging duality in the following way:

> 'The effect is terrible. Each party searches for a trap to denounce the other parties, to send them to the hands of the authorities or to prison. There are people who were thrown into prison because of that [elections]. Even if you work legally, we can denounce them anonymously, often give them labels like: "you work in illegal trafficking" for example … there are men in the village who never worked in *con-*

> *trebande* [illegal smuggling] and they are poor, but they were sentenced to eight or ten years, they did nothing illegal … it is only the dual electoral politics which is the cause … there are those in whose houses the authorities found nothing, but they captured them, they are starving to death!'
> <Hakim, 6 October 2013, Rissani>

For example, there were victims who were pursued by the authorities based on anonymous phone calls, since they were searching for a 'criminal' related to illegal smuggling. A villager attested that there was someone who was captured in Tanamoust (near Merzouga), apparently because of an anonymous informer, although the 'convict' was 'so poor that he didn't even have a chicken in his backyard' (a figurative expression of poverty). As a result his children who were left behind had to live on the donations of friends and relatives.

Another example of such case was a distant relative of my friend in Rissani. When I visited this Ou Baydir family in Tafraoute, the head of the household, Brahim Ou Baydir (67, Ayt Amar), was absent, so I talked to his wife Zahra (55, Ayt Amar). The only male workforce in the household, Assou, Brahim's son, went to prison some years ago due to an unreasonable allegation that he worked in *contrebande*. According to the local people, it often happens in Tafraoute nowadays that the most deprived people are denounced because of inter-clan disputes and sent to prison without any tangible evidence that they are involved in smuggling. The villagers say that if they had been smuggling, they wouldn't be living in Tafraoute but got a comfortable large house somewhere in towns and might aspire to be a candidate in the next communal election.

The strain caused by the electoral conflict on the lives of the most marginal part of the population is synonymous to the forever-unpaved route to Tafraoute; since it is evident that with the wealth of the power players of the village and their connections to party authorities, paving the 130km route in the desert would not be a difficult project. However, the outcome of 'democratic elections' was the proliferation of corruption and the birth of inter-clan tensions. If one side proposed a project which would contribute to the welfare of the population, the other side would oppose it, so as not to let them benefit from it. Since each party tried to defend its own interest, the welfare of the entire village became just a peripheral subject in the local politics.

For the third election in 2003, one part of the village population, largely Ayt Taghla, insisted that Baha Amraoui was 'old' and 'sick', so he needed to be replaced. They had chosen another candidate from their clan, Hamid Ou Moh, who built his fortune by illegal smuggling. Although he lived in Erfoud and did not stay in the village, he still had his house and fields there, so he was considered to be a good candidate to protect the interest of Ayt Taghla group. On the other hand, Baha Amraoui, elected president twice, held a meeting with close allies and told them he was 'tired', that he wanted them to find a successor so that he could retire. They had chosen Ali Ou Mouch, but some people insisted Baha should stay in his place and that Hamid Ou Moh become the first vice-president as a proposal of reconciliation. Baha, however, opposed this idea, saying he didn't want to have the 'youths' – the people who represented the young population on the side of Hamid – in his bureau, and that he didn't trust them. As a result, Ali Ou Mouch was elected president in the third round, while Baha became the first vice-president, *de facto* guarding his position in power. In short, the vested interests of one group continue to rule the local politics at the cost of the well-being of the general mass.

The Tafraoute electoral rivalries were closely connected to the Rissani Municipality, as the Sidi Ali Commune was an important base of support for party politics. The two candidates who won the 2011 parliamentary election, Amin El Yahiaoui and Hassan Zoubir, both Arab merchants from Rissani, had close connections to Tafraoute political figures: Hamid Ou Moh supported El Yahiaoui (PAM), and Baha Amraoui was in the camp of Zoubir (PPS: Party of Progress and Socialism). In the past, El Yahiaoui used to be the front runner, occupying the presidential seat in the Rissani Municipality for twenty-five years, from when it was founded thirty years ago. In the 2011 election, however, Zoubir was elected president for the first time, reflecting the support he received from an influential lawyer: El Alami from the Istiqlal Party. El Alami was the president of the *jamʿa* Beni Mhammed, and originally came from Meknès. He was from a poor background, and first approached El Yahiaoui, attracted by his money. However, the two men got into a problem, and El Alami started to take a distance from El Yahiaoui and instead approached his rival Zoubir. Shortly afterwards, El Yahiaoui got into trouble and was sued for corruption, and was sentenced by the court to a year in prison and a fine. Behind the scenes El Alami had played a role in putting him into this situation. Since then Zoubir became increasingly strong, thanks to the help of El Alami.

It is evident that the newly implemented electoral system created inter-clan conflicts which affected the Tafraoute villagers' relationship to each other, as well as friendships and marriage patterns. For example, a villager from the Irjdaln group explained to me that when he wants to work for someone from the Ayt Taghla group, as a driver for instance, his friends will not allow him to do so by putting various forms of pressure on him. Although there are lucrative business chances, he cannot take them because of the inter-clan conflict. In terms of marriage, before it didn't matter if an Irjdaln clan-member wanted to marry an Ayt Taghla clan-member, as long as the individuals concerned agreed amongst another. However, in recent years there is increasing pressure to avoid inter-clan marriage (Irjdaln/Ayt Amar – Ayt Taghla), hence clan endogamy has become more prevalent. As discussed in section 3.5.1, the predominant trait to marry within one of the Ayt Khebbash clans, inter-cousin marriage, has long been a social norm among the Ayt Khebbash people, even after their sedentarisation in villages and towns. However, the abstinence of intermarriage between Irjdaln/Ayt Amar and Ayt Taghla clans is a newly emerging practice in Tafraoute since the 1990s, which can be seen as a form of traditionalisation in response to the tension brought by the modern electoral system. The dominant group, represented by the electoral candidates, invoked 'tradition' and stressed the difference between clans in order to control and administer the subordinate group. The villagers know that marriage exclusion is not part of their 'tradition', so it is by no means important, symbolic or emotionally necessary for them to practice it. Rather, they responded to the political manoeuvres in this way because of the possibility of 'material remuneration' (Cf. Gillman 2001; 2004) and political participation. By demonstrating support to the 'clan representative', some villagers gain political and social recognition and could avoid being denounced behind their backs. Therefore, clan endogamy in Tafraoute is on the one hand informally enforced by the local authorities as an effective means of control, but on the other is a tactic of participation maintained by the villagers through experiences of implicit privilege and marginalisation.

3.8 Conclusion

We have seen in this chapter how the Ayt Khebbash villagers' social relations underwent a dynamic re-organisation process in the course of the formation and development of Tafraoute. The process of state formation, capitalism and globalisation that penetrated the Tafilalet, imposed on the formerly nomadic Ayt Khebbash population a sedentary way of life in search of cash income. Not only the previous economic structures changed but also the Ayt Khebbash people's cultural world view and their

relationship to one another. In this process of globalisation, the dusty oasis villages near the Algerian border were created and integrated into the world market for money, material goods and migration. The flows and interactions that occurred in these processes have diminished the autonomy of local traditions, and have fostered a greater variety of hybridisation in production, communication, and styles of consumption as compared to the past (Cf. Canclini 1995 [1989]).

Meanwhile, we can observe that the Ayt Khebbash people have actively transformed the 'disorder' of the everyday world they live in, by the creation of myths and fictive clan affiliations. Even those seemingly fixed institutions such as kinship, ethnicity and traditional customs are in fact constantly reformulated and manipulated by the local people without altering the outer form of appearance. We have already seen that the 'Ayt Khebbash' group category itself is flexible, as in the case of Ayt Taghla clan joining them by creating a fictive affinity. However, the interaction with the outside world and the recent implementation of a modern political system did not only integrate the Ayt Khebbash by producing 'hybrids', but also segregated them by producing new inequalities and marginalising the already impoverished members of the population.

The living world of Tafraoute villagers has been transformed from subsistence agriculture and herding to wage-earning labour, in which they strive to traditionalise modernity to make sense of the new social and cultural norms. Yet this contradictory aspect of the identification processes is far more complex than what it seems, if we take a close look at how people respond to the imposition of discourse practices. The general picture is that the power players of the village utilised their existing family connections and clan affinities in order to survive and exploit the newly implemented electoral system, which some villagers consider as a 'tragedy born out of ignorance'. A former nomad of the Tafraoute region who currently lives in Rissani told me that during the time he spent in the Algerian prisons he learnt about international politics and Western concepts such as 'democracy', which he believes need to be better understood by the villagers. He insisted that the ignorance of democracy by the villagers was the primary reason behind all the corruption, denunciations and inter-clan conflicts.

Apart from this viewpoint, many of the villagers explicitly or implicitly deny the discrepancy between their mode of living and the modern political system, because they more or less seemed to counteract the discourse power by tactically internalising it

within their age-old web of social relationships. The result, however, is not integration but segregation, since the social actors have discovered in this complex process the means for resisting or modifying globalisation, when they participate in social practice in ways that are constitutive of power relations. In other words, by traditionalising their social relations and marriage patterns the villagers also strive to claim a position of power in the newly created political and economic order. Many of the Ayt Khebbash villagers do not consider such practices as actually related to their 'tradition', but rather perceive these as an artificial segregation from their own history wherein different clans co-habited and inter-married. They are marginalised and segregated from their historical 'roots' and 'self', but at the same time complicit in their own domination by seeking political and economic opportunities. This profound complexity of power relations is engrained in the Ayt Khebbash people's identification processes, which continue to shape the meanings they attach to the *tamazirt*, long after their migration to the towns.

3-1 Tafraoute *tiwjdidt*

3-2 A house in Tarfaoute *taqdimt*

3-3 A salon in a house in Tafraoute *taqdimt*

3-4 Field in Tafraoute

3-5 Irrigation

3-6 A Tafraoute inhabitant in his field

3-7 A tent in Tafraoute *tiwjdidt*

3-8 Dressing a bride

3-9 A bride in the collective marriage (2012) in Tafraoute

3-10 Finished trilobites

3-11 Fossil association in Tafraoute

Chapter 4 – Sculpting the Town

4.1 Introduction

This chapter intends to be an ethnography of work in the Tafilalet town of Rissani, within the framework presented in chapters two and three about the socio-economic transformations. I will first set the context by looking at how the local population lived with the environmental hazard of flooding and subsequent water shortages, and then go on to describe the function of the town of Rissani as a regional economic centre and a labour market. Finally, I will treat the evolvement of the specific work domain of fossil sculpting, which is linked to the global market of tourism.

As discussed in the previous chapters, the drought of the 1980s forced the nomadic Amazigh population to sedentarise and live in villages and towns. On the other hand, the Imazighen were not only 'pushed' out of the desert, but also 'pulled' into the towns. The rural-rural migration structured the national process of integration into the global capitalist economy, wherein local towns such as Rissani and Erfoud became important labour markets absorbing the rural population in wage-earning jobs. Inspired by their interactions with the growing number of tourists in the 1970s to 1980s, the Imazighen realised the commercial value of the fossils and started to make a living from fossil extraction in the mountains and eventually in sculpting. The present chapter is about the process of the Ayt Khebbash nomads becoming fossil artisans, which is also a process of social identification, of becoming an 'Amazigh', and creating a new collective identity through work practice in the multi-ethnic town environment. By adopting the analytical framework of the 'community of practice' (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998; Wenger and Snyder 2000; Wenger and McDermott 2002), I will argue that learning or failing to learn in apprenticeship is a process of participation that is at first 'peripheral', but increases in engagement, dis-engagement and complexity in the course of time. I will also demonstrate that in the process of recruitment, acquisition and transmission of skills, the Ayt Khebbash artisans do not always rely only on village-based family relations, but also make individualised efforts in order to secure their job and to become a *m'allem* (skilled master).

The social transformations brought about by the capitalist economic developments forced the Ayt Khebbash artisans to also engage in different types of communities of practice outside their work domain, in an effort to defend and reconstruct their identities. The Ayt Khebbash people's collective effort to claim land rights in Kudyet

Draoua, a territory to the southeast of Erfoud, is an acute example of this process. I shall examine the ways in which the Ayt Khebbash artisans responded to the changing political and legal framework of post-independence Morocco, and how they reconstructed their social identities of being 'Amazigh' and 'Ayt Khebbash' in their endeavour to gain access to local resources necessary for their new life in town.

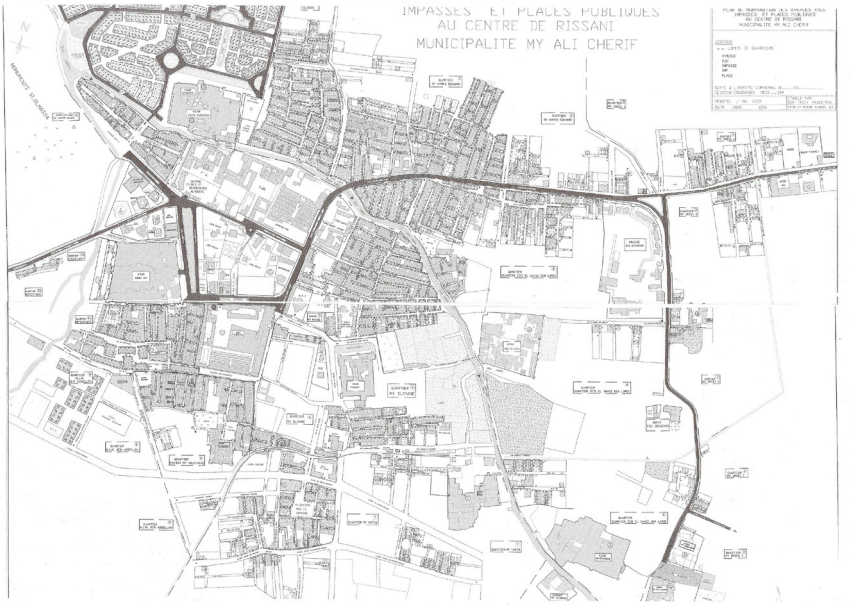
4.2 Rissani: Historical and Physical Context

> 'In 1965, Moulay Ali Cherif flooded: the water ran through the centre of Rissani – we constructed a small embankment with mud and stones in front of [*qṣar*] Abu Am. A lot of *qṣur* were destroyed or damaged … then we attempted to destroy the dams in Oued Amerbouh [in order to decrease the water flow in Oued Ziz, i.e., Rissani] and after that the situation got better. The water came back to the wells, and to the *khettara*. Later on the water left again … since 1974 or 1975 the drought began.'
> <Zakaria, 18 March 2013, Rissani, interview in Moroccan Arabic>

4.2.1 Crossing the Desert River

Since the time of Sijilmassa, life in the Tafilalet oasis has always been influenced by the constant battle against flooding and drought. Located at the southern end of the national route that connects Meknès to the Tafilalet, the town of Rissani is bound to the east by the Oued Amerbouh and the stony black desert of Ḥamada du Guir, to the west by Oued Rheris and Alnif, to the north by the oasis Oulad Zahra and the town of Erfoud, and to the south by the sand sea of Erg Chebbi, leading to the arid mountains of Adrar. Rissani is an urban commune administered by the Moulay Ali Cherif Municipality, which includes in its territory eleven modern quarters and eighteen *qṣur* (map 4-1). Situated in the plain of Tafilalet, the altitude is moderate, with stony mountains between 750 and 790 m high. The Oued Ziz runs through the town from the northwest to the southeast, exposing its dry river bed almost all year round – except when there are occasional rains from November to April.

Before the construction of the modern Oued Ziz Dam at Ar-Rachidia, the flood water periodically endangered human life in the Tafilalet, while replenishing the water table of the date palms and springs, cleansing the oasis environment and providing important water resources for the short and mid-term period (Miller 1995). As described by the elderly men of Rissani, in 1965 the rapid snow-melt in the eastern High Atlas



Map 4-1 Moulay Ali Cherif (Rissani) Municipality

mountains resulted in floods, flowing through numerous streams and channels used in traditional irrigation methods to replenish the water bed for date palm cultivation and agriculture. This event marked the beginning of the modern period in the Tafilalet, when the heavy rain in the mountains swept down to the Oued Ziz. It destroyed the dams, *segia* (irrigation channels) and *qṣur*, and many human lives were lost. In the wake of this disaster the Moroccan government initiated the construction of a dam in Ar-Rachidia, completed in 1971. A few years later, however, people started to suffer from a lack of water as the desert river dried up. Miller insists that this was a result of modern technological interventions. Since the construction of the dam, the oasis is no longer fed by the occasional flood of the Ziz, and the Tafilalet has become less moist and 'less healthy' (1995:65).

Due to the severe drought that befell the Tafilalet region, beginning in the mid-1970s and taking its full force in the 1980s, increased numbers of Ayt Aṭṭa and Dwimniaa[29] people were forced to abandon their pastoral way of life and find an income in the

29 The Dwimniaa speak an Algerian-Arabic dialect and live predominantly from agriculture. Originally they are from the southwestern region of Algeria and Oujda, Boudnib and Bouârfa; they started to settle in the Tafilalet oasis in the seventh century.

towns. On the other hand, approximately 70 per cent of the local *filali* (which literally means 'people of the Tafilalet', but usually refers to Arabic speakers only[30]) population emigrated to Fès, Meknès, Khemisset, Oujda, Casablanca, Tiflet and Rabat.[31] According to Abderrahmane El Maliki (1991), who studied the Arab *qṣar* population of this period, the death of the patriarch usually triggered the dispersion of a household, since family ties were one of the main reasons for people to remain within a *qṣar*. During the period from 1980 to 1985, the Ar-Rachidia Province region received at most only 200 mm rain per year, and there were several years without any rain at all. The migration of the population towards the north already had a long history, but this period of severe drought intensified the process: the *khettara* all dried up and there were virtually no agricultural activities possible, which resulted in massive out-migration of the local inhabitants.

El Maliki states that in *qṣar* Oulad Youssef water pumps for the wells were installed in 1986, although there were only three wells that actually produced water (1991: 64). The water was exclusively used for watering animals and for washing clothes. In 1974, the depth of the wells was twelve m, but in 1986 it had already reached 26 m. He writes, 'For those who didn't leave it was only the history and culture that bound people together to stay in the *qṣar*' (1991: 65), indicating the strong family ties and sentimental attachment to their land and traditions among the Arab inhabitants.[32] Some informants of the modern quarters say that nowadays in Rissani 'there is no wind', in contrast to the violent and chronic sand storms that used to occur during the period of the drought, when many people, especially children, suffered from eye diseases, such as trachoma, as well as from skin infections and severe respiratory problems. On the way to *qṣar* Mezguida from the centre of Rissani, we can still find the remains of a massive barrage, of which the water was reserved for agriculture and domestic animals. During the drought, people used to flock here to drink from the remaining water, which eventually dried up. Today we only see the children of the *qṣur* running around and

30 In the local context, *filali* (pl. *filaliyin*) means the (formerly) *qṣar*-dwelling Arab population. However, outside of the Tafilalet region, anyone from the region can be called a *filali*.

31 Chikhaoui (2002) points out that the present crisis of artisanal sector was accelerated by the urban explosion and massive rural-urban migration, which made it difficult for the authorities to implement public policies. See Chikhaoui 2002: 13-16.

32 One of the supposed differences between Arabs and Imazighen - that is locally believed to be true - is that the former feel strongly attached to their land, whereas the latter, as a result of their nomadic past, are more flexible in that respect.

playing football on the cracked, thirsty ground which used to be a reservoir. A former *qṣar* dweller and a civil servant in his late forties recalls his time in college during the drought:

> 'In the eighties, I was a college student. In the mornings when I got up, I couldn't find any water to perform my ablution. We used to go very far in search of wells to fetch water to the mosque of our *qṣar* [Oulad Abdelhalim]. At other times, there was an occasional lorry that brought water from Jorf – 40 kilometres away [from Rissani]. We bought water for 50 centimes per litre. Also, there were problems regarding the construction of houses, since they needed water for the production of concrete … Many of my friends and relatives migrated to the cities.'
> <Rida, 11 May 2013, Rissani, interview in French>

In other words, during the drought Rissani and the Tafilalet region as a whole underwent the greatest demographic transformation in its history. As a result of the massive out-migration, the ethnic composition of the Rissani population has changed. Including the 9000 inhabitants of the eighteen *qṣur* of Rissani Municipality, it is estimated that the Arabs amount to 47 per cent, Amazigh 30 per cent, Ḥaratin 18 per cent, and Dwimniaa 5 per cent.[33] If we exclude the *qṣar* population and only look at the eleven modern quarters in the town centre, we find a dramatic decrease of the Arab proportion to around 30 per cent. The majority of the inhabitants are Amazigh (50 per cent), with some Ḥaratin and Dwimniaa.

4.2.2 Going down to the *Suq*

'Belkacem[34] (a resistance fighter from Oujda) departed, and the French came in. They ordered the people of Abu Am to destroy all that had been built by Belkacem, because they needed to construct their own administrative post.' Two elderly Arab men, in-

33 This is an estimation made by the Rissani Municipality based on their statistics.

34 Belkacem Enghadi was a militant, originally from the region of Oujda, who governed Rissani before the French colonisation. It is locally believed that he was dispatched by the Sultan to fight against the French forces, but since the central state was weak at that time, he governed Rissani independently. When the French occupied Rissani in 1931 without much resistance, following the historic battle of 1926, Belkacem still attempted to fight back against them from Qṣar Tiaarimt. After the defeat, he escaped and asked for help from the tribe of Ayt Isfoul, but to no avail. Later on, according to some sources, such as the work of Bourchoq (1991/1992) and Rissani informants, he cooperated with Ayt Khebbash in an attempt to drive out the French forces from the Tafilalet.

tensely tanned, one in *jellaba* and wearing a cap, the other in a faded navy jacket, sat at the terrace of a café at the entrance of the artisanal district Moqaouama, recalling the beginning of the town formation in the 1930s. One was a Rissani native and the other originally from Beni Mellal. The Mellali confidently pointed his finger to the *qṣar* Abu Am right in front of the café, claiming that his father was the one who helped Belkacem make peace with its inhabitants. After the French occupation of the town, he says, his father was in charge of taking care of the nationalist prisoners in Alnif.

The remains of Abu Am are still overlooking the modern quarters of Rissani – the mud-brick defensive walls facing the town centre are still intact, although only few Arab families continue to live there. Rissani before the French colonial period consisted of several of such *qṣur* spread out in the oasis and a *suq* in the town centre. Grown into a modern town with eleven districts administered by the Moulay Ali Cherif Municipality, *qṣur* in the Cercle Rissani have seemingly become a remnant of the past, whilst the life of the town continues to be synonymous to '*suq*' (market). There are still 9000 inhabitants (mostly Arabs) living inside the eighteen *qṣur*, but many families have moved out to the modern quarters. On the other hand, the function and meaning of *suq* remains strongly attached to the globally influenced lifestyle of the people. In other words, *suq* is a living cultural form and a social institution as well as an economic system. As Geertz observed in the Middle Atlas town of Sefrou, *suq* is more than a place for people to come to every day in order to meet one another – it is a 'distinctive system of social relationships centring around the production and consumption of goods and services' (1979: 124).

When a Rissani inhabitant says *addugh gr suq* or *nemshi l-suq* ('I am going to the *suq'* in Tamazight and Arabic, respectively), it does not necessarily mean that he is going out for shopping in the market. In a broad sense, *suq n rissani* is the market, marketplace, and the town centre where one finds the cafés, grocery shops, and the mechanics along the main road of Avenue Hassan II: it is the area that is commercial as opposed to residential. In a narrow sense, *suq* means the municipal market of Rissani, where the population of the region gathers on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays to sell and buy their food and common provisions. In addition, the animal trade (*raḥbat* [or *suq*] *shyah* 'sheep and goat market', *raḥbat l-bgar* 'cattle market', and *raḥbat l-behaym*[35] 'donkey market'), the *suq l-fuul* 'bean market', and numerous vegetable sellers

35 *Behaym* is the plural of *bhima* 'animal'. Therefore, all animal markets including sheep, goats, cattle and donkeys can all be collectively designated as *raḥbat*/*suq l-behaym*. However, since the term 'donkey'

stretch outside the southwestern gate of the covered district, and are also part of the *suq* as a specialised marketplace. Therefore, when a non-local – someone from Tafraoute or Lahfira, for instance –, says 'I am going to the *suq*', it will most definitely mean that he is going on a shopping trip to any market of Rissani. On the other hand, for the locals, *suq* indicates a meeting point, a social sphere in the centre where they meet with friends, exchange greetings and information, as well as engage in commercial transactions. In either case, time and space of the dusty oasis town is controlled by the centuries-old human activities embedded in the battered, but familiar walls of the old *suq*.

When the French tanks ripped through the Avenue Mohammed V in 1933, the Qaṣbah[36] Abu Kacem Ziyani and the adjacent quarter constituted the urban centre of Rissani; no other urban quarters existed. The present Alaouite Research Centre's building housed the military command post, and the town began to take its form as a colonial administrative centre, symbolising the final conquest of the Tafilalet tribes. Right in front of the demolished ruins of Qaṣbah Ziyani, the oldest café in the town still exists, serving agreeable café noir, café au lait and orange juice. A retired civil servant recalls the time in the 1970s, when this café used to be seedy and decadent, serving alcohol brewed from dates. There was another café, he said, adjacent to this one which was run by a Jewish man. 'A Jew in the 1970s?' I asked back, and he replied that although most of the Jewish population had left Rissani in the 1960s for occupied Palestine, a few non-Moroccan Jews remained. 'They [the Jews] were so inventive', he went on, 'they usually ran jewellery shops, tanneries, or weaving *ateliers*, but not only that: they were the first who brought the camera to town. We used to go to their laboratories for photos – you know, the old fashioned way that involves dipping the picture into water, then it comes out'.

The modern quarters continued to expand after the Moroccan independence (1956), and the population kept growing: from 2844 in 1960 to 3565 in 1971 and further to 4985 in 1982 (*Population Legale du Maroc* 1983). The statistics of 1994 shows it further

(*ḥmar* or *aghyul*) is often used as an insult, the locals consider the term as vulgar and tend to uniquely designate the donkey market as *suq l-behaym* 'animal market' instead.

36 *Qaṣbah* is a term that specifically indicates a type of village (*qṣar*) that is surrounded by mud-brick defensive walls and has a square that functions as a political centre; it is governed by a single figure. Whereas *qṣar* is a term that may refer to any small village, with or without surrounding walls. Some examples are: Qṣar Melhaj, Qṣar Chaïb er Ras, Qṣar Taouz, Qṣar Bouhamid.

quadrupled to 18,450 and it reached 20,456 in 2004 (*Monografia baladia Moulay Ali Cherif* 2009). When we look at the Quarters Moulay Hafid and Moulay Slimane (previously Bouhamid Quarter together), two of the older quarters in Rissani that started to grow in the late 1970s, we see a marked population increase during the drought period (1980s), reaching its peak in the 1990s and 2000s (appendix 1).

According to my survey of 50 households in these quarters, 24 families belonged to the Ayt Aṭṭa or other Amazigh groups, 14 were Arab (Shorfa and Aḥrar), 5 Saḥrawi (Ḥassania speaking nomadic group), 5 Ḥaratin and 2 Ismkhan (appendix 1). This result corresponds to the Municipality's estimation of the ethnic ratio, according to which 50 to 60 per cent of the modern quarters is occupied by Amazigh (Ayt Aṭṭa, mostly Ayt Khebbash) immigrants from the Tafraoute and Taouz areas. Most of the Arab population came in from the nearby *qṣur*, such as Abu Am, El Ghorfa and Tabassamt. The majority of the Amazigh population in Rissani first moved into the Moulay Hafid and Moulay Slimane quarters, and later some of them changed their residence to other newer quarters, such as Moqaouama. In terms of occupation, we see that there are several household heads who are retired from military service and living on their pensions. The younger male family members are usually engaged in seasonal construction work, fossil sculpting, or petty commerce. Initially, the population in Bouhamid was to a significant extent divided into Arab and Berber quarters, but nowadays they are intermingled with no marked residential divides. However, the socialising circles are often self-contained with very little intermarriage occurring between the different groups.

As mentioned earlier, the Ayt Khebbash is the predominant Amazigh group in Rissani, also in the domain of fossil sculpting and other mining work in general. Although there are a few Arab groups working in fossil sculpting in other towns such as Erfoud and Midelt, I limited my surveys, interviews, and analysis to artisans who are mostly from the Ayt Khebbash group, since 99 per cent of the artisans in the fossil domain in Rissani belong to either that, or the Amazigh group.

4.3 Moving out of the Village: *Les Pierres Noires*

> '[In the mountains] we found the trace on the surface of the rock, and we were sure there was something inside the black stone ... initially, we sold the raw [fossilised] stones to foreigners. Then I bought a hammer, and then a chisel, a shovel, and a pick. I moved to Rissani [from Tafraoute] in 1996, and finally bought a house ...'
> <Amar, 14 June 2012, Rissani>

4.3.1 The Development of Fossil Extraction Work

The fossil sculpting domain did not start as 'sculpting', but as spontaneous 'extracting' work in the mountains before the influx of Amazigh population into the towns. People tell that the first foreigner who systematically began to establish 'fossil sculpting' as a domain of work was a Frenchman from Bordeaux. He came to Rissani in the 1970s, established an association in Casablanca, and worked with Ayt Khebbash men from Amerbouh and Mezguida. According to the brother of the Ayt Khebbash man from Mezguida who still lives in Rissani, the Frenchman taught them how to identify fossils in the mountains and how to cut the rock into blocks, before transporting them to the workshops in Casablanca. The raw materials were sculpted in accordance with European production standards, and then exported to France. Later on, several Europeans in search of fossils followed suit and a growing number of Arab and Amazigh intermediaries started buying raw materials, usually from Amazigh nomads living in the Taouz and Tafraoute region who were familiar with the mountains. A fossil artisan in Rissani recalls how he got into the domain in the 1980s:

> *Aissa*: 'I was living around Laatchana, near Fezzou [Tafraoute area]. I was a nomad, following my goats when I found those [fossilised] stones. You know I often pass by these places where you find the fossils. But then I was not interested. Later, there were some people from Rissani and Erfoud, generally people working in the tourism domain, who asked us where they could find such stones. So I decided to collect these stones, since I said to myself, "If they are sought-after, they can be sold". One day I came here to the *suq* of Rissani and was instructed to meet M.'
> *Question*: Who is this man?
> *Aissa*: 'He makes caps and puts them on a table in the bazaar to sell. Together with these caps, he also displayed some fossils and minerals. I showed him my fossils [phacops] wrapped in a cloth, and he gave me 45 DH for them. This was my

> first income from fossils; and so I continued to collect them. I got a hammer and extracted them from the mountains. Me and my friends … sometimes we got broken pieces, sometimes complete objects … Later I quit being a herder and settled down in Lahfira. I separated from my brothers and went on with my friends to engage in fossil extraction. The Rissani men [intermediaries] bought them from us.'
> <22 January 2013, Rissani>

In the pioneering days, the Amazigh nomads worked in fossil extraction in the mountains while they lived in the surrounding villages and were active in animal herding and agriculture at the same time. Several foreigners informed the locals that the fossils could be a source of income, and encouraged them to work in extractions. A veteran sculptor from Alnif said:

> 'One day he [a European, possibly a geologist] climbed the mountain with some locals and he found the mines; this way they started to go to the mountains more often, since before that, they didn't know where to find the veins [of fossils]. When there are no fossils on the surface, some people search for traces earlier extractions, and like this the mines were exploited and all the villagers started to earn cash. We sold everything.'
> <M'hamed, 21 May 2013, Erfoud>

The extraction method, until today, remains fairly rudimentary and informal. Once the local Imazighen got preliminary knowledge of where to look for fossils, they went to the mountains near Erfoud and Rissani, such as Imertrof and Amar, and worked there with hammer, pickaxe, and shovel to dig out ammonites, trilobites, and orthoceras[37] from the carbonated strata. Apart from the initial instructions given by European geologists, the way locals work in the mountains is not based upon strict cartographic knowledge, nor do they receive any scientific assistance; they learned how to extract fossils without damaging them from experience. 'We are certain ourselves [that there are fossils inside the stone]. If they form a long line, for sure there is something inside there. We have experience in lead [extraction], we dug and extracted the stone, and found the fossilised insect [*tabkhusht*] inside the gravel. We used to sell those raw blocks for about six years', an artisan explained. As a matter of fact, the great

37 Orthoceras (meaning 'straight horn') is an extinct nautiloid cephalopod, that existed between the Ordovician and Triassic periods. It is commonly found in limestones, and has straight and elongate shells which come in a variety of sizes from two cm to one m.

majority of the extraction work remains unauthorised. Still now, there are only five persons in Erfoud and Rissani who are authorised extractors and pay taxes.

4.3.2 Tools and Techniques

Individuals who are authorised to systematically work in the fossil domain use semi-industrial instruments, such as cranes, compressors, and various electric tools. They have been authorised by the Ministry of Interior to explore particular mines, and hire several workers on site and for transport. They treat and craft the raw material in their *ateliers* in Erfoud, or commission it to the artisans.

'I first saw the fossils in Melhaj [village in Taouz region], when I was visiting my aunt', a Rissani sculptor recalled. Melhaj is one of the first villages where the Imazighen started extracting and polishing fossils. 'I found the children [of my aunt] polishing the fossils. Some people were working with manual tools', he said. Initially, they just sold the raw stones, but upon the suggestions of European geologists, tourists, and Moroccan intermediaries they eventually created effective methods to work the stones using cutting tools, sand polish, and oil treatment. One of the tools they invented was a *ziyar*, a thick tree trunk with a metal handle attached to the side. It is said that it was first created by the men of Lahfira, and later became popular among the village artisans. The top surface of a *ziyar* is vertically cut in two, so that one can place a trilobite inside. The wood is tightened by the handle to secure the trilobite stone, so the artisan can work on it without the object moving around. A Rissani artisan told me about his experience with tools in the pioneering years:

> 'In the 1990s we already started to sculpt, using the pic. There was nobody who could teach us how to sculpt … but I heard from my clients that someone else knew a way to dig out the insect in the middle of the stone. We also invented the *ziyar*, the cylindrically shaped tree trunk. Our neighbour in Lahfira, named Hassan, was the first [to invent it]. But we had already discussed before how to fix the stone in order to sculpt it. He took the piece of wood and cut out a little hole in the middle. Afterwards, it was Hmad Ou Ali who modified this tool by cutting the wood in two pieces and putting a metal bar across, in such a way that you can tighten and loosen it [the gap]. Before inventing this tool, I used to fix the stone in between my legs. After we got the *ziyar,* all of us started to use it. There was a woodworker in the village; it was him who used to make it from then on.'
> <Abdelatif, 22 January 2013, Rissani>

The initial development of fossil extraction and the invention of tools had little to do with centralised Moroccan state policies. Rather, the ideas and methods were developed through the imposition of the foreigners' tastes, which brought with it the European dominant culture and academic definitions of quality standards set by the international scientific community (Cf. Herzfeld 2003). The newly developed fossil sector provided considerable economic benefits to the local population, yet the absence of regulations and legal measures were an obstacle for its development. On the other hand, the lack of state intervention allowed the sector to grow spontaneously, which often resulted in the discovery of 'rare species' which were considered scientifically important, and also contributed to the birth of creative ideas for developing tools and object designs.

In Rissani, the process of craft production starts with cutting the large blocks that contain fossilised stones into smaller pieces, using the industrial saw, which is capable of cutting pieces of up to 2 metres wide. Since it is an expensive saw, only a limited number of artisans are able to afford it. Most artisans buy pre-cut pieces from others who do own the machine, or they crush the dug out rocks into smaller pieces using a sledgehammer. The second step is to trace the object they wish to create, using a small hand-held saw. After this stage, the artisans need to closely look at the rock to identify which parts contain fossils that they want to preserve in the object design. Cutting the rock while preserving the fossil inside is a very difficult part of their work that requires experience and patience. In the case of trilobite sculpting, they use the electric chisel '*chicago*' to sculpt out the creature inside the rock; this may easily take several weeks. For sculpting ammonites and goniatites, the artisans use the medium-scale electric saw '*dynamo*', while for rounded objects, such as washbasins, bowls, or small boxes they use the machine *teqqaba* (an Arabic term that means 'hole-digger'). When they have finished cutting out the object, they use grindstone and water to pre-polish it, before applying the final touch with sand paper.

For the decorative objects such as plaques, washbasins, mirrors, ashtrays and boxes, it is very common to paste the fossils cut from another stone onto the object as a part of their design. This will reduce the object value for the European consumers, but unless s/he is a geologist or an experienced connoisseur, the trick cannot be identified. For example, the large-size natural orthoceras are always excavated in small broken pieces, so it is impossible to create a perfect object without artful pasting. The artisans carefully assemble the bits and pieces and paste them onto a long, rectangular fossil

plaque, in the way of a jigsaw puzzle. For the missing parts they put a different stone of the right size instead, and then polish it to perfection.

Many of the artisans make a distinction between the old manual tools they had been using since the beginning of their careers, and the new electric machines they bought after moving to town. When I visited the *atelier* of Oualid, an Ayt Khebbash artisan from Tafraoute, he was mostly working with the electric chisel '*chicago*'; one with a medium-sized head and another with a smaller head to sculpt the details of trilobites. However, he still kept his old and worn hammer and chisel, which were the first tools he used when he started working in fossil sculpting in his home village. 'I will never give up my old tools, because I feel they are an extension of myself and my life', he explained: 'There are memories in my tools. Thanks to them I could earn money and buy my house in Rissani'. Most of the Ayt Khebbash artisans share the feeling of attachment to the old, rudimentary tools, since they associate them to their idealised vision of the home villages, and also to their success in accumulating wealth in the town. On the other hand, the artisans take a distant and realistic view towards the newly introduced electric machines. Another artisan from Tafraoute jokingly expressed that 'My old tools are like my lover with whom I parted a long time ago. Whereas the machines, which cost me a lot of money, they are like a car that needs constant maintenance and surveillance'. Apparently, he does not feel anything sentimental towards the electrically operated machines, which are convenient, but dangerous at the same time; the artisans usually have several cuts and wounds on their hands from the razor-sharp disc '*diamond*' attached to the '*dynamo*', caused by sculpting objects such as goniatites, ammonites or small ashtrays. Expensive machines often evoke the money the artisans spend on purchasing cars, which is a symbol of success but something they have to be cautious with. In such a way the electric machines are associated with the artisans' experiences living in town, the place where they find some material comfort, but also feel unfamiliar and withdrawn.

4.3.3 From Raw Material to Craft

At the beginning of the 1970s the raw materials were directly sent to the factories in Casablanca for sculpting and treatment, but in due course the *ateliers* for sculpting and polishing fossils started to take shape in towns such as Rissani, Erfoud and Alnif. The Artisanal Delegation in Ar-Rachidia classifies fossils as artisanal materials into two categories; 1) the trilobite sculpting and 2) the 'polishing' of other design objects such as tables, washbasins, ash trays and bowls containing ammonites, orthoceras

and goniatites, or those fossils alone polished for decorative purposes. According to *Etude sur le secteur des spécimens minéralogiques et fossiles* (*'Study of Mineral and Fossil Specimens'* 2002), there are three categories of fossil *ateliers* in the polishing category, classified based on the nature and number of machines and tools they utilise:

> Class 1: Large *ateliers*. These are well-structured and organised *ateliers*, belonging to companies. These factories utilise large-scale machines (stone-cutting machines, sawmills, chainsaws, drilling machines, electric drills, etc.). They specialise in manufacturing tables, plates and other polished products. There are only four of such *ateliers* in Erfoud and the entire region.
> Class 2: Medium *ateliers*. These utilise machines of medium capacity (drilling machines, polishers, *dynamo*s with different heads). There are thirteen *ateliers* in Erfoud and two in Rissani in this category.
> Class 3: Small *ateliers*. This class regroups the majority of the artisans of the Tafilalet region. The machines and tools they utilise consist of small portable drilling machines, *dynamo*s with different heads, hammers and chisels. The artisans of this class perform all stages of treatments.

The trilobite *ateliers* can be classified into two classes:

> Class 1: This class utilises modern machines and tools such as binocular loups, micro-hammer sculptors, and micro-fraises. It is estimated there are no more than ten artisans in this class.
> Class 2: This class comprises the majority of artisans (about fifty). They do not use electric machines, and in the 1980s they only used manual tools. There are several in the Alnif region and they work at the extraction sites, at home or in the garages (*ateliers*).

Nowadays there are virtually no artisans who do not work with electric tools, but this categorisation can still be used with regard to the size and number of machines they employ in their *ateliers*. In Rissani, there are approximately fifty artisans, belonging to Classes 2 and 3, who are member of the Association Ayt Aṭṭa for fossil sculpting in Rissani. Although the total number of unregistered artisans is hard to establish, the Ministry of Tourism estimates that there are approximately 300 Class 2 artisans in Rissani alone, who constitute the majority of the fossil sector in the town. Therefore, my research is limited to this artisan group in Rissani.

The incorporation of electric machines in towns were one of the main reasons for the Amazigh nomads to leave the villages, since at that time there was no electricity outside the towns and therefore the villagers had to work with manual tools. Simultaneously, by the time they were discovering the commercial value of fossils, the drought forced them to abandon their pastoral way of life. The *muqaddam* of Tafraoute recalls that in the 1980s the well water got increasingly salty, making it difficult to use in agriculture. 'Only those who got a water pump could improve the situation. Water provision had become scarce. Many of the palm trees died'. In other words, in the 1980s the Tafilalet witnessed a massive out-migration of *qṣar* inhabitants (Arab population) into large cities (rural-urban migration), whereas the nomadic population continued to flow into local market towns (rural-rural migration). Most of the Ayt Khebbash migrants found their subsistence in fossil sculpting, or worked as animal sellers and taxi drivers.

It is not easy to categorise the Ayt Khebbash migration patterns, but their immigration to the Tafilalet towns is usually accompanied by their family members, unlike their seasonal work in large cities where only single men go to earn cash and eventually return to their home villages. The movement of nomadic and village population into local towns is a permanent one: at first the single or married men move in, rent a house and find work, then they eventually invite their brothers, wives and parents to settle down permanently.

However, although they usually try to build their residence in a particular locale, the life of Ayt Khebbash men is an eternal cycle of wandering. The fossil artisans, for example, do not show a typical sense of attachment to their profession as we expect from artisans, but are always willing to change their job in favour of higher income generating activities of the moment. Many of them have experience working in cities such as Nador, Tanger, Casablanca and Agadir, where they engaged in construction work or petty commerce. This typically resulted in short-term migration, eventually returning to their homes, although there are a few exceptions – those who built a fortune during the construction boom of 1970s remained in cities. Once they return home, they continue with the fossil sculpting or start investing in the hotel business or barite and lead mining. They can also work in several different domains at once: one remains in fossil sculpting and his brother temporarily goes for barite mining, for instance. They habitually foster and juggle their work identities in their new situations in town, by reconstructing the same type of social order which was evolving in

their nomadic past. Adapting or resisting to a new social reality requires employing the cultural habits which they nurtured during centuries of nomadic life across the desert rivers.

4.4 Coming to the Town: Apprenticeship in Fossil Sculpting

> 'I worked with ammonites and goniatites. There are people who are knowledgeable in this domain, those who passed some time in the work. They can see the veins of origin without talking about the pieces, since the vein is under a rectangular form, but it contains the pieces inside without being apparent. We take the hammer and we break the rock very carefully [after extraction]. When we see the trace of the fossilised insect, it shows as a white stain, we leave this part that contains the trace, and we take the chisel and we sculpt its surroundings, to draw out the boundary of the piece. But at the same time you need to know the face and back of the piece …'
> <Abdelkrim, 22 January 2013, Rissani>

4.4.1 Nomadic Learning

Abdelkrim, an Ayt Khebbash man with many jobs, is in his early forties, now working as a barite artisan. Once a herder in the region of Bou Maïz, 30 km south of Rissani, he moved to the village of Melhaj in 1989 to work in the fossil domain. 'There were so many people who were working with fossils, those from Merzouga, Hassi Labied, Melhaj…I was in Bou Maïz before settling into Melhaj', he says. He started his work by learning the tasks at the artisans' mining site or *atelier*. It were these people who offered him the information, such as how to make the chimney, how to know the depth of the vein, how to dig it, how to extract from the surface, and how to prepare the stone containing ammonites. He worked in extraction and later in sculpting for five years, then he travelled to the north, mainly in the province of Nador, and engaged in construction work and brick factories in Tafarsite. After some years, when he renewed his identity card, he decided to obtain a driver's licence. He returned home to the Tafilalet, settled down in Rissani and became a truck driver, but eventually started to seek for opportunities in barite mining since 2010.

With artisans changing their jobs and residence so many times, it is hard to picture the domain of fossil as the techniques and arts transmitted from one generation of craftsmen to another through a classic form of apprenticeship, often affiliated with guilds

that require semi-permanent commitment. The fossil domain defies categorisation, other than that it is another income generating activity through manual labour; it is impossible to put the domain next to the realm of other centuries-old Rissani artisanal traditions such as pottery, woodwork, metal work, tanning and basket weaving. The only common characteristic of all of the artisanal sectors in Rissani, including the fossil trade, is that none of them are organised into craft guilds, but remain to be unregulated family or kin-based businesses. If we follow the official definition, the fossil extraction is 'regulated' by the Ministry of Energy and Mining, whereas the fossil sculpting is under control of the Artisanal Delegation, but in fact the two sectors remain to be an informal economic activity which is seamlessly incorporated into the changing life stages of local Ayt Khebbash men.

Fossil work itself is unrelated to Islamic art and religious education; it is a recent invention by the local population in response to European craft knowledge, scientific values and consumer demands. Ibish argues that in the Muslim world, the impact of European colonialist expansion and capitalist ventures displaced many locally made commodities, replacing these with mass produced European goods (1980). Also, the reorganisation of government structures in accordance with colonial models served to weaken the power of local craft guilds. In Morocco, the Protectorate government attempted to strengthen the traditional craft economy and for this purpose restructured Moroccan craft workshops by shifting their control from guilds to the French authorities (Irbouh 2005). As a result, the Moroccan craftsmen adopted French instruction as well as their modes of production, through formation in vocational schools. Irbouh points out that the art schools created by the colonial administration in large cities such as Casablanca, Rabat, Marrakech, Fès and Meknès played an important role in diffusing French colonial cultural hegemony, for instance by producing a subordinate work force that served the interest of the colonial state (2005: 2). In the case of Rissani, the historically fostered social and economic ties of the local Arab artisanal groups deteriorated due to this establishment of urban craft centres which was one of the causes of massive rural-urban migration of skilled artisans in search of better paid jobs. On the other hand, the fossil domain emerged in the 1970s as a 'gold rush' for the nomadic population flowing into local towns. In other words, the birth of the fossil and mining sectors in the Tafilalet is rooted in complex historical factors in a process of globalisation that first grew out of European colonialist ambitions, and was subsequently accelerated by the compelling forces of world capitalism, as manifested in the development of new commodities and markets.

For this reason, the 'fossil artisans' of Rissani are not comparable to those artisans characterised by their inherited skills and pride of their professions, such as with those minaret building artisans in Yemen described in the work of Marchand (2001). The fossil artisans are un-rooted, in a sense that their identities are not fixed to this particular work, and that the domain itself is unrelated to existing local traditions. Therefore, their apprenticeship must be seen in a different light, opposed to the assumption that it requires high levels of knowledge and skill that generates equally high levels of social respect. Although the fossil sculpting necessitates specialised knowledge and skills, the period of apprenticeship, either formal or informal, lasts for only one or two years at most. Thereafter they become independent sculptors. Whatever hardship or skills it requires, the work is considered as an informal and temporary occupation that the artisans are willing to quit whenever another job opportunity comes up. There are, of course, those veteran artisans who continue to work for decades and will not quit until their voluntary retirement. Even though they express enthusiasm for their work, they say 'we stay in the domain because we have no other options'.

4.4.2 Apprenticeship in the Moqaouama Quarter

Many artisans learn the skill collectively by working with their brothers or relatives in their home village, while others come to town and become an apprentice in the *atelier* of a *mʕallem* (skilled master). In Rissani, the artisanal quarter Moqaouama started to take its form in the 1980s on the southwestern side of the *suq*. In the narrow and dusty alleyways leading from the southern gate of the *suq*, there are a number of small *ateliers* for wood workers, often with artisans working on the street. Soon after the road gets wider and a relatively open space with several garages of fossil artisans appears. Right at the corner, the animal selling trucks pass by in the morning to unload the chicken, leaving behind a strong putrid odour. The artisans are rather unconcerned by it, even less concerned about the clamour of their own cutting machines '*dynamo*'. This is the first location where the fossil work started to develop – the artisans rent a garage to store their objects, and work with small to medium machines and tools, not in a blessed condition except for the supply of electricity. Passing through this street lined by garages, there are few more wood workers and metal workers, next to the small alleyway of old but enduring brothels (which finally closed down their business sometime around January 2014), and few metres further west an open space appears which looks more desert-like, dotted with a few modern houses and palm groves. There we find the second fossil garage area, a recent creation by those artisans wishing to work in a more isolated and open environment where they don't need to care

about noise complaints from the neighbourhood. The difference from the first garage street is that all of the garages have been bought by the artisans. This area started to develop in the 1990s and approximately twenty Ayt Khebbash men work there in their own *ateliers*. During my fieldwork I rented a house in this area, which my landlady jokingly called 'the second Tafraoute' – due to the fact that many of the inhabitants were originally from the Tafraoute region, and the spacious landscape reminded us of the village rather than the typical Rissani townscape where numerous tiny houses attached to each other are squeezed into narrow alleyways.

The layout of the Moqaouama Quarter speaks for what it is – a village in a town, sculpted out by the practical activities of everyday life. The quarter retains village-like characteristics, as everyone knows each other, visits each other and their places of origin are mostly limited to Tafraoute and Taouz areas. Hence the quarter is full of family members and kin groups. The apprenticeship of a fossil artisan is, therefore, home-grown – an integral part of existing social spheres, even though the commercial value of fossil crafts are validated by Western standards. The Moqaouama Quarter came into existence in the 1980s, when the Ayt Khebbash men started to move in and rent the garages for work. A veteran fossil merchant, Moha, who owns a large shop on the Merzouga route at the end of Rissani says he rented his small garage in Moqaouama and worked there for some years before moving out to the current location:

> 'My brother worked since 1980, and I joined him after quitting school in 1987. I started with ammonites, polishing them with sand paper and cleaning with water. Later, my brother needed help in his work so we started working together with small machines. We rented a garage in Moqaouama and there we worked for two years … there was only me and my brother [working there] during that period. We needed more workers, so we hired four. And then we worked there for six years. Later we bought the land here on the Moulay Ali Cherif route, and employed twelve workers. We bought more machines …'
> <Moha, 9 February 2013, Rissani>

By 1990, the fossil street contained approximately twenty garages with *mʕallem*-s and apprentices from different villages of the region, mostly from the Ayt Khebbash group, with very few Arabs. Craftsmanship itself has a long history in Morocco: carpet weaving, woodwork, metalwork, pottery, blacksmith, leather work, tailoring … etc., and indeed some of the Ayt Khebbash women are skilled craftspeople, as described

by Cynthia Becker (2000; 2006) in her study of art and gender of the tribe. However, the Rissani artisanal sector is historically dominated by Arabs, and the Ayt Khebbash men who started working in fossil sculpting are neither part of the Rissani artisanal tradition nor of the Ayt Khebbash craft practices which are exclusively the domain of women. Rather, the fossil craftwork should be placed in the historical process of herding, agriculture and mining work of Ayt Khebbash men. These everyday experiences fostered the contemporary practices of fossil craft apprenticeship.

The study of craft apprenticeship started with the aim to find a form of education that might be compared with Western schooling but was locally rooted. In other words, I understand the apprenticeship as a typical example of an informal education embedded in the practical activities of daily life. Lave (2011) argued in her study of Vai and Gola tailors in Liberia that the notion of learning through apprenticeships is a matter of 'legitimate peripheral participation' in 'communities of practice', in which the apprentices engage in structured patterns of learning experiences without being taught to become skilled and respected master artisans (Lave 2011; Lave and Wenger 1991). The notion of 'legitimate peripheral participation' is useful when looking at the relations between newcomers and old-timers. It focuses on activities, identity transformations, and communities of tacit knowledge and practice, and explains the ways in which newcomers become part of a community of practice. Furthermore, Lave and Wenger insist that this learning process is 'situated', from the perspective that knowledge and learning are relational, and that meaning is 'negotiated' in the context of informal, experience-based learning (1991). The apprentices are not merely receiving factual knowledge about the world, but are active agents who reconstruct the meaning of past and future in understanding the present circumstances.

As noted earlier, apprenticeship in fossil sculpting happens as a way of – and in the course of – daily life. Without recognising it as a permanent profession, the Ayt Khebbash men enter the apprenticeship stage informally by observing others and absorbing the techniques of extraction and eventually of the crafting skills. It can be regarded as another set of subsistence skills built upon their tacit knowledge learnt from their parents, but more specialised and driven by power relations imposed by the West. A *mʕallem* in his mid-thirties, Ishou, is someone who learnt sculpting skills after coming to Rissani and by undertaking apprenticeship in several different *ateliers*. Unlike most of the artisans who never went to school, he received a primary school education in his village and speaks some French. He told me about the days when he

first came to Rissani;

> *Ishou*: 'You know in the village, agriculture became impossible due to the lack of water. There were the people from my village [in Rissani], the neighbours. They worked already [in the fossil craft] and it was them who suggested to come here [in 1997]. The first time I worked at Ali Oufkir, but after two days I fell terribly sick, so much that I had to return to my village. After two or three months I came back again, but the job was taken by someone else, so I went to work for Bassou, who is from my village. But he didn't work regularly since sometimes he didn't bring us the raw materials to work on … One day I went to search for work at Hamou [deceased now], and we agreed on the salary of 30 DH per day, since I had already worked for 25 DH before.
> *Question*: What did you do at his *atelier*?
> *Ishou*: 'He [Hamou] told me to wash the goniatites, the big ones … and in order to wash, you have to polish with the help of paper and water, at that time we didn't have acid that we use now to ease the task. I believed that this washing was the same as washing the dishes: the patron came back after few minutes and he found I washed five or six pieces, he said, "It's not like this. You wash it gently and carefully even it takes time".'
> <9 February 2013, Rissani>

The apprenticeship typically starts with washing and polishing the fossils by hand. It is the easiest and most mundane task which they all have to learn at first. Later, Ishou went on to work for another master and there he learnt to work with chisel and hammer, and then moved on to work with electric machines. He learnt to work with these tools by observing other young apprentices, and asked them how to do it. In this period he saw the master working on a decorative ashtray in the shape of 'Fatima's hand', which was designed by a *mʕallem* who commissioned them to do the finishing task. Ishou worked for him for three to four months, then he found another master, Mbarek, who was working on a large decorative plate. Since Mbarek was receiving many orders, he proposed to pay Ishou by the piece. There, Ishou worked for two years, and later on Mbarek paid him 50 DH per day. At that time Ishou was working on the task of cutting the large rocks into pieces using the industrial saw operated in water:

> 'At Mbarek's *atelier* I gained a lot of experience. I started to work as a *mʕallem*. There were other workers, but it was me who directed. There are some patrons who don't leave the machines for the workers to use freely for fear of damage, but Mbarek was not afraid of that; we could work with any machines, and thanks to that I could learn quickly. But there are still many things I don't know in the fossil domain. The most difficult task is to trace the object, it's not the finishing [that is difficult]. The objects we treat have to be worked on delicately in a way that it appears it wasn't modified or changed.'
> <Ishou, 9 February 2013, Rissani>

Ishou's description of his apprenticeship is an example of how learning in practice takes place and what it means to move toward 'full participation' in a community of practice. Learning experiences may vary depending on whom one works with, for some masters are not working consistently and therefore do not provide an adequate learning environment. Also, we cannot make a general claim that all apprenticeship facilitates learning, for there are several ways in which the patrons prevent learning rather than facilitating, such as not allowing the apprentices to freely use the machines when they are absent.

In the fossil domain, apprenticeship and learning is quite informal in character, as many apprentices learn the skills in their own brothers' or kin groups' *ateliers*. Ishou started his venture with his fellow village men, then learnt the most important tasks with a patron originally from Ighef n Ighir (Tafraoute region), who was unrelated to his extended family or village. This is one example of the local transition from a domestic type of production to learning a specialised occupation from a specialist master, although to a limited extent. As described by Goody (1989) in her study of West African apprenticeship, it implies that the household production units have shifted from merely integrating their own brothers and kin groups, via integrating non-kin, to production separated from the household. In the town context, the learners can be total newcomers as they participate in an unfamiliar culture of production, different from the culture of household labour. As Ishou said, his wish to learn the new skills did not allow him to stay in the household or extended family, since it was important to work for a master who could provide him with specialised skills. Furthermore, in the 1990s the fossil domain had a demand for additional labour which met the need of the Ayt Khebbash men who had a desire to learn. In other words, fossil apprenticeship developed in Rissani as a mechanism for dealing with increased urbanisation and the

demand for capitalist wage labour, which implied market diversification and of the division of labour.

Although there is a difference between those who learn within the family unit and those who enter the apprenticeship with unfamiliar patrons, the processes in which Ayt Khebbash men engage in different communities of practice and construct identities through learning are what they have in common. Moha, who learnt the skills with his brother, entered the domain as a way of life by observing his brother working when he was still a student. After he completed his primary school education, he followed the footsteps of his brothers. He started to treat some stones with sand paper and water, and then moved on to polish them with 'disk 36'. He told me that he learnt much from his errors while in the stage of apprenticeship:

> 'An error that I committed and that I cannot forget, was when I was seriously injured. One day I treated 1600 pieces of goniatite, which is not easy for only one apprentice. We were working in Moqaouama, I worked and a man came and gazed at me and then, posed me a question: "Did you do all this alone?" I replied him "Yes", and then at the moment I was trying to prepare what we call "the spoon" which serves to work as a paste, the moment when I put my hand towards the machine it touched me and severely cut my hand and arm…since then, when I want to use a machine I put on my [protective] clothes and turban and everything.'
> <Moha, 9 February 2013, Rissani>

Here, when he talked about 'a man gazing at him' and later he cut his hand, he refers to the evil eye that caught and cursed him. As commonly known, the eye motif is often represented in Amazigh arts, either realistically or abstractly, for the motif is believed to possess magical properties against evil. Although the number of *fqih*-s who write talismans in the *suq* has dramatically decreased in the past years, the historically grounded narratives of dreams, magic and supernatural beliefs are still a powerful undercurrent in the contemporary social relations of Rissani inhabitants. Ayt Khebbash men do not actively practice magic, but as the narrative of Moha shows, in the course of difficulties and contradictions in everyday life they resort to the belief in supernatural forces as a mean of overcoming their problems and to make sense of this experience in the modern context. In other words, the use of historically formulated narratives is a way to establish and maintain identities when the new-comers are caught in dilemmas, while participating and engaging in the existing practices

within the community.

As Lave and Wenger argue, the production and social reproduction of persons are mutually entailed in the reproduction of social order; the inherent contradictions in reproducing persons within the domestic group and in other communities of practice do not go away when the form of production changes, but go through transformations of their own (1991: 114-115). The contradictions in the learning environment should be seen against the backdrop of social transformations and of the historical understanding of local forms of learning, family relations and education. The learning experience of Moha is one example of the reconstructed meaning of the present with reference to the past, when in conflict with the modernising work environment.

In fossil sculpting, one of the most difficult tasks to accomplish is said to be clearing of the 'eye' of the ammonite, the central part of the coiled object which looks like an eye. When a *mʕallem* wants to measure the skill of an apprentice, he will give him an ammonite to see how he works on it. If they are not experienced there is a risk of making a hole in the basin or plate, when they want to paste the ammonite in a basin or in a plate. The proper skill is learnt during work with certain hints but not through direct conversations. Usually, the ways in which the apprentices learn is by being corrected in their mistakes:

> 'There are a lot of things that I didn't do well, such as the ammonite. It's difficult, we all work on it but in the end the *mʕallem* corrects almost all of the work done. I recall that my patron ordered us to wash the stones, and when we went away and finished the task in haste, [actually] we didn't work in a way we should have. We polished the pieces before we put some oil [on them], so that the stones looked as if they were well polished…later we had to re-do the work all over again.'
> <Moha, 9 February 2013, Rissani>

The central task of the artisans is to create objects which look 'natural', as if they have not been modified, which is a benchmark of the accomplishment and a standard for measuring skills. The polished ammonites should look as natural as possible, and the decorative plates of orthoceras are supposed to be an impeccable object, preserved in its original form since the Devonian epoch. Abdelhak, a *mʕallem* who worked in trilobite sculpting for twenty years, prides himself of being one of the best sculptors in the region. His main argument for this, is that he can preserve or recreate even 200 or 300

original thorns of the creature without a trace of modification. He got into the domain in 1984, and first worked in extraction with a friend called Brahim and his brother Hmad. In the beginning they didn't even know the veins, and it just happened that they would find some pieces of stone containing trilobites, and bring them to Rissani. Since they sold well, they continued with the business. Abdelhak bought a thick chisel and tried to sculpt with it, but it didn't work well, because the tool was rudimentary and they didn't have glues to paste with. 'It is just recently that this [situation] improved', he says. 'Some people went to the US and brought back advanced materials and things started to improve'. His associate Hmad was a construction worker before and Abdelhak himself worked in agriculture in Alnif, but they decided to quit after discovering the commercial potential of fossils:

> 'I was working in agriculture, growing tomatoes, wheat and henna. But I already visited the place [in the mountains] with a friend and saw it [the fossils], I just didn't start working immediately. We worked just during the hot season [summer], and when we extracted a large piece we earned like 600 DH … so I proposed him to go and work there. The next day I returned home and bought the necessary equipment and we climbed the mountain, then we started to earn. We stayed in the mountains for a week, then returned home for a week, it continued like this.' <Abdelhak, 23 May 2013, Erfoud>

Later on, Abdelhak's friend Hmad went to the US and bought the tools and necessary materials for sculpting, and he proposed Abdelhak to work with him. He observed how others worked and gradually acquired the skill, but he knew that he was better than others and was quick to learn. When he taught the apprentices, he usually gave them easy tasks, such as the trilobites without thorns and legs, but was always willing to let them use the '*chicago*' from the beginning. He continues to work for the brothers, whom he calls 'just like family', earning a salary and occasionally selling his pieces independently. He says there is not much difficulty in the work, except that he feels 'tormented' by the dust.

In Abdelhak's case, it is also clear that the initiation to the fossil domain and acquisition of skills are unrelated to kin groups or family. He has fostered a strong sense of identity as a *mʕallem* in the fossil domain, and everyday work is a creative and meaningful experience in his quest to achieve a high standard of perfection. However, this does not mean that he is not interested in the other job opportunities and business

chances. He said it is just that he feels he cannot do better at his age. This humility partially derives from the fact that the fossil artisans are not socially respected, even though they have a specialised skill. Abdelhak does not wish his children to 'inherit' his work, since the work condition is too hard with little profit or respect in return. In short, his identity as a 'skilled artisan' is largely validated by the commercial profit in return to his work, and not by the value promoted by the Moroccan government which defined the fossil craftwork as 'national heritage'.

The three cases we have seen, Moha, Ishou and Abdelhak are all skilled and rather successful *mʕallem*-s but not all the apprentices achieve that level. Zaid, an Ayt Khebbash man from Qaṣbah Sidi Hmad Madani, had just turned thirty and lived in Moqaouama Quarter with his two brothers. His case is rather different from the other artisans, because he is unable to work with tools due to epileptic fits. When in Qaṣbah, he used to raise sheep and goats, and before that he was a herder. One day he had lost his conscience and was discovered by his uncle near the village Megta Sfa. This sudden loss of conscience happened to him regularly, day and night, and so he started to take medicine. After he came to Rissani with his brothers he helped them by washing and polishing the pieces with sand paper. He never worked with tools and machines, for the fear of fainting while working. He also works for others, but all are temporary jobs. In the morning he goes around the fossil *ateliers* to see if there is work. If he finds some, he starts washing until noon or sometimes until the end of the day. Zaid typically earns 20 DH per day for this task, but occasionally nothing. When there is no work at all he pushes the trolley in and around the *suq* to earn extra money. He does not have the opportunity to acquire the skills to become a fossil *mʕallem*, except for earning occasional cash through the monotonous task of washing. Zaid is, and has always been, working in the fossil domain since leaving his village, but his participation remains at a peripheral level.

However, being handicapped does not always prevent the artisans from becoming a *mʕallem* in the domain. Here is an example of Yidir (33), who was born in Tafraoute in 1979 and has been living in Rissani since 2000. Yidir first learnt the know-how from his brother, who was working in extraction back in the village since the early 1990s. Yidir started working with him in 1998, and abandoned his agricultural activities because of the drought. He got married to a woman from the same village and the same clan (Ayt Taghla). By that time he was suffering from tetanus in his right leg, and had to rely on a crook to walk. When they first came to Rissani they rented a house in the Bouhamid

Quarter, and he sculpted the trilobites for other *ateliers*. Later on his brother moved on to work in the barite mines, and Yidir found a job in the *atelier* owned by a fellow kinsman from Tafraoute, where he worked for 5 DH per finished piece. The use of the *ziyar* eased the difficulty when sculpting, for he didn't have to use his legs to fix the object in place. However, the infection got worse and in 2001 he got hospitalised in Ar-Rachidia. The operation was unsuccessful, and finally he had to make the decision to amputate his right leg down from the thigh. He collected funds from family and friends, and spent 10,000 DH for another operation in 2006. He says he felt much better after the amputation of the infected leg, and seemed to manage working and moving around with ease. He even became the person in charge of the small *atelier*, and thinks that his handicapped leg does not disturb his competence in work.

In the course of apprenticeship, the Ayt Khebbash men come to identify and understand themselves as fossil artisans and members of a new community, through 'legitimate peripheral participation' and through reinterpreting the past in the changing situation of the present. We have seen apprenticeship here in conjunction with the development of the capitalist labour market in Rissani. In all cases presented, learning occurred without formally organised apprenticeship or teaching, but through participation in different tasks of daily practice.

4.4.3 Acquisition and Transmission of Skills

In principle, the skill of fossil sculpting is something to acquire through observation while working with a senior artisan. The transmission of skills does not usually involve much difficulty, as reported in other cases of apprenticeship. The fossil artisans are usually not reluctant to show the necessary skills to the apprentices, either family members or not. It appears that the Ayt Khebbash men identify themselves with the Tamazight-speaking group in the town, for the fossil apprenticeship always takes place in a Tamazight-speaking environment, as opposed to the predominantly Arabic-speaking town environment. The system of mutual help is established through either personal endeavour or through family networks, and for this reason the fossil *mʕallem*-s are, in most cases, willing to instruct the apprentices to become competent sculptors. In a very rare case, there are Arabic-speaking apprentices, but they quickly become 'Berberised' and manage to understand and speak Tamazight in the course of their learning, whereas the other Arabs who co-habit with Imazighen in Rissani would never learn to speak their language however long they live next door.

Furthermore, as we have seen in the cases of Ishou, Abdelhak and to some extent Yidir, the acquisition of skills is not solely dependent on family relationships, but also on their personal efforts in building social relations of their own. So in their cases, their participation in the community of practice of fossil artisans was realised through social interactions of each of the participants. If we look at the transmission of skills, we can see the differences between the examples. In the case of Zaid, the transmission of skills never occurred due to his physical limitations. He is employed on a day-to-day basis without transmission of skills, but rather lives in a solitary and atomised world, while playing the role of a 'fossil artisan' in order to belong to the community that provides him support. Ishou, Abdelhak, Moha, and Yidir have reached the level of *mʕallem* and therefore are often responsible for the daily tasks in the *ateliers*. Ishou bought his own *atelier* and now works with his brother, whereas Abdelhak and Yidir work for their patrons. Moha has a large shop and *atelier* on the bus route, and employs twenty artisans. Ishou and Yidir do not have apprentices. But in large *ateliers* such as those of Abdelhak's and Moha's, they sometimes need to show the newcomers how to perform the tasks. In order to work efficiently, they recruit someone who is experienced, by giving them a test, and do not always prefer members of their family or kin group. The transmission of skill is done smoothly and the information on how to improve in performing difficult tasks is generously given.

As I discussed in chapter one, the development of identity is crucial to the apprentices of fossil sculpting, which is also fundamental to the concept of 'legitimate peripheral participation', since learning is not merely a matter of the transmission of knowledge or the acquisition of skill, but is about the identification processes in relation with practice. As Lave and Wenger argue, learning and a sense of identity are inseparable, for they are aspects of the same phenomenon (1991: 115-117). The Ayt Khebbash men reconstruct their social identities through 'legitimate peripheral participation' at work, by transforming themselves from subsistence farmers/herders to artisans whose labour is incorporated in the global market economy. One of the important components of their new identification processes is, as already mentioned in section 4.4.2, the reconstruction of the home village in the town. The Ayt Khebbash artisans work together in a linguistically Tamazight-dominated world as opposed to the generally Arabic-dominated Rissani environment, creating a network of social relationships which is based upon kin groups and families, but is also extended to other Tamazight-speaking groups of artisans and apprentices. Also, their sense of solidarity is strengthened by their willingness to help each other in their learning process. The

ways in which they 'traditionalise' the modern work environment into something familiar to them, suggests that the Ayt Khebbash men are actively reconstructing their social identities by making use of their own versions of histories. At the same time, the different ways in which the skilful apprentices and those with limited capacities establish and maintain identities generate diverse viewpoints on the practice and its development.

Lave and Wenger claimed that the apprentices' 'legitimate peripherality' crucially involves participation as a way or learning, 'of both absorbing and being absorbed in the culture of practice' (1991: 95). Although this model provides insight into the informal learning processes of the Ayt Khebbash artisans of Rissani, it is also questionable to define their belonging to the 'culture of practice', by assuming the members to be the autonomous Western individuals who 'negotiate meanings' to achieve a common goal. Wenger claims that the individuals 'negotiate meanings' in the dynamic process of identifications, a phenomenon that becomes especially significant at the periphery of the community (1998: 207). He does take into consideration the articulation of the communities with other communities, yet he ignores the 'multiplicious' aspects of identification processes which are influenced and limited by external power relations beyond the official structure of the communities, and by the historically situated self. As I shall elaborate later in chapter five, the participation in the communities of practice also involves disengagement, 'non-participation' and refusal to establish identities connected with the practice.

4.5 The Quest for a New 'Tradition': The Commercial Side of the Fossil Domain

The Ayt Khebbash men are not solely making a living by building the social relationships created within the communities of practice of fossil sculpting. There is an arduous human endeavour in an attempt to improve, secure and defend their lives in the town in order to survive. Due to the world recession since the Gulf War in 1991, and especially after the economic crisis in Europe since 2008, the life of Ayt Khebbash artisans has become more and more unstable, except for those who successfully ventured into other domains such as barite mining or tourism. In order to understand the identification processes of fossil artisans in the community of practice from a comparative point of view, it is vital to look at the communities of practice other than that of apprenticeship with which they engage in their daily lives. For this aim, let us now examine the ways in which the fossil sculpting and its commercialisation was affected by the world economic crisis and the state policies, and how the artisans responded in

a continuous endeavour to create new 'traditions'.

4.5.1 The Art of Payment Delay

Following the European recession since the early 1990s, the demand for artisanal products and the price of fossil craftwork started to decrease progressively. The inflow of nomadic populations into Rissani and the number of fossil artisans were still on the rise, but certain fossil merchants realised the stagnation of the commerce. The foreign buyers started to decrease their orders, and the Moroccan intermediaries delayed their payments to the artisans. Those merchants who used to sell out their fossil craftwork in a month-long exposition in the US complained that nowadays they had to remain there for six months without significant profit.

It is fairly common in the domain that buyers are incapable of immediately paying the full price of products, and the cash flow stagnates due to double and triple credits they owe to each other. Bourdieu observed in Algeria in the 1960s that the peasants who became urban proletariat lacked the skill in handling money; they were incapable to adjust to legal rules and lost their land, since they did not understand notions such as credit and interest (1963: 9-13). This analysis does not fully apply to the case of Ayt Khebbash people working in towns and cities since the 1960s, because they had already worked in French-run lead mines and were accustomed to the economic institutions and monetary exchange introduced by the colonial government. However, they use localised notions of 'credit' and do not calculate the financial value of time since the notion of interest is absent. According to Islamic norms the fossil merchants do not charge interests to each other, and when they give 'credit' it is never defined by a written contract. Instead, the local notion of 'credit' indicates payment delay for an unlimited period of time, which often functions as a system of mutual help for the economically deprived.

For example, two fossil artisans, Nasser and Hussein, associated with one other for the commerce of meteorites. Nasser represented their venture and sold a box of meteorites to Amar for the price of 2000 DH. Amar agreed to the price but said that he could not pay the entire amount at once, and asked for a credit of 800 DH. So Nasser received 1200 DH only, but did not tell his associate Hussein that he received the money, instead he said he was still waiting for the payment. So for the moment Nasser would pay Hussein from his own pocket and gave him 200 DH. After some time Hussein realised something was wrong, and headed to Nasser's shop. It turned out that Nasser was

owing money to Hussein, and Amar was owing to both Nasser and Hussein:

Hussein: 'I haven't received anything. How much for me?'
Nasser: 'The remaining amount for him [the buyer Amar] is 800.[38]'
Hussein: 'No, how much of the entire value for me? It's not just 800 that are remaining.'
Nasser: 'It's 800 for him to pay us.'
Hussein: 'How much in total for us?'
Nasser: 'That, I already gave you.'
Hussein: 'No, how much is it for the whole business?'
Nasser: 'Who remembers?'
Hussein: 'It's 2000 DH and something, yes? And I receive only 800? It's only my money that went out, or what?'
Nasser: 'What 800? We already settled the account. It remains 800.'
Hussein: 'No, we didn't settle!'
Nasser: 'We did it.'
Hussein: 'Where?'
Nasser: 'When I told you what is remaining here for this [box of meteorites].'
Hussein: 'No, you did not tell me anything. You said he [Amar] didn't give you anything! ….you said "I give you 200 DH, because he didn't give me [the money]".'
Nasser: 'May the prayers be on the Prophet [*salaat ala nabbi*, meaning that's it, expression of consent].'
Amar: 'I don't know what happened amongst both of you …'
Hussein: What did you take? You believe it was sold for 800 DH or what!? We bought it for 1,000 plus.
Nasser: '[To Amar] How much did I sell you that?'
Amar: 'I don't know what you did!'
Nasser: 'We bought that for 1100 DH.'
Hussein: 'We bought it for 1000 plus, I gave you 600 or 650.'
Nasser: 'Its 1100. You paid 600 and I paid 600 [sic].'
Hussein: 'I cannot bring myself to recuperate my money, look at the benefits! You are playing games [*hat laʕb aynnagh*]!'
Amar: 'Ok, listen…take your 800 dh…that is in between you both…the one to blame is this one [Nasser].'

38 In rural Morocco, people still use the old currency calculation of Riyal, so in the original phrase, he said 16,000 Riyals. To avoid confusion, I converted Riyals to Dirhams.

Hussein: 'He has to give me 600 or 800 in addition.'
Amar: 'I, I lost in this affair. But never mind …'
Nasser: 'How much you gave me last time?'
Hussein: 'I gave you 600.'
Nasser: 'Give him [to Amar], May God return me that 200 [that he gave to Hussein previously] [*kas xlifa aala llah, la …*]
Hussein: 'No, it's not that!'
Amar: 'You have to be fair with the account, don't mix it up.'
Hussein: 'You see, Amar …'
Nasser: 'The rest is 800, I told you that. I gave you 200 from my pocket.'
Hussein: 'You gave me that. I don't lie. You said, "I give you from my pocket."'
Nasser: 'This one [Amar] owes 800 [to Hussein].'
Hussein: 'You did not talk to me about 800, you told me he gave you nothing … that he hasn't yet paid us …'
Amar: 'I don't want to give you that [800 dh]! So, give me a discount!'
<13 September 2012, Rissani>

The conversation ends in a light-hearted tone while the buyer Amar jokes with the sellers that they should reduce the price for him. Although the parties are frustrated by the situation, they are still friends and have no desire to pursue the case too seriously. This art of payment delay is a long-established practice in Morocco which is not exclusive to the fossil business. In order to deal with a stagnant economy, they created ways to slow down the money flow by giving credit to each other, justifying it by quoting Islamic morals and tolerance. It is a system of mutual aid to allow people who don't have the means to find their way when in a difficult situation. Occasionally it can become exploitative, such as when the party who receives the money does not give the required sum to the recipient, as in the case of Nasser. As the general economic situation has become progressively difficult, in some cases this delayed payment causes frustration and anger, leading to serious disputes with physical violence or verbally threatening to call the police if the party does not pay. If one does not have money to pay, people have to look for relatives or friends to ask for another credit, ending up in double or triple debts. In a more prosperous domain the use of credit is far less dominant – the above conversation just indicates the decline of the fossil business and the practice of artisans to mitigate their problems.

4.5.2 Cooperative Activities and State Policy

In order to structure the domain and to promote national and international sales, the Cooperative Sijilmassa for fossil crafts was founded in 2000, followed by the Association Ayt Aṭṭa for fossil and marble sculptures in 2004. The artisans could benefit from working in the framework of cooperatives to ease tax payments and the selling of their products in larger quantities abroad. Until then the profit generated by the fossil sector was nearly dominated by the family-owned local companies, working systematically with travel agencies who brought large organised tour groups to their shops conveniently located on the bus route.

The cooperative aims to provide the members with subsidised materials and tools essential for fossil sculpting, and help them to sell their products abroad and inside Morocco. Its function is similar to a company, in the sense that it does the accounting and pays the taxes for the artisans who work informally. The Association was founded in order to organise the fossil domain, improve the quality of the products and promote commercialisation related to tourism. It has organised some fossil expositions in Ar-Rachidia, Tinerhir and Merzouga Route since 2005, but their activities have been significantly reduced since more and more artisans started to leave the domain.

Since 2005, the national policies also encouraged the craft production to a limited extent. The Craft and Social Economy Department (Le Department de l'Artisanat et de l'Economie Sociale) launched the 'Vision 2015' to promote the artisanal activities to generate incomes for the artisans by sustainable development. In this vision the fossil craft was defined as representing the 'paleontological heritage' or 'prehistoric heritage' of the Ar-Rachidia Province region – a valuable domain of work to be preserved. Apart from the various claims to promotion and quality control, the only project which was implemented in the fossil domain was the education programme which aimed to provide two years of formal apprenticeship to young people who did not continue their education after primary school. The project aimed to educate 50,000 people within the period from 2006 to 2015, concerning all the artisanal sectors, and to introduce a system of formal certificates to measure their level of mastery. In reality, however, there are very few people entering the fossil domain each year. In 2013, there were no candidates from Rissani wishing to enrol in this state apprenticeship programme.

As the demand for barite in the international market started to rise in the 2000s, increasing numbers of fossil artisans started to move into the mining sector, either

temporarily or permanently. As I mentioned earlier, there were several artisans who already had some experience working in mines of lead, zinc and barite, so for some it was a return to their previous work. Here we see that although the fossil artisans are seemingly incorporated into the larger value hierarchies, they do not necessarily identify themselves with the idea of national heritage as a basis for their prestige, but rather with their own income generating capacities: fossilised stones and craftworks are only valuable to them as long as they possess high commercial value.

For example, the commercially successful artisans[39] buy a large quantity of small souvenir objects such as miniature marble camels and animals from Marrakech and Agadir, and sell them as regionally produced crafts to the guides and tourists, together with fossil ashtrays, small jewellery boxes, etc., because they have become the most popular commodities in the mass tourist market,[40] especially in the wake of the European recession. The tourists passing by Rissani to visit the sand dunes of Merzouga are usually not interested in the authenticity of the objects but looking for a memento of their trip to the exotic place, or small souvenirs to give to their friends at home. For this reason, some fossil merchants do not stock up on much of the real trilobites, ammonites or goniatites any longer but specialise in these desired objects. Hence, the pressure to sell small inexpensive souvenirs exerted by the market forces is affecting the quality of the craft production that the state gave the status of paleontological and prehistoric heritage to. And paradoxically, the artisanal objects which have commercial value in the tourist industry become a national heritage to the central state, a point of view confirmed by the director of Artisanal Delegation in Ar-Rachidia.

In the current situation, the fossil domain is progressively abandoned by the artisans whilst the central state is ostensibly eager to promote commercialisation in relation to tourism, elevating the fossilised stones status to precious paleontological and prehistoric heritage. However, if the concept of heritage or tradition itself is a distinctively modernist concept and a Eurocentric idea, it is questionable to what extent the local artisans are aware of their own incorporation into this political context. In the initial period of the 1980s, the fossil sales to tourists enabled the Amazigh population to find refuge in the town, build their houses and improve their standard of living.

39 As noted earlier, fossil craftwork is a family business in Rissani. This means the artisans who engage in craftwork usually work with their brothers who deal with the marketing and selling of the crafts.

40 On the subject of the invention of traditional crafts for the tourist market, see Biernert 1998; Cauvin Verner 2007.

Simultaneously, as Nash (1993) argues for Central America, this process involved a renewed colonisation as the local artisans became ever more dependent on international markets and the haphazard economic cycles over which they have no control - the Amazigh nomads have become fossil artisans as a result of the commercialisation of fossil crafts, and will leave the domain when the market demands other minerals. Whether the fossil artisans will continue to create and conceive of their new 'traditions', will depend on the global market forces which are not always synonymous to the promotion of national identity.

4.6 Social Identities in the Claim for Property Rights

Now that we have observed the social practice of Ayt Khebbash artisans in their everyday work, let us look at another community of practice they engage in, which is also an important component in their new identification process in the town context. In 2012, the Ayt Khebbash people's strong attachment to tribal and ethnic identities was demonstrated in their tribal claim of ownership to the twenty hectares' of land around the settlement Kudyet Draoua[41] to the east of Erfoud. Their actions defied the state incentive that de-tribalisation is a necessary step in the move towards urbanisation and modernisation. The Kudyet Draoua area is one of the 'illegal' settlements where a number of nomadic Ayt Khebbash population took refuge during and after the period of drought in the 1980s, and many of its inhabitants work in the domain of fossil sculpting.

On 10 April 2012, more than 5000 Ayt Khebbash tribal members from Rissani, Erfoud and Merzouga region gathered at the disputed site of Kudyet Draoua – the territory commonly known as 'Shishan'[42] - in protest against the sale deals of land between the Erfoud Municipality and the Arab Sbbah[43] (also known as 'Maadid') tribal representative.[44] The protesters alleged that the *jamʿa sulaliya* (tribal unit, ethnic descent group-

41 Kudyet Draoua means 'the hill of the people from the Drâa' in Arabic.

42 The land is commonly called 'Shishan' by the local people, referring to Chenchenya (the Chechen Republic of Russia). The term is often used to address 'illegal' settlements in various parts of Morocco, indicating their 'defiance' against the central state.

43 Arab Sbbah is a sedentary Arabic-speaking population who occupied several *qṣur* in the lower Ziz Valley.

44 Most of the data concerning the Kudyet Draoua land dispute presented in this section come from my informal and formal interviews with the local people, i.e. the President and qayd of Rissani Rural Commune, Vice-President and staff of Erfoud Municipality, Ayt Khebbash tribal representatives, leaders of the

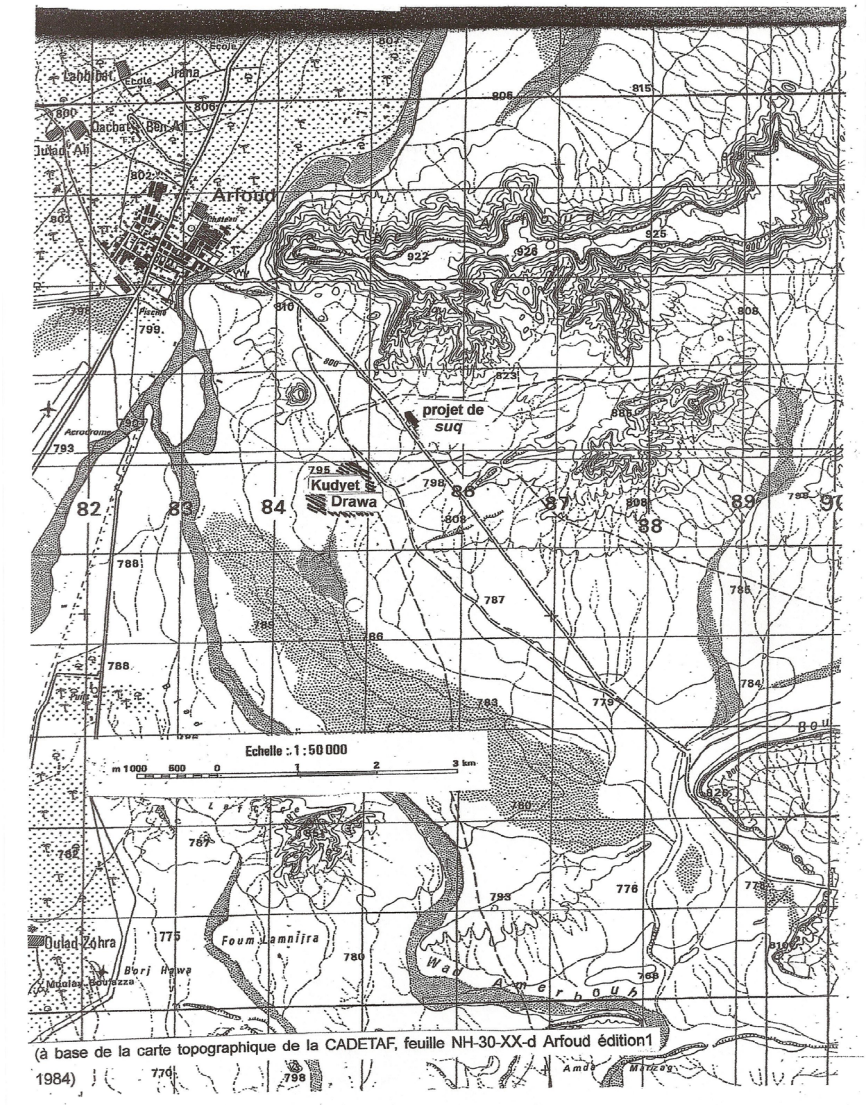
ing) of Arab Sbbah had sold twenty hectares of land located in the area of Kudyet Draoua to the Erfoud Municipality, without the documents to justify their ownership to the land in question (map 4-2). The sale act itself took place some eight years ago, dating back to 2004, but it became known to the general public only in 2009, and had gradually led to various investigations, protests and disputes in the past three years. About 2000 Ayt Khebbash members signed a petition to distribute the land to all the families in the region belonging to the Ayt Khebbash tribe. The Erfoud Municipality claimed in response that there was no topographical map in existence to justify the Ayt Khebbash tribal ownership, and that their protest had no legal grounding.

Before the French Protectorate period, the tribes organised and regulated the territorial boundaries and use rights according to their customary law (*azerf*), and the tribes and *qṣar*-dwelling population of the region have agreed that this particular plot of land is the tribal territory of the Ayt Khebbash. However, since the French occupation of Morocco, the *ḍahir* of 1919 legally defined the tribal land as 'collective land', which meant that the land was transformed from a holistic environment for living into a commodity that can be sold in the marketplace. In other words, the colonial legislation initiated the separation between the tribe and their territories, which meant a progressive demise of tribal influence over the newly implemented legal order.

After the independence in 1956, the collective land continued to be considered as obstacle for development, and the property rights of the tribes were even more diminished in an effort to promote investment and commercial activities (Bouderbala 2007). The new legal system of independent Morocco was largely based upon a French legal model, which also corresponded to the expansion of the world capitalist economy promoted by colonialism. The transformation of a legal notion from collective use rights to individual property rights is linked to a transformation of the economy from subsistence to the capitalist mode of production, while colonialist modernity dismissed the social organisation based upon agnatic ties and the notion of tribalism, in favour of individuals defined by property rights.

However, the dispute over the property rights in Kudyet Draoua between the Ayt Khebbash and the Arab Sbbah tribal units clearly demonstrated that tribes as political units still exercise significant power over the control of local resources in the Tafila-

land dispute, inhabitants of Kudyet Draoua and several Rissani fossil and barite artisans.



Map 4-2 Kudyet Draoua and the municipal *suq* project

let. Simultaneously, it revealed that either the tribal identity or the broader sense of Amazigh consciousness are never static, since contextual factors continue to influence the formation and re-formation of personal and collective identities. The social practices which we see as 'tribal' or 'traditional' are in a constant process of invention

and development, such as the ways in which different groups express their claims to the land. People do not primarily define their property rights in a legal way but in a social way, which is intricately connected to their tribal and ethnic identities, but also influenced by the modern notion of individualism, as we shall see in the Ayt Khebbash people's petition for allocation of land rights based on household units. Therefore, the question to ask is how different groups defend their positions and how their shifting tribal identities relate to their work practice in the modernising and globalising context of today.

For this purpose, I shall first look at the progression of one particular land dispute in Kudyet Draoua. Then, I will examine the local understandings of collective rights and the modern legal system inherited from the colonial past, and how people construct legal categories such as tribal and individual property rights in the process of their reformulation of social identities. Lastly, I will discuss the ways in which property rights are related to ethnic and tribal forms of social organisation in rural Morocco, and its relevance to Ayt Khebbash people's work practice.

4.6.1 The 'Shishan' Land Dispute

A month after the 10 April incident, on 16 May 2012, the Kudyet Draoua inhabitants – the Ayt Khebbash members who already resided there - demonstrated in front of the Erfoud Municipality, demanding their rights to water and electricity. The settlement, in the form of a village, is located on the south of the twenty hectares of territory allegedly sold to the Municipality, just across the unpaved road, which is already inhabited by approximately 3000 immigrants consisting of four hundred households, mostly from the Ayt Khebbash group (map 4-2). A first wave of settlement to this area began in the 1990s, for in this period certain members of the Rissani Rural Commune encouraged their immigration for electoral reasons. The second influx of nomadic population was in the 2000s, with the increased need for wage labour and urban housing. The current population of Kudyet Draoua mainly consists of Ayt Taghla, Ayt Amar, Irjdaln from the Tafraoute and Taouz areas, and Ayt Bourk from Zerzef and Missour areas, with notable exceptions of Dwimniaa families who settled there in the 1960s (table 4-1 and map 2-4).

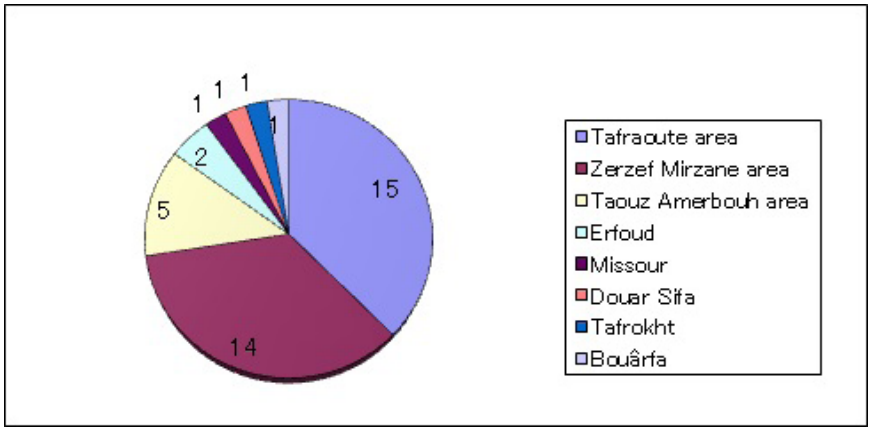


Table 4-1 Areas of origin of Kudyet Draoua inhabitants

40 sample households (out of approximately 400) taken on 10 October 2012.

However, the problem was that the *ḍahir* of 1919 prohibited the individual transfer of collective land, which meant that only the 'public moral person' could cede the land if it was for the benefit of the central state and served the local welfare. Since the administrative decision-making power of the collective land belonged to the Moroccan state, the *jamʕa sulaliya* of Ayt Khebbash could not distribute the land to individual tribal members and thus the tribal members' act of settling in was considered 'illegal'.

As a result, not a single household has the right to plug in electricity, nor to incorporate tap water in their houses. The inhabitants buy batteries in Erfoud for electricity, and go to fetch water early in the morning from the only one communal tap in the village centre. The settlement is close to Erfoud, but the inhabitants used to obtain their birth certificate or other necessary documents in Rissani, for the territory was attached to the Rissani Rural Commune until 2009 (maps 2-4 and 4-2). It is estimated that the number of Ayt Khebbash immigrants in Kudyet Draoua started to increase in the 1990s, and some commune members - such as the former members of parliament, and the former president of the Rissani Rural Commune - had encouraged and helped them to settle there for electoral reasons. On 17 January 2008, two associations in Kudyet Draoua wrote a letter to a member of parliament and President of the Erfoud Municipality, to request their administrative attachment to Erfoud, for the reason of geographical proximity. The member of parliament addressed a request to the governor to include Kudyet Draoua in the Erfoud urban commune territory. Since then, the

Rissani Rural Commune lost their power base and demanded Erfoud to return the water and electricity cost they had paid for Kudyet Draoua. Previously the Rissani Rural Commune had paid three periods, so Erfoud paid the rest of the two periods instead of returning the money. In 2009, Kudyet Draoua was officially attached to the Erfoud Municipality, but until present, the authority has not allowed the inhabitants access to electricity poles. The Municipality wants the *jamʕa sulaliya* of the Ayt Khebbash to completely hand over the territory in order to construct a *suq* there and for this purpose they need to destroy all the houses in existence. As a result, the inhabitants of Kudyet Draoua started to insist that they wish to return to the administrative territory of the Rissani Rural Commune.

This conflict of interests between Erfoud Municipality - largely represented by Arab Sbbah - and the *jamʕa sulaliya* of the Ayt Khebbash, manifested itself in repeated physical clashes over the past decade. In 2001, alarmed by the expansion of 'illegal' settlement, the Caidat[45] Arab Sbbah started to destroy houses by sending several tractors to the site. A young fossil artisan of Kudyet Draoua recalled the incident as follows:

> The Arab Sbbah believed that the land belonged to them…and demanded us to leave. They destroyed several houses…and they came to my house. It was my mother who could stop them, when she plunged herself underneath the tire of tractor. Then [at that point] they finally stopped there….
> <Khalid, 22 May 2012, Kudyet Draoua>

After the incident, the Ayt Khebbash tribal representative officially confirmed that the territory east to the Ziz River belonged to Ayt Khebbash tribal land, but the statement did not change the legal status of the inhabitants, which led to the 16 May 2012 protest already mentioned. On the way back from Erfoud, the demonstrators blocked the route to Merzouga to attract attention of the authorities passing there. The police demanded to clear the road, which was followed by violent physical clash with the protesters. Nine people were detained, including three women. One of them, a teenage girl, was brutally attacked by the police and injured on her face and body, which sparked anger among the local population. Her pictures were published on a local news website,[46] as a proof of human rights violation by the state. This led to another

45 Local administrative authority.

46 http://www.ksarsouk.com (in Arabic) 16 May 2012.

protest a week later in front of the provincial government of Ar-Rachidia, demanding the immediate release of the detainees. The response to this demand was delayed, but all women and three men were released later. The other remaining three detainees were sentenced to four years in prison.

4.6.2 Local Views of 'legitimacy'

For centuries the nomadic group of the Ayt Khebbash lived in the area of Rissani, Merzouga and Taouz to the south, Boudnib to the east and Tinerhir to the west (map 2-4). The Arab Sbbah is a sedentary Arabic-speaking population who occupied several *qṣur* in oasis of the lower Ziz Valley. The territory in question, Kudyet Draoua, is situated in the Erfoud region in the direction of Merzouga, along the regional route No.702, which was scarcely populated until the 1990s when a number of Ayt Khebbash people started to settle in. The tribal property before the French occupation was administered by the tribal customary law *azerf*, and its usufructuary right belonged to the Ayt Khebbash tribal unit. In other words, the land was inalienable from the tribe and was cultivated or exploited to the collective benefit of the members.[47]

In the French Protectorate period, however, the demand for land by the post-World War I immigrants from France pressurised the Protectorate to enable them to acquire land in Morocco. In other words, although the policy makers had objectives to preserve the traditional ways of life, they needed a legal grounding to colonise the more fertile land to distribute to European immigrants. Therefore, they defined the pastoral land as 'uncultivated land' (*mawat*, meaning dead), and largely limited the collective tribal land to this area. The 'cultivated land' was decided to be treated as joint property, that should be divided among the households of the tribes or else for private ownership (Vinogradov 1974: 94-95). In most tribal areas in Morocco, people made little distinction between agriculture and pasture land, but the state objective was to confiscate the more fertile land and limit the tribal land to the less fertile areas, while incorporating them under jurisdiction of the state.[48]

47 On the subject of pastoral order in the tribal milieu of rural Morocco, see Mahdi 2010.

48 See Bouderbala, Negib. 2007. 'Terres collectives et territoires de tribu', Akesbi, N, Benatya, D, et al (eds.), *Hommage* à *Paul Pascon : Devenir de la société rurale, développement économique et mobilisation sociale.* Rabat : IAV Hassan II, Département des Sciences Humaines.

Following several *ḍahir*-s issued between 1912 to 1916, the 1919 *ḍahir*[49] limited tribal rights to the collective lands, declaring that the administrative decision making power belongs to the central state. This meant the tribes still had the right to administer, but they no longer had the right to sell, rent or seize the land without approval of the Protectorate government. The content of this 1919 *ḍahir*, in terms of ownership of the collective land, became the root of tribal conflicts over land rights in several parts of rural Morocco, which is yet to be resolved in the post-independence period.

After Moroccan independence, the collective land was administered by the Ministry of Interior which managed the land and inter-tribal disputes. As mentioned earlier, in principle the collective land could not be sold by the tribal representative, but with a notable exception of a 'public moral person', i.e., it could be sold to the commune, municipality or to a ministry who represents the public interest. In the case of Kudyet Draoua, the twenty hectares' territory was allegedly sold by the Arab Sbbah tribal representative to the Erfoud Municipality who has the objective to build a housing district (*arrondissement*) and a covered market (*suq*) there. In opposition to this act, the Ayt Khebbash representative Bassou claimed the sales contract to be invalid:

> *Bassou*: 'We were notified by the *pasha* [of Erfoud] that our land was sold. We claimed that the Arab Sbbah representative should be present in front of us, to explain why they have the right to hand over, rent out or sell these twenty hectares of land…If the Municipality had bought it, probably they dealt with falsified documents, who knows?'
> *Question*: Why is it that the Municipality did not show you the sale documents?
> *Bassou*: 'No, they had shown us, but that was the PV [*procès verbal*] of 2005. In this document they mention these twenty hectares, and it contains all the stamps of the relevant authorities. For example, that of tax, the representative of the *jamʕa sulaliya*, the president of the Municipality and the *pasha* of Erfoud, all of the relevant members of the commission, since if the *jamʕa sulaliya* want to sell the land they need to call all the services of this commission to reunite.'
> *Question*: What is the content of this PV?
> *Bassou*: 'It says the land was sold at the rate of 15,000 DH per hectare.'
> *Question*: With which document the Maadid [Arab Sbbah] had justified their land sales?

49 See *Guide sur les Terres Collectives*. 1990. Royaume du Maroc, Ministère de L'Interieur, Sécretariat Général, Direction des Affaires Rurales.

Bassou: 'Oh, that's what we are all looking for! Myself and the president of our Commune, and the chiefs of the Cercle [*daʔira*] Rissani, we notified the representative of Caidat Arab Sbbah that the land could not be sold like this. Since 2005, one of our representatives, Oualibou, had filed a claim, but the case remained stagnated and now it came back again. There are [in the PV] ten hectares among those twenty hectares belonging to the Ayt Khebbash, do you understand? I was surprised: where is the signature of the representative for these ten hectares? We claimed that he should be present. Normally, he should have been notified, but they say he didn't come because he was sick…We told them he must be present [for the document to be valid].'
<26 April 2012, Rissani>

What we can see from the claim of Bassou and the content of the 2005 PV, in which the signature of Ayt Khebbash representative is lacking, is a certain complicity between the *jamʕa sulaliya* of Arab Sbbah and the Erfoud Municipality. Furthermore, some Ayt Khebbash informants suspect that probably some of their tribal members could have been included in the deal behind their backs, since they believe that prominent members of the *jamʕa sulaliya* of Ayt Khebbash must have allowed the Arab Sbbah to proceed to the sales act:

'The problem of Shishan, is that we [Ayt Khebbash] wanted to redistribute it [the land], we heard a portion was sold by those Arabs [Arab Sbbah], if they sold it we need to know who did this, since if they [Arab Sbbah at the Municipality] have bought it, someone of the Ayt Khebbash must have sold it. People gathered there, they wanted to redistribute the land but they were afraid of the authorities and prison. They have already traced by tractor four parts corresponding to four clans [of Ayt Khebbash]; Irjdaln, Ayt Amar, Ayt Taghla and Ilḥyan.'[50]
<Mahmoud, 26 April 2012, Rissani>

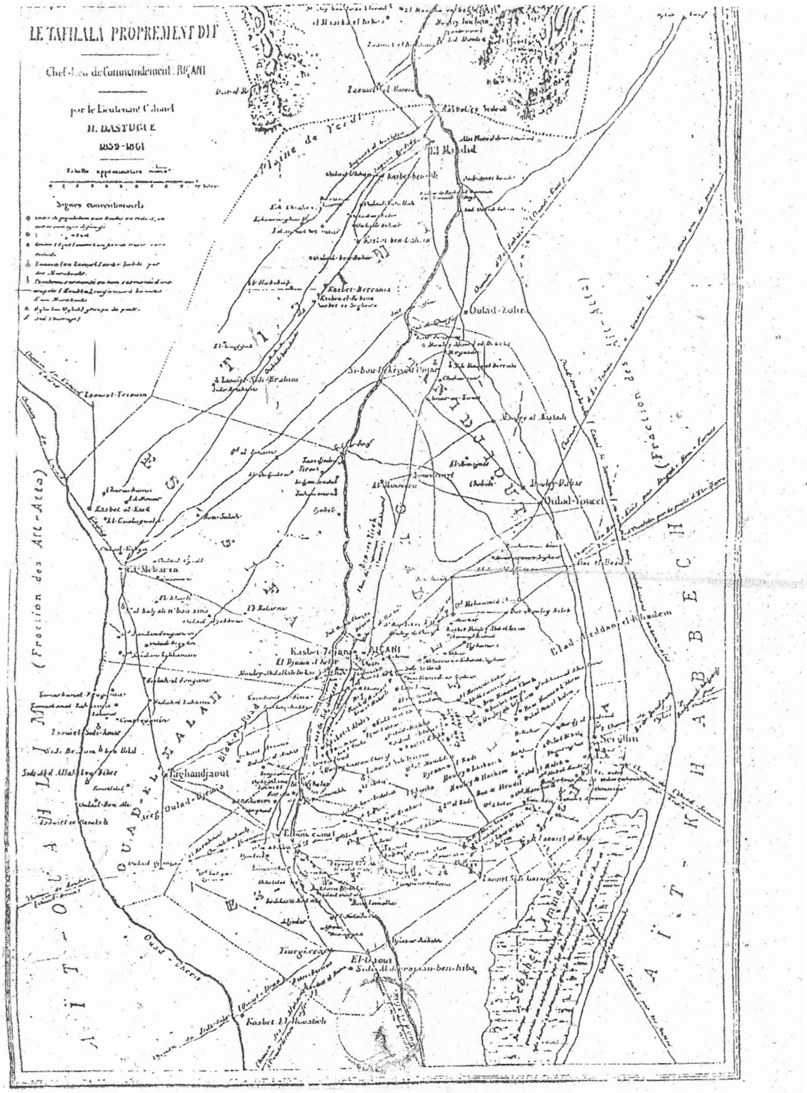
Although it might be true that Ayt Khebbash members might have been included in the negotiations, it is a well-known fact that the Erfoud Municipality is controlled by

50 This attempt of distributing the land according to the clans is based upon the local people's historical practice which is related to the customary court. During the Protectorate period, the court used to register marriages, births, divorces and death, as well as resolving the disputes over land ownership. They divided land according to existing genealogies and established plot boundaries. On the functioning of the customary courts in this period see: Hoffman 2010.

the Arab Sbbah, and that local policy is strongly influenced by the interests of this group. This is because the majority of the elected members of the Municipality, including the president, come from the Arab Sbbah. This fact demonstrates that the tribes in the Tafilalet, depending on contexts, still form political units and control social actions of individuals, which have a significant impact on local political decision making. A member of the Rissani Rural Commune explained the conflict in the following way:

> *Question*: Do you think the Erfoud Municipality has a shortage of land [since they got Kudyet Draoua handed over from Rissani Rural Commune to be included in their territory in 2008]?
> *Samir*: 'Oh, the Municipality did not even have a place where to bury a serpent [*lbaladia ma ʕandha temma fash tedfen ḥetta ḥensh*, meaning they do not have anything], even if the cemetery belongs to us [the Rissani Rural Commune and the Ayt Khebbash]!'
> *Question*: But they want to construct a market there?
> *Samir*: 'Yes, but the problem already existed between the *jamʕa sulaliya* of Ayt Khebbash and that of Arab Sbbah. M and the others [ex-bureau members of the Municipality] have bought from Arab Sbbah in 2004. When this information came out to us, we filed our opposition in 2004 and 2005 … The project of the *suq* itself is not a problem for us, because it is for the public interest. We have already discussed this some years ago, that they wanted to build a *suq*, artisanal centre, fossil *atelier*, etc. But it was since the 1920s that the Ayt Khebbash people have guarded this land … in the middle of the Ziz River the landmark [*borne*] was established in 1937/1938.'
> <14 June 2012, Rissani, interview in Moroccan Arabic>

As discussed by Samir and many other local people, the 'legitimacy' of the Ayt Khebbash tribal claim to land is well recognised locally. Samir attested that 'the Arab Sbbah have got nothing on the east of Oued Ziz', although there are no official documents to legally justify this claim, except for the obscure map of the tribal territories existing at the Rissani Rural Commune, or in the hands of particular people (map 4-3). An elderly Ayt Khabbach man who resided in Kudyet Draoua also claimed that even if the territory was uninhabited, it belongs to Ayt Khebbash because the boundary was established in the middle of the Ziz River before the French colonisation of the region. He showed the document concerning the convention which defined the territorial



Map 4-3 The Tafilalet in the middle of the nineteenth century

limit since 1279/1293 (table 4-2; appendix 2), stressing that the Ayt Khebbash never allowed the Arab Sbbah to cross the boundary. In other words, the 'legitimacy' of tribal ownership rests in the local people's historical memory and in their customary law.

In the context of the Tafilalet region, the French colonial authority has defined the non-cultivated land as belonging to the nomads (people engaged in herding), such as the Ayt Khebbash. On the other hand, the greenery (*verdure*), which referred to the palm groves and cultivated lands, was given to the *qṣar* dwelling population, for in the case of war the greenery always used to be their territorial limit (map 2-4). An Ayt Khebbash man who resides in Rissani explained that during the colonial period, when they asked the *qṣar* inhabitants, 'where is your frontier?' they used to reply 'at the end of the palm groves, we are not going out further from there'. In the meantime, the Ayt Khebbash have taken all of the territories outside the palm groves: the entire east bank of Ziz River crossing into Zerzef region, excluding the territory of Ihadhuchin of Retbat (Aoufouss). He stressed that, if the *filali*-s (in this context, the Arab inhabitants of *qṣur*) transgressed the territory outside of the palm groves, they could be assassinated. In sum, the Ayt Khebbash territory was agreed to be the east of the unpaved route to Boudnib in the north of Erfoud. All the territory to the east belonged to Ayt Khebbash, and the land to the west was considered the territory of Ihadhuchin, Ayt Seghrushen, and the people of Retbat in general.

With this historical process in mind, it is locally justifiable for the Ayt Khebbash people to claim Kudyet Draoua as belonging to them, although the territory was 'empty' – largely uninhabited until the 1990s, with the exception of very few Arabs and Ayt Alwan (an Ayt Aṭṭa clan which is not part of the Ayt Khebbash group) who settled there in the 1980s. It was mainly due to the climate change and the need for wage labour that many Ayt Khebbash families from the Zerzef, Taouz and Tafraoute regions started to move into Kudyet Draoua, attracted by the proximity to the *suq* (Erfoud town centre) and access to water:

> 'At first, we were nomads. When there were no more animals [herding], some of us went towards [the work of] barite mining, the others went to fossil sculpting. Later, it was necessary to use the machines for work [they needed electricity]. We cannot rent a house here [in Erfoud]. We went there [to Shishan] and constructed barracks and we worked in Erfoud, just by renting a garage [for work]. Now, we are looking for electricity, but in vain …'
> <Yassine, 22 May 2012, Kudyet Draoua>

Just like Yassine, many of the Kudyet Draoua inhabitants first worked in fossil sculpting, and the rest engaged in day-to-day construction work. The one-hour walking

distance to Erfoud town centre and the Municipality's plan to build a *suq* there confirmed the potential value of the territory, which implied the land price might go up dramatically in the near future: once a non-descript plot of desert land, 'Shishan' has become the promised land for both the Ayt Khebbash people and the Erfoud Municipality. The conviction that the land belongs to the Ayt Khebbash group led to an increasing number of tribal members randomly moving in without purchasing the land, ending up with an 'illegal status' of their housing and being denied access to electricity and various other amenities.

4.6.3 Becoming an 'Ayt Khebbash Artisan'

After we have analysed the strong local belief in historically defined tribal territories, let us now look into the question of how these tribal identities relate to the collective rights of property. In the modern world, land disputes between indigenous populations and the state or present owner are widely discussed. In the area conquered and colonised by Europe and the US throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it was a fairly common occurrence that the native people were robbed of or driven out from their lands. Even after winning independence, with the birth of new nation-states in the latter half of the twentieth century, the land disputes were not fully resolved in most countries. The Ayt Khebbash people, for example, claim it is their natural right that they are the owners of the land where their ancestors lived, and which they passed on to their offspring for generations. Furthermore, they argue that the central government 'illegally' took the land from them by means of force. On the other hand, the authority insists that there are no tribes in the modern nation-state and that the land was 'legally' bought and registered by the Municipality, in order to foster the welfare of the whole local population – a claim which ironically obscures the actual influence of the Arab Sbbah tribal unit involved in the land sale.

Therefore, on the 10 April protest the Erfoud Municipality flatly turned down the petition signed by Ayt Khebbash people, on the ground that their tribal unit does not possess the right to distribute the land to its members under the *ḍahir* of 1919 and that their claim can be regarded as a serious threat to the social order of the modern nation-state. However, if we are to deny the right of 'legitimate ownership' under the state law, the modern Western perspective based upon a civil society model should be put into question. The 'legitimate ownership' in modern civil society is confined to the binary relations between the material object and the subject who possesses the right. However when we look at the logic employed by the international movement

claiming the indigenous land rights, this restrictive subject-object relationship has a possibility to be opened to a wider social context.[51] That is, the 'ownership' can also be defined as that of the unifying element between the ethnic communities which historically existed to nurture the individuals and the land which is not an object of sale but a holistic environment with multiplicious meaning, that has given birth to numerous myths, tales and beliefs which contributed to the creation of local world views.

The Ayt Khebbash resistance against the 'legitimacy' of state law, demonstrated in the incident of Kudyet Draoua dispute, shows that their historically formulated world view cannot be detached from the land, which is synonymous to their culture itself. As this conviction of righteousness is embedded in the reasoning that they are externally and internally justifiable 'owners' of the land and culture, the Moroccan administration's attempt to dissolve the tribal systems and identities into a centralised modern nation-state can be challenged.

The local people's strong attachment and reformulation of tribal identities, when claiming their property rights, should be viewed as a process in which they constantly negotiate their 'paroles of justification' according to their current necessities of everyday life – the necessities of *becoming* an 'Ayt Khebbash artisan'. The 'common sense' world view, which often outlaws the modern legal system, is generated through the process of ongoing everyday practices and interactions, where people negotiate traditions and recognise the relativity of meanings. In the course of the land dispute, the property rights were defined in a collective way based on tribal units, but also claimed in an individualised way, which demonstrates the contested process in which different groups dispute over the control of resources. Living in the modern world of cultural contradictions, the Ayt Khebbash people practice the identification processes wherein transition and stability co-exists: abandoning the past way of life in search of wage labour and housing in towns, but holding on to their tribal identities. Not surprisingly, these historically formulated and reformulated tribal identities remain at the core of an enduring form of social organisation in the Tafilalet, which is indivisible from the Ayt Khebbash men's processes of becoming an 'Ayt Khebbash artisan' and a Moroccan citizen in the town environment.

51 There are several studies which highlighted the genuineness of traditional culture as a justifying background of indigenous land rights, such as the studies on Melanesian *kastom* (tradition) and its transformations. See Trask 1991; Keesing and Tonkinson (eds.) 1982; Linnekin 1991; Jolly and Thomas (eds.) 1992.

4.7 Conclusion

In order to shed light on the identification processes in the communities of practice of the Ayt Khebbash artisans, we have seen the examples of apprenticeship in fossil sculpting, and then the commercial side of the domain. By looking at the case of the artisans with physical disabilities, I have demonstrated that they do not always move on to the level of 'full participation' but may permanently remain at the periphery of the community. Also, those who became skilled masters experience inner contradictions with their historically situated self, of which they attempt to make sense by resorting to supernatural beliefs. The Ayt Khebbash artisans' identification processes cannot be reduced to the concepts of 'mutual engagement' and 'negotiation', since it involves contradictory participation, which will not lead to more inclusive practice within the community. The skilled artisan Abdelhak participated in the apprenticeship and everyday work as a member of a community of practice including his friends and brothers, and is proud of his personal achievement in trilobite sculpting standards. However, his identity as a *mʕallem* is conflicted when he situates himself in the wider relations of economic and social inequalities which marginalise him in the town as a mere 'seasonal labourer'. As I shall discuss in chapter five, this sense of exclusion and marginalisation was even more heightened when the Ayt Khebbash artisans moved out of the Tafilalet region to engage in seasonal labour in the large cities, where they experience capitalist wage labour divorced from their own cultural context. In either case, the work-based identifications of the Ayt Khebbash men are contingent on multiply-situated power relations, wherein the dominance of specific norms and values organise the communities. For this reason the experience of the Ayt Khebbash artisans also involves a refusal of participation, since they cannot be fully engaged in a practice that marginalises their own 'traditions'. As I shall elaborate in the following chapter, the ways in which the Ayt Khebbash artisans respond, resist and appropriate the contradictions, result in 'multiplicious identifications' (Hodges 1998), which is an ongoing process of a historical reconstruction of the self.

I have discussed the artisans' reconstruction of social identities in the claim for property rights in Kudyet Draoua, which is a community they engage in outside of work. Their social practice within the town environment is strongly attached to their sense of belonging to the Tamazight-speaking group they interact with. However, there is a marked difference between their practice of everyday work and that of the claim for land rights. In the community of practice of fossil apprenticeship, the social relationships are more and more oriented towards the self, in order to learn and work

efficiently. On the other hand, in the community of protest claiming land rights, the 'traditional' kinship principle was reinterpreted and strengthened to reinforce their tribal solidarity for the purpose of the individual acquisitions of land.

In either case, the Ayt Khebbash people's identification processes are seemingly returning to the 'whole' but simultaneously oriented towards the 'self', because their sense of belonging is reconstructed for the people's current necessities of everyday life in the modernising context, where they encounter foreign entities, a new legal system, and a commodified market. The Ayt Khebbash people's changing needs of land and housing resulted in their claim for ownership of urban property by referring to a tribal identity, which is a manifestation of their collective interest in work as well. As the economic foundation of the old way of life, based on animal herding and agriculture, collapsed with the generalisation of monetary exchange, individual land purchase became mandatory to guarantee the security for work and family life. Therefore, many of the Ayt Khebbash people who cannot afford to buy a plot of land in town, turned to the collective notion of the 'tribal land' which helped justify their claim. This also demonstrates the identification processes of the Ayt Khebbash people as multiplicious, which are situated between the community of 'tribal entity' and the contingent encounters of individuals.

As discussed in chapter three, the Ayt Khebbash people's attempt to traditionalise modernities against the dominant discourse power, relates to their ongoing effort in claiming the position of power themselves. In the land dispute, some of the Amazigh groups who are generally not considered 'Ayt Khebbash', such as Ihadhuchin, also joined the protest and even became one of the leading members in the newly created association for Ayt Khebbash land rights. In this situation, they multiply their identities and consider themselves as 'Ayt Khebbash', contrary to their usual identification as belonging to a different group. This is an acute example of how the local people as acting agents manipulate the 'tradition', such as 'tribal roots' in social practice, and of their complicity in power relations.

According to Sennett, craftsmen are people with discipline and commitment, who have the desire to do something well for its own sake, with a sense of pride in work and accomplishment (2008). I have pointed out that this category is not applicable to the fossil artisans who consider their tasks as one of those mundane seasonal labours. Rather, the fossil apprenticeship of the Ayt Khebbash men should be seen as a pro-

cess in which they are crafting out the ways to conduct life with skill. In other words, they do not only obtain professional skills in the fossil domain but are also 'sculpting' the town by actively reformulating their tribal identities through participation in different communities. Therefore, the physical skill they acquire in the *ateliers* anchors that of the community of practice they engage in for commercial transactions, and to claim land rights in Kudyet Draoua. By demonstrating their collective interests in land acquisition, the Ayt Khebbash artisans articulate their communities in the work domain with another community, to reaffirm their tribal origins, which is in ever-changing process of renewal. In other words, collective survival for individualised objectives are at the core of their 'craftsmanship' in town, whether surviving consists in the search for food and housing, or in the pursuit for viable identities.

4-1 Rissani *suq* outside the southern gate

4-2 Sales of garments in Rissani centre

4-3 Moulay Slimane Quarter in Rissani

4-4 Fossil extraction site Amal

4-5 Carrying raw ammonites

4-6 Unloading the raw materials

4-7 *masetta* (top) and *chicago* (middle and bottom)

4-8 A fossil artisan working with *ziyar*

4-9 *Dynamo* 380v

4-10 Disk *diamante*

4-11 Rock cutter in a large scale *atelier* in Erfoud

4-12 Bosch

4-13 Fossil artisan street in Moqaouama Quarter

4-14 Sculpting a Fatima's hand

4-15 Trilobite sculpting with *chicago*

4-16 Cutting a rock

4-17 Sculpting an ashtray using *masetta*

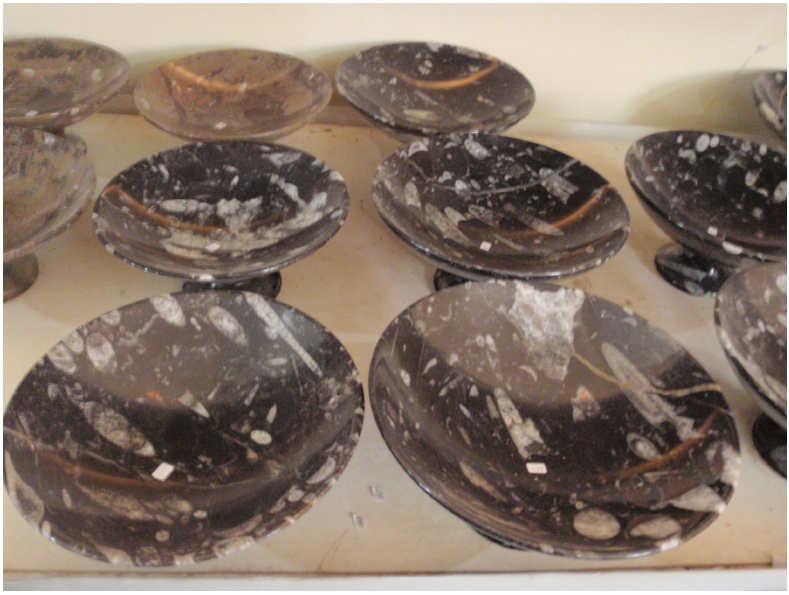
4-18 Working on a fossil plaque using *bosch*

4-19 Pasting orthocerus

4-20 Polishing orthocerus

4-21 Finished orthoceruses

4-22 Polished ammonites



4-23 Ashtrays

4-24 Decorative objects 1

4-25 Decorative objects 2

4-26 Mirrors and washbasins

4-27 A decorative table

4-28 A fountain

4-29 Trilobites

4-30 Commerce of fossil objects

4-31 A fossil shop in Moqaouama

4-32 The Shishan demonstration on 10 April 2012

4-33 Signing a petition

4-34 Kudyet Draoua inhabitant in front of her house

4-35 The demonstration on 23 May 2012 in Ar-Rachidia 1

4-36 The demonstration on 23 May 2012 in Ar-Rachidia 2

Chapter 5 – Exploring *Reḥla*

> 'The *tawargit* [dreams], there are those which are real. The Prophet said 'you know and you believe that you dream [*innaka taʕlamu wa taḥsabu taḥlum*].[52]' That is to say, you believe that it is a dream but it's "knowledge" [*taʕlīm*], a reality. There are dreams that are real, with time they become a reality.'
> <Daoud, 9 February 2012, Rissani>

5.1 Introduction: The Communities of Power Relations

In this chapter, I shall analyse the ways in which the Ayt Khebbash artisans develop the notions of communities, local values and beliefs in their relations with the outside world. Evidently, they formulate their identifications through participation and non-participation in the communities of practice, which are embedded in wider power relations. For instance, the artisans foster a sense of belonging to their tribal origin through participation in the protest and petition movements for their land ownership in Kudyet Draoua, and this identity includes an internal complexity under multiple political and social pressures. But the Ayt Khebbash artisans' identities are not only internally constructed within the communities, but are also a product of their relations to which they develop with the wider world through labour migration to other parts of Morocco and through commercial exchange in the national and international market.

The identification of acting agents is a process developed through experiences of contradiction, confrontation and resistance against others. As Laclau states, all identities are coincidentally constructed, and power relations are inevitably engraved in the entire process (1990; 2000). These coincidental identities are endangered identities, so that it is only possible to construct the self by suppressing contradiction, confrontation and opposition. In all aspects of everyday practice, people construct their identities through discourse practices and the exercise of power.

In order to discuss the multiplicious identification processes of Ayt Khebbash artisans from the perspective of power relations and discourse practice, I shall first focus on their labour migration to the northern cities and how their identities are constructed in the political and social context away from home. Secondly, I will look at their return

52 He invokes a *hadith* that is not traceable to any canonical collection of texts.

to mining work after spending years working in large cities and then engaging in fossil sculpting back in Ar-Rachidia. Lastly, I will discuss the growing Amazigh activism and the discreet but recurrent political consciousness emerging among the Rissani and Tafraoute artisans, so as to highlight how they create new meanings in everyday life against the discourse power of state and global capitalism.

When asked their place of origin, the Ayt Khebbash artisans often reply '*reḥla*' (open space), followed by the nearest village where they used to live in or around. The word *reḥla* means 'journey' or 'living as a nomad in an open space', which is synonymous to the Ayt Khebbash way of life. Referring to themselves as '*irḥaln*' ('nomads' or 'people of *reḥla*') is an enduring form of identification for the Ayt Khebbash people, even after they sedentarised. For them, being *irḥaln* is primarily related to animal herding, which is a practice they symbolically preserve by keeping small numbers of animals on the rooftops of their houses or in their backyards. Furthermore, the Ayt Khebbash men strongly associate their mining and fossil work to their historical memory of being *irḥaln*, since their extraction work takes place in their own living territory where they used to reside and traverse with animals. For them, the exploration of underground minerals is another form of 'nomadism' in their familiar land, but in a different context of the capitalist economy. Their seasonal construction labour in northern Moroccan cities epitomises the process of national integration wherein the 'nomadic' movement of the Ayt Khebbash men is enlarged to a wider geographical and conceptual space. In other words, the Ayt Khebbash people respond to the encroaching marketisation by sedentarising and finding cash income in various domains, and this process involves renewed and reconstructed nomadism, both in their life cycle and in social identifications. As I shall argue in this chapter, the traditionalisation of the modern socio-economic context is an important process in which the Ayt Khebbash artisans come to make sense of and cope with the contradictions of everyday life.

5.2 On the Road to Home: Ayt Khebbash Artisans and their Life Cycle

> 'First, I was grazing animals. Then I started working in lead mines in 1957 at Tadaout, Tizi n Rsas near Taouz, and Lemrakib. There were already people working there for the French companies … In 1986, I changed to fossil [extraction] in Lemrakib, the goniatite, phacops and trilobites.'
> <Hda, 27 October 2013, Tafraoute>

The Ayt Khebbash artisans often start describing their work by their tools and objects. The way they got into the fossil domain was 'with a hammer and untreated stones'. Later on, when asked how he turned to lead mining, Hda said he followed the footsteps of his father and other people, searching for the veins with a sledgehammer and distaff in his hands. When I asked why he left the fossil work, he mentioned the decrease of demand in Europe as an important reason, and then added, 'because I had a dream that the other domains were promising'. In the case of Hda, an artisan from Tafraoute, when he turned to the fossil domain, there were already a number of people working in the same area where he previously worked in the extraction of lead. He said he quit the work in 2000, leaving the extraction and sculpting work to his two sons, while he turned to small-scale agriculture.

Just like Hda, the Ayt Khebbash people grow up in the desert, passing by the lead and fossil mountains while herding animals, and eventually discover the commercial value of minerals and fossils, which they start to extract for commercial gain. The next common life stage is labour migration, often to Nador and other cities in the north, in order to accumulate cash and to help their extended families. After that, they return to their home region to start their own business in barite mining or tourism, or simply to resume artisanal labour while getting married and establishing themselves in the context of their home-grown social networks. This cycle of travel and work is fairly common for the Ayt Khebbash men in the Ar-Rachidia Province region, and a routinely practiced pattern in their lives.

As already discussed in the previous chapters, their work-based identification consists of a complex range of experiences which defies the assumption that authentic social existence should be centred in a circumscribed space and that artisanal work is likewise a 'rooted' profession. For the domains of artisanal work in the Tafilalet have been constantly invented, remade, and traversed by international influence beyond its borders. Furthermore, work identities are never singular, but multiply constructed across different practices and discourses. They continue to relate to the Ayt Khebbash people's past lifestyle – grazing animals from one pastureland to another, moving across the mineral landscape through a historical process of displacement. As Clifford argues, identities relate to the invention of tradition as much as to tradition itself, and are rather about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of change and transformation (1997: 7-11). Furthermore, I contend that only within the sphere of knowledge and experience of everyday life this dynamic

process of 'traditionalisation' embedded in processes of globalisation could have taken place at all. Amidst the increasing economic difficulties the Ayt Khebbash people are facing, they re-invented and manipulated knowledge and practice of daily life in the name of tradition. This traditionalisation takes place in the course of displacement from one job to another, which is constitutive of the Ayt Khebbash people's new trans-local lifestyle, but goes beyond a reaction to European colonial expansion and capitalism. As discussed in chapters two and three, long before the colonial period, the Ayt Khebbash people lived in transit and travel, constantly traversing the geographical and conceptual delimitations imposed on their 'tribal roots' and cultural experiences.

5.3 Migrating and Returning: Seasonal Work in the Riffian Cities

> *Sbʕa snayʕa w l-rzaq dayʕa* ['Seven jobs, and the money lost'].
> <Arabic proverb>

It is a common joke among Rissani men that they specialise in so many professions and acquire substantial skills in various domains and yet find their bank account empty at the end of the day. It is often the harsh reality of their lives that they spend enormous amounts of time and energy on various jobs in different locations, but still turn out to be unable to rise beyond the level of everyday survival.

As stated earlier in chapters two and four, the out-migration from Ar-Rachidia Province region to large cities intensified during the 1970s and early 1980s, when the chronic drought forced the male population to move out and seek wage labour, mainly in Fès, Khemisset, Rabat, Casablanca, Tanger and Nador. From the time I arrived in Rissani, I kept realising that the majority of the local Ayt Khebbash men I encountered had previously engaged in various forms of temporary work in Nador, the Riffian city adjacent to the Spanish territory Mellila. In Nador, massive emigration of the local population took place during the 1960s, due to the need for labourers in post-war Europe. Before this, the locals used to work in the coal mines. The Europeans even waited for the Moroccans to arrive from Nador at the port or train station during the period of high demand. In the 1970s during the construction boom in Nador, half of the local male labour force departed to Europe, and was internally replaced by men from Ar-Rachidia, Ouarzazate, Taza and other places, who either temporarily or permanently emigrated to Nador, attracted by the high level of income. In the suburbs and towns around Nador, many of the locals started to rent out old, uninhabited houses to

the immigrants. The newcomers found cheap housing in the Bouarourou Quarter at the end of Corniche Street, and in Afra Quarter next to the town Segangane.

Another reason for the Ar-Rachidia men for choosing Nador as a destination for labour migration is because they are often connected to the Riffians through intricate social networks of friendship. Therefore, the Riffians prefer to employ men from Ar-Rachidia rather than those from other regions of Morocco. Local employers choose workers from Ar-Rachidia since they are usually considered to be 'hard-working', 'honest' and 'serious'. Seasonal construction workers from the region told me that once the employers hear about their province of origin, they always prefer to hire those from Ar-Rachidia, since 'they keep working hard, even if the directors are not there to survey them', whilst those from Ouarzazate or Taza will stop busying their hands and start chatting or leave for a break.

During the years between 2011 and 2013, I met several Ayt Khebbash men in Rissani who had previously worked in Nador, or habitually returned there for seasonal income. Abdou, for example, was born in 1974 in a small village called Taguerroumt, 30 km away from the road between Alnif and Mecissi. He received some secondary education in Rissani, but left school in 1989 to work in the north. First, he dug wells in Midar, Tafersite, Boukhouch, Driouch, Kassita, and Azar, towns in the region of Nador and Al Hoceima. Soon after that, he came back to Rissani to work on the family-owned barite company 'HACH-MINE' in Chaïb er Ras. Then, since his elder brother Ali was already working in Nador as a *mʕallem*, he decided to follow suit to work in the same construction site. Ali was in the army before and worked in Nador, but later he quit and started working in the domain of construction, following the suggestion of his Nadorian friends. It is common to find a job by means of personal connections, but in the 1990s many of the job-seekers used to stand at a *mawqaf*, one of the meeting points in town where the local employers come to look for suitable candidates. This practice still exists today, but has become less and less important for the experienced job-seekers since they prefer to find a job by telephone networking. Many of the Ar-Rachidia men told me that when they first started working in Nador, they used to stand at a *mawqaf*, but eventually stopped going there after developing their local relationships. 'It was a very humiliating experience', Abdou told me with disgust, as the employers used to inspect them 'like animals', such as checking their hands and body. But nowadays, he does not need to go there anymore, since when he is about to finish his current task, a friend of his boss or client would pass by and ask him to

come to their sites.

In addition, there are common difficulties in construction. The daily routine of construction workers starts at 5.30 in the morning: getting dressed, praying, and then preparing their breakfast. After walking to the construction site, they change their clothes, which is disagreeable during the cold winter months. They start working at 7 am, take a break at noon and eat a sandwich, and then continue working until 5 pm. When they return home, they pray and then prepare dinner. A young *mʕallem* from Ar-Rachidia described his life in Nador as mundane repetition of '*dar – marmit*' (house – cooking pot). Very often, they suffer from respiration and allergy problems caused by dust, as well as from dry, rough and cracking hands. The workers say the best thing in life is the time when they receive their salary on Thursdays. If a *mʕallem* works for a week, he receives 24,000 ryal (1,200 DH), which is about 200 DH per day. It seems like a good salary, but as it is a temporary occupation, they do not find work continuously and can thus not rely on it. One job will usually last for a month or two, and then they have to look for another one, which can take some time. Furthermore, if they work for someone dishonest, there is the possibility that they will not get paid, so they have to waste time in an effort to make the patron give them their salary. Abdou told me the following about his experiences:

> 'Once I worked for someone and when we finished, instead of paying me, he told me he did not have any money! I replied to him that it didn't make any sense, and that I am a wage labourer and his gain or loss matters only to him and so he has to pay me … in the end, he told me to be patient or to complain to the authorities if I wanted, and that when he would get the money, he would donate it to the mosque if he couldn't find me! So I left without receiving any payment … after some time he sent me half the amount, by mediation from a man from my village.'
> <Abdou, 27 January 2013, Rissani>

These payment problems in general are not reported to the authorities such as the Employment Service because the seasonal labourers work informally. The construction boom in Nador began in the 1970s, due to the flourishing of illegal smuggling and its proximity to Europe. There were many businessmen who built a fortune by quickly buying and selling real estate with the intention to boost prices. During this period, job-seekers from other provinces randomly flocked to Nador in search of a better income. As a result, 90 per cent of the construction sector in Nador itself is informal,

and there are only twenty companies who engage in official construction projects, such as building schools and establishments.

Furthermore, several of the houses in Nador are uninhabited, since those illegal smugglers and drug traffickers attempt to guard their fortunes by investing in real estate, in order to avoid police inspections. In 2013, there were 1433 cases of reported conflicts (1645 reclamations) in all sectors of work in the Province of Nador. Among these, 793 involved 'foreigners' (non-locals) and 852 were locals. In the construction sector, there were 262 conflicts among the total of 2645 work-related conflicts reported in Nador Province.[53] This number comes from those engaged by companies who report problems, and thus do not include the large number of seasonal labourers who work informally. The construction companies have a main office in Rabat or Casablanca and usually there is a lot of miscommunication with the local directors, which may lead to a delay of payment to the workers. Those companies or individuals who work informally in the domain do not make claims in order to hide tax evasions, problems of social security with CNSS,[54] etc.

When it comes to the apprenticeship of work itself, according to Abdou, a year or two was enough for him to learn the techniques of construction, since he had his own brother at his side who always helped him to acquire the skills step by step. For those who do not have a relative in the domain it takes more time to reach the level of *mʕallem*. Abdou said the first thing he learnt was brick laying, and then eventually plastering:

> *Abdou*: 'For the construction work, you need to know certain things, such as how to keep the measures for the room, so that it will not be in a wrong angle, how to hold the ropes to measure the angle of the wall, before you construct. Then you should know how to lay the bricks on one another, and to stick them with cement [mixed with water] before you fix them.'
> *Question*: What was the second thing you learnt?
> *Abdou:* 'Smoothing the walls and floors, and then plastering them, since I wanted to learn tile fixing. Smoothing is necessary for tiles, because you have to apply the

53 These data were obtained from the Employment Service (Délégation d'Emploi) in Nador. I wish to thank the director and the staff who have generously given me the information concerning the situation of labour migration and work-related conflicts in Nador.

54 CNSS: Caisse Nationale de Sécurité Sociale (National Insurance for Social Security)

> plaster before the tiles. In summary, that's the stages of work we learn: wall building, plaster application and tile fixing.'
> <27 January 2013, Rissani>

For Abdou, the most difficult part to learn in the stage of plastering was how to manipulate the palette – at first he learnt how to hold it and use its inside and outside faces. He managed to master this technique in a year, and then in the second year he started learning how to lay out and fix the tiles. In construction, they usually start their tasks from the walls, then the stairs, kitchen, bathroom and salon, followed by the floor. In the early 1990s when Abdou started working, he received 35 DH per day as an unskilled labourer. After he reached the level of *mʕallem*, he earned 130 DH per day, and with continuous effort, he reached a level at which he would earn 200 DH per day, since he had mastered the skill of smoothing and plastering.

As in the case of Abdou, learning the skill of construction normally requires substantial time, effort and patience. However, they usually consider their profession as temporary and seek for opportunities in other domains and locations simultaneously. Abdou once quit with construction work in 1997 and went on to work in a brick factory for seven months, before he returned to construction. Since then, however, he has become more engaged in all the different stages of the profession, staying on the site from the beginning until the completion of the building. In 2008 he returned to his home village to get married to a local woman, and built his home in Ar-Rachidia. By the time I met him in 2013, he was already thinking of quitting his work in Nador in order to settle down and work near his home.

This seasonal migration pattern among the Ayt Khebbash men of Ar-Rachidia is a well-established life cycle since the 1990s. In terms of labour migration to the north itself, similar patterns exist among the local Arab men as well, although the majority of them do not work in fossil, barite and lead mining domains back home in Ar-Rachidia. Before the 1990s, those who made a fortune during the construction boom of 1980s or those who got married to Nadorian women chose to settle down in Nador, but in recent years the great majority of Ar-Rachidia men prefer to return home once they have accumulated some money.

We shall look at another example. Abderrazak, born in 1982 and originally from Taguerroumt; his family has now moved to Ar-Rachidia. Abderrazak has never worked in the fossil or mineral domain. He first came to Nador in 1999, with his paternal cousin. He received nine years of primary and secondary education, and he learnt the know-how of construction work from his father while growing up. He got married in 2010 to a woman from Wuchen (a *qṣar* in the Rissani area) who is also from an Ayt Khebbash group. He says he did not think of marrying a woman from Nador because they are like 'foreigners', and that he trusted people at home more. He also thinks 'Riffians are close to Europeans', that 'they do not work well' and 'they are ostentatious'. In Nador he rents a small room, without water tap or shower, but with a broken toilet outside the entrance, where the only available tap is, at 1,000 DH per month. He shares the room with three others: two brothers and a cousin, who also work in construction. According to him, it normally takes one to two years to learn the job, whilst he learnt very quickly thanks to his father. Since he got married in Ar-Rachidia, he spends two months in Nador and then returns home for two months; whereas before he used to divide the year in two parts: six consecutive months in Nador and then six months in Ar-Rachidia.

His life in Nador, however, comes with a cost of life-threatening injuries. Since insurance is non-existent in the domain, when one is injured one has to pay for it. Abderrazak injured his back in 2009, when he accidentally fell to the ground from the second floor. His patron took him to the hospital and paid for the medical expenses, but he himself had to pay 300 DH for the radiography, and then had to rest at home in bed for fifteen days. He took two months off and eventually recovered, but continues to suffer from chronic back pain. In the case of another construction worker, his patron did not even offer help for the medical treatment when he got an accident:

> 'One time when I was working in construction, we were about to put down a panel near the empty space next to the stairs, and there was a little board behind me, I walked backwards to adjust this board of formwork of a pillar, I put my foot on the little board [behind] and I slipped over into the empty space. It was the metal of the pillar that prevented me from falling right downstairs by holding me beneath my shoulder, then another worker pulled me back from there.'
> <Driss, 20 January 2014, Nador>

At first, Driss thought he was not injured, but a few minutes later his co-worker told him that blood was running down so he should seek for treatment. His patron also told him to go to the hospital and that he would cover the expenses, so he went to see a doctor. Driss found out that he could not continue working because he was unable to lift his injured arm for two days, and when he returned to his patron he refused to pay his hospital bill and medicine, but just gave him 50 DH for the taxi ride. Driss argued with the patron, but he insisted that he did not work for days and was therefore not eligible for compensation or salary. In recent years, there have been cases in which the patron paid for the treatment of workers until they recovered, but in general, the workers do not have any right to claim medical expenses, due to their informal working status. This unstable condition also induces the workers to not settle down in Nador,but to return to their home provinces where they can seek for help from their family members on a daily basis.

The three room mates of Abderrazak are in their early twenties and unmarried, but share the same life objectives, planning to return to Ar-Rachidia after their temporary stay in Nador. His younger brother, Yassir (24), who is a university graduate, came to Nador in 2005. Another brother Ali (22) joined them in 2008. Mustapha (23) is the fourth person sharing the room, he is a maternal cousin of them. He came in 2011, from Fezzou (Tafraoute region). He has a long experience working in construction in other cities: in 2004 in Fès, in 2006 for the first time in Nador, in 2007 in Marrakech, in 2008 in Dakhla, and eventually returning to Nador in 2010. He also wishes to go back to Ar-Rachidia after he has accumulated some money in order to get married and settle down.

One of the reasons for this return of labourers to Ar-Rachidia is that the local wage level has gone up in Ar-Rachidia Province itself, as there is now a moderate demand in the construction domain, which did not exist in the 1980s and 1990s. For example, the daily salary for an unskilled worker is now 100 DH and for a *mʕallem* 200 DH, which is not so different from what is paid in Nador. For this reason, it has become more common for men from Ar-Rachidia to intensively work in Nador only during the summer months when there is a high demand, due to the massive return of local expatriates from Europe seeking to build or renovate their vacation homes. And once they have accumulated wealth, they permanently return to Ar-Rachidia, either to invest in barite mining and tourism, or to simply work in the fossil domain.

It is evident that the wage labour economy led the villagers of Ar-Rachidia to establish an out-migration pattern which can result in a change of rural social order, but what we see in their objectives and their desire to establish themselves at home, by observing the traditional patterns of endogamous marriage, indicate the durability of rural social norms and values which stand against the world of state power and global capitalism. As Crawford argues, migration and money do not simply lead to a 'changing culture', but often the rural social order is durable and resistant, although being constantly fragmented, absorbed or undermined by social dynamics at large (2008: 5-14). In other words, the Ayt Khebbash men may often be willing to accept the effects of the powerful devices of domination, but in so doing they reinterpret, remake and traditionalise the situation in their everyday practice. From this perspective, I shall now look at their next common destination, the domain of barite and lead mining in Ar-Rachidia.

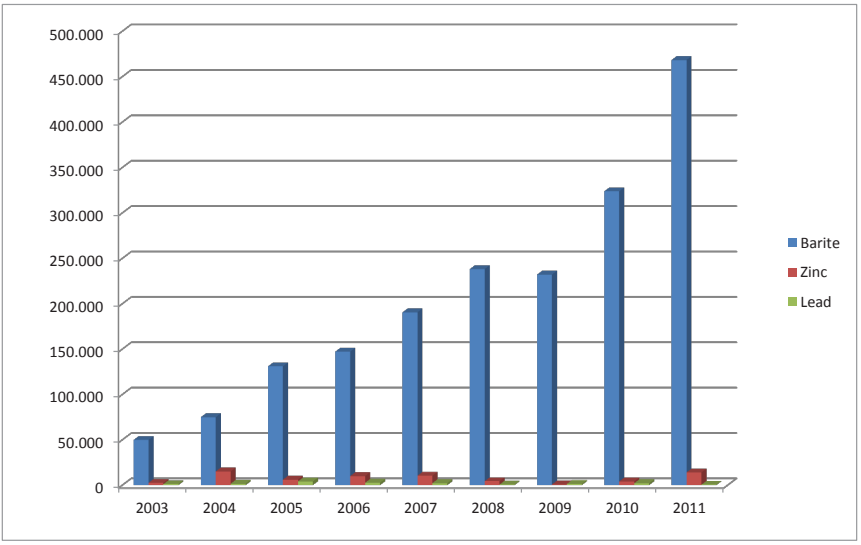
5.4 Moving on to Stay on: The Return to *Mʕadin*

> 'I recall a dream I had in 1974 when we were working in the mines of Bourika [between Taouz and Tafraoute]. At night, I slept … I saw a dromedary standing with its head down, taking the form of our barite veins bent like a dromedary, I said to myself: "this dromedary and the barite, since it's white [the barite], the dromedary is also white." I saw the dromedary next to the vein with its head lowered into the vein, I said this is the barite, the quantity is limited, so I sold my part to my partners, and then they found that it was exhausted. It is like this I believe, there are dreams that are real.'
> <Lahcen Ou Moh, 11 February 2012, Rissani>

Lahcen Ou Moh is the father-in-law of my fieldwork assistant Youssef, who worked in the barite mines during the 1970s. Later in the early 1980s, he chose to become a fossil artisan and emigrated to Rissani with his brothers and nuclear family. Like him, there is a number of Ayt Khebbash men who worked in barite mines before the price of the mineral went up significantly in the 2000s. Since the change of work, for them, is not actually a 'change', but a cyclic continuation of their nomadic past in the form of adaptation to the colonial rule and the global market economy. The domain of mining (*mʕadin*) has been an integral part of life in the Tafilalet since the French colonial period, and has become part of Ayt Khebbash people's identification to their land, history and culture.

Table 5-1: Evolution of mineral production in Ar-Rachidia 2003-2011

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Barite	49.828	74.936	131.003	147.170	190.512	238.130	232.035	323.783	468.263
Zinc	2.536	15.170	6.146	9.997	10.388	4.386	697	4.032	14.027
Lead	1.185	1.593	4.093	2.685	2.188	666	1.307	2.070	520

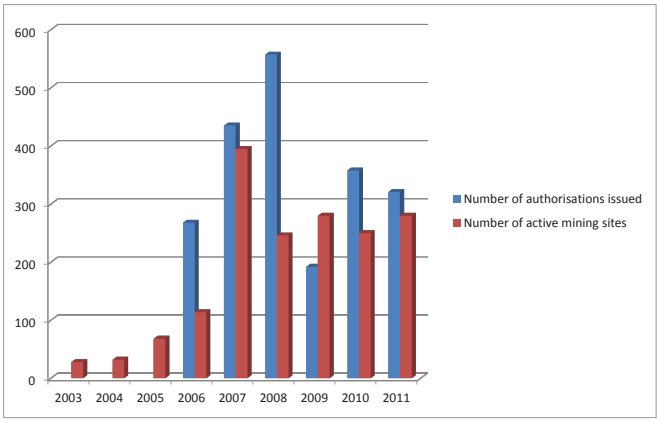


Source: CADETAF

As discussed in chapter two, Ar-Rachidia Province is home to rich mineral deposits such as lead, zinc and barite. The artisanal exploitation of these minerals is permitted by the provincial commission composed of the representatives of 1) the local authorities; 2) the Provincial Management of the Department of Energy and Mines; and 3) the Buying and Development Centre of the Mining Region of Tafilalet and Figuig (Ministère de l'Energie et des Mines, la Centrale d'Achat et de Développement de la Région Minière du Tafilalet et Figuig; CADETAF). The number of authorisations issued for artisanal mineral exploitation in 2010 was 1777. In the world market, the demand for lead, zinc, and barite started to rise in the 2000s. In 2010, for example, the production of these three minerals increased by 41.38 per cent, reaching 329,899 ton, against 234,039 ton in 2009, and the sales also rose by 41.10 per cent. Within this domain, the production of barite occupied 98.14 per cent of the mineral extraction in the CADETAF zone in 2011, especially centred on the area of Taouz in the Ar-Rachidia Province (table 5-1). In terms of individual exploitation, the number of authorisations

Table 5-2 Mining authorisations issued between 2003-2011

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Number of authorisations issued				268	435	557	192	358	321
Number of active mining sites	28	32	68	114	395	246	280	250	280



Source: CADETAF

issued by CADETAF reached 321, in contrast to zero in 2003 (table 5-2). Furthermore, the authorised extraction sites increased to 320, against 28 in 2003.

The pioneer company specialising in export and exploitation of mines in Ar-Rachidia is HACH-MINE limited, which is owned by the Arab Shorfa family El Abbassi. According to the current president Said El Abbassi, who is based in Rissani, his father was initially an agriculturist while being one of the first in the region to work in the transportation of lead in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1984, his father started to work in the extraction of barite in the Taouz region. In this period, they had great difficulty in selling, for there was not much demand in Europe. In 2003, the family founded the company HACH-MINE for the exploitation and exportation of minerals. They are one of the only two companies in the region, and they call the others working in this domain quite simply 'artisans'. These companies have the exclusive right for direct exportation abroad, whilst the artisans can only sell the minerals to Moroccan companies.

Currently their main site of exploitation is the Taouz region on the Algerian border, after they obtained the authorisation of the army. The company produces forty tons of barite per day, and they roughly pay 100 DH to the non-specialised workers, for eight hours of work per day. They work year round, except for two months during the summer, due to the difficulties of the hot climate in the desert. They transport the barite to Safi for direct exportation to Europe, at the sale price of 350 DH per ton.[55] They also have large client company in Rabat, which buys the barite and transports it to Nador.

At the time of my fieldwork (2012-2013) it was estimated by the Rissani Municipality that there were about 150 people working in the domain of barite in Rissani, who were mostly Imazighen from the Ayt Khebbash group. These artisans can sell their barite to only two companies. El Abbassi considered that most of the artisans are too hurried to see great results, 'They sit in a café in Rissani, expecting the workers to bring them big money without working hard themselves'. In this increasingly competitive domain they need an exploration permit to look for promising mines everywhere, and the companies who have the means and expertise are making a great effort and spend enormous time, money and energy in search of minerals throughout Morocco.

At the beginning there are common difficulties for the artisans in this domain due to the lack of experience, such as that they have no clue about places to exploit. They have to ask a research team to conduct an examination each five or ten metres along the length of the allotted plot (normally four points in total) to determine the potential of the vein, before they decide to set up the site. There are problems for the companies as well, especially when they are disconnected from the local context. For example, there is another company called LASNIM which came from Casablanca to Ar-Rachidia in 2001. However, they were having difficulties in their work since 2007, as the president is far away from the site of exploitation. El Abbassi told me that it is vital for the management to be present all the time, and that they themselves have advantages by being a family company, as one of the brothers can always be at the vein to control and supervise the workers.

In the barite domain apprenticeship is required as well in order to successfully establish one's business. Abderrahmane, an Ayt Khebbash artisan explained his learning process as follows:

55 The price at the time of interview in 2012.

Abderrahmane: 'It is necessary to learn how to prepare the site to avoid risk, you also need to know how to manage your products, in order to avoid losses that may be the result of rejections by client companies … you should learn about the different charges, salaries of the workers, materials …'
Question: How did you learn about them?
Abderrahmane: 'You need to work for the others first, in various exploration sites, at least three to four years. Each of them has their own intelligence, to have information, to distinguish good merchandise from bad … and you acquire experience at other sites from their projects. When we analyse [the veins], when we want to start, we send one sample to the client company which informs the provider [the artisans] about the state of his merchandise … and we start to accumulate the experiences until we know the maximum. The analysis can be unreliable, and in that case we need to send [the sample] to another laboratory.'
<5 October 2013, Rissani>

As implied by Abderrahmane, the artisanal mining – as well as fossil sculpting and various forms of construction work – remains to be a disorganised, informal sector of the economy in Ar-Rachidia. It is vital for the artisans to establish their own social system of learning in order to avoid pitfalls and counteract state control. The companies can betray them, and handling the local politics in a battle to secure a promising vein or acquiring a mining authorisation can be a real challenge. In the words of Abderrahmane, what remains for them after all the complications is 'just one piece of bread in the mouth' (*daghd ittqima im n ughrum*). Baha Ou Ali, a now-retired Ayt Khebbash man in his sixties, has a long history of working in the lead mines, and later in the fossil domain. He struggled with the CADET[56] to sell his merchandise and also to obtain the compensation for an accident he suffered from.

'I used to bring my merchandise to Erfoud [to sell to CADET]. They determined a place and a day at which the buyer would come to collect the lead … the company [CADET] was at Megta Sfa, Lfioun n Temgharine, Chaïb er Ras, and Bou Maïz. They bought the merchandise, if you had a 'trip' [the quantity sufficient to load a lorry], they would send a lorry to transport it to Erfoud. For kilos [a small quantity only], they collect on the spot.'
<Baha Ou Ali, 15 September 2012, Rissani>

56 CADETAF was formerly called CADET (Ministère de l'Energie et des Mines, la Centrale d'Achat et Développement de Région Minière du Tafilalet), before they included Figuig in their territory.

As most of the other artisans, he worked without a permit for exploitation. For this reason a conflict occurred one day when another fellow artisan who worked adjacent to his well proposed him to dig the part of the earth which was in between their territories:

> 'Assou Ou M'hamed, he arrived, he was associated with another person. He proposed this man to dig his well on the part which was a border in between mine and theirs. Then the commission came and verified/measured the distances and warned this man [associated to Assou Ou M'hamed] that he did not have the right to work in this place [in between the two wells].'
> <Baha Ou Ali, 15 September 2012, Rissani>

Territorial disputes such as this are common, since the only way to define each artisan's territory is the ten m distance measured by the commission. And if one leaves the well unexploited for a month and a day, one will lose the (informal) right of extraction. Furthermore, since they work informally, artisans are not legally protected against any accidents that may occur during their work. Baha lost his left eye and index finger due to an accident with explosives, but he did not receive any subsidies for his medication despite his claim to CADET. One day, he set three explosives in the mine, but one did not explode. Unaware of the failed explosive, he kept digging when all of a sudden it exploded in his face:

> 'I sent my dossier to CADET, then there was another accident reported by someone from Tinrheras, and they wanted to replace [my dossier] with that one. To do so, they sent me a 'reliable' person, and he asked me to duplicate my dossier to submit it, and that the [already submitted] dossier was lost. I said to them that I would bring it, but they demanded I should submit on *that* day. He [the 'reliable' person] was also manipulated. When I returned [to CADET], they told me that they did not know me! I went to Ar-Rachidia, but I could not find any doctor; he was on holiday or he quit his work. With time, the problem fell into oblivion.'
> <Baha, 15 September 2012, Rissani>

In the view of my informants, this case shows the corruption of authorities in the mining sector and the disorganised state of the work environment, which is the reason why the informal mining continues to expand. The artisans find their way by participating in the 'game' themselves, for that is the only way to operate in what they

consider to be a society of widespread corruption, stretching from the local to the national government. Mohammed, another fossil artisan-turned barite miner, explained that he suffered both from the dealings with the client companies as well as from administrative bodies such as CADETAF, for he was illiterate and he did not know the content of the *ḍahir* of 1960 which created CADETAF and the mining regulations.

> 'I started working in barite mining by associating with two other friends. There are a lot of difficulties, such as that we suffer from what comes from the [client] companies [buying and export]. There are times when the companies pay a certain price and after a month, [or] fifteen to twenty days, they contact us to say the quality of the merchandise has gone down. But in reality, when they have plenty of stock, they disturb us in this way. When they do not have sufficient stock, the demand is high [even if the quality is inferior]. We have problems at the level of selling.'
> <Mohammed, 22 January 2014, Rissani>

Furthermore, Mohammed talked about problems coming from the administrative side: the content of the *ḍahir* was not applied correctly to their work condition. According to him, there are certain measures adopted in favour of people working at CADETAF, while measures which would benefit the artisans were ignored.

> 'I am illiterate. But I heard people say what is in the *ḍahir*, a lot of things. For example, CADETAF must prepare the route towards the mining site … before, in certain times, I heard that when we found the vein and when we obtained authorisation, CADETAF prepared the route to the site, supplied the necessary materials, and for selling the merchandise, CADETAF issues you another authorisation to sell to the company of your choice. When the merchandise was sold, the rights for CADETAF [one centime per kilogram] were directly paid by the client company to the CADETAF … they were also in charge of workers' insurance and the charges in case of accidents during work. In addition, the material for route preparation [should be paid by the CADETAF].'
> <Mohammed, 22 January 2014, Rissani>

Although corruption and its benefits are not exclusively for the rich and powerful, the artisans often claim that there is a discrimination against the poor when it comes to issuing authorisations and supplying the necessary materials. This claim leads them

to the logic that they see no valid reason to follow the law themselves, when the leadership is trapped in what they call the practice of favouritism, discrimination, and cheating. Addi, an Ayt Khebbash artisan in his mid-forties, who worked 'illegally' in the barite mountains of Tijaght, claimed that he was not afraid of the authorities, since he would ask them what they asked him. 'I am a local and there is no one who has the right to command what I do here. If they ask me where the authorisation is, I will tell them that I am now preparing the papers to obtain it', he asserted. During my visit to Tijaght, he repeatedly said that the Ministry of Mining discriminated against the local Ayt Khebbash artisans when they came to ask for authorisation for exploitation.

> 'They [the authority] accused me working outside the law. I replied: 'No, it is because of you that the majority is working illegally, since you have blocked the authorisation.' Is the authorisation just for the rich? Or are there no lands to rent? The Ministry of Mining replied that around 2005 there was no one who came to ask for an authorisation. But look, in 2005, there was only corruption in the mining sector, which prevented us from applying for an authorisation. Another time, I went to the bureau with my bicycle, but they chose those who are rich. We, *irḥaln* ... there is no one who defends our rights [as a group], but rather, everyone defends just his own interests. You know, we have created an association to defend the rights of the locals, since no one has the right to exploit the earth that belongs to us. Another time [in the past] Ayt Khebbash people did not know how to defend their rights; *iqbliyn*[57] came here to Tijaght with their authorisations, and we did not [did not have an authorisation].'
> <Addi, 6 February 2013, Tijaght>

As we can see in this quote, the Ayt Khebbash artisans understand the practice of informal mining and small offences made against the local non-Imazighen mineral exploiters as made necessary by the crude inequalities they experience in everyday work. Addi, for instance, works several months in the scorching heat of the mountains in the middle of the desert, with only a pickaxe and shovel, until he has gathered a

57 The origin of the term *iqbliyn* is contested, as some claim that it derives from *qabila* ('tribe') and others say it comes from *qibla* (the direction of prayer, i.e. east). In the local understanding of Rissani, *iqbliyn* means 'Easterners' (those from the direction of the *qibla*), referring to the Arabs who originated from Saudi Arabia. In the context of the Tafilalet, when the Imazighen use this term, it can mean the Arabs and/or the dark-skinned people such as the Ḥaratin.

quantity that is big enough to fill a lorry. He lives in a temporary hut of about four square metres that is made of stone bricks, with only minimal everyday necessities, such as an oven for baking bread, a lamp, a small gas stove, cooking pots, and a tea kettle. In the isolated desert, there is neither toilet nor shower, and the workers rely on the four-wheel drives that come from Rissani once a week, loaded with daily provisions. After ten to twenty days of digging, Addi searches for a lorry to rent so he can sell the barite to local companies. He said he was once interrogated by the Mining Delegation for working 'outside the law', but he replied that this was due to the authorities that blocked his authorisation. In short, the local people feel that the official regulations force them to develop excuses for their informal mining. For them, the state law intended to 'resolve the problems of existing conditions' is producing the opposite effect.

Furthermore, from the way Addi describes himself and the Ayt Khebbash people as *irḥaln*, and the local non-Ayt Khebbashis as *iqbliyn* ('strangers'), who are unreasonably preventing them from obtaining authorisations, it becomes clear that they construct the 'unities' in the context of power relations and exclusion. As Stuart Hall forwards, an identification process is often that of naturalised 'closure', hence identities are constructed through difference and are constantly destabilised by what they leave out (1996: 5). We should understand this process in specific historical and institutional sites and within specific discursive formations and practices, since identities emerge within the modalities of power, and are thus a product of marking difference and exclusion.

5.5 Amazigh Activism and Local Identity

5.5.1 *ʕati l-shluḥ ʕalash waqef* (Give to the Berber what he is standing on)

Until the 1990s, this expression used to be common among the butchers in the Rissani *suq*. When the butcher saw that the customer was an Amazigh, he would tell his assistant *ʕati l-shluḥ ʕalash waqef*, presuming that the customer did not understand Moroccan Arabic. The phrase has two senses: firstly, it simply means 'Give him meat', but the underlying second meaning is 'Give the *shluḥ* (Berber) plenty of bones'. Before the proliferation of international Amazigh activism in the 1990s, Arabic speakers used to see Imazighen in the area as culturally inferior to them, and they were often ridiculed when they spoke Tamazight in public. As stated earlier in chapters one and two, it is not the purpose of my thesis to document the history of Amazigh activism

or to look at Amazigh identity from the viewpoint of international activists and intellectuals. Instead, I would like to focus on the influence of such movements on Rissani Ayt Khebbash artisans' everyday practices and identification processes, as observed during my fieldwork years.

Thami, a fossil and barite artisan, told me that he does not participate in Amazigh cultural movements, but does wish that the Tamazight language will become an important part of school education. He is originally from Hassi Labied, a village thirty kilometres south of Rissani. He came to the town in 1987 to work in various construction projects, and eventually started working as a fossil sculptor in 1992, until he briefly turned to tourism and worked as a tour guide in Merzouga in 2011. The following year he switched to barite mining and now spends most of his time on the desert mountain Rask Mouna. Just like him, most of the Rissani artisans are conscious of their elevated rights but do not actively participate in cultural movements, and even less so in Amazigh activism related political protests, which are non-existent in Rissani.[58] This is largely because Rissani is an Arabised town, although nearly 50 per cent of the newly built quarters are inhabited by Imazighen from various clans. Moroccan Arabic remains to be the public language, which is spoken by the entire population, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. The administrative posts, such as those of civil servants, are largely dominated by Arabs, so other ethnic groups feel they need to conform to public norms, as resisting them would inevitably result in being marginalised even further.

> 'We were ashamed to talk [in Tamazight], we were afraid of being mocked. Nowadays we can understand … illiterates can from now on know a lot of things concerning religion, news … Our children, when they go to the countryside, they feel frustrated when they cannot speak their own language [because they always Arabic in Rissani]. They say to themselves, "I am Amazigh, why don't I speak Tamazight?". My son asks me, "Dad, you are Amazigh, why did you not teach me [Tamazight]?" This is why we insist Tamazight should be taught at school, it should be integrated in school [programme] … we wish that it will take its [right] place in society and especially that it will be taught [in schools].'
> <Thami, 20 September 2012, Rissani>

58 I mean here political protest related to Amazigh activism, excluding other protests such as claims for salary increase in front of the municipality, etc.

In 1994 the late King Hassan II approved of the Tamazight language educational programme in all public schools of Morocco (Cf. Crawford and Hoffman 2000; Hoffman and Miller 2010). Thami said that he was interested in the Amazigh cultural movement since the mid-1990s when they were finally 'allowed' to publicly speak their own language without feeling embarrassed. However, as discussed in chapter two, the Tamazight language programme incorporated in primary school education in Rissani did not actually help the children to learn the language, due to the usage of the Tifinagh alphabet in text books and the insufficient number of school teachers who were native speakers of Tamazight.

Despite this actual failure in policy implementation, the Moroccan state has recognised the rights of Imazighen as an important element to sustain the national unity and to consolidate the rule of the current Alaouite Dynasty.[59] The direct cause of this policy development was the international Amazigh cultural movement, that originated from Algerian expatriates in Paris and spread through the internet; it reached as far as the remote desert villages in Ar-Rachidia Province region.[60] A young *fourgonnette* driver from Tafraoute proudly explained to me the meaning behind their tri-coloured flag with a red Amazigh symbol in the middle: the blue symbolises the Mediterranean sea, the green refers to North Africa, and the yellow signifies the Sahara, including Niger and Mali. He went on to show that the Amazigh symbol 'Z' is the shape of a human being who attempts to break the chain with force to liberate himself, which has thus become a symbol of freedom. When asked where he acquired this knowledge, he mentioned internet sources as well as university-educated friends who studied in Ar-Rachidia or Meknès. As such, the book *Al-Khitabat*, which narrates the history of Amazigh people, has become a bible among certain young Imazighen, who are conscious and/or supportive of Amazigh activism.

59 See Silverstein, Paul. 2010. 'The Local Dimensions of Transnational Berberism: Racial Politics, Land Rights, and Cultural Activism', Hoffman, K. E. and Miller, S. G. (eds.), *Berbers and Others: Beyond Tribe and Nation in the Maghrib*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press; 2011. 'Masquarade Politics : Race, Islam and the Scale of Amazigh Activism in Southeastern Morocco', *Nations and Nationalism* 17: 1: 65-84; 2013. 'The Activist and Anthropologist', Crawford, D. and Newcomb, R. (eds.), *Encountering Morocco: Fieldwork and Cultural Understanding*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

60 How international migration and the development of global communication changed the lives of Berber speakers is well documented in Crawford, D. and Hoffman, K. 2000. 'Essentially Amazigh: Urban Berbers and the Global Village', in Lacey, K. (ed.), *The Arab-African and Islamic World: Interdisciplinary Studies*. NY: Peter Lang. See also Crawford, David. 2001. *Work and Identity in the Moroccan High Atlas*. PhD thesis. Chapter 5. University of California-Santa Barbara.

> 'The Imazighen were victims of oppression during the time of Hassan II. And what's more, it appeared that you need to speak Arabic to be a good Muslim, [but] there are millions of Arabs who are atheists, Christians … They equally spread the idea that if you speak Tamazight, you are a nomad, backward, old, outdated … and if you speak Arabic you are civilised, so that the Arabs will have to serve nothing [to be superior to us]. The authorities do not accept that we give our children Amazigh names, such as, for example: Sifaou, Anir, Massinissa, Ghouta … the ancient names. They want these names to disappear little by little … it was during the time of Hassan II, [and] now these people [Imazighen] have become conscious [of their cause].'
> <Mehdi, 7 December 2012, Tafraoute>

In the Ar-Rachidia Province region this cultural and political movement was most prominent in Goulmima, Tinejdad, Tinerhir and Alnif, where the majority of the inhabitants are Tamazight language speakers. According to the viewpoint of Amazigh activists, there is a marked difference between Amazigh and Arab culture and language, and the Amazigh tradition should be respected and preserved. For example, many of the activism-conscious people claim the Amazigh New Year must be celebrated on 13 January, and that this day should become a national holiday throughout Morocco. However, I contend that this collective Amazigh consciousness is largely a media fabrication, in which an all-encompassing 'Amazigh-ness' is constantly invented in favour of the dialect, customs and traditions of a certain region/people, often connected to the politics of the Moroccan state. The Amazigh New Year is largely defined by the media and activists as an occasion at which families eat couscous with seven vegetables (*sebʕa khḍar*). They hide a date seed within and the one who finds it is bound to be the most lucky one in the coming New Year. This custom is practiced in the Goulmima-Tinejdad region, but not in the Taouz-Rissani area – my host family in Rissani, for instance, knew about this event but confirmed that they have never celebrated it. In short, the largely illiterate local people in Rissani do not conceptualise their Amazigh-ness in the way prescribed by intellectuals and activists, although many are aware of their claims.

Above all, in the context of Rissani the essentialised notion of the divide between Arab and Amazigh, in existence since the French colonial period, is largely rejected in line with the nationalist claim of unity as Moroccans. The inhabitants acknowledge their linguistic differences, and language is implicated in occupational differentiation

as well as in forming and articulating group boundaries. However, the ideology of an Amazigh culture as separable from the rest of Moroccan culture is in conflict with the reality that both the Tamazight and Moroccan Arabic languages are products of a long history of cultural intermixing, which is a reflection of the identity formation of the inhabitants. The Tamazight language spoken in Rissani area includes a large vocabulary originally borrowed from Arabic, and the same applies to Moroccan Arabic – it is an oral language formulated through centuries of Tamazight, Spanish and French linguistic influences. Although the local Imazighen identify themselves as different from the other ethnic groups in town, which I have already demonstrated in my previous analyses of occupational differentiation and marriage patterns, they do also recognise themselves as Moroccans and Muslims especially when confronting foreigners and foreign entities. Furthermore, it is important to note that work and economic circumstances are also major components in the identification processes of the Ayt Khebbash artisans, and according to their situation in everyday life, they reconstruct, adopt, or discard the prescribed notion of 'Amazigh-ness' and 'Amazigh culture' forwarded either by the activists or the Moroccan central state.

5.5.2 I, You, Workers and the Unemployed intellectuals

The Revolution (Tagrawla)

I, you, workers and the unemployed intellectuals
(*nekk d keyyin d uxddam d wi nna akkʷ ghran, shumren*)
Those in exile, we are tired of the 'good announcements'
(*winna imllan l-bunananz llan g tmizar n mʕaden*)
I, you, the workers, women and those who suffer
(*nekk d keyyin d khufar d tmeṭṭuṭ d wi d ikrefsen*)
The mountain people, all those who are disadvantaged, all those who are humiliated
(*tarwa n udrar d wi nna akkʷ lkamn wi nna akkʷ sbujiden*)
This country will never be in peace, it will never be
(*tamurt a ujjin thenna, tamurt a ur sar thenna*)
There is only suffering, so start the revolution!
(*xas afrya n tmara nekratagh s tagrawla*)
The illiterates, like the donkeys inside them, we know only to applaud…
(*ur neghri, grasn ighyal, aqur dignegh abqqa*)
Always our face and black, the pit viper has bitten and crushed us

(*dima udm negh iga ungal tetsh agh tfighra*)
And no flees are white [no good]
(*awd yan g iwurdan ur igi amllal*[61])
Like the PAM,[62] like the Istiqlal
(*am l-asala am l-ʔistiqlal*)
This country will never be in peace, it will never be…
(*tamurt a ujjin thenna, tamurt a ur sar thenna*)
<Song by Saghru Band>

The young Imazighen in Ar-Rachidia Province region often favour the music of Saghru Band from Mellaab, a town on the route between Touroug and Tinejdad. This band has been active since 1996, and their songs involve strong political messages, such as in the lyrics of *Tagrawla* (Revolution) or 'Moha': 'all the political parties are corrupt; they collaborate with one another to consolidate the power of Istiqlal Party'. They go on to cite the names of the dead combatants of Sarhro who fought against the French and the ancient Imazighen rulers: '(Let's) follow the footsteps of El Habbaz, and the road of Ajou Moh, follow Zaid Ou Hmad[63]….follow the road of Sifaou[64]…they will break, but will fight until death' (*nekat abrid n l Habbaz, nek abrid n Ajou Moh, nek abrid n Zaid Ou Hmad….Nekat abrid n Sifaw … ad teṛṛeẓ wala tekʷna*). Such songs by Saghru Band are extremely popular among the local, young Imazghen and are often played in public transport, such as taxis, or at home, regardless of whether or not they share their political messages or not.

In the summer of 2013, the first Amazigh music festival was held in Rissani, which was organised by the Association Ayt Aṭṭa of fossil artisans. This event symbolised a remarkable change of direction in the history of the fossil association, for the members were indifferent to such Amazigh cultural movements until in 2012 when they elected a new young president who was in his early thirties. Poets, singers and activists from Goulmima, Tinejdad and Mellaab showed up on stage and many local youth also per-

61 A Tamazight proverb.

62 Parti d'Authenticité et Modernité (Authenticity and Modernity Party), which is a political party created by a close friend and advisor of King Mohammed VI in 2008.

63 El Habbaz, Ajou Moh and Zaid Ou Hmad were combatants originating from Sarhro Mountains who resisted the French occupation in the 1930s.

64 Sifaou is the name of an ancient Amazigh king.

formed or agitated the crowd to give support to the detained activists and to promote Amazigh culture and language. With regard to this event, a local student expressed his point of view as follows:

> 'Why is that the Tamazight language is not present enough? It was marginalised by the French colonisation; in all the colonised countries they left power in the hands of Arabs [such as in Morocco and Algeria]. Another thing is that they circulate this idea: if we find a paper in which there is Arabic script, you have to collect it to avoid it being trampled by people, under the pretext that it is a part of the Qur'an, [since] the Qur'an is written in Arabic script. They also circulate the idea such as that [late King] Mohammed V was seen in the moon, which is propaganda. They want us to believe that if the state is not governed by the Arabs, it is not an Islamic state. [But] Islam was brought by Imazighen themselves, and they adopted it themselves….What was the objective of the Arabo-Islamic conquest? They came to steal our resources in North Africa, they did not bring Islam. We had Islam before the arrival of the Arabo-Islamic conquest.'
> <Amir, 28 August 2013, Rissani>

Although the local fossil and barite artisans appreciate the proliferation of Amazigh culture and the increased freedom of expression, it is important to note that they do not share this well-articulated point of view against the central state and the 'Arabo-Islamic conquest'. The young artisans, for example, are 'trend conscious' of the Amazigh cultural movement in a way that is similar to fashion in clothes and music; they wear the Amazigh symbol on sandals or t-shirts and put up the flag in front of their houses, but this is not to be considered as an act of commitment to the ideological cause of the movement. There are very few artisans who went through primary education, and even if they did, they often cannot relate to the standardised or internationalised 'Amazigh-ness' as shown in television broadcasts, nor to the strange Tifinagh characters used to teach Tamazight language in schools. They do indeed acknowledge the boundaries between the young, elite Imazighen in Rabat working behind the screen on Amazigh-related documentaries and themselves who do not share the same cultural experiences. The Amazigh television channel 'Channel 8' typically does not focus on Ar-Rachidia Province, since the two directors responsible for the documentaries are from the Sous and Rif areas. The culture and language promoted on TV are far from their own, and the local Imazighen watch them with curiosity in a way they look at 'foreigners', making fun of the dialects and expressions presented on

the screen. In short, we can see that the identities of Ayt Khebbash artisans in Rissani are strongly bound to localised space and tribal origins, and that they adopt the national or international trend as long as it serves the interests of their everyday life, and more precisely, their work.

Addi, the fossil and barite artisan, for example, is not interested in Amazigh music or festivals but emphasises his rights in terms of 'Amazigh-ness', as somebody who belongs to the original people of the land, defining the Arabs and other dark-skinned people as *iqbliyn* (strangers) in order to claim the right of exploration of what is beneath the earth. Similarly, he is actively participating in forming an association aiming at protecting the Ayt Khebbash people's land rights in Kudyet Draoua. At the same time, he is married to an Arab woman originally from Meknès and is rather disinterested in teaching Tamazight language to his five children at home. I have already argued that it is extremely rare to find marriages among Rissani Ayt Khebbash artisans outside their own clan or tribe, but Addi says he just happened to fall in love with this particular woman, who also happened to be an Arab. Therefore, he does not question his wife's 'Arab-ness' as a contradiction to his various claims based on his own sense of belonging to Ayt Khebbash group and Amazigh category. Apart from his marriage, he has several characteristics which he shares with the other local Ayt Khebbash artisans: they are interested in Amazigh identity issues as far as it is work-related or beneficial in terms of land acquisition. Those who are successful in barite business and have already become affluent are not interested in any sort of Amazigh activism, but are busy advancing their own careers and collaborating with the influential Arab politicians.

Therefore, how the Ayt Khebbash artisans associate their day-to-day problems with being Amazigh is highly contextual, since they do not typically locate themselves in larger geographical terms nor in a longer historical time frame including entire North Africa. In other words, people do accept certain discourses and are being taken in by them, yet simultaneously they resist, hesitate, and do not participate in the communities of power relations when articulating their complex daily experiences. This reality supports my contention that people construct their practice in confrontation with the power relations of the discourse practice, and is also coincidentally involved in the processes of identification.

5.6 Conclusion: Work, Communities and Identities

Judith Butler stated that identification is a process that can never be 'achieved', and that it is never fully and finally made. She contends that it is incessantly reconstituted and is subject to the 'volatile logic of iterability' (1993: 105). Contrary to the claims by Lave and Wenger (1991; Wenger 1998) that an identification process equals a learning process, in which the apprentices participate and synchronise with the masters under the official structure of the community, it is by now evident that the communities of practice include peripherality, marginality and dis-identification processes at the same time. We have seen in the travels and work of Ayt Khebbash artisans in Nador that they neither identify nor assimilate to the structural conditions, but instead hold on to their 'traditional' values and norms as they experience marginality in the cities. In an attempt to establish themselves in barite mining back home, they also experience this striking marginality when interacting with the authorities and client companies. The conflict a person experiences in the space between what they are actually doing and how they find themselves located in the communities can be described as 'non-participation' (Hodges 1998: 273). The process called 'participation' is an experience in constant conflict with their historically situated self - for the Ayt Khebbash artisans, this process rather induces a 'non-participation' within the structural conditions, as well as a sympathy for their own tribal identities.

Furthermore, the identities of Ayt Khebbash artisans are not only reconstructed through participation and non-participation, but also through practice within power relations. The process of exclusion does not merely occur in their day-to-day conflicts of work, but also in relation to the politics of national and international Amazigh activism. Their identities of belonging, which are reconstructed through traditionalisation of modernities, involve concrete internal complexities against the administrative, political and social pressures they confront in their everyday lives. This conflict opens up new identificatory possibilities that constitute the Ayt Khebbash artisans' experience of being in a transforming world of commodified labour markets. Their migrant labour to Nador and elsewhere within the context of exclusion and pressure led them to 'multiply' their identities through ongoing sociality, wherein they invented a new form of nomadism to become an 'Ayt Khebbash artisan' time and again. In other words, they encountered their own 'manipulated and manipulating self' (Hodges 1998: 289) which led them to a historical reconstruction of the self to internalise the social forces in the course of their multiplicious identification processes.

As discussed by Lave and Wenger, learning implies becoming a different person through 'legitimate peripheral participation' in the communities of practice, which involves relations of power (1991: 31-39). I have argued in this chapter that not only the Ayt Khebbash artisans become skilful as acting agents, but there is an infinite possibility of their multiplicious identifications through participation and non-participation. When they identify themselves as *irḥaln*, often against the other category *iqbliyn,* which indicates 'strangers', they reconstruct their 'traditional' sense of belonging to *reḥla* once again as the 'periphery' in the centre of their own world. And precisely because the home (*tamazirt*) of the Ayt Khebbash people stays permanently in *reḥla*, it possesses the capacity to speak to the marginalised, dispossessed and excluded self within the system of world capitalist production. In this respect, the ongoing travels of the Ayt Khebbash artisans is a renewed nomadism, generated by the reality of life, which cannot be conditioned, dictated, or concluded.

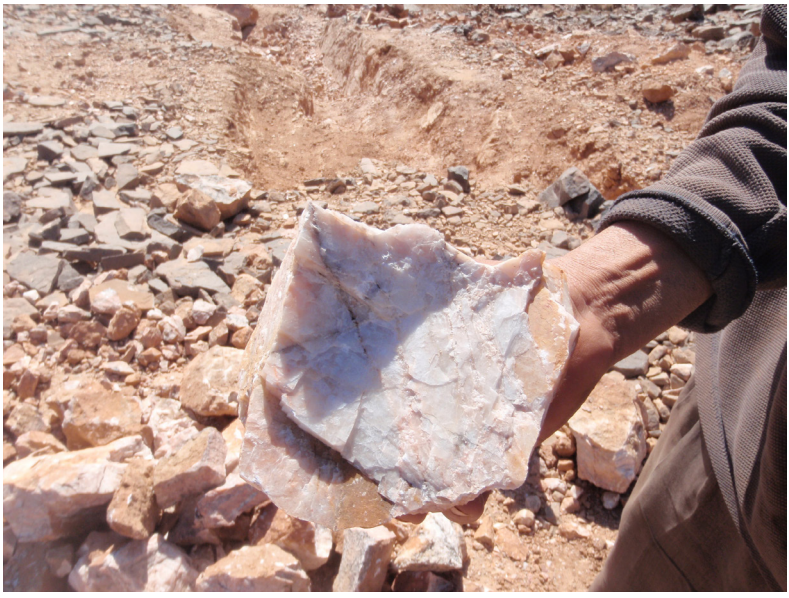
5-1 Ar Rachidia men in Nador

5-2 Construction work in Nador

5-3 Job-seekers at a *mawqaf*

5-4 Barite mines of Tijaght

5-5 Ayt Khebbash miners in Tijaght



5-6 Barite

5-7 Extraction of barite in Tijaght

Chapter 6 – Conclusions

The modern world is seemingly bound by the web of an administrative apparatus, in Foucault's terms, which controls and disciplines human beings through education, media and market forces (1975). The aim of the preceding chapters was to look at the material and ideological life of the Ayt Khebbash artisans so as to draw the contours of the tensions between identities formulated through work practice and articulated through power relations. These identification processes are also organised around places in which they dwell, and from which they reap the meagre fruit of their labour. Drought and economic necessities has once driven the Imazighen out of the desert, and will continue to perpetuate their ever-circulating migratory routes to and from towns and cities, and then back to the desert again. As discussed in chapter five, this life cycle was often described by the locals as: *sbʕa snayʕa w l-rzaq dayʕa* (seven jobs, and the money lost) - after a century of hands in different domains of work, they realise that they did not even have their hands, and will not have them in the future to come.

'My life has not changed much. Except that I settled down in Rissani fifteen years ago', an Ayt Khebbash artisan in his fifties who once worked in the French-run lead mines said, while recounting how his present life as an independent barite miner was filled with unpredictable dangers and loads of payments for the workers. When asked why he chose the profession if it is so difficult, he replied in bewilderment, 'There is no other work (than mining). Isn't it better to be a herdsman?' It is not entirely sure if he really thinks living in a tent without modern facilities and herding animals is a better way of life, but this nostalgic discourse on the past is often heard among the Ayt Khebbash artisans, which can be understood as an effort to vindicate their tribal roots in order to counteract the contradictions they face in everyday situations.

During my more than two years residence in Rissani from the end of 2011 to January 2014, I saw many of the fossil artisans who worked in the garages of Moqaouama quarter move on to the domain of barite mining. The previously lively artisan street became less and less animated, as an increasing number of garages closed down and the artisans sold their machines that used to emanate the familiar noise and dust. Some of them got associated with friends and set up their own business to exploit the mines, whereas those who did not have the means randomly went on to the mining sites such as Tijaght and Rask Mouna to dig the veins with rudimentary tools, without

authorisation for exploitation. Those who remained in the fossil business were often caught in debt crisis, since the buyers refused to pay the full amount and the retailers also delayed the payment to the suppliers. I witnessed on several occasions serious arguments over money and even quarrels turning into fist fights. The loose-knit credit relations based upon Islamic morals started to crumble due to the absolute lack of income and the decline of the economy within the whole of Morocco. Although payment delay is less common in the mining sector, the barite miners are also entirely dependent on the volatile international market and the whimsical complications imposed on them by the Moroccan administration and commercial enterprises.

The identification processes of the Ayt Khebbash people are complicated by their participation in the communities of practice that is premised on the marginalisation of their income, health and language. In Tafraoute, a man from the Irjdaln clan will not be allowed, by social pressure, to work for a profitable venture initiated by one from the Ayt Taghla clan, for fear of revenge and boycott from his own group. The wealthy Ayt Taghla businessman, on the other hand, is associated with influential Arab politicians and lives in Erfoud, while pursuing his own economic goals. Marginalised and impoverished village people are often made responsible for illegal smuggling, ending up in prison without viable evidence. In Rissani, the dominance of the Arabic language and some privileged Arabic-speaking families organise the ways in which the Amazigh population participates in the communities. As discussed in chapter two, the domains of work in Rissani are hierarchically divided by ethnic or linguistic groups and there is very little space for social mobility. Local politics and commerce are dominated by Arabic-speaking officials and merchants, and those *qayd*-s or *pasha*-s appointed by the central government with little knowledge of Amazigh culture or language. The Ayt Khebbash people usually find subsistence in informal sectors, and the marginalised status of fossil sculpting demonstrates the conflictual identification processes within this distinctively modern domain of work.

In the context of this town environment, the artisans participate in apprenticeship in a paradoxical way, since the individual's historical and cultural backgrounds are evoked and shifting, displaced and also continuous in participation. They constantly evoke and reinforce their memories of the nomadic past in their utterances and through their participation as an 'Ayt Khebbash' artisan in the communities. They participate in various ways, by recalling their days as herdsmen, and by conforming to, but also contradicting the Western norms and values of commodity production. In

every circumstance we see that Moroccans are not autonomous individuals but contextualised in the web of social relationships. The Ayt Khebbash artisans will migrate to Rissani or look for seasonal income in Nador by the force of circumstances, but their decisions depend on the consent of their fathers and brothers, and the money earned goes to the mouths of their patriarchal family members. In Rissani fossil *ateliers*, the Ayt Khebbash men are not entirely alienated from themselves in a sense that they often work with their own brothers and kin-groups in a Tamazight-speaking environment within the town. As Rosen discusses, the actors are placed in a context of origins, family, knowledge and relationships, and on this grounding the 'negotiation' with one another becomes possible (1984: 182-3). Within this 'bargaining' process, as Rosen calls it, it is only the 'situated person' who can engage in the course of 'negotiation' since the person's 'freedom of action' is shaped by the contexts (1984: 165-192).

When it comes to the work in mining and construction domains, the Ayt Khebbash artisans find themselves in the acute condition of a capitalist market economy on the basis of their everyday work. Exploitation of mines involves unreasonable imposition and fluctuation of prices, a series of bureaucratic complications, and inevitable corruption. In the disorganised domain, cheating, robbing and falsification of documents are rampant because of the artisans' peripheral position within the economic and political hierarchies. The social consciousness of the Ayt Khebbash artisans based on their tribal roots is even more heightened by their seasonal migration to Nador and the large cities outside Ar-Rachidia. As discussed in chapter five, the work conditions of construction labourers speak of the paradox of the Moroccan nation in the course of being integrated into the world market. The export of mineral resources increases the vulnerability of a nation entirely dependent on external trade for survival, and the process of the Ayt Khebbash artisans becoming an urban proletariat is deeply connected to the demographic change and cultural transformation of post-independence Morocco. These workplaces, which represent the dominant parties in the capitalist economy, invented their own norms – unwritten rules and employment conditions – in order to serve their interest and maximise profits. The artisans simply cannot affiliate with such communities, nor participate as 'members'. As discussed by Hodges (1998), identifying through participation in the norms of the communities of practice can involve conflictual relations between one's socially marginalised differences and one's peripheral relations within the community of practice. Most importantly, this marginalisation is *not* negotiable and will never lead to more inclusive practices; rather, the marginalised persons continue to remain outside the dominant social struc-

ture. In other words, the Ayt Khebbash artisans are in the process of reconstructing themselves historically, on the basis of the social exclusion they experience in the new work environment.

In the course of the historical reconstruction of the self, the artisans experience the non-negotiable conflicts embedded in the multiply situated power relations. The Amazigh population of Rissani appreciates the improved status of the Tamazight language and its incorporation into the educational programme, but do not speak in Tamazight to their children. Also, they are aware of the power of the Berber-speaking elites in Rabat who influence the state policies and decide which region and what aspect of 'Amazigh culture' should be broadcast and promoted. The Rissani artisans may refuse to identify with the state ideology of 'Amazigh-ness' or resent the Arab-dominated social order, yet selectively adopt the overarching 'Amazigh identity', 'individualism' and encourage their children to learn Arabic and French. This reveals the processes of power relations as multiplicious, and that their complexity is incorporated into the situational identifications of the historicised self.

At some point in 2011, before I started my fieldwork in Rissani, the lead singer of the Saghru Band, M'barek Ou Larbi from Mellaab, passed away at the age of 29. With a bachelor's degree in French public law and literature, he was known as a militant Amazigh activist and an open critic of the Moroccan government and IRCAM policies. The much speculated reason of his sudden death was reportedly a heart attack or drug abuse, which remains to be an unresolved mystery for many of the Imazighen in Ar-Rachidia. His inimitable voice however continues to sing in the taxis, lorries and *fourgonnettes*, up and down the mountains and on the bouncing, unpaved routes to and from Tafraoute. 'Moha' is one of the favourite songs of the young local Imazighen, which depicts both real and imagined state of inequality experienced by an Amazigh persona 'Moha':

> Poor Moha, poor Moha
> (*igellin Muḥa, igellin Muḥa*)
> Moha the unemployed has studied abroad
> (*Muḥa d ashumar ighra aghd bṛṛa*)
> In the country of his ancestors he became a stranger
> (*g tamazirt n daddas yaghul ig u bṛṛa*)
> My suffering I share with Moha

(*arzag inu sharegh t d Muḥa, arzag inu*)
His leg is suffering and the *makhzen* has killed it
(*ineqqa t wafud, ineqqat lmakhzen*)
Poor Moha, poor Moha
(*igellin Muḥa, igellin Muḥa*)
Since his existence Moha walked with bare feet
(*seg mayd illa Muḥa iteddu s uẓir*)
Moha has never dreamed of becoming a minister…
(*Muḥa ur jjin iwarg ad ig lwazir*)
Oh the Moha-s, go there Moha-s!
(*ah, a id Muḥa, anekragh a id Muḥa*)
The Moroccan race have reunited
(*ijemʕa uzur n umureski*)
A cunning Arab
(*a yiwn waʕrab aḥḥraymi*)
They say Moha is ignorant
(*nann Muḥa d abujadi*)
Or is it to fight against the colonisers
(*hat lahkt ad iwt aṛumiy*)
Moha climbed the mountains
(*Muḥa ittel lʕawari*)
The sons of Allal (El-Fassi) went to Paris
(*memmis n ʕAllal iʕayn baris*)
To obtain another degree
(*ad iberred diblum yaḍnin*)
And returned to sit on the chair (became a minister)
(*yughul d amzn akersi*)
Ayay ayay ayay ayay…..
They told me I am not even worth a shit
(*nann iyyi ur tswit amezzur*)
The culture of folklore….
(*idelsen n lfulklur*)
For the Amazigh, there is only the ruins remaining
(*amazigh, iqquma lharhur*)
This land is [belongs to] the Imazighen!
(*tamurt a i imazighen!*)

Throughout the song, the post-independence state policy to integrate the Imazighen into the national unification process to become *mureski* ('a Moroccan citizen') is described as a conspiracy of 'a cunning Arab', which marginalised and devalued the identity of 'Moha'. M'barek goes on even further to say 'They told me I am not even worth a shit', referring to the proliferation of Amazigh cultural movements since the 1990s which in turn was used by the Moroccan government to 'folklorise' the Amazigh arts and tribal culture, without much consideration for the actual life of the economically and socially disadvantaged.

As discussed in chapter five, this is not to say the ordinary Imazighen in the Tafilalet necessarily share the same viewpoint of M'barek and the militant activists of Goulmima, Tinejdad or Mellaab. The artisans of Rissani do identify themselves as Moroccan citizens and Muslims, especially against foreign entities, and are at least linguistically integrated into the town environment, in the sense that the first generation immigrants are all bi-lingual in Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight, or that they speak Arabic even better. The 'Amazigh' ethnic category is highly contested, since the ideological penetration of international and national Amazigh movement created an imagined unity of Berber language speakers all across the globe through media and internet. As a matter of course, the local youth, especially those with frequent contacts with foreigners, are more susceptible to this international trend and are influenced by it, but illiterate people of over forty years old – which includes most of the Ayt Khebbash artisans - are less interested and more selective by adopting only beneficial aspects of 'Amazigh-ness' that are directly relevant to their daily concerns in the context of the Arabised town environment.

I have argued throughout the preceding chapters that what matters for the Ayt Khebbash artisans on the level of personal identities are their tribal affiliations based on agnatic ties. They still strictly observe the *tafargant* ('rule of respect') which prohibits certain inter-clan marriages within the Ayt Aṭṭa group and seldom out-marry their daughters to the Arabic-speaking 'strangers'. This marriage practice is irrelevant to what Cynthia Becker claimed to be their wish to 'keep the bloodlines pure' (2006), but rather is a matter of filial piety. The process of modern state formation and migration to towns and large cities necessitated the Ayt Khebbash people to strengthen their family networks in order to consolidate their sense of geographical and historical belonging, which will be beneficial to the parents and grandparents who are dependent on the sons' income, and for the sons who are in need of imagined homes. In a state

without a tangible welfare system to rely on, traditionalised practices become part of the reconstruction process of the global reality the Ayt Khebbash artisans have to face, and also the spiritual shelter they seek for. In becoming a 'Moroccan citizen', and in becoming a universally defined 'Amazigh' person, they identify and dis-identify within the ideological constructs to transform it into something more creative and discursive. At least, the Ayt Khebbash artisans I encountered had the ability to actively manipulate the power relations in practical and imaginative ways which allowed them to flexibly adapt to institutional and cultural changes in the real world. I have analysed in chapter three how the 'Ayt Khebbash' tribal category was constructed through repetition of myth and through intermixing with different patrilineal descent groups. Tafraoute itself is a modernly constructed village where the nomadic population sought for refuge after the two wars with France and Algeria. This historical fact does not sit well with the Rissani artisans' strong affinities with their *tamazirt* ('homeland'), since *tamazirt* itself is neither unchanging, nor pure, nor sacred. However, the tactical ways in which people attach meaning to *tamazirt* and Ayt Khebbash tribal belonging help them to historically reconstruct the self in order to cope with their everyday work environment in towns and cities. Their renewed interpretations of 'Amazigh' and 'Ayt Khebbash' categories are nurtured by individualised interest in the modern context but are strongly anchored to the perpetual kinship and tribal sense of belongings. Apparently, the Ayt Khebbash artisans are not at all a 'revolutionary' segment of the working class, although they are aware of the penetrating force of global capitalism and social inequalities, as depicted in the songs *Tagrawla* or 'Moha'. Their opposition, dis-engagement and non-participation are rather embedded in micro-level social interactions and work practices that will remain marginal in *reḥla* as long as they continue to earn the bread of the day. They will eat, invite guests to the table, and they will joke: *mstnyn iyzm ikhmjak imi*? (Who will tell the lion 'your mouth is dirty'?).

The point of departure of this dissertation was my unfinished series of encounters with the hospitality of the land, which does not belong to the realm of a rational legal principle. The simple offering of sweet tea and bread on the road relates to 'living' or 'dwelling', and this relationship belongs to the unreasonable poetic realm rather than to the relativity of rational discourse. The Ayt Khebbash artisans of Rissani have no reason whatsoever to vindicate themselves in the framework of Western civilisation, although their lives are constantly encroached and engendered by the administrative apparatus of power. However, they do refuse to be commodified into an expendable object in the market – at least on the deepest emotional level. Therefore, if the 'de-ter-

ritorised' land of the nomads is worth theorising and philosophising, it is due to the local hospitality which allows life, movement, and the regenerating forces to flow out against the all-encompassing will of civilisation.

Appendices

Appendix1:
Year of migration of the inhabitants of Moulay Hafid and Moulay Slimane Quarters

1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
6	11	15	15	3

Total number of households: 50

Moulay Hafid Quarter

Year of migration	Age	Occupation	Village/Ksar of origin	Ethnic Background
1978	62	retired military	Taouz (reḥla)	Irjdaln
1987	64	retired military	Tiharyine, Taouz	Irjdaln
1982	63	retired civil servant	Gueuama	Shorfa
2006	50	merchant	Tiaarimt	Reggi/Imlwan*
1987	62	retired civil servant	El Ghorfa	Aḥrar
1992	65	none (handicapped)	Oulad Rehou	Aḥrar
1989	58	driver	Tbaht El Khir	Irjdaln
1997	53	seasonal worker	Ighef n Ighir	Ayt Taghla
2007	50	seasonal worker	reḥla	Murabiṭin (Hassani)
2000	32	none	reḥla	Aarib (Hassani)
1989	48	retired military	Tazegzout	Izulayn
1985	62	retired	Rich	Shorfa
1990	58	seasonal worker	Zagora	Ayt Alwan
1987	52	sculptor	Tanamoust	Ayt Taghla
2012	45	military	Ouarzazate	Ayt Hdiddou
2010	58	retired mechanic	Qṣar Greenfod	Shorfa
1999	58	retired military	Taouz	Ayt Amar
2003	50	seasonal worker	Remlia	Ayt Taghla
1992	50	seasonal worker	Hassi Labied	Irjdaln
1999	68	retired	Qṣar Lemtahra	Abid (Ismkhan)
1978	78	retired	Tiharyine	Ilḥyan
2011	56	retired military	Qṣar Sosso, Laayoune	Ḥaratin
1978	78	retired	reḥla	Aarib (Hassani)

1979	60	retired	Taouz (reḥla)	Rguibat (Saḥrawi)
2009	28	construction worker	Qṣar Gaouz	Shorfa

Moulay Slimane Quarter

2001	42	seasonal worker	Taouz	Ayt Bourk
2009	63	retired butcher	Abu Am	Ḥaratin
1992	62	retired military	Zawiya Mellaykhaf	Shorfa
1985	42	seasonal worker	Tabaht Lkhir	Izulayn
1999	38	unemployed	Tazoulaït	Izulayn
1996	56	sculptor/trader	Tafraoute	Ayt Taghla
1984	61	sculptor/trader	Remlia	Ayt Taghla
2008	37	unemployed	Tafraoute	Ayt Amar
1985	52	retired	Taouz (reḥla)	Ihadhuchin
1999	67	merchant	Qṣar Houara	Ḥaratin
1982	74	retired military	Tafraoute	Irjdaln
2002	56	barite	Tafraoute	Ayt Taghla
1972	72	merchant	Qṣar Menuga	Aḥrar
1978	41	guardian/seasonal	Qṣar Leqsabi	Shorfa
1998	48	mediator of taxi	Tafraoute	Irjdaln
2005	50	sculptor	Lahfira	Ayt Amar
1998	67	vegetable seller	Tiaarimt	Ismkhan
1994	56	company	Qṣar Bni Mimoun	Aḥrar
2005	60	woodworker	Rabat	Arab
1999	45	woodworker	Qṣar Tabassamt	Aḥrar
2009	33	tailor	Qṣar Oulad El Mouden	Aḥrar
1992	52	mobile merchant	Zawiya Sidi Ali	Aḥrar
2006	56	Imam	Qṣar El Mati	Ḥaratin
2002	55	retired military	Tafraoute	Kentaoui (Saḥrawi)
2008	60	vegetable seller	Melhaj	Ayt Taghla

Age and occupation: Head of the households

Population of two quarters: 14,000[65]

* *Reggi* (Arabic)/*Imlwan* (Tamazight): Ḥaratin group who speak Tamazight (the black popula-

65 Estimated by the Moulay Ali Cherif Municipality in 2013.

tion of the Tafilalet with lighter skin than Ismkhan).

Data collected from 8 and 10 September 2012 surveys, 50 households out of approximately 200 within Moulay Hafid and Moulay Slimane Quarters (previously Bouhamid Quarter together). I noted *reḥla* for the people who specifically mentioned it as their place of origin. However, many more families in the list are of nomadic origin.

Table 4-2 The convention of 1293

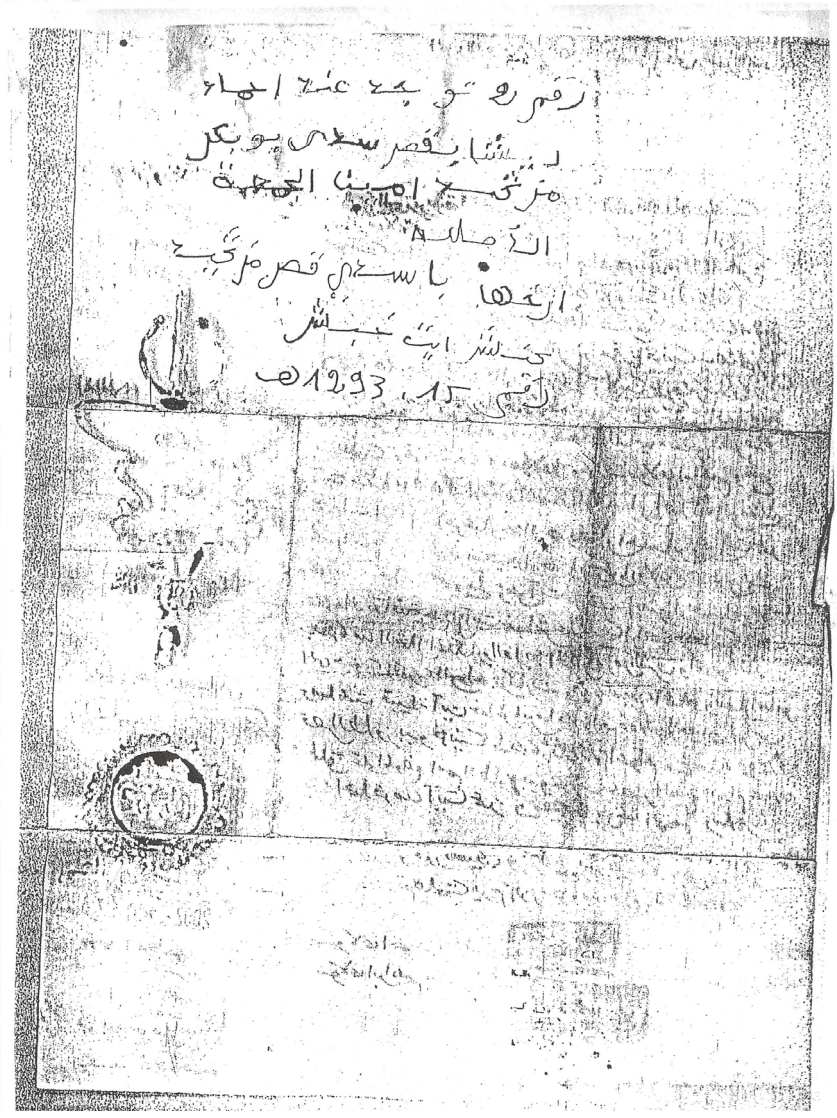


Table 4-2 The convention of 1293

Appendix 2: The convention of 1293 (French translation of table 4-2)

Au nom de Dieu miséricordieux
Louange à Dieu seul et que la prière et salut soient sur le Prophète, sa famille et ses compagnons.

N° du document 30 au lieu de 29

N°1 Taouz
2 –Sidi Boubker
3- *qṣar* Boudnib
Vendredi de l'an 1293 de l'hégire, les Shorfa de *qṣar* Boudnib qui sont : Moulay Ahmed, Moulay Ali, Moulay Lahcen et Tayeb ; ils ont demandé de se réunir avec Ayt Khebbash une première fois à Mich Ali Ou Moussa El Maïder en 1293 H, la seconde à *qṣar* Taouz. La convention a été signée à *qṣar* Sidi Boubker ou Amer à Mezguida en 1293 H.
Ces Shorfa ont demandé de Ayt Khebbash d'assurer le gardiennage de Boudnib avec 120 hommes. De Ilḥyan vingt hommes, vingt de Irjdaln, vingt de Ayt Amar, vingt de Izulayn, vingt de Ayt Taghla et vingt de Ayt Bourk. Ils ont ajouté cinq hommes pour les services de *jmaʕa*.
Cette convention a lieu en présence de deux Shorfa de Tamslouhte qui sont : 1- Moulay Ahmed ; 2- Moulay Brahim, et le *shaykh* de Ayt Aṭṭa de la fraction Izulayn Lahcen Ou Hsaine en plus des représentant des fraction de Ayt Khebbash : Bouyqbane Hsayne de Irjdaln, Lahcen ou Moh de Ayt Amar, Said ou Hsayne de Ilḥyan, Mohammed ben Ali de Izulayn, *shaykh* Ali de Ayt Taghla et Yechou Ou Hsayne de Ayt Bourk. Conformément à cette convention, les Ayt Khebbash ont obtenu le un tiers (1/3) des terres de Boudnib délimité au nord par al Mangar et la foret verte, et de l'est Oued Bouaanane au sud al-Karb à Oued Tazggart et le mausolée de Sidi Hmad et au nord Assamre.
La tribu de Ayt Khebbash a contribué là ou ils se trouvent par 400 Réal Hassani pour les gardiens de *qṣar* Taouz de Boudnib pour une durée de trois ans. En 1293 le lieu a pris le nom de Taouz à Boudnib en présence de *shaykh* Addi ben Hmad de Ayt Amar.

Fait à Sidi Boubker ou Amar à Mezguida en présence
des Chorfa de Tamslouhte le mercredi en 1293 H.

Signature : Moulay Ahmed Ben Ali
Signature : Moulay Brahim Ben M'barek

(Translated from original Arabic into French by Youssef Hasnaoui)

Appendix 3: Kudyet Draoua chronology of events

1937/38 In the middle of Ziz River a landmark was established to set the territorial boundary in between Ayt Khebbash and Arab Sbbah (Ayt Khebbash to the east bank, Arab Sbbah to the west).

1970 The Arab Sbbah entered into the east bank, the field cultivated by Ayt Khebbash, to claim their territorial rights. The case went to the court, and the final judgement assured the rights of Ayt Khebbash tribe and the Rissani Rural Commune.

1990s The number of Ayt Khebbash immigrants in Kudyet Draoua started to increase in this period. Some commune members (such as the former parliamentary members, former president of Rissani Rural Commune) encouraged and helped them to settle there for electoral reasons.

2001 The Caidat Arab Sbbah started to destroy the houses in Kudyet Draoua with tractors. The inhabitants protested by physical intervention. After this event, the Ayt Khebbash representative confirmed that the territory east of the Ziz River belongs to Ayt Khebbash tribal land.

2005 The Procès Verbal of the sale of the twenty hectare's territory was established.

2008 On 17 January, two associations in Kudyet Draoua wrote a letter to a parliamentary member and president of the Erfoud Municipality, to request their administrative attachment to Erfoud. The parliamentary member addressed a letter of solicitation to the governor to include Kudyet Draoua in Erfoud urban territory. Since then, the Rissani Rural Commune demanded Erfoud to return the water and electricity cost they had paid for Kudyet Draoua before (Rissani paid three periods, Erfoud paid the rest of the two periods instead of returning the money).

2009 Kudyet Draoua was attached to the Erfoud Municipality.

2012 **April 10**: Ayt Khebbash people demonstrated at Kudyet Draoua, in protest against the sales deal of twenty hectares of land between Arab Sbbah and the Erfoud Municipality.

April 18: The Ayt Khebbash people gathered again at Kudyet Draoua, in order to sign a petition to distribute the collective land to all the head of the

households belonging to the Ayt Khebbash tribe.

May 16: Kudyet Draoua inhabitants demonstrated in front of the Erfoud Municipality demanding water and electricity. On the way home, the demonstrators blocked the route to Merzouga to attract the attention of the responsible authority to their situation. The police demanded to clear the road, and nine (including three women) were detained. Three women and a man were freed later, on conditional release.

May 23: Kudyet Draoua inhabitants demonstrated in front of the provincial government of Ar-Rachidia, in protest against the injury and detention of a female demonstrator on 16 May. They demanded immediate release of the remaining detainees (the response was promised a week later, yet delayed further). Three people were sentenced to four years in prison.

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A Century of Hands: Work, Communities, and Identities among the Ayt Khebbash Fossil Artisans in a Moroccan Oasis

Abstract

This study analyses the everyday practices and the multiplicious identification processes in Amazigh mineral and fossil artisan communities, focusing on the Ayt Khebbash group in Rissani and Tafraoute. I address the following questions: how do the Ayt Khebbash artisans identify themselves and others through everyday work and participation in different communities? What is their relation to the space that surrounds them? How do they deal with the discourse power of the state and the penetrating influences of capitalism? I argue that in the context of the Tafilalet, the collective Amazigh ethnic identity promoted by the activists holds little importance compared to a tribal sense of belonging based on agnatic ties. Also, I find that the local Ayt Khebbash artisans see themselves contextually through social interactions in everyday work and in relation to external power structures.

This dissertation consists of an introduction, four main chapters, and a conclusion. The division of the main content of this study into four chapters is in accordance with the geography of the region: Tafilalet (Ar-Rachidia Province), the village Tafraoute, the town Rissani, and *reḥla* ('open space'). I examine the development of fossil extraction and sculpting work in Tafraoute and Rissani in the context of environmental factors and the local history of French colonial rule, so as to situate the practice of Ayt Khebbash men in the historical process of herding, agriculture and mining work. Then I analyse the apprenticeship of fossil artisans as a process of participation in social practice, by using the notion of 'legitimate peripheral participation' within the 'communities of practice' developed by Lave and Wenger (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). This is to demonstrate that work is a social practice wherein acting agents acquire new knowledge, techniques, and lifestyles, in the multiple processes of confrontations and contradictions. Furthermore, through an analysis of the Ayt Khebbash artisans' work experiences in Nador and barite mining, I argue that their identification processes also involve 'marginality', 'dis-identification', and 'non-participation' (Hodges 1998). Contrary to Lave and Wenger's model (1991; 1998), 'participation' was an experience in constant conflict with their historically situated self within the new socio-economic frameworks, which in the case of the Ayt Khebbash artisans induced sympathy for their own tribal identities, rather than assimilation to the structural

conditions of the capitalist labour market. I conclude that the Ayt Khebbash artisans counteract the effect of globalisation in their own terms with their own initiatives, by constantly imagining, reinventing and reconstructing their spatial and tribal senses of belonging.

Samenvatting

Deze studie analyseert de dagelijkse praktijk en meervoudige identificatieprocessen binnen de Amazigh-gemeenschappen van mineraal- en fossielambachtslieden, waarbij de nadruk ligt op de Ayt Khebbash-groep in Rissani en Tafraoute. Ik ga in op de volgende vragen: hoe ontlenen de Ayt Khebbash-ambachtslieden een identiteit voor zichzelf en voor anderen aan hun dagelijkse werkzaamheden en participatie in verschillende gemeenschappen? Wat is hun relatie tot de ruimte om hen heen? Hoe gaan zij om met de *discourse power* van de staat en de binnendringende invloeden van het kapitalisme? Ik betoog dat, binnen de context van de Tafilalet, de collectieve, etnische Amazigh-identiteit zoals deze gepromoot wordt door de activisten, van weinig belang is vergeleken met het tribale *sense of belonging* dat gebaseerd is op agnatische banden. Ook stel ik dat de lokale Ayt Khebbash-ambachtslieden zichzelf contextueel zien - door sociale interacties in de dagelijkse werkzaamheden en in relatie tot externe machtsstructuren.

Deze dissertatie bestaat uit een inleiding, vier hoofdstukken en een conclusie. De verdeling van de inhoud van deze studie over vier hoofdstukken is in overeenstemming met de geografie van de regio: Tafilalet (provincie Ar-Rachida), het dorp Tafraoute, de stad Rissani en de *reḥla* ('open ruimte'). Ik onderzoek de ontwikkeling van fossielopgravingen en beeldhouwwerk in Tafraoute en Rissani binnen de context van omgevingsfactoren en de lokale geschiedenis van Frans koloniaal bestuur, om zo de dagelijkse praktijk van de Ayt Khebbash-mannen te situeren in het historische proces van veehoeden, land- en mijnbouw. Vervolgens zal ik het leerproces van fossielambachtslieden analyseren als een proces van participatie aan *social practice*, door gebruik te maken van de notie van '*legitimate peripheral participation*' binnen de '*communities of practice*', ontwikkeld door Lave en Wenger (Lave en Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). Dit om aan te tonen dat werk een sociale bezigheid is waarin, in de meervoudige processen van confrontaties en tegenstellingen, de actoren nieuwe kennis, technieken en levensstijlen verwerven. Bovendien zal ik, door middel van een analyse van de werkervaringen van de Ayt Khebbash-ambachtslieden, betogen dat hun identificatieprocessen ook '*marginality*', '*dis-identification*' en '*non-participation*' (Hodges 1998) met zich mee brengen. In tegenstelling tot het model van Lave en Wenger (1991; 1998) was '*participation*' een ervaring die in constant conflict was met hun historisch gesitueerde zelf binnen het nieuwe, sociaal-economische kader, wat in het geval van de Ayt Khebbash-ambachtslieden eerder sympathie opwekte voor hun tribale identiteit, dan dat

het zorgde voor assimilatie aan de structurele voorwaarden van de kapitalistische arbeidsmarkt. Ik concludeer dat de Ayt Khebbash-ambachtslieden de gevolgen van globalisering op hun eigen voorwaarden en met hun eigen initiatieven tegenwerken, door zich voortdurend hun ruimtelijke en tribale *senses of belonging* te verbeelden, en deze steeds opnieuw uit te vinden en te herconstrueren.

Curriculum Vitae

Mayuka Tanabe was born on 16 June 1974 in Kyoto, and grew up in Thailand, Britain and Japan. She specialised in Art History and Film Studies at Kwansei Gakuin University. Following her early interest in the Chinese Communist Party, her BA thesis was on the representation of the Cultural Revolution in post-1970 Chinese films. After six months of affiliation to the Central Academy of Drama in Beijing to study Chinese performing arts and Mandarin, Tanabe enrolled in the University of Cambridge to pursue her research in the anthropology of China. Based on interviews and library work in Taipei and Xiamen, she wrote her MPhil dissertation on the Taiwanese investment and the building of social networks in Fujian Province in southern China. In 1999, she embarked on another research project at the University of Oxford (MLitt), focusing on the organisational culture of Taiwanese multinational enterprises in mainland China. This project involved twelve months of fieldwork in Shanghai at a Taiwanese multinational firm.

During her residence in Britain, Tanabe travelled extensively to northwest Africa and the Middle East, notably Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt, through which she discovered her strong connection to the desert and Islamic culture. Also influenced by the Burmese, Pakistani and Algerian Muslims in Oxford, she went to Damascus, Syria, in 2004 to study Classical Arabic and Politics and Society of the Modern Middle East at the French Institute (IFEAD). In 2009, she moved to Morocco to work as a lecturer of Academic Study Skills at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, and later at the Lebanese International University in Casablanca. At the same time, she engaged in social work as an assistant educator and a French teacher at a local NGO, 'Association Bayti', helping street children and impoverished families. Since 2011, affiliated to the Moroccan Centre for Social Sciences, Université Hassan II, Tanabe undertook her doctoral research in the Tafilalet town of Rissani, on the work practices of the Ayt Khebbash fossil artisans. She has been a Ph.D. candidate at the Leiden Institute for Area Studies, Leiden University, since 2014. Her current research interests include: Imazighen in North Africa, the Tamazight language, nomadism, and anthropology of work.