

‘For Progress and Civilisation’: History, Memory and Alterity in Nineteenth Century Colonial Algeria.

‘En avant, mes frères, et tout comme nos frères français, entonnons le *Chant du départ*. Non pas le départ pour la guerre, mais pour la conquête du progrès et de la civilisation’.¹

Abstract - This article explores the role played by past and by notions of alterity and belonging in political and cultural debates pertaining to the Algerian colony in the nineteenth century. It identifies a number of historical and memorial references in French and Algerian discourse and shows how they inflected power relations in the colony at the time. This study considers how history and memory, as well as colonial relationships were invoked and represented by the French and by Algerian Muslims. It examines how French colonial narratives on past wars and conflicts intersected with representations the actual phenomenon of colonisation. It also discusses the emergence on the political scene of a small group of French-educated Algerian Muslims from the end of the nineteenth century. It assesses the extent to which those Algerians were able to develop an alternative political voice and to construct an empowering narrative on Algerians’ experience and identity that countered dominant French discourse.

Introduction

Algeria’s troubled colonial history (1830-1962) and its legacy have been the subject of sustained scholarly attention over the last few decades; and a significant number of works have examined the momentous events that marked the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962), arguably one of the most violent wars of decolonisation of the twentieth century.² Several such studies have emphasised the role played by the past in political and cultural debates during Algeria’s colonial and postcolonial eras.³ As Martin Evans and John Phillips point out, the past was mobilised in a number of ways before and after Algerian independence in 1962. ‘Past, present and future’, they argue, were ‘seen as one and have played a key role in justifying all kinds of violence’. Particular conceptions of the past were used not only by the French to justify their colonial rule from 1830 onwards and by the Algerian nationalist organisation the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) that fought for independence during the Algerian War but also by the regime and their opposition in the postcolonial period – including Islamists from the 1980s onwards.⁴ It is worth noting, however, that relatively few studies have examined in detail and from a comparative perspective the role played by the past in both French and

emerged more prominently during the last three decades of the century which saw the end of the policy of assimilation and the establishment of civilian rule during the troubled early 1870s marked by the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71), the fall of the Second Empire (1852-1870) and the Algerian uprising led by Mohamed El-Mokrani in Eastern Algeria (1871).¹⁰

It could be argued that the notion of temporality played a central role in public and political discourse on colonial Algeria in the nineteenth century. A number of texts published at the time considered not only Algeria's past in relation to the colonisation process, but also its future as a territory under French control.¹¹ In his writing on Algeria, Ismayl Urbain, the Saint-Simonian who became adviser to Napoleon the Third, sought to 'bring out truth from the darkness of the past and the indecision of the present' in an 'effort to uncover a new path for Algeria'.¹² In the early 1850s, lawyer and journalist Jean-Gabriel Cappot de Feuillide wrote a book in which he presented his 'dreams on the past and the future of French Algeria and stated: 'in colonisation as in all human endeavours, time rules'.¹³ French academician Gaston Boissier also emphasised the relevance of the past to the colonial project in Algeria when he stated: 'to know what will become of a people, one needs first to understand its past. This is what history can do to help us'.¹⁴ Debates about Algeria's destiny at the time were as much about specific conceptions of past (history and memory) as they were about the 'presentness'¹⁵ of the colonial experience.

Those tensions and connections between past, present and future which will be discussed in relation to colonial Algeria, have been the subject of sustained academic attention. They form a key part of Martin Heidegger's conceptual framing of temporality in which, to quote Jean Ladrière, the present is 'mobile but mobile in relation to itself; it constitutes by itself this incessant advance of existence'.¹⁶ For Heidegger, Dorothea Frede contends, this consistently evolving present is tied to the past: 'not only do we carry our past with us, as one carries weighty memories, but we always already understand ourselves and our projects in terms of the past and out of the past'.¹⁷ As Paul Ricœur argues in his study of Heidegger, temporality 'springs forth in the plural unity of future, past and present'.¹⁸ Ladrière echoes this when he states that the past 'plays its part in that it is always present in the actual present, as does the future in that it is already present through anticipation within this same actual present'.¹⁹ It means, according to Frede, that 'we exist as three temporal dimensions at once: it is being ahead of ourselves in the future, drawing on our past, while being concerned with the present that constitutes our being'.²⁰

Temporality, therefore, is marked by instability and shifts. Indeed, as Reinhart Koselleck argues, the notion of the 'uniqueness and unidirectionality' of historical processes should be critiqued.²¹

Temporality, he points out, is characterised by the past and future possibilities that it contains: 'Temporal differences, refractions, or tensions [...] express the trend towards a new structuring of reality [...] different temporal relations and factors of acceleration unexpectedly come into play'.²² As

will be discussed within the context of this study of nineteenth century Algeria, specific forms of temporality framed discourses and socio-political actions across the colonial divide. Those discourses intersected with each other, but they were also marked by tensions, conflicts and distinct ‘temporal rhythms’, to use Kosseleck’s term.²³

This study will investigate how, during that period, ‘the past has been made present’²⁴ through a process of negotiation,²⁵ re-appropriation and meaning-making by identifying some salient historical and memorial threads in French and Algerian discourses at the time. It will argue that particular experiences and relationships, as well as power relations, shaped the way in which history and memory were invoked and represented by the French and by Algerian Muslims. That this pronounced focus on memory and the past emerged at that historical juncture is indicative of the specific social, cultural and political concerns that surfaced during the nineteenth century. According to Richard Terdiman, the profound uncertainty of relation to the past experienced by people in post-revolutionary France, from 1789-1815 to the early twentieth century (what he calls the ‘long nineteenth century’) was symptomatic of a ‘memory crisis’ characterised by perceptions of a ‘massive disruption of traditional forms of memory’. Within this context, he argues, ‘the functioning of memory, the institution of memory and thereby of history became critical preoccupations in the effort to think through [...] the modern’. The ‘long nineteenth century’ became a present whose self-conception was framed by a disciplined obsession with the past’.²⁶

The past, it could be argued, is always reconstructed in the present in problematic ways. As Walter Benjamin points out: ‘[t]o articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize “the way it really was”’.²⁷ Terdiman echoes this when he states that while the past is ‘gone without recourse’ and ‘can never be brought back intact’, its recollection through memory is a process that is founded on reduction, loss and forgetting. The past, he adds, ‘is always already and irretrievably a profoundly altered and attenuated version of the contents that were potentially available to consciousness when that past was present’.²⁸

In Algeria, such evocations of the past were informed by the colonial divide that framed relationships. For much of the nineteenth century, discourse on the past was reduced to a French ‘*récit des vainqueurs*’²⁹ (victors’ account) and marked by the silence and marginalisation of the colonised as the ‘*vaincus*’. In French narratives, reference to past wars, conflicts and specific colonial events from different periods and locations was made in ways that intersected with the actual phenomenon of colonisation. Of course, such historical accounts tended to be, by their very nature, teleological. They contributed to the structuring of the coloniser’s ‘reality’ on social, cultural and political level.³⁰ Yet, as this study will show, if history made by the ‘victors’ dominated in the short and medium-term in Algeria, it was disrupted over time by the voice of the ‘vanquished’ whose conception of history was informed by distinct experiences and expectations.³¹ This particular form of counter-discourse

developed by the colonised will be examined through the emergence, towards the end of the nineteenth century, of a small group of French-educated Algerian Muslims on the political scene. Those Algerians, it will be argued, were able to develop an alternative political voice, present a distinct interpretation of the past and of the colonial experience and seek reform of the colonial order. It involved, on the part of the colonised, a process of ‘substitution’, ‘replacement’ and ‘displacement’³² of the dominant historical frames of reference that allowed their own connection to the past and expectation of the future to be negotiated within a colonial context marked by their dissatisfaction with the present.³³

I

In nineteenth century Algeria, society was rigidly organised along colonial fault lines established during French colonial expansion from the 1830s onward, and relationships were, to a significant extent, shaped by the memory of war and conflict. Frequent reference to the French as ‘victors’ and Algerians as the ‘vanquished’ framed public and political debate and literature at the time. In a speech delivered on 30 September 1834, Justin Laurence, Special Justice Commissioner for North Africa, declared: ‘let us work wisely to foster what will be a very difficult integration of the victor and the vanquished. Let us alleviate the resentment felt by the African after the conquest [...] We have gloriously restarted the *œuvre* of the Romans by the sword, it is now time to complete it with our laws’.³⁴ In *L’Algérie et l’opinion*, writer Paul-Dieudonné Fabar echoed those views. He drew on the past and on the idea of the ‘white man’s burden’ to justify France’s role in Algeria: ‘all victors are faced with such an ungrateful task’, he wrote, ‘Rome which is constantly cited, respected the laws and the customs of the peoples that it had subjugated’.³⁵

Colonists’ view of Algeria was, to some extent, influenced by their experience and memory of conflicts and campaigns that had taken place prior to and during the Revolutionary years, the Premier Empire (1804-1815) and the Restoration (1814-1830).³⁶ Memories of previous campaigns and conflicts allowed actors and observers to make connections between the past and the present. Parallels were made by some officers between the campaign of Egypt (1797-1801) and France’s military action in Algeria. Major Claude Ambroise Fernel, who took part in the expedition of 1830, wrote that France’s spoils of war in North Africa ‘reminded us of the great achievements of our army of Egypt which is admired around the world’.³⁷ On the eve of the French landing at Sidi-Fredj, he wrote, soldiers were encouraged to emulate the battle of Heliopolis of 20 March 1800 that opposed General Kleber’s imperial Armée d’Orient to the Ottomans – those same Ottomans who were now presented as the oppressors of Algerians: ‘they will remember that fewer than the ten thousand men of our army of Egypt triumphed over seventy thousand Turks who were more brave and battle hardened than those Arabs whom they have oppressed’.³⁸

Personal and collective memories of recent campaigns in Europe also inflected perceptions of France's 'civilising mission' and fight against oppression. A parallel was made between the military expedition to Spain of 1823 and the invasion of Algeria in 1830. In the late 1820s Aimé de Clermont-Tonnerre, France's War Minister and an advocate for the North African expedition, declared to King Charles X: 'Behold that we have waged a war in Spain. After having destroyed the tyrants of Spain, wasn't it noble of us to destroy the tyrants of Algeria?'

³⁹ General Louis-Auguste de Bourmont, who led the Armée d'expédition d'Afrique (African Expeditionary Force), also made a connection between Spain and Algeria in his proclamation read to soldiers prior to the landing at Sidi-Fredj in 1830. It evoked a French army that had won the 'esteem of Spain' and presented the imminent campaign in North Africa as one of liberation: 'France's cause is that of humankind [...] For too long, the Arabs have been oppressed by a greedy and cruel militia. They will see us as liberators, they will implore our alliance'.⁴⁰ Personal memories of the war in Spain continued to feature in texts on colonial expansion many years after the landing at Sidi-Fredj. In 1846, military doctor Mathieu-François M. Audouard made a parallel between Spanish resistance and the colonial war in Algeria and called for new measures to firmly establish French domination in the colony: 'Spain continued to fight even when it was fully occupied by our troops and deprived of her strongholds, and God knows what a terrible war it was! I witnessed it; I saw it in all its horror. The same events are taking place in Algeria, and we will be faced with the same troubles unless we find ways of making our conquest last'.⁴¹

II

Memories of recent conflicts also fostered connections with broader historical references in ways that emphasised the superiority of France's civilisation and celebrated its conquest of Algeria. In 1852, Colonel Victor Thomas published a book comparing and contrasting France's conquest of Algeria and the legacy of Moorish Spain. For him, French military campaigns in the Muslim World constituted a turning point: while General Bonaparte's victory in Egypt had, he claimed, sealed 'the victory of the Cross over the Crescent', the French landing in North Africa on 14 June 1830 was no less than a redress for past Moorish conquests in Europe:

30,000 French troops landed at Sidi-Fredj and [...] brought down the violent government established in Algiers. Once more, Christendom encountered Islam; but this time, it is not those disorganised, undisciplined Christian paladins from the Middle-Ages fighting against Saracen horsemen [...] it is the personification of the idea [sic], of civilisation and organisation that has come to fight against brutal force, barbarism and disorder.⁴²

Here, a link was made between present circumstances (French colonisation in Algeria), memory (France's military campaign in Egypt) and a particular conception of history (Moorish Spain) that framed colonisation as a struggle for civilisation against barbarism, violence and disorder.⁴³ This

interpretation of current power relations between the Algerians and the French shaped by reference to the past could be found in a number of publications in the decades that followed. In 1882, for example, Colonel Vincent Noëllat drew on temporal conceptions steeped in Orientalism and *revanchisme* to paint a portrait of the racialized other as inassimilable, and pit the ‘civilised’ and ‘rational’ European open to progress and freedom against the Arab reduced to atavistic traits rooted in nature in order to dehumanise him and legitimise French colonisation. The Arab people, he argued, had enjoyed their ‘hour of glory’ but had ‘lain down in an animal-like torpor and vegetated’ ever since.⁴⁴ Here a racialized conception of history was foregrounded to represent French domination as justified by historical change and to depict the colonised as devoid of agency:

Today, the Arab race feels that Europe is advancing and fighting it with the same grandiose force that brought the Arabs to Europe ten centuries ago [...] between them, peace, fusion or coexistence is impossible [...] The Aryan race, which was once the attacked, is now the attacker [...] Faced with fatalism, immutability, predestination, sensuality which form part of Muslim dogma, the Aryan race champions liberty, progress, the power of science over matter, the unlimited aggrandizement of human spirit.⁴⁵

This view of colonisation as forming part of the natural cycle of history was reflected in the writing of Dr Abel-Victorino Brandin, ex-principal surgeon of the army, who argued in 1846 that the ‘study of the past’ showed that civilisation in Africa had been a brief interlude and that it had fallen back into ‘primitive barbarism’; Europe, he claimed ‘appears destined to bring back to Arabs the benefits of human knowledge that it had received from them in the twelfth century’. Through colonisation, Brandin added, Algerian Muslims were ‘carried without realising it’ (*entraînés à leur insu*) by the progress brought about by civilisation. The uprising led by Emir Abdelkader against colonial expansion in the 1840s was, for Brandin, nothing more than a ‘vain effort’ on the Emir’s part to maintain Arabs in a state of ‘ignorance’ and ‘fanaticism’.⁴⁶

III

In 1856, lawyer and journalist Jean-Gabriel Cappot de Feuillide deplored the fact that the conquest of Algeria had been undertaken with no agreed system of occupation and that ‘Our statesmen, our generals, our naval officers had no in-depth knowledge of Algeria’s seas, coast, populations, customs, country or society’, before adding:

For [them], Algeria was, on the coast, a pirate’s den that had to be cleared, and inland, a bunch [*tourbe*] of savages that could be exterminated or pushed back like the tribes of America [...] When the occupation of Algeria happened, it turned out that the bunch of

savages were in fact people that were strongly attached to their land through agriculture and by their ancient nationality. They were little disposed to letting themselves be exterminated.⁴⁷

As Patricia Lorcin has shown, in the early years of French military occupation, such unfamiliarity of North Africa's terrain and ignorance of colonising methods meant that French officers versed in classical texts drew on the Roman past in North Africa to create a reassuring point of reference. As debates about the future of the French occupation of Algeria took place, the French authorities focused on the Roman past in North Africa as a valid source of inspiration in the Western tradition.⁴⁸ Considerable effort went into identifying archaeological remains dating back to the Roman era, as well as classifying and publishing data pertaining to those sites. As Ernest Renan stated: 'The scientific exploration of Algeria will be one of France's titles of glory in the nineteenth century, and the best justification for a conquest that has highlighted all the conquering nation's talents [...] The military authority and the civilian population have shown the same zeal'.⁴⁹ The writing of the history of Roman North Africa by the French was informed by a dual process: while this classification work involved military personnel on the ground (officers, physicians, interpreters and even priests),⁵⁰ historical accounts on Roman Africa produced by archaeologists and historians – in particular studies of the strategies used by the Romans to control North Africa - were published for the benefit of the military. In 1845, Théodore Fortin d'Ivry, a member of the Oriental Society of Paris, stated that in the first few years of the military campaign in Algeria, officers focused on charting the 'land that had been covered', the 'memory of the places occupied by the Romans', the 'escape routes used by the mass of enemy cavalry' and the 'illusory surrender of certain individuals'.⁵¹

The notion that the Roman past could be reinterpreted and form part of a 'road map' for colonisation is also reflected in a manual on ancient North Africa written by archaeologist Adolphe Dureau de la Malle in 1852. This manual, he argued, was aimed at French soldiers who could use it as a guide during colonial campaigns in order to compare 'ancient and modern times' and search for the 'imperious motives that drove the leaders of Roman legions and those of the French army to follow particular plans of operations'.⁵² Political observers who were aware of Marshall Thomas-Robert Bugeaud's 'hostility towards Arabs' and of his 'openly expressed desire to exterminate them', noted that he had conceived a plan to 'establish colonial settlements imitating those of the Romans'.⁵³ Those views on the relevance of the Roman past to present circumstances continued to be expressed by officials under the Third Republic. For General Alfred Chanzy, Governor General of Algeria between 1873 and 1879, too, the past could inform colonial policy: 'Even if the years of utter barbarism that have afflicted this country have destroyed, in part, the wonderful aqueducts and the huge dams left by the great civilisations of yesteryear, there are nonetheless enough traces left to show us that, on that front, we are far from having achieved as much as our precursors'.⁵⁴

Many publications recounting the history of French colonisation presented the military conquest within a broader historical framework paying homage to the past periods of European domination in Algeria.⁵⁵ As Marshall Sylvain Charles Valée, Governor General of Algeria (1837-1840) declared in 1838: 'I want France to remake Roman Africa'.⁵⁶ This Roman Africa was evoked as part of a binary construction opposing, once again, civilisation and barbarism. This view of the land that was being colonised was shared by a number of military officers and writers. For example, captain Paul Emmenond Émile de Mont Rond in his *Histoire de la conquête de l'Algérie*, recounted in detail France's military campaign in Algeria, a land 'inhabited by savage populations' and described as 'the last obstacle put up by barbarism against civilisation'. He evoked the past history of domination of Algeria which justified and legitimised France's violent conquest and claimed that 'the traces left by Roman domination are everywhere for us to see on this land'.⁵⁷ By wrapping themselves in the mantle of ancient Rome, military officers presented the conquest of North Africa as a process that involved a connection with the past through 're-enactment' ('I want France to remake North Africa') and that presented colonisation as the return of (Western) civilisation and the resumption of the march of history.

For de Mont Rond as for many other colonial writers, officers and politicians at the time, French colonisation which was presented as the continuation of the *œuvre* of the Romans necessitated the use of violence. The French military conquest and the massacres committed by the army that 'struck terror' among Algerians were 'cruel acts', he conceded, but they were 'the best means of dominating those fierce tribes'.⁵⁸ This violence, he claimed, was a necessary means to an end which would ultimately benefit the colonised: 'after all is said and done, the war that we have waged against the Arabs of Algeria and that can only end with their complete submission, will be even more advantageous for the vanquished than for us'.⁵⁹ Such views on France's civilising mission continued to be expressed in the following decades. The aim of France's colonial mission, the War and Education Ministers wrote in a report to Napoleon the Third in 1865, was to 'drive Muslims to break with centuries-old transgressions'.⁶⁰

Other writers established a connection between France's *mission civilisatrice*, the past and religion. In 1842, economist Eugène Buret wrote that throughout Algeria 'we have recovered traces of the Romans [...] The Africa of the Romans has been rediscovered, without a doubt!'.⁶¹ He called on France to expand colonisation: 'Our task is to cultivate, save from insalubrity, solitude and barbarism, this part of the Ancient-World'.⁶² He viewed France's mission in Algeria as consisting of creating a 'new, civilised Christian nation'. Describing Algerians as inassimilable, he advocated the settlement of Europeans – French as well as Italian and Spanish – to populate, regenerate this land and make it 'fertile' based on the example of European settlements in North America.⁶³

The question of how to deal with the Algerian population, and the role that education could play in colonial Algeria were considered by a number of writers and observers. Drawing on the Roman past, General Franciade-Fleurus Duvivier, who served in Algeria in the first eleven years of French colonisation, argued in 1841 for the maintenance of the military regime in Algeria and the creation of Arab kingdoms in North Africa that would be France's vassals and for the development of education as a tool of colonisation:

The history of Rome and of all the great peoples confirms this. *Perseverance leads to victory*: this is the expression of one of the most important principles of a State [...] Rome was victorious in Africa only because she found populations there that had already been subdued by kings [...] We should either withdraw immediately, or settle in a rational way, with perseverance, and by spreading education among the population that we must subject to our domination.⁶⁴

Buret, on the other hand, saw the Algerian population as a burden rather than as an asset, but he came to similar conclusions about the need to educate Muslims. It was necessary, he argued, to 'teach work discipline to this weak and degenerate population' and educate young Algerians to prevent [...] this population from relying entirely on us financially or from becoming dangerous'.⁶⁵

IV

For much of the nineteenth century, the ubiquity of French discourse on Algeria contrasted with the dearth of Algerian voices providing insights into their colonial experience.⁶⁶ Evocation of the past constituted what Enzo Traverso describes as a Western prerogative and a system of domination: a 'justificatory narrative by the powerful that finds its *raison d'être* in the erasure of other histories and the negation of other memories'.⁶⁷ However, towards the end of the century, a small group of French-educated Algerians coalesced in Franco-Muslim sports associations and started to engage in modern forms of political activity. Following the adoption of the law on the freedom to create associations on 1 July 1901, they established a number of *cercles algériens* which acted as spaces of exchange and debate.⁶⁸ While previously, political, public and media discourse had been dominated by the French, the intervention of some Algerians described as *évolués* and *intellectuels* on the political scene constituted an important act of '*prise de parole*' (speaking out) that allowed them to challenge French conceptions of the colonial experience and negotiate their own conception of the past and of their present circumstances. It marked the emergence of a 'counter-public sphere'⁶⁹ which, although constrained by colonial control, inflected political debate in the colony during that period. Those intellectuals were, predictably, viewed with suspicion by settlers and the colonial authorities. Although French-educated Algerians consistently declared their loyalty to the French nation, they

were accused by the Administration and by settlers of being intent on undermining France's domination in North Africa.⁷⁰ Education, lawyer François Charvériat claimed, made Algerians 'more dangerous to French influence [...] Natives' hostility towards us can be measured by their level of French education. The more educated they are, the more we should distrust them'.⁷¹

The social, cultural and political context within which Algerian intellectuals were evolving at the turn of the twentieth century was marked by the rigid constraints of the colonial order. Thus, relationships established by Algerians in *cercles*, associations, schools, the workplace, the army and, as Omar Carlier has shown,⁷² in North African cafés called *café maures*, facilitated personal and group connections as well as political debate. Those sites of political engagement were all the more important as Muslims were deprived of political rights and of any meaningful representation in Algerian local councils and elected assemblies. As *La Revue Indigène* noted in 1912, '[t]he representation granted to natives is completely illusory [...] the number of native representatives in local assemblies is so small that the French don't take them into account'.⁷³ Importantly, the launch of a small number of Algerian newspapers had an impact on Algerian political activism that was more significant than the modest circulation figures would suggest. The distinct political voice that emerged among educated Algerian Muslims at the end of the nineteenth century became increasingly influential in the decades that followed.

Despite severe financial difficulties and the hostility they encountered in the Administration and among settlers, groups of French-educated Algerians created newspapers that enabled them to present their political views and spell out their demands for reforms in the colony at the turn of the twentieth century. The first notable publication produced by Algerians in the late nineteenth century was *El Hack* (the truth), a weekly bilingual (French-Arabic) newspaper created in Bône in 1893 and closed by the colonial authorities in 1894. This short-lived publication whose motto was 'For God, for the Fatherland, for Equity' was founded by Slimen Bengui (Director) a tobacco manufacturer, Omar Samar (Chief Editor), a journalist and writer and Khellil Caïd Laïoun (Administrator), a clerk.⁷⁴ It was, arguably, the most important newspaper published by Algerians during the late 1990s.⁷⁵ Following the closure of *El Hack*, and despite significant hostility from the colonial administration, Omar Samar continued his action in favour of equality and rights for Algerians. He launched *L'Éclair* in March 1895, a socialist weekly newspaper with the French printer Simon Leca in Bône. Two months later, the publication's title was changed to *La Bataille algérienne* following a threat of legal action made by the Paris-based *L'Éclair*. By the end of May, Samar had withdrawn from his role as editor 'for personal reasons' but the newspaper continued to be published briefly under the editorship of Simon Leca.⁷⁶

In its first issue (6 August 1893) *El Hack* recalled the meeting that led to its foundation and which constituted what they saw as a '*prise de parole*' of Muslims mobilising for a just cause: '

A loud voice is raised and breaks the silence: it is the cry of the desperate, the tears of the destitute, a heart-rending lament [...] So in our turn we sp[ea]k out in the following terms: [...] “Unite, create a newspaper to defend your interests, free up your thoughts and soon, when your suffering will be laid bare, the jackals that are devouring you will shake with fear!” Then, in unison, this assembly decided to launch the newspaper *El Hack* [...] and now the great battle is about to begin!⁷⁷

The political ‘battlefield’ that French educated Algerians were about to enter with their limited means was largely dominated by the French colonial press but their action was to have a significant impact nonetheless.

Omar Samar [*nom de plume*: Zeïd ben Dieb] considered that the silence that had been imposed for decades had ill-served Muslims who had waited for reforms ‘that will never happen or that will be adopted when it is too late’. He argued that the press offered Algerian Muslims a unique opportunity to promote their views. It was, he claimed, ‘a formidable weapon that will save us’, ‘a powerful, legal tool that we will use to demand justice’.⁷⁸ His denunciation of the dispossession of Algerians and France’s failure to introduce reforms in the colony was framed through evocations of the past, celebrating ‘our ancient civilisation which acted as an example to other peoples’,⁷⁹ and in relation to present circumstances: ‘it is not enough to deprive a people of their princes and their customs, it should be done so that they do not look back to their past with regret: by encouraging them, by making them feel happy with their present circumstances by making some concessions in their favour, even if this is a difficult thing to do for the conquering nation’.⁸⁰ Harking back to the past, Samar lamented the fate of his fellow-Algerians, those ‘fierce sons of the desert, [those] proud and magnanimous warriors who had impressed peoples with their legendary audacity, their hospitality and their magnificence’. Under colonial rule, he claimed, they had been dispossessed of their land and reduced to misery and vagrancy.⁸¹ Here, the past was nostalgically conceived as a refuge from, and a derivative of the present colonial situation affecting Algerians. It became a salient theme in their political discourse during this initial phase of political engagement, and continued to be reflected in publications produced by Algerian activists in the early twentieth century.

A notable trait in Algerian discourse was the way in which the past was used as a tool to challenge, disrupt and undermine power relations and prejudice in the colony. One such prejudice that shaped colonial perceptions of the colonised both in the colony and in metropolitan France was the widely held view among the French that the ‘*indigènes*’ (natives) were profoundly fatalist. This was a view that intellectuals at the time related to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz’s notion of *fatum mahometanum*⁸² to better distinguish between the ‘fatalist’ inclination of the colonised – considered to be devoid of agency – and that of the coloniser’s actions imbued with free will. References to the so-called fatalism of Algerians pervaded many aspects of French colonial discourse from military personnel to the

administration and settlers who explained the submission of the colonised by 'this fatalism that is the salient trait of the Arab character'.⁸³ Their beliefs, it was said, pertained to a 'fatalistic religion'; they 'also suit the mollifying nature of the climate'.⁸⁴ In a report on North Africa published in 1840, economist Adolphe Blanqui described the 'sudden ruin' of the Algerian middle class caused by colonial expansion and stated: 'Most of those poor people are unable to come out of their natural apathy and each day they fall into ever more profound destitution and misery'.⁸⁵ In the early 1840s, administrators and military officers in Algeria deplored what they saw as the 'indifference and apathy of most natives' and the 'resentment and maliciousness'.⁸⁶ Their minds, it was claimed, were steeped in 'torpor', 'fatalism' and 'barbarism'.⁸⁷

This perception of the colonised marked by atavistic traits and as 'recalcitrant to any form of progress',⁸⁸ continued to be expressed by a number of politicians, administrators and writers during the late century when Algeria was under civilian rule. In the 1880s, for example, anthropologist, teacher and administrator Emile Masqueray, who was often accused by settlers of being '*indigénophile*', considered that Kabylia remained a 'semi-Barbaric region',⁸⁹ while some conservative settlers like Albert Joly, mayor of Tizi-Ouzou, who opposed colonial reforms, dismissed Arabs as 'an inferior race that was bound to disappear'.⁹⁰ Few French observers challenged such views at the time. Among them was a military officer writing under the *nom de plume* Kiva who argued that Muslims were no more subject to fatalism than Protestants who also believed in predestination, and that their decline could only be explained by political disorganisation and the ignorance and failures of their autocratic rulers.⁹¹

This notion of '*fatalisme musulman*' that deprived the colonised of agency and excluded them from history and the polity was denounced in the Algerian newspaper *El Hack*. This prejudiced view of Muslims, *El Hack* argued, had gained such wide currency that scholars had developed a 'philosophical system of fatalism [under] the name of *fatum mahometum*': 'such a theory proscribes any progress, suppresses any science, destroys any civilisation. In short, those who dare to practise it are not even human beings, they are just callous brutes [...] that is why, we are told, the Arabs have made no progress for many years'.⁹² This article published in 1893 is consistent with the argument later presented by Kiva. It stated that Algerian subjects' predicament was explained not by fatalism but by the political failures of Muslim leaders. It drew on the past to oppose an alternative and empowering interpretation of Algerian identity:

And if [Algerians] were as fatalistic as we are told, why then did they oppose the arrival of the French in Algeria? Why have they rebelled so many times against them? Why have they fought against the infidels? Why did they conquer the world? Lastly, why do they work, eat? Why is it that, when they reached the peak of their civilisation, they made so many great discoveries and so many inventions? Come on, true Muslims, shake off that torpor which is

weighing on you, and let us conquer civilisation! You were civilised, you were even more civilised than any other people.⁹³

As this passage illustrates, memory and history were summoned largely through representations of conflict and resistance. The author drew on themes that were redolent of French historical discourse in that the relationship between the past and the present was re-interpreted rather than re-imagined.

Memories of Algerians' struggle against the French military conquest and of resistance to colonisation were evoked in ways that countered the colonial narrative. The article also made reference to history by invoking the 'golden age' of Muslim civilisation, but rather than question the notion of colonial domination, it represented Muslims as a people that had also, in the past, conquered and dominated large parts of the world. Through temporal displacement, therefore, *El Hack* opposed the dehumanising way in which Muslims were represented in colonial Algeria through evocations of a time when power relations between the dominated and the dominant were inverted. There was, however, another distinctive aspect to their discourse on the past: whereas colonists' narratives on the past coincided with concerns about the maintenance of the colonial status quo in Algeria, Algerian Muslims invoked a past that fostered reform and change: 'when the French and the Arabs can help each other', they stated, we will be able to make of our Algeria the most beautiful country in the world'.⁹⁴ A number of other articles at the time challenged French assertions that Algerians were inherently fatalistic. In *La Bataille Algérienne*, for example, Sif Elyazel drew on themes previously evoked in *El Hack*, and praised 'our ancestors who remained symbols of virtue and moral standing, who had enlightened the world thanks to the influence of their science, and brought civilisation to its peak'. Muslims had, he conceded, been affected by 'decadence' but this was entirely due to discord between them over the centuries. He evoked the rise and fall of Moorish Spain, this 'rich country which was once the cradle of almost all Islamic scholars', to corroborate his assessment and called on North Africans to emulate the French, 'unite and rise again'.⁹⁵

V

During the second half of the nineteenth century, debates pertaining to colonisation in Algeria were closely linked with conceptions of 'degeneration' and 'regeneration' on a physiological, cultural and social level. To some extent, those considerations echoed concerns expressed by some writers, politicians and scientists from the 1850s onward about the 'decline' and '*dépérissement*' (decay) of the French population. Debates about the process of 'degeneration' referred to notions of race and also to social concerns considered through particular conceptions of time and history.⁹⁶ Those considerations were, to a significant extent, informed by the development of social Darwinism in the late nineteenth century and acted, for some observers, as a framework to interpret the alterity of

Muslim society. They were redolent of views on biological and sociological determinism expressed by writers influenced by social Darwinist selectionism, and resonated with the development of eugenics in the nineteenth century through the work of writers such as anthropologist and theoretician of racialism Georges Vacher de Lapouge in France.⁹⁷ During that period, as Matt Matsuda points out, ‘colonized peoples served to model different, but also earlier types of humanity, bounded within a degenerate or savage time against which the Europeans displayed their own evolutionary sense of supremacy’.⁹⁸ The literature of the time illustrated this: in 1892, Maurice Wahl, who taught at the Lycée d’Alger, described Muslim society as ‘backward and stuck in the past’, a society ‘so different from ours and that we are barely beginning to discover despite having been in contact with it for such a long period of time.’⁹⁹ For Dr Horace Agn  ly, an Algiers-based physician who co-founded the Society of Algerian Climatology, the period between Roman North Africa and French colonisation had been marked by decline caused by ‘ignorance’ and ‘degeneration’. He argued that ‘between the Roman occupation and the French occupation, hordes of barbarians had invaded and wrecked this country’. France, he stated, should now work to master the ‘physical forces of nature’ in the colony.¹⁰⁰ Th  odore Fortin d’Ivry, a writer, echoed those views: ‘savagery, coarseness and cruelty’, he claimed, ‘have spread from one race to the next [...] so that the whole of Algeria is a terrible living example of social degeneration and backwardness [*abrutissement*]’. He too drew on the past to argue for the legitimisation of France’s colonisation: ‘Algeria was powerful, populous and cultured under the Romans, but when she was conquered by the Arabs, she rapidly fell into a terrible state of degeneration under the regime of the sword and the Turks. We too conquered it by the sword, but we will keep Algeria by other means: her regeneration must legitimise our conquest’.¹⁰¹

Those considerations became more prevalent in the second half of the nineteenth century when the theme of regeneration was frequently used to underscore what the French saw as the transformative influence of their domination on Algeria. As geographer and journalist Victor-Eug  ne Ardouin du Mazet claimed in 1882: ‘It is sadly the case that this country can only be regenerated under the influence of a conquering people’.¹⁰² Colonisation, it was argued, would thus lead to a process of regeneration of the people and land of the colony. For Eug  ne Vayssettes, tutor at the Coll  ge imp  rial arabe-fran  ais of Algiers, too, the mission of the coloniser was to ‘regenerate a people’ and ‘revive it through civilisation and life’. ‘By giving water to those sterile plains’, he added, ‘we will make them fertile and give them abundance [...] we will moralise and civilise those degraded and impoverished tribes’.¹⁰³ During that period, other writers as well as prominent voices in the Administration echoed those views but they also argued that this project was largely about ensuring France’s salvation; it was a way of proving that France was not in a state of inexorable decline. For example, Louis Tirman, Gouverneur G  n  ral of Algeria between 1881 and 1891, evoked France’s colonial project in Algeria within the context of France’s colonial past in North America to counter suggestions that the French had been affected by ‘degeneration’. The conquest of Algeria was

presented as a reflection of France's *grandeur* and proved that 'the strong race of the colonisers of Canada and Louisiana has not degenerated on the African land'.¹⁰⁴ He too suggested that France's mission in Algeria was one of 'regeneration', one that chimed with her civilising aims: 'isn't our mission in Algeria to regenerate the Arab people, to raise them to our level, to spread among them what has rightly been called the salutary contagion of well-being, education and dignity?'¹⁰⁵

Few texts published at the time presented the views of Algerians. Among those was a memorandum written by Louis Khoudja, a French-educated Algerian who described himself as a Frenchman by adoption and an advocate of assimilation. In this text addressed to the eighteen senators of the Senate Commission of Enquiry on Algeria in 1891, Khoudja set out a number of proposals for colonial reform that he justified through a specific temporal frame and narrative that reflected French discourse on the Arab people: 'after having occupied the highest rank in the field of literature, the sciences and arts, they find themselves, undeniably, in a state of abasement and inferiority vis-à-vis other peoples. [...] You consider the Arab as a big child and you have placed him spontaneously under your tutelage'.¹⁰⁶ Interestingly, his text framed the notion of regeneration of the colonised through an analogy with time and nature, thereby highlighting the way temporality borrows from the natural realm.¹⁰⁷

I would make an analogy between the different phases of the lives of peoples and the four seasons of the year. Like the year, the existence of a race has its spring which is the time of formation, the era of invasions, conquests and internal disturbance; like the year, it has its summer which is the period of greatness and prosperity; like the year, it has its autumn, which is the time of decline; like the year also, it reaches its winter – its final phase, that of decrepitude and annihilation. The life of peoples and races evolves within that fatal circle; but it is not without a way out. Just like it has been recognised that winter is not at all a dead season, but rather a period of incubation during which the soil regains its strength, and by disintegrating under the action of the cold weather, breaks up, is recomposed and absorbs new sap. Similarly, for peoples, the period that follows the time of decadence is a period of elaboration, of regeneration preparing for a new era; it is this restorative sleep that must give the people its primitive energy back and prepare it to secure a more brilliant place on the world stage.¹⁰⁸

Using this analogy with nature and seasons, Louis Khoudja challenged the linear historical narrative of terminal decline of the colonised that underpinned the justification by the coloniser for the domination of Algeria. He argued for a cyclical conception of time to invoke the future destiny of the colonised as one of regeneration and *grandeur* rather than disappearance. Furthermore, the evolution of peoples and civilisations is discussed in very broad terms in this text, suggesting that this season-like cycle of rise and decline affects not only the civilisation of the colonised but all civilisations,

including France's. Indeed, Khoudja argued that the circumstances that Muslims found themselves in were the result of 'feudalism' and were not different from those experienced by the French until the French Revolution: 'This is the same cause that, for many centuries, maintained France in a state of ignorance and subjugation'.¹⁰⁹

This theme of regeneration informed by empowering references to the past, blood and sacrifice appeared in the Algerian newspaper *El Hack*. Writing under the pen name Zeid ben Dieb, Omar Samar, its Chief Editor, claimed that 'we, in the past, were the civilisers and were the first to show the way to those barbaric peoples who now, alas, have left us trailing behind them'. In the Middle Ages, he wrote, the Arab people had 'reached the peak of their glory and magnificence'.¹¹⁰ However, he concluded that 'sadly, it is rare for greatness not to be followed by decadence and this is what has, predictably, happened to us. [...] like a gentle yet tenacious wave, decadence spread gradually and what was left of [our] prestige and glory vanished'. But all was not lost, he claimed: 'Arabs are starting to rise again [...] Let us go forth towards progress and emancipation'.¹¹¹ Samar praised the 'Muslim youth, the children of yesterday, those who attended French schools who have embraced progress and civilisation with enthusiasm'. He summoned the past to mobilise Algerians around the newspaper's call for colonial reform and rights for Algeria: 'Let us remember that our ancient civilisation served as an example to others, so let us not stay inert [...] Let us cry together: civilisation, progress! [...] the most vivid Muslim blood that flows in the veins of this new Arab generation is a new, regenerated blood. [...] This generation will do everything to ensure that their sacrifices are not in vain'.¹¹² As those examples illustrate, the fact that French-educated Algerians framed their discourse within the narrow constraints of colonial paradigms is a reflection not only of the influence that French cultural values and education had on them, but also of the fragile political ground on which they stood under a colonial order that closely monitored their actions and declarations and punished any activity deemed 'seditious'.¹¹³ Despite those difficulties, they were able to appropriate those themes and values to further their political agenda by 'taking the French at their word' and develop an empowering narrative on Algerian identity that countered the coloniser's views on the decline and 'degeneration' of the colonised.¹¹⁴ Notions of 'race' and 'blood', courage and sacrifice rooted in memory were posited as positive markers of a people able to contribute to France's '*oeuvre de civilisation*' in the present to the same extent that it had given rise to a prestigious Arabo-Muslim civilisation in the past. Conjuring up the greatness of the Muslim past, *El Hack* stated: 'The Arabs will recover their past splendour, the Arabs will rise again from their ashes like the *mythological phoenix*. A people that was once so great, so enlightened, and let us say this without being vain, that civilised *the* world that was still barbaric at that time, will not disappear. A bright future awaits them'.¹¹⁵

VI

As this study has shown, the past constituted a terrain on which conflicting and shifting conceptions of the colonial experience were developed in nineteenth century Algeria. Colonialism, after all, takes power in the name of history.¹¹⁶ Representations of the past in colonial discourse drew on memory and history in ways that fostered specific interpretations of the colonial experience and addressed distinct and often conflicting social, cultural and political concerns at the time. The influence of the coloniser's discourse lay 'in the codes by which it regulate[d] understanding of the social world'.¹¹⁷ In the long nineteenth century, within a social, political and cultural context that largely marginalised the colonised, such representations of temporality tended to be articulated by the French. A study of discourse at the time suggests that the colonisation process in Algeria stimulated memories of other conflicts and generated particular connections between history and the present. The colonial project was, it could be argued, also about 'colonising' the past. Memory and history reinforced specific imperial views and imperatives. They fostered a closed conception of temporality with the colonial status quo seen as the culmination of historical evolution. Such views remained consistent during the nineteenth century and largely transcended the distinction between the first phase of colonisation when Algeria was under military rule, and the colony under civilian rule in the last three decades of the century. It is worth noting, however, that colonial representations depicting Algerian Muslims as hampered by particular atavistic traits (through the themes of fatalism and degeneration for example) gained new impetus within intellectual, political and academic circles and among colonial administrators with the emergence of social Darwinism and determinism from the mid-1850s onwards, and particularly during the last few decades of the nineteenth century. Such views aimed to further marginalise them socially and culturally, deprive them of political agency and place them 'out of history', to use Albert Memmi's terms.¹¹⁸

Importantly, the voices of Algerian Muslims started to be heard towards the end of the nineteenth century when a small number of French-educated, politically active Algerians emerged on the margin of the political scene in the colony, and their influence grew in the following decades. Despite the hostility and opposition that they encountered among colonists, settlers and the administration, they were, for the first time, able to use effective forms of political communication to denounce the dispossession of the colonised, demand more rights for Algerian Muslims and call for gradual reform in the colony. They initiated forms of political activism which gave rise to the Young Algerian movement from the early twentieth century onward. This movement, whose emblematic figure was Emir Khaled, Emir Abd El-Kader's grandson, was to have a significant influence on prominent political organisations during the interwar period: the nationalists of the Etoile nord-Africaine led by

Messali Hadj, the reformists of the Fédération des Élus Musulmans d'Algérie whose most important figure was Ferhat Abbas, and the Muslim reformist scholars of the Association of Algerian Muslim 'Ulamā led by Abdehamid Ben Badis.¹¹⁹

On the surface, Algerian political activists in the late nineteenth century drew on memorial and historical references and themes that were redolent of the French cultural and political values to which they had been exposed through education and socialisation. They also trod carefully on the political field, mindful as they were of the severe constraints imposed on them by the colonial authorities and the harsh punishment meted out by an administration intent on thwarting the emergence of any form of autonomous political activity among Algerians. But the counter-discourse that they developed was not reduced to a form of emulation. It aimed – to echo Terdiman – to represent the world differently. This conception of difference, therefore, was not about contradicting the coloniser and negating their reading of the past. Their counter-discourse sought to delineate the rigid contours of the coloniser's discourse and to 'project their subversion'.¹²⁰ In the social, cultural and political context of late nineteenth century Algeria, memories emerged in the 'interplay between different pasts and a heterogeneous present', to echo Michael Rothberg. They were marked by 'interference, overlap, and [the] mutual constitution of seemingly distinct collective memories' and helped shape a particular form of counter-public sphere among those Algerians.¹²¹ The notion of the past which featured prominently in the discourse of Algerians was summoned to give meaning and substance to the liminal, hybrid experience of the colonised. They were able to disrupt and reimagine dominant colonial narratives and inscribe Algerians' experience and imagination in a distinct timescape, one that allowed for their subjectivities to be negotiated, and which legitimised their demands for equality and reform in the colony.

¹ *El Hack*, 10 September 1893. 'Go forth, brothers, and like our French brothers, let us sing the *Song of Departure* [French Revolutionary song]. Not a departure for war, but for the conquest of progress and civilisation'.

² For a broad account of the history of colonial Algeria, see for example, Ch.-R. Ageron, 1979, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine, 1871-1954*, Tome II, (Paris, 1979); B. Stora, *Histoire de l'Algérie coloniale* (Paris, 2004); O. Carlier, *Entre Nation et Jihad: Histoire sociale des radicalismes algériens* (Paris, 1995); M. Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien, Tomes 1 (1919-39) & 2 (1939-51)* (Paris, 2000/2003); J. Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation*, (Bloomington, 1992); M. Evans, and J. Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed* (New Haven, 2007). On the Algerian War, see Branche, Raphaëlle, 2009, *La Guerre d'indépendance des Algériens* (Paris, 2009); M. Harbi, and B. Stora, Benjamin (eds.) *La Guerre d'Algérie* (Paris, 2004); M. Harbi, 1954: *la guerre commence en Algérie* (Bruxelles, 1998); S. Thénault, *Histoire de la guerre d'indépendance algérienne* (Paris, 2005); M. Evans, *Algeria: France's Undeclared War* (Oxford, 2012). On the broader political/geopolitical implications of the war, see for example, Shepard, Todd, *The Invention of Decolonization, The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca, 2006); J. J. Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization, and the Third World Order* (Oxford, 2016).

³ See for example, J. McDougall, *History and the Culture of Nationalism in Algeria* (Cambridge, 2006); J. Frémiaux, *La France et l'Algérie en guerre, 1830-1870; 1954-1962* (Paris, 2002); P. Lorcin, Patricia (ed.), 2006, *Algeria and France, 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia* (Syracuse, NY, 2006); P. Lorcin, 1995, *Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, Prejudice and Race in Colonial Algeria* (London, 1995).

⁴ Evans and Phillips, 2007, *Algeria*.

- ⁵ MacDougall's study provides important insights into the role played by History in the formation of Algerian nationalism, particularly in the twentieth century (MacDougall, *History and the Culture of Nationalism*). By contrast, Lorcin's major study of Algerian history discusses mainly French ideological constructions of the colony (Lorcin, *Imperial Identities*).
- ⁶ H. Blais, C. Fredj, and E. Saada, 'Un long moment colonial: pour une histoire de l'Algérie au XIXe siècle', *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle*, 41 (2010), 7-24; H. Remanoun, 'L'Intervention institutionnelle et son impact sur la pratique historiographique en Algérie: la politique d'écriture et de réécriture de l'histoire, tendances et contre-tendances', *Insanyiat*, 19-20 (2003), 7-40. Recent studies on nineteenth colonial Algeria complement works by Charles-Robert Ageron, Charles-André Julien and Marcel Emerit on that period. See, for example, J. Frémiaux, *La Conquête de l'Algérie: la dernière conquête d'Abd el-Kader* (Paris, 2016); O. Saaïdia, *Algérie coloniale. Musulmans et Chrétiens : le contrôle de l'Etat, 1830-1914*, (Paris, 2015); W. Gallois, *A History of Violence in the Early Algerian Colony* (London, 2013).
- ⁷ See, for example, Ch-R. Ageron, 'Mai 1945 en Algérie. Enjeu de mémoire et d'histoire', *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, 39/1 (1995), 52-56; B. Stora, *La Gangrène et l'oubli : La mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris, 2005); B. Stora, *La Guerre des mémoires* (La Tour d'Aigues, 2015); M. Harbi and B. Stora, *La Guerre d'Algérie 1954-2004: la fin de l'amnésie* (Paris, 2004); R. Branche, *La Guerre d'Algérie : une histoire apaisée?* (Paris, 2001); G. Manceron and H. Remaoun, *D'une Rive à l'autre : la guerre d'Algérie de la mémoire à l'histoire* (Paris, 1993); A. Dayan-Rosenman and L. Valensi (eds.) *La Guerre de l'Algérie dans la mémoire et dans l'imaginaire* (Saint-Denis, 2004); G. Meynier and F. Abécassis, *Pour une histoire franco-algérienne : en finir avec les pressions officielles et les lobbies de mémoire* (Paris, 2008); E. Savarese, *Algérie, la guerre des mémoires* (Paris, 2007); C. Eldridge, *From Empire to Exile : History and Memory within the Pied-Noir and Harki Communities, 1962-2012* (Manchester, 2016); A. L. Hubbell, *Remembering French Algeria: Pieds-Noirs, Identity, Exile* (Lincoln, 2015); J. House and N. MacMaster, *Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* (Oxford, 2006); N. Vince, *Our Fighting Sisters: Nation, Memory and Gender* (Manchester, 2015).
- ⁸ Lorcin, *Imperial Identities*; J. MacDougall, *History and the Culture of Nationalism*.
- ⁹ MacDougall, *History and the Culture of Nationalism*, 2-3.
- ¹⁰ On the 1871 uprising, see M. B. Salhi, 'L'Insurrection de 1871', in A. Bouchène, J.-P. Peyroulou, O. S. Tengour and S. Thénault (eds), *Histoire de l'Algérie à la période coloniale, 1830-1962* (Paris, 2012), 103-10.
- ¹¹ See, for example, C. J. A. Mathieu de Dombasle, *De l'avenir de l'Algérie* (Paris, 1838); J.-G. Cappot de Feuillide, *L'Algérie française: son passé, son avenir* (Paris, 1856); Th. Fortin d'Ivry, *L'Algérie: son importance, sa colonisation, son avenir* (Paris, 1845).
- ¹² I. Urbain, *L'Algérie française: indigènes et immigrants* (Paris, 1862), v.
- ¹³ Cappel de Feuillide, *L'Algérie française*, 9, 389.
- ¹⁴ G. Boissier, *L'Afrique romaine. Promenades archéologiques en Algérie et en Tunisie* (Paris, 1895), 316.
- ¹⁵ D. C. Harvey, 'Heritage Pasts and heritage Presents: Temporality, Meaning and the Scope of Heritage Studies', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 7:4 (2001), 319-38 (319).
- ¹⁶ M. Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford, 2001); J. Ladrière, 'Historicité et Vérité. Approche philosophique', *Le Supplément, Revue d'éthique et théologie morale (Historicité et Vérité)* (Paris: 1970), 11-52 [20]. See also P. Ricoeur, 'Narrative Time', *Critical Inquiry*, 7:1 [1980], 169-190.
- ¹⁷ D. Frede, 'The Question of Being: Heidegger's project', in C.B. Guignon (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* (Cambridge, 2007), 42-69 [64].
- ¹⁸ P. Ricoeur, 'Narrative Time', *Critical Inquiry*, 7:1 (1980), 169-190 [171].
- ¹⁹ J. Ladrière, 'Historicité et Vérité. Approche philosophique', *Le Supplément, Revue d'éthique et théologie morale (Historicité et Vérité)* (Paris: 1970), 11-52 [20].
- ²⁰ D. Frede, 'The Question of Being: Heidegger's project', in C.B. Guignon (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* (Cambridge, 2007), 42-69 [64].
- ²¹ R. Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (Stanford, CA: 2002), 13.
- ²² Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 9.
- ²³ Ibid., 8; R. Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Past* (New York, 2004), 2. I am borrowing the term 'temporal rhythm' from Koselleck's *Futures Past*, 2.
- ²⁴ R. Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis* (Ithaca, 1993), 7.
- ²⁵ Terdiman, *Present Past*, 18.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 3, 5.
- ²⁷ W. Benjamin, *Illuminations* (London, 2015), 247.
- ²⁸ Terdiman, *Present Past*, 22.
- ²⁹ E. Traverso, *Le Passé: mode d'emploi. Histoire, mémoire, politique* (Paris, 2005), 34.

- ³⁰ As Koselleck points out, history produced ‘on the side of the victors is prone to interpret[ing] short-term successes from the perspective of a continuous, long-term teleology ex post facto’ (Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 76).
- ³¹ See Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 76.
- ³² Foucault, ‘Nietzsche, la généalogie, l’histoire’, in *Dits et écrits*, Vol. I, 1954-1975 (Paris : 2001), 1004-24 [1014].
- ³³ I draw here on David Scott’s work (see D. Scott, ‘The Temporality of Generations: Dialogue, Tradition, Criticism’, *New Literary History*, 2014, 45 (2014), 157-181 [158]).
- ³⁴ A. Franque, *Lois de l’Algérie du 5 juillet 1830 (Occupation d’Alger) au 1^{er} janvier 1841* (Paris, 1844), 176-77.
- ³⁵ P.-D. Fabar, *L’Algérie et l’opinion* (Paris, 1847), 96.
- ³⁶ For example, General Louis-Auguste de Bourmont who led the military expedition in Algeria and General Thomas-Robert Bugeaud had both served during the Premier Empire and the Restoration. De Bourmont was involved in the expedition of Spain of 1823 and Bugeaud took part in the Iberian Peninsular war (1808-1815). As Marie-Cécile Thorat points out, Bugeaud, as part of his military campaign in Algeria, drew on his experience of counter-insurgency during the Napoleonic Peninsular war and introduced flying columns that were used in France, Egypt, Italy and Spain during Napoleonic wars (M.-C. Thorat, ‘French colonial counter-insurgency: General Bugeaud and the conquest of Algeria, 1840-47’, *British Journal for Military History*, 2 [2015], 8-27 [22]). The career of General Bouat, who died during the campaign of Italy of 1859, also illustrates this: In 1823, aged 19, he served as sous-lieutenant in the Spanish War and from 1830 in North Africa. By 1851, he had risen to the rank of general and fought in the Crimean campaign before leading the first division of the Troisième Corps de l’Armée d’Italie (A. Humbert, *Victoires et conquêtes des armées alliées. Deuxième partie: campagne d’Italie* [Paris, 1859], 87).
- ³⁷ C. A. Fernel, *Campagne d’Afrique en 1830* (Paris, 1831), 65.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.
- ³⁹ Cited in S. de Bourbon, *La dernière conquête du Roi (Alger 1830)* (Paris, 1930), 54.
- ⁴⁰ Th. de Quatrebarbes, Théodore, *Souvenirs de la campagne d’Afrique* (Paris: 1831), 7-8.
- ⁴¹ M.-F. Audouard, *Un moyen d’assurer la conquête de l’Algérie, auquel on n’a pas encore pensé* (Paris, 1846), 4-5.
- ⁴² V. Thomas, *Étude sur la conquête de l’Espagne par les Arabes et sur celle de l’Algérie par les Français* (Paris, 1852).
- ⁴³ Other texts on Algeria focused on the legacy of Moorish Spain and the French colonisation of Algeria. For example, Louis Vignon, a teacher at the École coloniale and a former chef du cabinet of the Finance Minister, argued in 1893: ‘Muslim Algeria never reached or came close to the state of civilisation of Muslim Spain’ (L. Vignon, *La France en Algérie* (Paris, 1893), 60).
- ⁴⁴ N. Noëllat, *L’Algérie en 1882* (Paris, 1882), 12-3.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.
- ⁴⁶ A.-V. Brandin, *Considérations politiques, historiques, statistiques et hygiéniques sur le royaume de Tunis dans ses rapports avec l’état actuel de l’Algérie* (Paris, 1842), ix-xi.
- ⁴⁷ Cappot de Feuillide, *L’Algérie française*, 51-2.
- ⁴⁸ Lorcin, ‘Rome and France in Africa’, 302, 327. See also M. Greenhalgh, *The Military and Colonial Destruction of the Roman Landscape in North Africa, 1830-1900* (Leiden, 2014).
- ⁴⁹ E. Renan, *Mélanges d’histoire et de voyages* (Paris, 1878), 320.
- ⁵⁰ Lorcin, ‘Rome and France in Africa’, 303. On the use of heritage in colonial politics between 1830 and 1930, see, N. Oulebsir, *Les Usages du patrimoine: monuments, musées et politique coloniale en Algérie (1830-1930)* (Paris, 2004).
- ⁵¹ Fortin d’Ivry, *L’Algérie*, 7.
- ⁵² A. Dureau de la Malle, *L’Algérie, histoire des guerres des Romains, des Byzantins et des Vandales* (Paris: 1852), 5. The author stated that the manual was produced ‘so that soldiers, warrant officers, low and high-ranking officers [...] can carry it in their bags and read it during their free time in their bivouac or in their garrison’ (‘Avertissement’, no page number).
- ⁵³ M. de la Sicoitière, ‘Algérie: Rapport fait au nom de Commission d’enquête sur les actes du Gouvernement de la Défense nationale (Annexe No. 1416, Séance du mercredi 13 novembre 1872)’, *Annales de l’Assemblée nationale, Compte-rendu in extenso des séances, Annexes*, Vol. 26 (Paris, 1875), 331-348 [334].
- ⁵⁴ Conseil Supérieur du Gouvernement, ‘Session de novembre 1877, Procès-verbaux des délibérations’ (Algiers, 1877), 71.
- ⁵⁵ See, for example, E. Lapène, *Tableau historique de l’Algérie depuis l’occupation romaine jusqu’à la conquête par les Français en 1830* (Toulouse, 1846). Lapène served as colonel in the French artillery.

⁵⁶ S. C. Valée, 'Dépêche de 1838, citée par M. le comte Molé, discours prononcé à la Chambre des pairs, séance du 5 août 1845', cited in A. Hennequin, 1857, *La Conquête de l'Algérie* (Paris, 1857), no page number.

⁵⁷ P. E. de Mont Rond, *Histoire de la conquête de l'Algérie de 1830 à 1847* (Paris, 1847), 6, 410.

⁵⁸ On the early history of war and violence in colonial Algeria, see for example J. Frémiaux, *La France et l'Algérie en guerre*; and Gallois, *A History of Violence*.

⁵⁹ De Mont Rond, *Histoire de la conquête*, 15, 140. De Mont Rond's detailed account of military operations in Algeria illustrated his point. For example, he described the massacre on the order of the Duke de Rovigo, of the El-Ouffias clan who had wrongly been accused of theft in April 1832. He stated: 'they all had their throats slit before they had time to wake up [...] the French army returned to Algiers at nine in the morning after having cut off the heads of eighty to a hundred people and dragged with them a few women and some elderly men who had escaped the massacre' (Ibid., 141-42).

⁶⁰ 'Rapport des Ministres de la Guerre et de l'Instruction Publique à l'Empereur', 1865, AN F/17/12326.

⁶¹ E. Buret, *Question d'Afrique: de la double conquête de l'Algérie par la guerre et la colonisation; suivi d'un examen critique du gouvernement, de l'administration et de la situation coloniale* (Paris, 1842), 13.

⁶² Ibid., 21.

⁶³ Ibid., 13-20.

⁶⁴ F.-F. Duvivier, *Solution de la question de l'Algérie* (Paris, 1841), vii, 35.

⁶⁵ Buret, *Question d'Afrique*, 96, 97, 101.

⁶⁶ The 'Algerian people' described in the colonial literature of the time referred consistently to the European settlers and not to Algerian Muslims (see, for example, F.-J. Gastu, *Le peuple algérien*, Paris, 1884).

⁶⁷ Traverso, *Le Passé*, 24, 25, 29.

⁶⁸ In the early 1910s, there were three sociétés franco-indigènes: L'Avant-Garde, founded in 1895 was an association that promoted sport and military preparation among Algerians; La Rachidia, an association of ex-students of écoles indigènes in Algiers and Algeria was created in 1902. La Toufikya (Concord) was established in 1908 as a charity and an association promoting literary and scientific education – it was reorganised by the Jeunes Algériens in 1911 and had 200 members in 1912 (P. Millet, 1913, 'Les Jeunes Algériens', *La Revue de Paris* [November-December 1913], 165).

⁶⁹ Jürgen Habermas, who first developed the concept of the 'public sphere' defined it as follows: 'By "the public sphere" we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed' (J. Habermas, Jürgen, 1974, 'The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article', *New German Critique*, 3 (1974), 49-55 [49]).

⁷⁰ See, for example, A. Servier, *Le Nationalisme musulman en Egypte, en Tunisie, en Algérie: le péril de l'avenir* (Constantine, 1913).

⁷¹ F. Charvériat, *Huit jours en Kabylie: à travers la Kabylie et les questions Kabyles* (Paris, 1889), 147-148.

⁷² O. Carlier, 'Le Café maure: sociabilité masculine et effervescence citoyenne (Algérie XVIIe-XXe siècles)', *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 4 (1990), 975-1003.

⁷³ 'Comment organiser l'Afrique du Nord! Articles du Temps et de la Revue Indigène', Bibliothèque de la Revue Indigène (1912), 18, 20.

⁷⁴ Following the closure of *El Hack*, they founded *L'Eclair* and *La Bataille algérienne* which briefly appeared in 1894 (see D. Prochaska, David, 1990, 'Making Algeria French and Unmaking French Algeria', in W. Yoke-Sung, and D. Sayer (eds.), *Twenty Years of the Journal of Historical Sociology, Challenging the Field* (Vol. 2), [Oxford, 1990], 297-336). *El Hack* was also notable also for its anti-Semitic stance.

⁷⁵ The ephemeral *L'Algérie Franco-Arabe* published in Constantine in 1898 and whose political director was the indigénophile M. J. Manalt d'Anhalt (*L'Algérie Franco-Arabe*, 25-26 August 1998) remained largely marginal. It was only in the twentieth century that other influential Jeunes-Algériens newspapers started to appear, including *El Misbah* edited by the instituteur Larbi Fekar in 1904-05; *Le Rachidi* (1911), *L'Islam* (1912) and *L'Ikdam* (1912).

⁷⁶ *La Bataille algérienne*, 28 May 1895. This section will focus on *El Hack* but will also make reference to *L'Eclair* and *La Bataille algérienne* as well as other relevant newspapers.

⁷⁷ *El Hack*, 6 August 1893.

⁷⁸ *El Hack*, 14 January 1894.

⁷⁹ *El Hack*, 20 August 1893.

⁸⁰ *El Hack*, 14 January 1894.

⁸¹ *La Bataille Algérienne*, 11 May 1895.

⁸² For Leibniz, *fatum* came to mean "what will necessarily happen" (K. S. Feldman, 'Per Canales Troporum: On Tropes and Performativity in Leibniz's Preface to Nizolius', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 65:1 (2004), 39-51 [49]). As Clive Borst points out, 'Leibniz distinguishes a *fatum mahometanum*, a *fatum stoicum*, and a *fatum christianum*. The first "will have an effect happen, even though its causes should be avoided", the second "will have a man be quiet, because he must have patience whether he will or not", the third recognises "a certain

destiny of every thing regulated by the foreknowledge and providence of God” (C. Borst, ‘Leibniz and the Compatibilist Account of Free Will’, *Studia Leibnitiana*, 24:1 (1992), 49-58 [52]). In a critique of Leibniz’s work, libertarian socialist and philosopher Pierre-Joseph Proudhon argued that *fatum christianum* and *fatum mahometanum* were in fact identical (P.-J. Proudhon, *De la Justice dans la Révolution et dans l’Eglise. Essais d’une philosophie populaire. Tome troisième* (Brussels, 1868), 187.

⁸³ V. Noëllat, *L’Algérie en 1882* (Paris, 1882), 95.

⁸⁴ ‘Déposition de M. Dormoy, inspecteur des travaux de colonisation devant la Commission sénatoriale d’enquête sur l’Algérie’, in Conseil supérieur du Gouvernement de l’Algérie, *Procès-verbaux des délibérations et exposé de la situation générale de l’Algérie. Session de janvier 1893* (Algiers, 1893), 6. Colonel Théodore Pein even suggested that Europeans living in Algeria were not immune to such feelings: ‘Fatalism (*mektoub*) appears in all places and at all times’, he wrote, adding that ‘on this land that exhales the perfume of fatalism everywhere and with an atmosphere heavy with its smell, it is difficult to resist its influence’ (Th. Pein, *Lettres familières sur l’Algérie. Un petit royaume arabe* [Paris, 1871], 283, 379).

⁸⁵ A. Blanqui, *Rapport sur la situation économique de nos possessions dans l’Afrique du Nord* (Paris, 1840), 7.

⁸⁶ ‘Inspecteur de l’Instruction Publique to M. le Directeur de l’Instruction Publique’, 10 July 1843, A[rchives] N[ationales], F/17/2326.

⁸⁷ ‘Note sur l’instruction publique musulmane’, 1846, A[rchives] Nationales d’[O]utre-[M]er, GGA 22 S 1.

‘Direction des Affaires Indigènes, Gouvernement Général de l’Algérie, à M. Le Ministre de la Guerre’, 15 January 1848, ANOM, GGA 22 S 1; ‘Lieutenant-Général Alphonse Bedeau, Commandant de la Province de Constantine, à M. Le Ministre de la Guerre’, 12 February 1947, ANOM GGA 22 S 1.

⁸⁸ ‘Note du Capitaine Chef du Bureau arabe subdivisionnaire de Médéa (De la vulgarisation de la langue française chez les Arabes)’, 31 March 1883, AN F/17/12331.

⁸⁹ ‘Emile Masqueray to M. Le Ministre de l’Instruction Publique’, 15 November 1880, AN F/17/12331.

⁹⁰ H. Le Bourgeois, *Rapport d’Inspection Générale sur la situation de l’enseignement primaire* (Paris, 1880), AN F/17/12331. Some press articles echoed those views. For example, a correspondent for *Le Soleil* wrote in 1891: ‘Is there anything that can be done? Are [Arabs] irretrievably condemned? Is it just a matter of making them disappear like the Red-Skins? On a human level, yes, absolutely.’ (*Le Soleil*, 24 February 1891).

⁹¹ Kiva, *En Algérie (souvenirs). Extrait de la Revue militaire universelle* (Paris, 1894), 99.

⁹² *El Hack*, 29 October 1893.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid. This article also appeared in Omar Samar’s *L’Éclair* on 25 April 1895.

⁹⁵ *La Bataille Algérienne*, 11 May 1895.

⁹⁶ As a further illustration of this, one could cite Léon Claux’s review – published in *La Revue Socialiste* in 1897 – of Georges Vacher de Lapouge’s work. For Laclaux, Vacher de Lapouge considered that: ‘Nations are born, live and die, like animals or plants, leaving only ‘residues that cannot even be used to constitute new peoples.’ [...] Thus peoples rise, then disappear, and no amount of education can revive the dust of men that remains in their place’. Long gone are the civilisations of the Orient; there is nothing that can be done to pull them out of their eternal torpor’ (L. Claux, ‘Du sélectionnisme optimiste au sélectionnisme pessimiste’, *La Revue socialiste*, [1897], 68).

⁹⁷ See G. Vacher de Lapouge, *Les Sélections sociales: Cours libre de science politique professé à l’Université de Montpellier, 1888-1889* [Paris, 1896/1990]). Critics of social Darwinism in the early twentieth century included sociologist Jacques Novicow who stated: ‘[Social] Darwinism comes from a series of superficial observations, hasty generalisations, inaccurate comparisons, subjective views and methodological errors [...] In short, Social Darwinism is an incoherent patchwork of contradictions paradoxes and sophisms’ (J. Novicow, *La Justice et l’expansion de la vie. Essai sur le Bonheur des sociétés humaines* [Paris, 1905], 367; see also J. Novicow, *La Critique du Darwinisme social* [Paris, 1910]).

⁹⁸ M. Matsuda, *The Memory of the Modern* (New York, 1996), 12.

⁹⁹ M. Wahl, *L’Algérie* (Paris, 1882), 115.

¹⁰⁰ H. Agnely, ‘Le Climat’, in O. Teissier, *Napoléon III en Algérie* (Paris, 1865), 273.

¹⁰¹ Fortin d’Ivry, *L’Algérie*, 14.

¹⁰² V.-E. Ardouin du Mazet, *Études algériennes: L’Algérie politique et économique; A travers la province d’Oran; Lettres sur l’insurrection dans le Sud Oranais* (Paris, 1882), 256.

¹⁰³ E. Vayssettes, *Trois Mois sous la tente et régénération du peuple arabe par l’instruction* (Algiers, 1859), 24, 26.

¹⁰⁴ Conseil supérieur de gouvernement (Algérie), *Procès-verbaux des délibérations et exposé de la situation générale de l’Algérie (session de novembre 1888)* (Algiers, 1888), xxvi. Henri Lorin, professor of colonial history at Bordeaux University, also celebrated the legacy of French explorers in Africa as ‘this kind of salutary revenge that has allowed us to prove to ourselves that our race has not degenerated’ (H. Lorin, *L’Afrique à l’entrée du vingtième siècle. Le pays et les indigènes; la pénétration européenne* [Paris, 1901], viii). As was

stated in the newspaper *L'Afrique* in 1844: 'Never before has a colony advanced so rapidly; never before has a new society, called on to regenerate a degraded [*abâtardi*] people, found in its homeland so many agents of organisation and *grandeur*' (*L'Afrique, journal de la colonisation française*, 12 October 1844).

¹⁰⁵ Conseil supérieur de gouvernement (Algérie), *Procès-verbaux des délibérations et exposé de la situation générale de l'Algérie (session de novembre 1887)* (Algiers, 1887), viii). In 1867, travel writer M. Etourneau described France's mission in the colony as 'regenerate this barbaric people' (M. Etourneau, *L'Algérie faisant appel à la France* [Paris, 1867], 176).

¹⁰⁶ Khoudja, Louis, *A la Commission du Sénat: la question indigène par un Français d'adoption* (Vienne, 1891), 13.

¹⁰⁷ See Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 7.

¹⁰⁸ Khoudja, *A la Commission du Sénat*, 12-13.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

¹¹⁰ *El Hack*, 10 September 1893.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *El Hack*, 20 August 1893.

¹¹³ As journalist Philippe Millet pointed out, Algerians who engaged in politics were subjected to close surveillance and intimidation by the Administration and the police and risked losing their job or being arrested for their activities (Millet, 'Les Jeunes Algériens', 167).

¹¹⁴ For example, anti-semitic and nationalist writer Raoul Bergot, in his account of a visit to Algeria carried out in 1890, described it as a country that 'has remained barbaric for ten centuries, uncultivated, covered with ruins, and whose land has been overrun by huge thistles and scrubs' (R. Bergot, *L'Algérie telle qu'elle est*, [Paris, 1890], iii).

¹¹⁵ *El Hack*, 3 September 1893.

¹¹⁶ H. Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse, *Discipleship: A Special Issue on Psychoanalysis*, 28 (1984), 125-133 [126].

¹¹⁷ R. Terdiman, *Discourses/Counter-Discourses* (Ithaca, 1985), 149.

¹¹⁸ A. Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (London, 2010).

¹¹⁹ On those political movements, see, for example, M. Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien. Tome I, 1919-1939* (Paris, 2003), B. Stora, *Messali Hadj, 1898-1974* (Paris, 2004), B. Stora and Z. Daoud, *Ferhat Abbas, une utopie algérienne* (Paris, 1995), and McDougall, *History and the Culture of Nationalism*.

¹²⁰ R. Terdiman, *Discourses/Counter-Discourses*, 149.

¹²¹ M. Rothberg, 'Between Auschwitz and Algeria: Multidirectional Memory and the Counterpublic Witness', *Critical Inquiry*, 33/1 (2006), 158-184 [162].