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A GENERATIVE PHONOLOGY OF THE
MOROCCAN ARABIC VERB

by

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Moroccan Arabic is the language spoken in the extreme northwestern part of Africa, Morocco. It is spoken by approximately eighteen million people. With this number of people speaking the language there are, obviously, dialectal variations which characterize different regions. The dialect described in this work is what might be called, broadly speaking, the Central Urban Dialect of Moroccan Arabic. This calls for a cautionary remark. Since I had to change residence from Meknes to Rabat, some changes have occurred in my dialect. These changes were by no means either voluntary or conscious. They were brought about by social constraints and impositions of what is and what is not "prestigious" speech. This, in short, is to say that the dialect described here is the Central Urban Dialect with slight variations.

More crucial to the import of this work is the background of Moroccan Arabic. Before the final quarter of the Seventh Century A.D., there was no such thing as Arabic in Morocco. What was spoken there is Berber, a Hamito-Semitic language distantly related to Arabic. The Arab invasion beginning in the late 600's introduced what was, I believe, very close to what is nowadays referred to as Standard Arabic, or Classical Arabic. This because the invaders originated from Damascus, the base of Arab civilization and culture.