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Studying the development of cycling in Algeria between the end of the nineteenth century and the eve of the First World War offers an original angle from which to reflect on the social and cultural history of relations between colonial Algeria and metropolitan France. Cycling as a practice was not only an aspect of the overall phenomenon of sport as an instrument of domination but also the vector for an international sporting culture that went beyond the colonial context and offered a space for multiple encounters between individuals and social groups. Examining the various uses of this sport associated with modernity, between competitions and leisure pursuit, and between track racing and cycling tourism, this article attempts to evaluate cycling's identity dimensions, identifying the forms of (regional and supraregional) affiliations that it encouraged, particularly through the network of local associations and the transnational and cosmopolitan sociabilities that it bore.

"Algeria seems to be the quintessential land of the bicycle, as its landscapes are varied, the roads fairly good, and the weather almost constantly conducive," a column published on March 13, 1892, in *L'Indépendant de Mascara* points out. Modern cycling had just appeared in Algeria as a sportive, social, military, and tourist pursuit. At the end of that century, it was the preserve of French elites and English *hiverneurs*. By the eve of the First World War, Spanish and Italian immigrants as well as Algerians had joined the peloton. Alongside boxing and football, cycling was among the most popular sports. This article studies the introduction and development of this sport between the 1880s and 1914. Accordingly, it draws on a booming field of research on sport in the colonial empires, and it mixes an interdisciplinary approach (combining historical, anthropological, literary, and iconographic studies) with transnational perspectives.[1]

Cycling certainly merits further reflection and analysis, for the fact alone that it is one of the practices that configured the colonial sporting space, along with, for example, athletics, boules, and swimming. Although it is less visible (and less studied) than soccer, it presents the possibility of exploring the notion of sporting sociability in a colonial context. It should be noted from the outset that the spread of cycling does not conform to the classic Republican model, in contrast to gymnastics, an activity practiced in schools and encouraged by the state. Cycling is an atypical activity that does not appear among the sports that feature in education, due to its proximity to the world of money, and in particular to the major cycling brands and the press.

Cycling associations have left few traces in the archives, in both Algeria and France. However, this gap can be filled through the

(1) Pierre Singaravélou and Julien Sorez, eds, *L'Empire des sports: une histoire de la mondialisation culturelle* (Paris: Belin, 2010); Nicolas Bancel and Évelyne Combeau-Mari, "Le sport en contexte colonial et postcolonial: une historiographie en friche," in *Le Sport, l'historien et l'histoire*, ed. Thierry Terret and Tony Froissart (Reims: Éditions et Presses universitaires de Reims, 2013), 99–123; Philip Dine, *Sport and Identity in France: Practices, Locations, Representations* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2012); Hugh Dauncey, *French Cycling: A Social and Cultural History* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012).

abundant colonial and metropolitan press as well as bulletins and journals produced by national-level sporting structures. Travel guides and narratives are also an important source. Iconography, especially photographs and postcards, is another valuable tool.[1] Intelligence services, on the other hand, offer little data. It seems that cycling was subject to relatively little surveillance by the French authorities, as it did not create problems similar to those experienced, for example, in the soccer world, where there were recurring clashes between supporters. An inherent difficulty in making use of sources is knowing who is speaking and who is writing history.[2] In order to find traces of the first Algerian cycling stars from before 1914, an oral investigation and anthropological research were undertaken in Blida, a city that was considered to be one of colonial Algeria's largest sporting centers.

The social and cultural history of the introduction and development of cycling in Algeria is not well known.[3] While the anglophone researcher Philip Dine has produced some analysis of cycling as part of his work on Algeria's sporting space,[4] France's historiography has neglected it in favor of a large number of works on cycling in metropolitan France, with the Tour de France proving to be an essential object of study.[5] Ignorance regarding this area is made all the more remarkable by the fact that there are some studies on cycling in other overseas spaces such as Guadeloupe and Réunion.[6] As for Algeria's historiography, it has not ignored cycling but instead given it a biased treatment. The dominant approach has been to describe the sport in terms of the emergence of a national sentiment.[7] Djamel Boulebier is one of the few Algerian researchers who discusses cycling, doing so in his research on the penetration and spread of associationism as a modern form of the grouping and mobilizing of people. His analysis, which is focused on the Constantinois region, offers a wealth of insights into the appropriation of modern physical practices by Muslims. However, both the European element and the international context are overlooked.[8]

There are three dimensions to the reflections that will be explored here. First, cycling will be considered as the vector for an international sporting culture that goes beyond a strictly colonial and binary metropolitan France-Algeria framework and that represents a world that rightfully has a place in the

(1) Excellent evidence that photography can be a historical source in its own right is provided by Lydie Haine-Dalmais "Photographier le Maghreb: regards allogènes sur des sociétés et communautés indigènes (1850–1950)," (PhD diss., Université Paris-VII, 2011).

(2) Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

(3) This article is the result of a research project on cycling in Algeria over the course of a long twentieth century. Its results will be published in book form in 2018 (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek).

(4) Philip Dine, "Dresser la carte sportive de 'l'Algérie française': vitesse technologique et appropriation de l'espace," in *L'Empire des sports: une histoire de la mondialisation culturelle*, ed. Pierre Singaravélou and Julien Sorez, (Paris: Belin, 2010) 105–117; Philip Dine, "Cycling, North Africa," in *Sports Around the World: History, Culture, and Practice*, ed. John Nauright and Charles Parrish (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2012), 286–287.

(5) Georges Vigarello, "Le Tour de France," in *Les Lieux de mémoire*, vol. 3, *Les France*, bk. 2, *Traditions. Singularités*, ed. Pierre Nora (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 886–925.

(6) Including Harry P. Mephon, *Corps et société en Guadeloupe: sociologie des pratiques de compétition* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2007); and Évelyne Combeau-Mari, *Sport et Décolonisation: La Réunion de 1946 à la fin des années 60)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998).

(7) Such as in the major work by Rabah Saadallah and Djamel Benfars, *Annales du cyclisme d'Algérie* (Algiers: OPU, 1990). See also Youcef Fates, "Le club sportif, structure d'encadrement et de formation nationaliste de la jeunesse musulmane pendant la période coloniale," in *De l'Indochine à l'Algérie: la jeunesse en mouvements des deux côtés du miroir colonial, 1940–1962*, ed. Nicolas Bancel, Daniel Denis, and Youssef Fates (Paris: La Découverte, 2003), 150–163; "Le sport: phénomène et pratiques," special issue, *Insaniyat: revue algérienne d'anthropologie et de sciences sociales* 34: 2006.

(8) Djamel Boulebier, "Constantine, sportsmen musulmans et nouvelles figures sociales de l'émancipation à la veille de la Première Guerre mondiale," in *La France et l'Algérie: leçons d'histoire. De l'école en situation coloniale à l'enseignement du fait colonial*, ed. Frédéric Abécassis et al. (Lyon: ENS éditions, 2007), 65–112.

sphere of Mediterranean migrations.[1] Second, the inquiry equally focuses on both sport as an instrument for colonial domination and sport as "space-relation."[2] Cycling represents a space for a variety of encounters: exchanges, education, adhesion and appropriation (by the French) on the one hand, and competition and confrontation on the other. A third aspect of reflection relates to the identity dimensions of this physical activity, which are sometimes difficult to grasp. To what extent is it a question here of a phenomenon of "national" sociability (in this case that of North Africa) and regional sociability[3] (that of Algiers, Oran, and Constantine)? In addition, in what respects does cycling as a practice appear here as a form of cosmopolitan sociability that bore an international or even transnational cycling culture? My analysis here involves different actors, namely sportspeople, figures in charge, journalists, and spectators. Journalists, a category that has been subject to very little study in the colonial context, seem in particular in my view to be "a major actor in the colonial partnership,"[4] and this is all the more so because cycling was closely linked to the press through accounts of it and sponsorship.

The first part of this article covers the 1880s and corresponds to the establishment of a cycling culture in wealthy circles (French and francophone ones) through different types of practices and the first associations. The second part deals with the golden age of cycling: the 1890s. Cycling was a pursuit conducted for competitive ends, on the road (with the first events) and on the track (with the construction of velodromes), and at the same time as a hobby, with bicycle touring and treks through the territory. Finally, the third part covers the beginning of the twentieth century. After a slow period, cycling experienced a renewal. It became more open to the middle classes, immigrants from the Mediterranean basin, and Algerians. This last part also focuses on one of the first Algerian stars of the North African peloton on the eve of the First World War who was emblematic of this opening up of the sporting world (document 1).

The development of cycling in Algeria

The arrival and introduction of cycling in Algeria continues to be an area left in the dark within the literature as it currently stands. Accounts and articles in the colonial sporting press give us at least some information on it.

According to the journalist Ernest Mallebay, the first velocipedes were brought in the luggage of English hiverneurs, well before 1888.[5] At that time, they came in a series of rudimentary forms (unicycles, penny-farthings, and high wheelers), and were still seen as an oddity. In the Algérois region, the *véloceman* Charles Briselin seems to have launched what was called the *sport vélocipédique* with the modern bicycle.[6] During the last months of 1888, so many cycles roamed the streets of Algiers that their "popularity seems assured."[7] This new means of transport and leisure became part of

(1) For a Mediterranean approach, see Julia Clancy-Smith, *Mediterraneans: North Africa and Europe in an Age of Migration, c. 1800–1900* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010).

(2) Driss Abbassi, "Le sport dans l'Empire français: un instrument de domination?" *Outremers* 96, no. 364–365 (2009): 5–15, here 7.

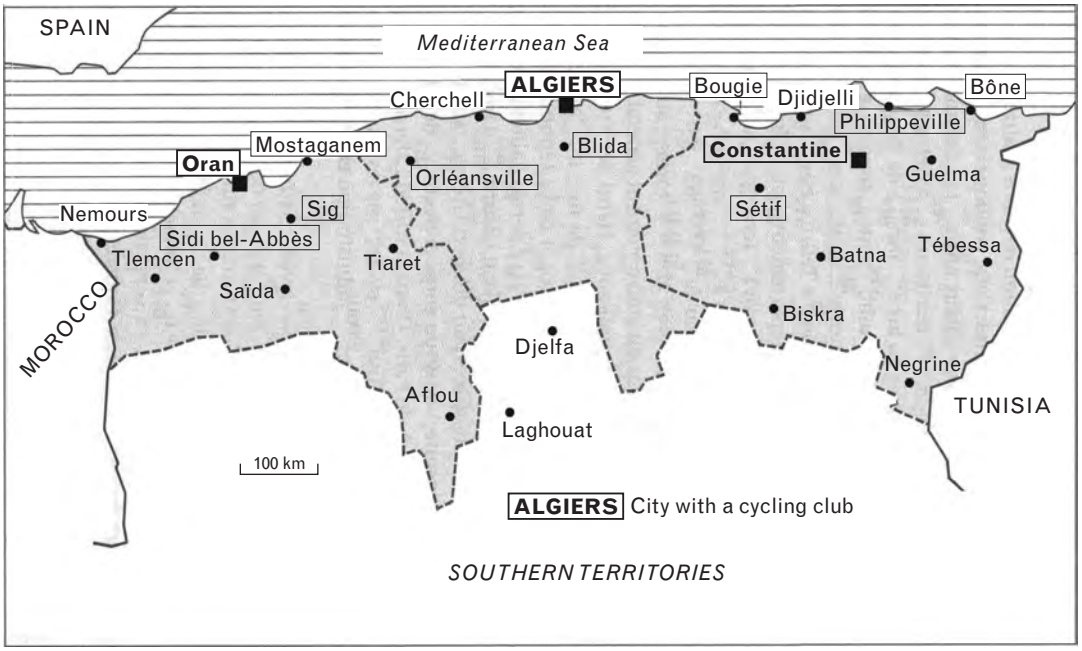
(3) Stijn Knuts developed this analytical framework for Flemish cycling: Stijn Knuts, "Converging and Competing Courses of Identity Construction: Shaping and Imagining Society through Cycling and Bicycle Racing in Belgium before World War Two" (PhD diss., Université de Louvain, 2014).

(4) Abbassi, "Le sport dans l'Empire français," 11.

(5) *L'Indépendant de Mascara*, March 13, 1892.

(6) This English innovation, which dates back to 1879, was characterized by movement driven by a chain, equally sized wheels, a straight frame, and tires. Two other important technical innovations in relation to the spread of modern cycling were the invention of the pneumatic tire (made from rubber) in 1888 by John Dunlop and the subsequent invention of the removable tire with an inner tube by the Michelin brothers (1891).

(7) *L'Indépendant de Mascara*, October 21, 1888.



1. Map of Algerian cities that had a cycling club, late nineteenth century.

the European elite's habits in Constantine in 1889.[1]

Several elements fostered the introduction and spread of this new vehicle. First, there was the presence of an international community, which included English hiverneurs. The few thousand British residents there formed a sort of colony within the colony.[2] In Algiers, they had their own networks, stores, doctors, and churches. These hiverneurs met up in their societies, among which was the English Club, and they had English-language periodicals (such as *The Atlas*).[3] Most resided in a specific place, the village of Mustapha, located on the outskirts of Algiers in a rural environment. Located here was an immense parade ground with a hippodrome where military parades, races between the best-known stables, and major local festivals took place. The suburb of Mustapha was described as an "aristocratic neighborhood, with its elegant villas stacked on the mountainside and its comfortable hotels."[4] The hiverneurs, a cosmopolitan and well-off group, had the time, cultural background, and means to take an interest in this new technical achievement. And, as Mallebay does not fail to point out in his memoirs, entitled *Cinquante ans de journalisme* (*Fifty Years of*

(1) Djamel Boulebier, "Constantine, fait colonial et pionniers musulmans du sport," *Insaniyat: revue algérienne d'anthropologie et de sciences sociales* 35–36 (2007): 21–61.

(2) Out of the 86,000 inhabitants, 35,000 were French, 25,000 Arabs, 20,000 foreigners (that is, Italian, Spanish, Maltese, and English), and 6,000 Jews. See George W. Harris, *"The" Practical Guide to Algiers* (London: G. Philip & Son, 1894), 12.

(3) Joëlle Redouane, "La présence anglaise en Algérie de 1830 à 1930," *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée* 38 (1984): 15–36; Jean-Jacques Jordi, "Le temps des hiverneurs: les 'Anglais' en Algérie 1880–1914," in *Le Tourisme dans l'Empire français*, ed. Colette Zytnicki and Habib Kazdaghli (Saint-Denis: Société française d'histoire d'outremer, 2009), 29–35.

(4) Comité d'hivernage algérien, *Alger reine des stations hivernales* (Nancy, France: Imprimerie Farnier & Chauvette, n. d.)

Journalism), they were athletic and eager to enliven the colony.[1]

Although Englishmen ushered in the fashion for cycling, it was citizens from metropolitan France who created sustainable structures for it—for example, associations, stores, a sporting press, and velodromes. In most cases, this group comprised businesspeople and former racing cyclists, as well as young manufacturers and teachers from France who had just arrived in Algeria. The major thoroughfares, city squares, or fields beyond the walls, vast and green spaces, were the places of sociability for this burgeoning cycling culture. For example, near Mustapha, the botanical garden was for some time a place for meeting up and physical activities. In the second half of the 1880s, on Sunday afternoons cyclists would meet at its roundabout before curious and interested individuals who were strolling through the park.[2]

Different types of races were organized, including ones based on speed, pursuit, skills, or distance.[3] In these early years, the main thoroughfares (such as that in Bône in 1889) or hippodromes (such as that in Constantine) were other favorite places for cycling races.[4] This first phase, which was characterized by amateur enthusiasm and improvisation, was followed by a period of asserting a desire to give cycling endeavors a long-term basis through the construction of velodromes, which were often located on parade grounds or near to them, as was the case in Bône and Oran.

There were therefore four strands to cycling in Algeria as a practice: sports, tourism, the military, and everyday cycling.[5] It was a new, Western mode of locomotion alongside the train, stagecoach, horse, and modes described as "native," such as the camel and the donkey. Cycling culture was absorbed into Republican and military discourse on health, discipline, and the spirit of revenge against Germany.[6] As a social practice, cycling fostered a new aspect of the public space, where it introduced speed, first to city streets and avenues, and then to villages and the countryside.

In contrast to metropolitan France, where associations were set up from the end of the 1860s, the creation of associations in Algeria began at the end of the 1880s.[7] As in Europe, the crucible of cycling associations was the city. The first cycling club was created in Algiers in September 1888.[8] The statutes of the Véloce-Club d'Alger (VCA) were modeled on those of Lyon's "bicycleclub." It had around a dozen members (leadership figures and athletes, all of whom were French).[9] In Constantine, a cyclists' society was announced toward the end of 1890;[10] other structures followed it in most settlements. It is worth remarking that because of its leaders, cycling was firmly rooted in the political and social elites. The president of the VCA in 1895, the physician Alcide Treille, was a deputy for Constantine, and then a senator.[11]

In line with the network of associations was the development of an entire cycling infrastructure: stores that handled sales, repairs, or rentals (at the end of 1888, a manufacturer based in metropolitan France, Adolphe Clément, opened a branch in Algiers[12]); a

(1) Ernest Mallebay, *Cinquante Ans de journalisme* (Algiers: Fernand Fontana, 1937).

(2) *Le Patriote algérien*, December 4, 1889.

(3) *Le Véloce-sport*, March 27, 1890.

(4) *Le Nouveau Progrès de l'Algérie*, August 25, 1891; "Bône, son histoire… ses histoires: vélocipèdes," *La Dépêche de Constantine*, October 19, 1958.

(5) Bicycles made their appearance in the army after 1886, when the first military cycling sections were created: *L'Indépendant de Mascara*, June 26, 1887.

(6) *Le Nouveau Progrès de l'Algérie*, October 11, 1890.

(7) Alex Poyer, *Les Premiers Temps des véloce-clubs: apparition et diffusion du cyclisme associatif français entre 1867 et 1914* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003) 10 and 15.

(8) *La Dépêche algérienne*, September 19, 1888.

(9) *Le Patriote algérien*, September 23, 1888; *L'Indépendant de Mascara*, January 27, 1889. Briselin, one of the VCA's founders, was a former professional cyclist from Lyon's club.

(10) *Le Nouveau Progrès de l'Algérie*, October 11, 1890.

(11) See his portrait and his photograph in *L'Algérie sportive*, January 17 and February 7, 1895.

(12) *Le Véloce-sport*, November 1, 1888; Clément appeared "very satisfied" with his Algerian visit at the end of 1889: *Le Véloce-sport*, February 14 and March 7, 1889.

specialized press (*L'Algérie sportive*, founded in 1890); and federal structures (the Union vélocipédique algérienne [UVA], created in 1892[1]). Structures for (European) culture and sociability also emerged, and these included cycling musical bands and bars (such as the Café du vélo algérien, located on Constantine Street in Algiers[2]). These groups and places were mentioned in the sports press, but there is a lack of sources on their inner workings. Finally, this development is illustrated by the dissemination of the first advertisements aimed at the domestic market[3] and wintering tourists ("*The*" *Practical Guide to Algiers*, 1890). Bicycles were an imported luxury product; there were very few "cycle makers."[4] Cycling was a mechanical and expensive practice: the price of a bicycle was a social selection factor, at least until the beginning of the twentieth century. On top of the purchase of the bicycle came maintenance, tires, and spare parts.

Although cycling became a "significant cultural phenomenon" on the cusp of the 1890s, it was certainly a sport and a pastime for the European bourgeoisie. Members of the privileged social classes paraded around on their new machines in parks, hippodromes, or resorts, while maintaining their "social detachment."[5] This finding is supported by the few iconographic documents and accounts that tell us about the members of the public who frequented Algeria's velodromes. A collotype of an international speed race at the velodrome of the Cyclo-club de Constantine produced on October 18, 1896, shows the clothing fashions of the well-to-do classes. Many women present among the spectators are wearing extravagant hats, such as wide-brimmed hats decorated with feathers and similar to those worn to horse races.[6] When, two years later, a reporter from metropolitan France attended events at the same velodrome, he described a "chic audience"[7] (document 2).

While the elite attended organized events (that required an admission fee) in the velodrome, a more diverse crowd attended road events and the races organized as part of festivals. Seen from this perspective, cycling can be considered as a point of contact between different individuals, groups, and cultures, as it was intimately linked to popular events: harvest celebrations, the national day, the flower parade, and village festivals. When the town of Mascara organized, as part of celebrations on July 14, 1889, the usual games of *baquet*, *tourniquet*, and *poêle*, it also offered something new: a "bicycle race."[8] The presence of the *vélousel* (cycling in a carousel formation) during competitions and festivals highlights how it was an entertainment tool. The bicycle, festive, acrobatic and spectacular, was quickly integrated into Republican folklore. It should be noted that the audiences that it reached were varied and segregated, depending on the event. There was a twofold segregation that was at work first of all within the European population, but also between Europeans and Algerians. Although it is unlikely that Algerians (apart from those from well-off backgrounds) attended track events, it is nevertheless likely that they followed road events and attended festivals, just as the European population did. But on this

(1) *Le Véloce-sport*, April 7 and June 30, 1892. The UVA disappeared at the end of 1894 following internal divisions: *L'Algérie sportive*, December 24, 1894.

(2) *L'Algérie sportive*, October 6, 1895.

(3) See the advertisement for "Howe Bicycles and Tricycles" in *L'Écho d'Oran*, October 20, 1885.

(4) The manufacturer J. Ortola, reported in Oran by *L'Industrie vélocipédique* in December 1895, seems in my view to be the exception that proves the rule. More frequently, the frames of the major French and English brands were imported, to then be fitted by the dealer or storekeepers.

(5) Poyer, *Les Premiers Temps des véloce-clubs*, 305 and 307.

(6) *Bulletin du Photo-club de Constantine*, January 1897. The four racers appearing in this picture are the metropolitans Bouhours, Lamberjack, and Bordigoni, as well as Bourceret, from Constantine. See *Le Turco*, October 23, 1896.

(7) Victor Breyer, "Trois mois de tournée cycliste. Souvenirs du circuit hivernal. V. Constantine et Tunis," *La Vie au grand air: revue illustrée de tous les sports*, April 1, 1899, 49.

(8) *L'Indépendant de Mascara*, July 11, 1889.

2. Spectators at Constantine's velodrome, October 18, 1896 (*Bulletin du Photo-club de Constantine*, January 1897).

specific subject of the composition and behavior of spectators, the sources are silent.

A "brilliant" turn of the century

In a retrospective piece from 1914, *L'Écho sportif de l'Oranie* characterized the years between 1894 and 1900 as North African cycling's "most brilliant period."[1] As was the case in metropolitan France, this physical activity experienced a "golden age" and was considered "the most dynamic sporting discipline."[2] *Cyclo-clubs* were becoming fashionable: apart from the four towns of Algiers, Oran, Bône, and Constantine, they appeared throughout the territory in the communes of Mitidja and Blida, in Kabylia (Bougie), in the Constantinois (Philippeville, Sétif), in the Oranais (Sidi Bel-Abbès, Sig, Mostaganem), and in Orléansville. When at the end of 1895 the Frenchman Édouard de Perrodil, editor of the *Petit Journal*, crossed Algeria from west to east on a bicycle, he indicated that there were cycling clubs everywhere. Where such structures did not exist, such as in Souk-Ahras, he did not hide his astonishment.[3]

Although any attempt to draw comparisons with metropolitan France is risky, Algeria's three *départements* can undoubtedly be located in an intermediate space between France's

(1) *L'Écho sportif de l'Oranie*, April 11, 1914.
(2) Poyer, *Les Premiers Temps des véloce-clubs*, 307.
(3) Édouard de Perrodil, *À travers les cactus: traversée de l'Algérie à bicyclette* (Paris: Flammarion, 1896), 271.

strongly *vélophile* regions (the Paris Basin, the North, and the Rhône Valley) and others where it remained a weaker presence, such as Brittany, the Pyrenees, and the Alps.[1] Apart from the spread of the necessary infrastructure and the growth in the number of enthusiasts, this happy period was characterized by the emergence of road events and an increase in the number of velodromes. It also took the form of Algeria's growing popularity among cycling tourists. Cycling remained an essentially masculine sporting practice, though on the back of races and festivals, events for ladies were also sometimes held from 1894.[2]

Because of the lack of reliable data, it is difficult to quantify cycling as a phenomenon. The number of clubs and members is not known, and nor is how they evolved over time. To the best of my knowledge, no cycling club from the 1880s or 1890s has left archival records behind. Information drawn from the colonial press gives no more than a few details. According to Ernest Mallebay, at the end of 1893 there were seven hundred cyclists in Algiers and about two thousand in the colony.[3] Two years later, Alcide Treille, the president of the Véloce-Club d'Alger, spoke of about six thousand to eight thousand cyclists in Algeria.[4] At the end of 1894, the UVA had around 800 members[5].

On the other hand, an analysis of other sources of interest such as reports of UVA meetings[6] and the directories of the Union vélocipédique de France (UVF, from 1881) and of the Touring-Club de France (TCF, from 1890) makes it possible to have some idea of members' social origins.

Registrations grew from 1893. Joining military personnel and some members of the nobility and the professions (lawyers, solicitors, bar presidents, judges, notaries, and architects) were many traders, merchants, proprietors, and craftspeople. Also present were teachers and public servants (from the municipality and general government), unlike farmers, an underrepresented category, just like in metropolitan France, with the exception of wine makers. During this turn-of-the-century period, most of the members, judging by their names, were of French origin. Spanish and Italian family names are conspicuous by their absence. Also appearing in the directories are a few English names (hiverneurs from Mustapha, often individuals of independent means with last names such as Thwing or Wigram), a handful of Jews (Stora, Levy, Cohen, Elkaïm, or Ben Frech), a few women and, in 1895, the first Algerian: Abdel Ben Brahim, an inhabitant of the Casbah. There was no aga or caid among the prominent local figures. However, it is well known that they were drawn to new technologies—for example, cars, which appeared in Algeria from 1897.

Who were the cycling athletes at the turn of the century in Algeria? Judging by the results and rankings for the races from these years, there were still few immigrants of Spanish or Italian origin in the peloton. Algerians were also extremely rare. The historical record is silent on Abdel Ben Brahim, a man nicknamed "The Flying Arab" [7] and considered to be the "best of the Algerian sprinters"[8] in the first decade of the 1990s. Out of the dozens of locals who participated in events, some

(1) Poyer, *Les Premiers Temps des véloce-clubs*, 306.

(2) "Course de dames: la première qui se soit vue en Algérie," *L'Algérie sportive*, April 12, 1894.

(3) *Le Véloce-sport*, November 9, 1893.

(4) Letter from Alcide Treille to Ernest Mallebay, published in *L'Algérie sportive*, December 23, 1895.

(5) *L'Algérie sportive*, March 7, 1895.

(6) Found for the years 1893 and 1894, these were published in *L'Algérie sportive* and included admission applications and admissions.

(7) *Le Progrès: journal de l'arrondissement d'Orléansville*, October 16, 1902; Saadallah and Benfars, *Annales du cyclisme d'Algérie*, 15; *Bulletin de l'UVF*, May 5, 1895. In this era in the United States, Major Taylor was known as the "Flying Negro." See Andrew Ritchie, *Major Taylor: The Extraordinary Career of a Champion Bicycle Racer* (San Francisco: Bicycle Books, 1988).

(8) *Le Turco*, February 1, 1902. Apparently, his fiancée, Ms. Burne, was European. See *Le Turco*, November 22, 1902.

such as François Serviès, Léonce Ehrmann, and Charles Perrin stand out. They dominated at local races and set North African records. However, in international terms they did not reach the same sporting level as the metropolitan French, European, and American stars.[1]

This sport allowed Europeans from Algeria to cross the Mediterranean and traverse the Europe that lay beyond metropolitan France. The results and rankings for races described in *Le Véloce-sport* in 1894 and 1895 for one of the best locals from the Constantinois region, Henri Pastariano, offer up an idea of this transnational mobility. Born in 1874 in Perpignan, he emigrated to Algeria at a young age. A dentist's apprentice, he became a member of Véloce-sport bônois. Before establishing himself as a dental surgeon, he focused on cycling for a few seasons and had a good record. After taking part in international races in Bône in October 1894 (at the Prés-salés velodrome) and in Philippeville in November, Pastariano left for metropolitan France. He spent the winter in Paris and competed at the Vélodrome d'Hiver. In the spring of 1895, he could be found in the Midi, in Nice (in April) and Cannes (in May). He formed a team, the *Triplette Tricolore*, with the metropolitans Émile Lamberjack and Robert Coquelle. It had successes in Geneva, Milan, Alessandria (Piedmont), Genoa, Florence, and Savona. During the summer, the three cyclists participated in races organized in the Nord region and in Brussels in July, and then in Ostend, Liège, Cologne, and Reims in August, before going back toward the Midi via Lyon and Aix-les-Bains in August. Pastariano was back in his adopted home country in the fall. He competed on the road in Sétif and Constantine in September, and then on the track in Bône in October. What Pastiano did was nothing less than a cycling "grand tour."[2] Conversely, the international cycling world's champions participated in events in Algeria. At the end of 1897, for example, the Mustapha velodrome organized an Anglo-Italian match with the English stars Brown and Gascoyne and the Italians Ferrari and Pontecchi.[3]

Cycling was part of Western cultural practices that were introduced to Algeria, along with music, theater, and literature. Among the key personalities was the aforementioned Ernest Mallebay (1857–1939). This Limousin native arrived in Blida in 1880, where he taught history at the school before shifting his career toward literature, sports, and journalism. He became a cultural linchpin within a burgeoning colonial society, and in 1888 he launched, among other titles, the *Revue algérienne*,[4] followed by *L'Algérie sportive*[5] in 1890. Mallebay immersed himself in Algiers's high society and in its cosmopolitan, anglophone culture. His house in Mustapha, which was located by the parade ground, was known as the *Vélo-cottage*. This cultural intermediary (in Michel Vovelle's sense) exemplifies the mentality of these entrepreneurs and pioneers whose life project was to develop the colony along the lines described in *Making Algeria French*[6] at the same time as they had a complex relationship with metropolitan France, which was both a model and countermodel. He belonged to the

(1) In this regard, it is significant that no North African athlete appears in the book on cycling stars written by Victor Breyer and Robert Coquelle: *Les Rois du cycle: comment sont devenus champions Bourrillon*, *Cordang*, *Huret*, *Jacquelin*, *Morin*, *Protin* (Paris: E. Brocherioux, 1898).

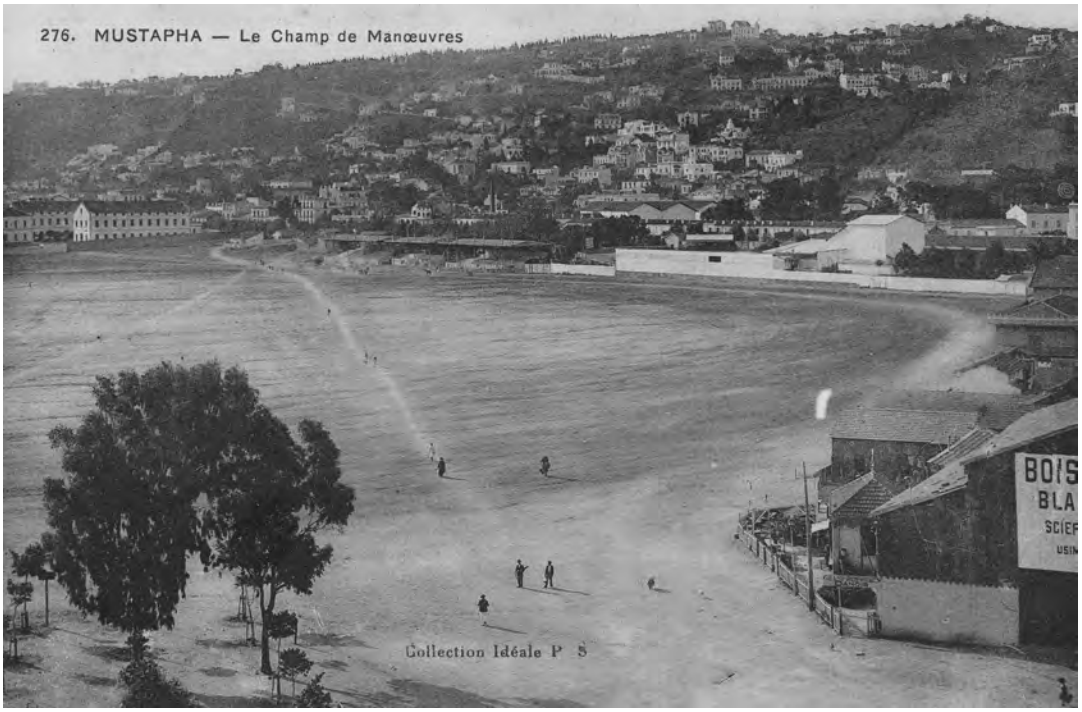
(2) *Le Véloce-sport*, December 6, 1894; April 25, May 30, June 20, July 22, August 8, 22, and 29, September 12, 17, and 19, October 2 and 4, 1895; "Silhouettes cyclistes: Henri Pastariano," *Le Turco*, July 17, 1896.

(3) *Le Petit Parisien*, December 28, 1897.

(4) Mallebay, *Cinquante Ans de journalisme*, vol. 1. He also launched *Le Turco* (1895–1923) and *Annales africaines* (1904-1937), two landmark publications.

(5) The first copy that could be found of *L'Algérie sportive* dates from May 6, 1893 (third year of publication, issue 19). The issues from 1890, 1891, and 1892 are yet to be found.

(6) David Prochaska, *Making Algeria French: Colonialism in Bône, 1870–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).



3. Postcard of the Mustapha velodrome on the parade ground in around 1904.

algérianiste[1] generation that proclaimed a new North African identity, and he was quite representative of what Abbassi described as "the colonized political elite, which appropriated sport as an instrument and turned it into a vector of endogenous nationalism and an agent for identity construction."[2]

In this mental universe of the 1890s, the bicycle, as an object of modernity, progress, and the future, occupied a rightful place. At the same time, cycling symbolized colonial conquest through urban planning (velodromes), events (on the track and road), and tourism (cycling treks). The building of Mustapha's velodrome is a reflection of this colonial ideology. It was a highly symbolic place that allows us to understand the relationship between the fields of sport and politics, in a similar manner to football, regattas, or gymnastics events.[3]

In the early 1890s, Algiers had a temporary velodrome, located in front of the stands of the equestrian society on the Mustapha parade grounds. The UVA organized distance, speed, and tricycle (for women and children as well as men) races there.[4] From 1894, Ernest Mallebay worked toward the creation of a velodrome on the site. Hope was placed in the fact that the future installation could "compete with the metropole's finest similar establishments,[5]" which included the Buffalo in

(1) Charles-Robert Ageron, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine*, vol. 2, *De l'insurrection de 1871 au déclenchement de la guerre de libération (1954)* (Paris: PUF, 1979), 59.

(2) Abbassi, "Le sport dans l'Empire français," 6.

(3) André Gounot, Denis Jallat, and Benoît Caritey, eds, *Les Politiques au stade: étude comparée des manifestations sportives du* xixe *au* xxie *siècle* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2007).

(4) *Le Tirailleur algérien*, March 25, 1894; *Furet algérien*, April 22, 1894.

(5) Jean de Blida, "Un vélodrome," *La Tafna*, June 23, 1897.

Neuilly-sur-Seine (1893) and the Vélodrome de la Seine (1894). The municipality of Mustapha, the prefect, the Fortifications Commission, and the General Council of Algiers were all turned to. The General Council of Algiers authorized the mayor of Mustapha to broach the matter of leasing the land. The outcome was a leasing and rental agreement.[1] This project also exemplifies how the colony tried to reproduce metropolitan structures as far as possible. The plans were provided by the engineer Georges Forestier,[2] who had made most of the velodromes in France, and the operating model was that of the famous Buffalo velodrome (document 3).

Under the direction of Ernest Mallebay, Mustapha's velodrome would be not only a sports and entertainment structure but also a major site for political gatherings. The large meetings in 1898 that had Jews as their target took place in the arena.[3] Mallebay, as supporter of Max Régis and Édouard Drumont, also published several anti-Semitic publications. The velodrome was an important place in constructing relations with the other. It was as much a peaceful and open place (as is shown by the international events that were held there) as it was a place for the sometimes violent expression of identity. Other tracks opened their doors in Oran (Saint-Eugène neighborhood), Constantine (La Pépinière), Bône (Prés-salés), Sétif, Bougie, Orléansville, Philippeville, and Sidi Bel-Abbès.

In addition to the fixed space of the track, the road was likewise (and at the same time in a different way) a space for encounters, competition, Gallicization, and domination. The arena and the road interacted with one another and sustained a symbiotic relationship via finishes at the velodromes. The symbolic (re-) conquest of Algerian space was carried out through the first major road events. The press recounted the first significant cycling journeys, such as that in 1888 between Saïda and Mascara (eighty kilometers), which was completed in "less than four hours."[4] In 1892, the first Algiers-Cherchell-Algiers event was organized, and the first between Algiers and Orléansville occurred in 1895. However, overall the 1890s were still lean years for competitions of this kind, and track cycling was dominant.

Cycling treks were another form of symbolically reconquering Algerian space. One of the first cycling tourists to cover Algeria's three *départements* may have been Albert Laumaillé, who made the journey in 1879.[5] Europeans from Algeria[6] and the metropolitan French aside, a significant number of foreigners discovered and journeyed across Algeria on modern or tandem bicycles or on tricycles. They included Americans, Germans, Hungarians, and the English. The "Tour of Algeria by bicycle» carried out in 1891 by a Russian officer, the baron of Kelleskrauss, was closely followed by the press. Conversely, French people from Algeria crossed Europe.[7]

Foreign cyclists' journeys have left few traces behind, unlike those of metropolitan journalists who produced travel narratives, prominent among which are those of Édouard de Perrodil (1896)[8] and Victor Breyer (1898)[9]. Like the novels of Louis Bertrand, Robert Randau, and Isabelle Eberhardt, leading lights

(1) *Journal général de l'Algérie et de la Tunisie*, May 8, 1897.

(2) "Forestier: sa carrière" and "Son intérêt pour le cycle et l'automobile," in *Le Corps des ponts et chaussées*, ed. André Brunot and Roger Coquand (Paris: CNRS éditions, 1982), 443–445.

(3) "Histoire d'un vélodrome," *Annales africaines: Turco revue*, May 13, 1906.

(4) *L'Indépendant de Mascara*, May 13, 1888.

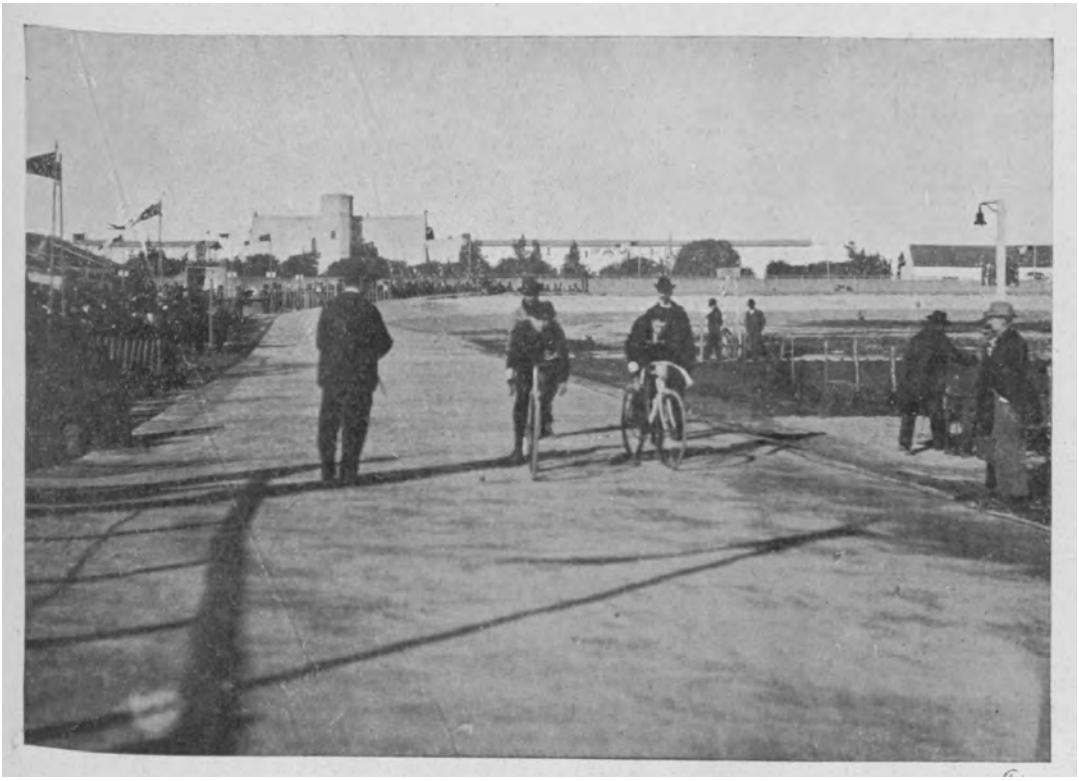
(5) See http://www.lepetitbraquet.fr/chron80_laumaille-albert.html (February 17, 2016).

(6) "En véloce," *L'Algérie sportive*, November 3, 10, and 17, December 1, 1895. In this series of articles, Mallebay recounts his journey across Algeria in around 1890 with Charles Briselin.

(7) For example, the VCA's Jacques Marconnet, who went across France in 1890. See *Le Véloce-sport*, August 28, 1890.

(8) Perrodil, *À travers les cactus.*

(9) Breyer, "Trois mois de tournée cycliste."



4. Photo, "Méridional Circuit" at the Oran velodrome, December 1898 (*La Vie au grand air*, March 18, 1899).

in colonial literature in Algeria at this time, touring cyclists' travel books paint "true social pictures of the colony."[1] They give a glimpse of Algeria's cycling cultures and structures, and they provide information on the country and its people through an Orientalist viewpoint and racist stereotypes. In Breyer's case, tourism and competition were closely linked. With his colleague and director of the Buffalo velodrome, Robert Coquelle, he organized a series of performances and events called the Méridional Circuit. This tour was a point of contact between individuals and communities, to be sure, but only insofar as Breyer, upon arriving in cities, tasked "teams of young Arabs" with selling the program of meetings in town. The best cycling locals were invited to run against his travel companions, who were all international champions in various disciplines: the American George Banker, the Belgian Louis Grogna, and the Italian Gian Fernando Tomaselli (document 4).

At the turn of the century, organized excursions took place in addition to individual treks. The Algiers Wintering Committee included, among other tourist activities, bicycle excursions around the country.[2] Cycling as a tourist activity and as a sport therefore revealed a cosmopolitan culture while remaining the preserve of Westerners.

(1) Breyer, "Trois mois de tournée cycliste."

(2) *Touring-Club de France: revue mensuelle*, June 15, 1897. See also Colette Zytnicki, *L'Algérie, terre de tourisme* (Paris: Vendémiaire, 2016).

The cycling space reborn and opened up

At the beginning of the twentieth century, relations between colonists and colonized became characterized by a new dynamic. As Djamel Boulebier has demonstrated in his work, Algerians gradually gained access to the world of recreation and sports. This entailed introductory and formative journeys into European environments. Algerians had the opportunity to share time at events as well as the illusion of being part of the same imagined community as the Europeans. It seems to me that cycling, compared to other sports such as football, developed in this way for the simple reason that at the beginning of the century it was undergoing a slow period. It had gone out of fashion, the VCA and several of the first clubs had disappeared, and with the rise of new automotive and aerospace technical feats, many cycling pioneers began to explore higher speeds. Léonce Ehrmann was the iconic example of this in Algeria. This child of refugees from Alsace, he was born in 1877 in Boufarik and had a successful international career before diving into the aerospace world. He then became a folk hero with his Tour of Algeria by plane in 1912. After he crashed in Bône two years later, there were crowds at his funeral.[1]

In order to make velodromes profitable, some managers of them, inspired by their metropolitan colleagues, opened their doors to the entertainment world. In 1902, the Mustapha velodrome set up within its premises an events hall as well as a popular theater (with an engineered stage made by technicians from Paris) that could hold up to 1,200 spectators.[2] For a few years, this multifunctional stadium hosted cycling events, passing troops, popular performances, sports events, and other flower parades held by the Wintering Committee. The stadium, hall, and theater were ultimately demolished in 1907 to make room for Mustapha's arenas.[3] After a period of stagnation, other velodromes such as that of Oran came back to life and restarted hosting track events with a new generation of athletes born at the beginning of the 1890s.[4] The number of cycling-focused sports societies as well as their activities therefore declined in the first decade of the new century, before growing again from around 1910.[5]

Relative to track cycling, road cycling gradually prevailed and contributed to the rebirth of African cycling from 1912. The model adopted was that of the great metropolitan races, including the highly successful Tour de France. The first multistage event in Algeria was the Algiers-Oran race, which took place between September 20 and 21, 1913, and covered 456 km over two days. In early 1914, the former cyclist Perrin, the cycling society La Roue d'or algéroise, and the weekly paper *L'Écho sportif* launched the Perrin Trophy. This was an event that comprised seven elimination stages, which were to be contested between May and August 1914, followed by an Algiers-to-Algiers final (160 km) on September 13, 1914[6]. However, the war prevented this event, which might be seen as an embryonic Tour of Algeria, from coming to fruition.

(1) *L'Écho sportif de l'Oranie*, April 25, 1914.
(2) *L'Avenir social*, December 7, 1902.
(3) For a year, the people of Algiers took an interest in bullfighting. There were two arenas in Algiers: Mustapha and Bab-El-Oued. See *Annales africaines*, March 13, 1909, and September 17, 1910.
(4) *L'Écho sportif de l'Oranie*, August 12, 1911.
(5) On the eve of the First World War, Algeria had at least a dozen sports associations devoted to cycling, but there were probably more than this given that many clubs catering for multiple sports had a cycling section. I have compiled the following non-exhaustive list of clubs: La Roue d'or algéroise, Union cycliste blidéenne, Amis cyclistes de Birkadem, Amical cycle oranais, Moto Cycle oranais, ASPTT (Oran), Pédale belabbésienne, Pédale rouïbéenne, Association sportive de Batna, Pédale algéroise, Sporting-Club d'El-Biar, Étoile cycliste algéroise, Starry Club (Alger), Amicale cycliste de Belcourt, Gallia Sport(s), and Étoile cycliste constantinoise.
(6) *L'Écho sportif de l'Oranie*, May 6, 9, and 16, 1914.

Compared with the 1890s, cycle racing in Algeria evolved a great deal, as the participation of the best locals in the Tour de France demonstrates. Between 1910 and 1914, five athletes (four Europeans and a Tunisian) started the tour.[1] The sport became more open to the middle classes. The production of two-wheelers became more standardized and more affordable. Following falls in bicycle prices, cycling ceased to be the exclusive domain of the elites and the bourgeoisie. The sociocultural base of athletes widened and came to include immigrants from the Mediterranean basin and Algerians. The entry list for the Algiers-Oran event of 1913 contains a dozen names that we may assume are Italian and above all, in relation to those from Oran, Spanish: Acosta, Poncetti, Garcia, Fernandez, Ruiz, Montésinos, Calderon, and Martinez.[2]

Whereas on the cusp of the twentieth century the sprinter Ben Brahim progressed alone, the presence of Algerian athletes seems to have been stronger by the eve of the First World War. In March 1914, *L'Écho sportif de l'Oranie* noted "how far the indigenous youth had come to athletic sports of all kinds and made huge progress in them."[3] In the Constantinois area, the cyclists Benderradji and Benmansour became well known, while Benbakir Mustapha and Bouaoni participated in events organized by the Touring Club Cycliste Constantinois in 1911.[4] In the Oranie region, an individual by the name of Ghalem emerged; in the Algérois region, Brazzi and Remadni (from Blida) attracted attention, as did Madani and Racim. However, not all Algerians who took to cycling from 1912 became a feature in the press. Although the name of Rabah Goumeri from Arba came to the fore, it was because he volunteered for the infantry and died in the war on November 13, 1914, appearing on the list of those killed.[5]

These Algerian riders enjoyed success: in April 1913, at the Bône velodrome, the very young Salah (or Salak) Ben Mohamed, aged seventeen, beat the twenty-four-hour record and was highly praised in the press.[6] The same goes for his compatriot Brazzi, who won the first stage of the Algiers-Oran event in September 1913. Ahmed Remadni (1889-1953) is an interesting case, because he is considered the first "Muslim star." The press, photographs, and oral sources allow us to take a look at his life and career.[7] Contrary to what has sometimes been suggested,[8] Remadni became involved in cycling well before the First World War. Before taking to the saddle in 1912, he participated in walking races, was a jockey, and played soccer for Croissant-Club blidéen. It is not known how this talented athlete came to cycling. It is apparent that he was supported by Blida's dignitaries, including Charles Perrin, a local personality who was by his side over his athletic career. This former cycling racer, the manager of a bicycle store in Blida, was also a patron and a sponsor of regional sport.

More so than the army or school, sports societies were the institutions that were the crucible of cycling as an extracurricular activity. Leaders were recruited from privileged French social strata. We have no information on the role of Algerian local dignitaries in cycling

(1) It should be noted that no North African finished the Tour de France: Émile Godard, in 1910 (quit at the tenth stage); Frédéric Vaillant, also in 1910 (quit at the third stage); Raphaël Galiéro, 1911 (quit at the sixth stage), and the Tunisian Ali Neffati, in 1913 (quit at the fourth stage) and 1914 (quit at the eighth stage). For the latter, see Pierre Carrey, "Les oubliés du Tour (3/6): à l'occasion de la 100e édition de l'épreuve, retour sur ses héros occultés," *Libération*, July 7, 2013.

(2) *L'Écho sportif de l'Oranie*, November 22, 1913.

(3) Robert, "L'indigénat: l'assimilation par les sports," *L'Écho sportif de l'Oranie*, March 14, 1914.

(4) Boulebier, "Constantine, sportsmen musulmans et nouvelles figures," 89 and 93.

(5) *L'Écho d'Alger*, November 6, 1915. His profile: "Rabah Ben Ahmed Goumeri," http://www.memoiredeshommes.sga.defense.gouv.fr (December 10, 2016).

(6) *L'Écho sportif de l'Oranie*, April 19, 1913.

(7) Interviews with the Remadni family, Blida, February 5 and 11, 2016.

(8) Saadallah and Benfars, *Annales du cyclisme d'Algérie*, 29.


Aux Fêtes de Maison-Carrée

Le jeune crack de LABOR-WOLBER, Ballester de la Roue d'Or Algéroise, enlève brillamment le demi-fond, sur ALCYON-DUNLOP, Poncetti de l'Etoile Cycliste Algéroise, gagne la vitesse... mais... dans un match défi, tout l'honneur, revient à Remadni de la R.C.A. sur PERRIN-DUNLOP. Remadni a été « balancé » dans la Finale ; une ovation fantastique lui est faite.

Raphaël BALLESTER

REMADNI

5. Photo of Ahmed Remadni (*L'Écho sportif de l'Oranie*, July 11, 1914.)

associations before 1914, unlike Algeria's first sporting "champions" who joined European clubs, all of which were mixed associations. Remadni confirmed his talents with his victory in the middle-distance championship of his club, la Roue d'or Algéroise, in July 1914.[1] Founded in 1908, this club was Algiers's most renowned cycling club. Remadni's success is emblematic of the breakthrough of Muslim cycling athletes in the North African peloton. The other sign of their rapid and apparently successful integration is in their becoming stars: Remadni's name appeared in big letters in advertisements announcing event results, and photos of him were published in the press[2] (document 5). Between 1914 and 1918, Remadni, unlike his teammates at la Roue d'or Algéroise, was not mobilized for war but participated in various events that took place in the Midi and in Algeria. In the postwar years, when cycling was rebuilt, he was among the North African stars. Is this to say that there was a new step in the emancipation process with this sudden entrance of Algerian sportsmen in the metropolitan sporting space? It seems that Remadni's sporting success allowed him to access economic comfort,

(1) *L'Écho d'Alger*, July 13, 1914.

(2) *L'Écho d'Alger*, June 18, 1914; *L'Écho sportif de l'Oranie*, July 11, 1914.

social ascent, and, to some extent, integration in colonial society. Around 1940, he bought a villa in the European district of Blida, just opposite Perrin's home. However, it is difficult to say how far the sport also served as a space for airing grievances. In any case, Remadni and his sporting compatriots were spotted by the press, which described their exploits at the start of 1914. *L'Écho sportif de l'Oranie* summed up its praise of North African sportsmen as follows: "The Arab belongs to a beautiful, simple, resilient race. This race that provides us with wonderful soldiers must, if it is all to be worth the trouble, contribute the right athletes to the next international competitions."[1] It should be noted, as has been demonstrated in relation to African footballers,[2] that praise for native athletes did not come without racist stereotyping. This quotation highlights how colonial sport was also a political and ideological instrument in the colonizers' hands. In colonial Algeria, the sporting space was as dynamic as it was ambiguous.

Studying the introduction and dissemination of physical activities related to cycling in colonial Algeria at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century is instructive, and the same is true of the subsequent period. Between the First World War and Algerian independence, cycling was a tool of domination and a crucible of French identity in Algeria. At the same time, it was a "social phenomenon" that created intra- and intercommunity sociabilities,[3] helping to forge multiple identities at the regional (Oran versus Algiers) and subnational (North African) levels, in the face of which metropolitan France appeared both as a model and as a countermodel that there was a desire to stand out from.

Specifically, two important periods can be distinguished in the development of cycling in Algeria after 1918. The first covers the 1930s. In 1929, a cycling Tour of Algeria was organized, and the sport then entered a prosperous period. New clubs that were European and mixed were created everywhere. The first so-called "Muslim" associations began to appear—for example, Vélo-sport musulman, created in 1936. Unlike the period leading up to 1914, cycling began to increasingly represent a space for nationalist demands. Major sports facilities were also built, with a new generation of municipal velodromes in Algiers and Bône. A second period, from 1945 to 1954, can be regarded as the pinnacle of cycling in Algeria during France's presence there. On the threshold of the 1950s, a joint African team comprising Europeans and Algerians participated in the Tour de France. The international dynamic reached its climax: European stars (metropolitan French ones, but also Italians, Belgians, Dutchmen, Germans, Irishmen, and so forth) participated in Oran's and Algiers's criteriums. Ultimately, throughout the period 1885–1962, cycling was not only a space of competition and confrontation, of domination and emancipation, but also a place of exchanges that took place at the local, regional, and international levels. Cycling was a multifunctional practice; it represented a space for a variety of encounters.

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Translated by Cadenza Academic Translations

(1) Robert, "L'indigénat: l'assimilation par les sports," *L'Écho sportif de l'Oranie*, March 14, 1914.

(2) For example, the analysis put forward in Stanislas Frenkiel, "L'ambivalence médiatique française sur la 'Perle noire': analyses des représentations de *L'Auto* et *Paris-soir*," *Insaniyat: revue algérienne d'anthropologie et de sciences sociales* 34 (2006): 83–97; Claude Boli, "La perception des joueurs africains en France," *Hommes et migrations* 1285 (2010): 124–132.

(3) Abbassi, "Le sport dans l'Empire français," 9.

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Abstract

— This article examines the social and cultural history of the introduction and development of cycling in colonial Algeria from the 1880s to 1914. Along with boxing and football, cycling was one of the most popular sports in French Algeria. The sport was seen as an emblem of an international sports culture whose scope went well beyond the context of metropolitan-colonial relations. The practice of cycling was multifunctional and represented an opportunity for diverse encounters. In colonial Algeria, cycling embodied competition and opposition, domination and emancipation; it was a forum for exchange at the local, regional, and international levels.

Key words: Algeria, cycling, sport, identity, sociability.