

MOROCCO, AFRICA

The disputed territory that became
the literature capital of the Mediterranean

TANGIER

1923 CE to 1956 CE



Introduction

The historic city of Tangier is located on the Maghreb coast at the western entrance to the Strait of Gibraltar. Half the city faces the Atlantic Ocean, while the other half faces the milder and warmer Mediterranean. The city boasts a long and rich narrative, owing largely to its geography, which allowed it to host a busy port that supported a large trade in various wares.

Throughout its long history, stretching back to the 1st millennium BCE, Tangier has been a mosaic of different cultures from throughout the Mediterranean and beyond. Changing hands regularly, as different empires and rulers claimed and utilized it, the city was influenced by these waves of foreigners as much as by its own residents and ancestors.

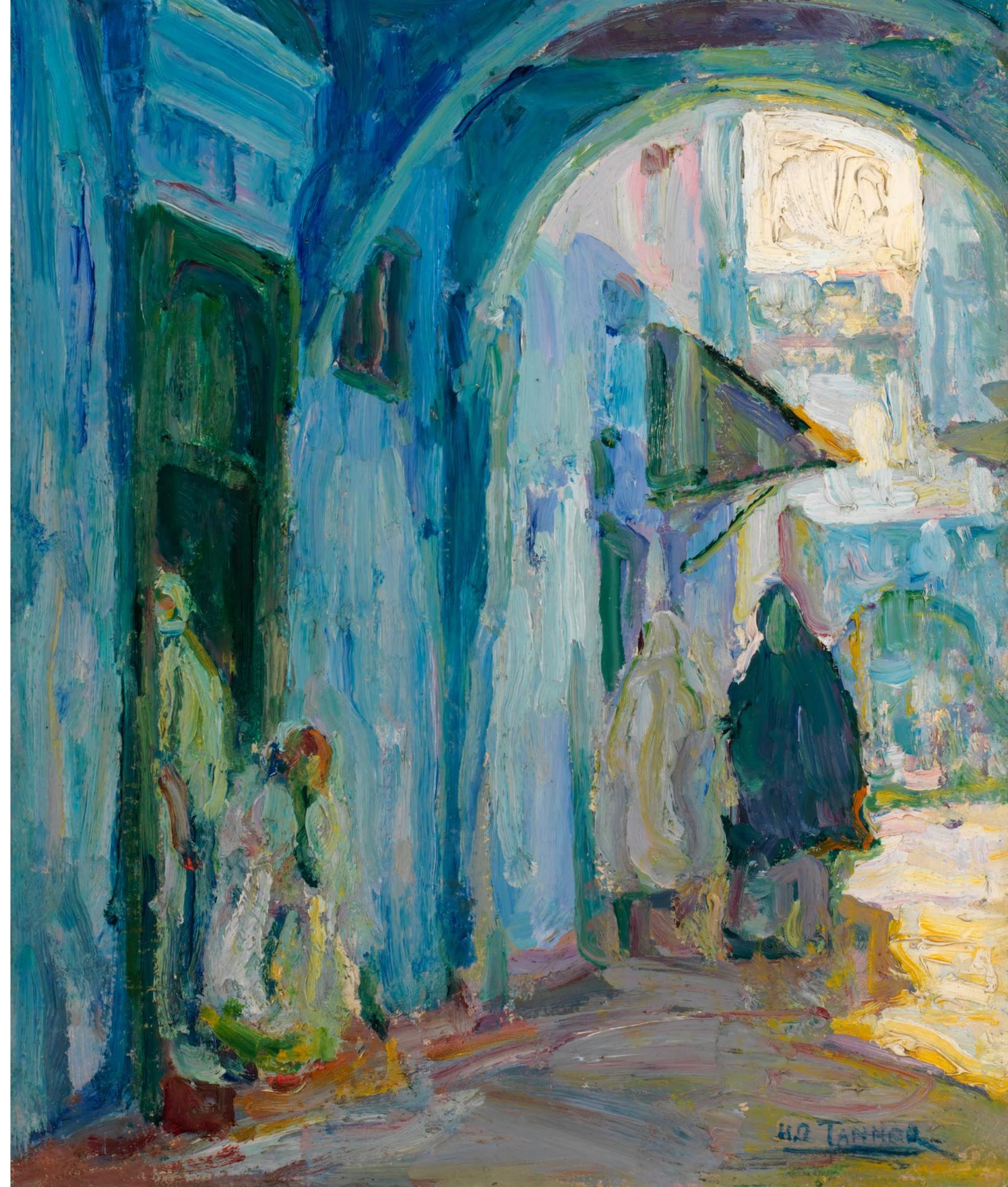
Street in Tangier, circa 1910

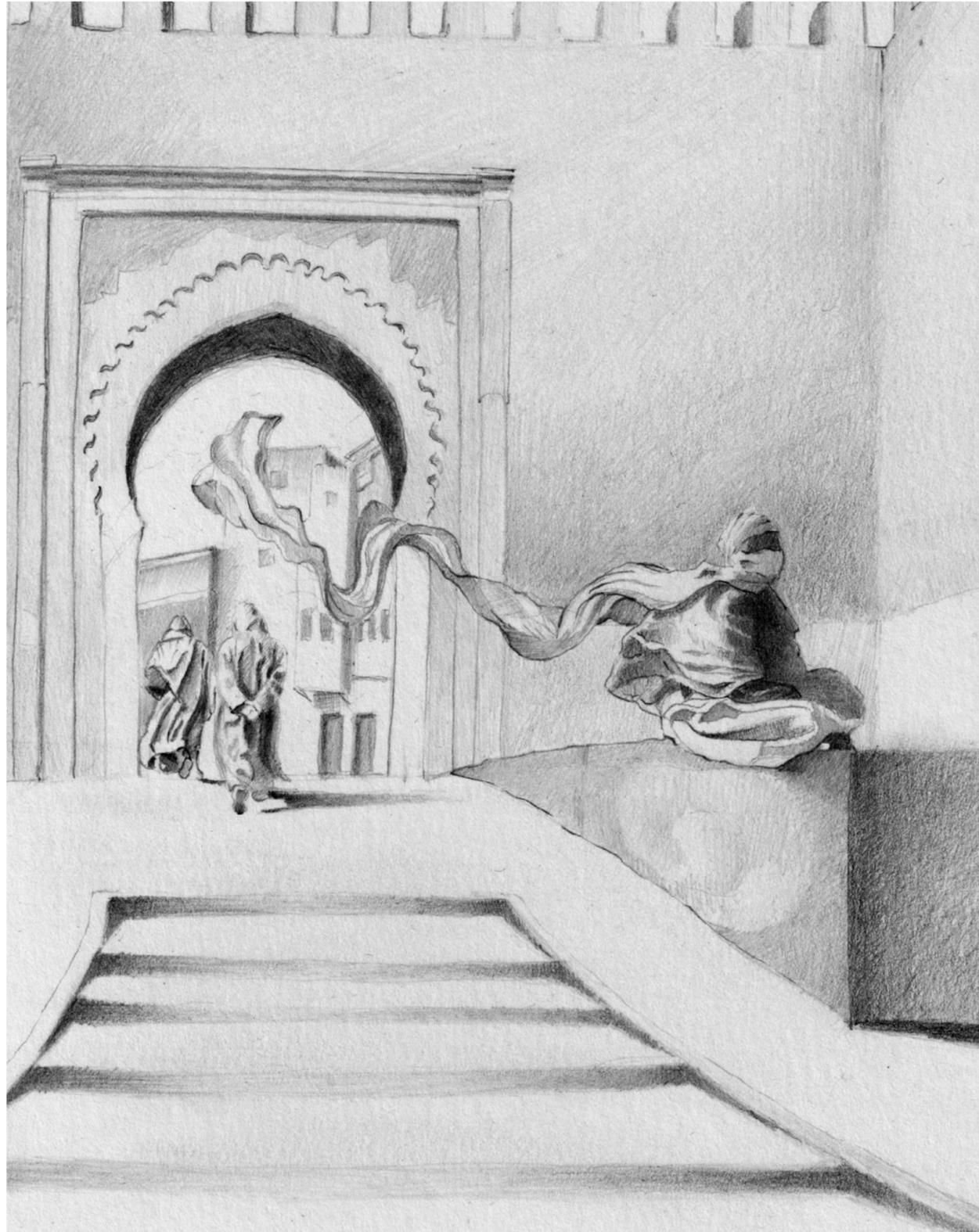
Henry Ossawa Tanner

Oil on fiberboard

Smithsonian American Art Museum

It is believed that Henry Ossawa Tanner might have created this scene with a passage from the Gospel of Luke in mind. In the background, Mary and Joseph approach the inn at Bethlehem, represented by the shadowed entrance on the left (Mosby, Henry Ossawa Tanner, 1991). Tanner did not visit Tangier until 1912, which suggests that he probably painted this scene in his Paris studio from postcards or photographs of the Moroccan city.





Gate in Tangier

Nathan Silver

Pencil on Paper

This illustration depicts an imagined scene at one of the sentry gates into the kasbah (citadel) in ancient Tangier. On any given day, locals might stroll through these gates on their way to the palace (the Dar al-Makhzen), the governor's residence, the courthouse, or the kasbah's mosque, which, having undergone several renovations and expansions since the late 17th century, stands with the walls to this date.

Culture

Tangier – or Tingis, as it was known at the time – was founded by Phoenician colonists as a trading post. It then became a Carthaginian settlement, before being conquered by Rome and passing hands to different actors within the empire during Roman civil unrest. However, its largest cultural influence would come from the Amazigh peoples of the surrounding lands, and later the Arabs.

In medieval times, Tangier was home to several rebellions and upheavals, especially against their Arab rulers who had a history of discriminating against Tangierians. With the close of The Middle Ages Tangier was captured by Portugal, and over the proceeding centuries transferred between European powers.

This procession of conflict is not all that the city was known for, throughout these upheavals Tangier repeatedly emerges as a center of education, trade, and artisanship.

Economy

Tangier's hinterland economy was largely based on subsistence agriculture and pastoralism, with weaving, pottery, metalwork, and leatherwork surplus circulating locally and sometimes passing through long-distance trade

Given its favorable location on the Atlantic Ocean, Tangier has always been able to rely on trade as its main economic driver. The city's port has been at the heart of its trade, with Tangier's various rulers investing in many upgrades and expansions over the centuries. Indeed, the latest upgrade of the port was in 2007. As colonialism brought on the decline of the trans-Saharan trade routes, it caused Tangier to develop further dependency on the European market.

In modern times, alongside shipping, Tangier relies very heavily on tourism. With high-quality leather products sold inside its old Medina walls and the amiable Mediterranean climate, Tangier has always been (and remains to this very day) a popular summer vacation destination.

1. **Gateway, Tangier, circa 1910**

Henry Ossawa Tanner

Oil on plywood

Smithsonian American Art Museum

In this painting, Tanner captured the intensity of the Moroccan sun as well as Tangier's distinctive architecture. It is unclear whether Tanner painted this image in his Paris studio or on-site, but it may have been a study for a larger work, *Entrance to the Casbah*, which has a similar composition and was completed a couple of years later.

2. **The Lower Inner part of Tangier, circa 1910**

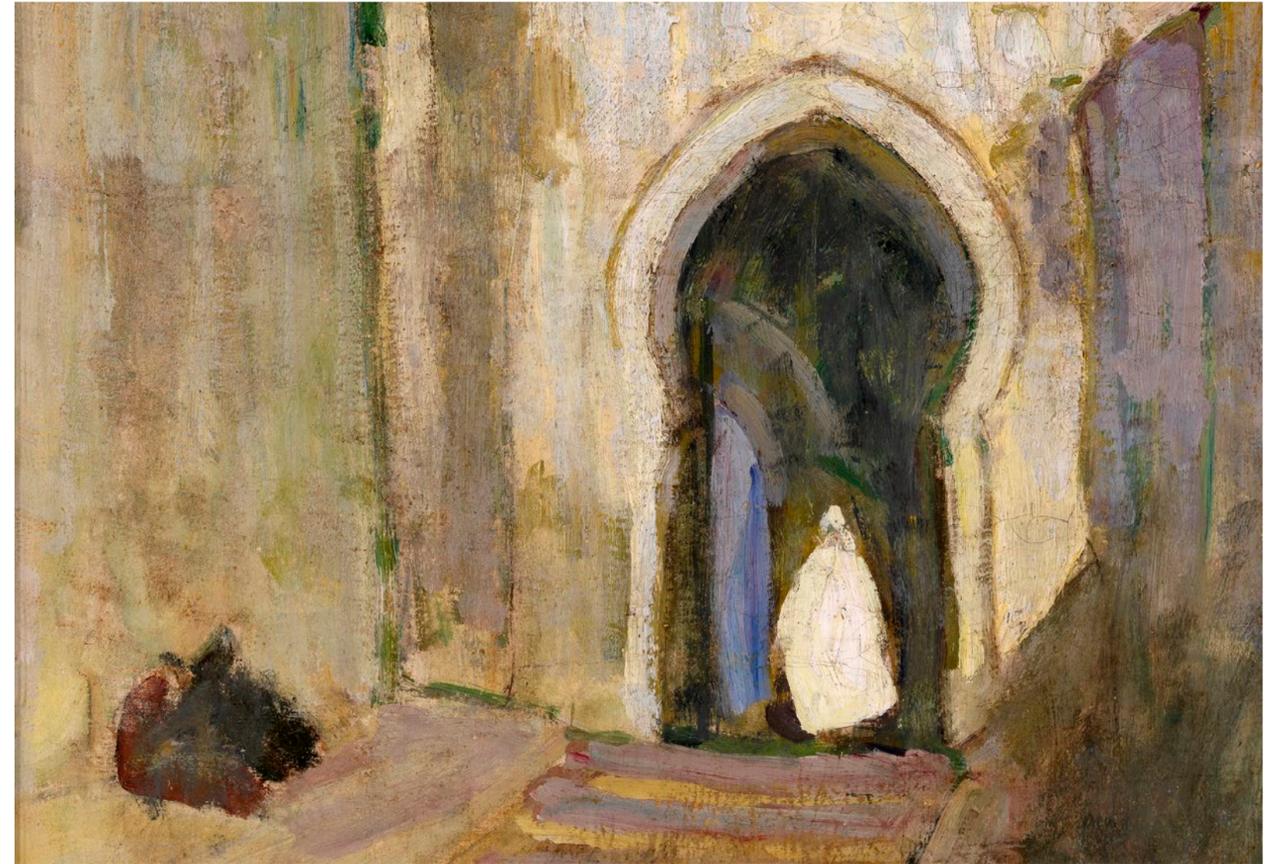
Wenceslaus Hollar

Etching, only state

Metropolitan Museum of Art

This etching is part of a series of works by Wenceslaus Hollar assembled in a catalogue by Richard Pennington. In it can be seen the lower inner part of Tangier, with York Castle, an historic structure on the Place de la Kasbah, dominating the scene. The stone castle was originally built by the Portuguese in 1580 and later was owned by the Duke of York, who gave it its name.

1.



2.





The Capture of Tangier, XV
The workshop of Passchier Grenier
Tapestry

Colegiada de Pastrana Museum
 “*La toma de Tánger*” as it is known in Spanish, is the final tapestry in a series of four which tell the story of the conquests of Asilah and Tangier by King Afonso V of Portugal. The tapestry masterfully encapsulates the conquest of the city, which was the true objective

of the Portuguese. The city governor surrendered without battling, as they hadn't enough resources to defend the position. On the left side of the tapestry, the triumphant Portuguese army, advances toward the city, which they conquered on August 28, 1471.

Governance

The land that's now Tangier was first known to have been populated by ancient Amazigh, until it was acquired by the Phoenicians and turned into a colony by the 8th century BCE. One of the capitals of king Bocchus I of Mauretania, the city then fell to Rome in the 1st century BC and was made a colony and the capital of the Roman province of Mauretania Tingitana under Claudius. The Western Roman Empire would, of course, disintegrate, but the Eastern Romans stood and took back the city, occupying it until the early Islamic conquests. This subjected the city to shifting codes of governance as different powers applied their laws to the area.

In the early 8th Century CE the Umayyad Caliphate seized control of Tangier, after which the city stayed under Muslim control for several hundred years, cleverly exploiting its decentralized position between the Fatimid and Cordoban Caliphates. Especially under the Almoravid administration, Tangier experienced a period of growth and stability, maintaining relative autonomy under

subsequent dominations until the Portuguese took control in 1471. It then passed with Portugal to Spain, before the English took their turn owning the city in 1662 and gave Tangier a charter. This charter made Tangier equal to other English towns, but it was short-lived. In 1684 Morocco took control of the city.

Governance Changes

In 1912 Morocco was partitioned between France and Spain. In 1923 the Tangier International Zone was established through an international convention, the Tangier Protocol, which was signed by France, Spain, and Great Britain, with Portugal, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United States all joining later. This zone delimited an area of 373 km² (144 mi²). While the Sultan of Morocco had nominal sovereignty over the zone and jurisdiction over the native population, practical control over governance was exercised by the European powers.

As an international zone, Tangier quickly became a tax haven and free-trade zone. The city was governed by divided branches. The legislative assembly was the legislature, and composed of representatives of 4 French members, 4 Spanish members, 3 British members, 2 Italian members, 1 American member, 1 Belgian member, 1 Dutch member, and 1 Portuguese member. This assembly had the authority to take actions such as levying taxes. The executive power within the zone was given to an administrator, and the judicial power given to a court that consisted of five judges, with one each appointed by the Belgian, British, Spanish, French, and Italian governments. The zone's foundational statute required that there be an Arabic interpreter attached to the court, and that provisions be made so that interpreters of other languages could be hired if necessary. The zone also had its own police force under the authority of the administrator, with commissioned officers from the European Powers and the non-commissioned officers and privates composed of Moroccans. Under international

management, the city grew, attracting people from all over the world. Tangier became a magnet for bohemians, artists, and others, from political radicals to the LGBTQ community, who lived there in relative tolerance. The city became as much a melting pot of religion as it did of lifestyles, where Jews, Christians, and Muslims co-existed together.

In 1952, Morocco gained its independence and Tangier was gradually re-integrated into the state. Full authority over the city reverted to Morocco in 1956, but Tangierian autonomy didn't end there. From 2007 to 2008, inspired by its history as an international zone and its prime location for trade, Tangier developed a 3.45 km² free zone containing four industrial parks, managed by the independent Tangier Free Zone entity.

Adrianople Group

The Adrianople Group is a business advisory and research firm that provides the world's most up to date information on Special Economic Zones and new city projects. We provide three types of services: business intelligence, marketing, and data. The world of tomorrow is powered by competitive governance.

Charter Cities Institute

The Charter Cities Institute is a nonprofit that empowers new cities with better governance to lift tens of millions of people out of poverty. To achieve this mission, we conduct both practical and academic research, produce popular media, provide technical assistance to new city developments and governments, and engage relevant stakeholders through a variety of partnerships and events.