



On your arrival at the Port of Tangier you will be met & assisted with Customs formalities and transferred from the Port to start your visit of Tangier "The Bride of the North". Our excursion today into Morocco's distant past takes you from Tangier, where we take a quick tour of the medieval Medina, a vast, picturesque, vibrant souk - the 'Grand Socco' (Spanish for 'souk'); the Mendoubia Gardens with their eight-hundred-year-old trees; the Sidi Bounabid Mosque, its minaret decorated with multi-hued faïences dominating the Medina, the Kasbah Square with its portico of white marble columns and the great Méchouar where the pashas once granted audiences; the Moulay Ismaïl Mosque; the Tangier American Legation Museum and the Merinid College. The Tangier American Legation Museum, the first property acquired abroad by the United States Government, is a thriving cultural centre, museum, conference centre and library in the heart of the old walled Medina, housed in the only historic landmark of the United States located abroad. Since the American Bicentennial celebration in 1976 the Legation has been operating a museum and cultural centre and is symbolic of the 1786 Moroccan-American Treaty of Friendship, which is still in force today. The complex expanded over the years as the surrounding houses were bought up. During World War II it served as headquarters for United States intelligence agents. On now on down to the Atlantic Coast at Asilah, where we cut slightly inland to arrive at a still relatively-unknown prehistoric site of Lixus, located on a hill over the right bank of the Oued Loukkos near the modern town of Larache (*El Araïsh*). Established by the Phoenicians during the 11<sup>th</sup> century B.C. as a natural port of strategic importance in their trading routes down the coast of Africa, Lixus was later to come under Carthaginian domination. After the destruction of Carthage, Lixus then fell under Roman control to be made an Imperial colony, reaching its zenith during the reign of the emperor Claudius I (A.D. 41-54). Some ancient Greek writers located at Lixus the mythological garden of the Hesperides, the keepers of the Golden Apples; a port often mentioned by writers from Hanno the Navigator to the Geographer of Ravenna and confirmed by the legend on coins and inscriptions. This site was originally excavated in 1925, thence continuously from 1948 to 1969 with work undertaken on the study of its mosaics, including one of sixty meters representing Neptune. A subsequent excavation brought to light some 40 tombs of the 6<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. They belonged to a necropolis which was probably used by the inhabitants of Lixus. This necropolis is the oldest and biggest burial site of this period yet to be discovered in Morocco. Items recovered from these tombs are unusually rich: gold and silver jewellery of Phoenicia-Punic tradition; perfume bottles in polychrome glass paste coming from the eastern Mediterranean; bronze offertory vases, some of them imported from Cyprus, and finally locally-produced amphora. It would seem that the local population - a mixture of descendants of the early Phoenician settlers, Carthaginians and Mauretians - continued to produce goods following the old artistic tradition and, at the same time, eagerly imported some fancy objects from elsewhere in the Mediterranean. During the reign of the Berber King Juba II, Lixus was to grow in importance as an economic metropolis in the Western Mediterranean. The outpost was to have an acropolis; a first century amphitheatre (unearthed in 1964 and the sole amphitheatre in coastal Morocco); thermal baths in mosaic and several temples, with residences richly decorated with frescos and mosaics of Mars, Helios, Rhéa and the Three Graces. Here, too, are the several hundred m<sup>2</sup> of factories to make *garum*, a salty paste made from anchovies so beloved of the Romans, salt pans and olive presses. There is even a Christian basilica in the town centre. From here you have a wonderful panoramic view of Larache and the Loukkos River. Were you to close your eyes and imagine the houses that have stood here, you could well believe this to have been one of the most beautiful outposts of the Roman Empire. According to Dr. Gerald Hawkins, of the Smithsonian Astronomical Observatory, the lower megalithic walls are carefully aligned with the sun: in fact, the earlier name for the city was *Maqom Shemesh*, or "City of the Sun". The Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl had noticed the marked similarity of the polygonal style of masonry with that of Peru and Bolivia - the same style of masonry construction can also be found in Andalusia and among submarine ruins along both coastlines of the Atlantic. You will see a superior style of masonry, with mortarless, fine joints between the larger stones to be found in the lower portion. Not

only are the much later Carthaginian walls made of stones much smaller in size and less precise in arrangement, but most of them have fallen, while these earlier megalithic stones are still in place. There are clearly and indisputably three levels, representing three totally different cultures: the top layer, and most recent, was Roman; beneath it lay Carthaginian; but the lowest level is of great interest: stone masonry representing some totally unknown, prehistoric culture. This bottom level literally jumps out at the observer, since it incorporates massive stones and the peculiar polygonal style similar to that used in South America. The question may be put: What are these similar masonry styles doing on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean?

Hercules' combat with the giant Libyan king Anteus, son of Poseidon and Mother Earth was said to have taken place here. It is also claimed that the Gardens of the Hesperides were on a nearby island, on which stood an altar to Hercules; but this island no longer exists, the Oued Loukkos having changed its course over the millennia. Some say the Garden was at Cadiz. Hercules' eleventh labour was to fetch immortality-giving golden apples from Hera's Garden of the Hesperides, three nymphs who tended Hera's orchard; Hera, (Juno to the Romans) stepmother and enemy of Herakles (Hercules). Hercules had been advised not to pick the apples himself, but to employ Atlas as his agent, meanwhile relieving him of the burden of carrying the world on his shoulders. Atlas was glad to undertake any task for an hour's respite, and Hercules took the globe while Atlas went into the garden and returned with three apples plucked by his daughters, the Hesperides. Atlas was not too eager to recuperate his charge and told Hercules that he would carry these apples to their destination, provided Hercules supported the globe for the next few months. Hercules pretended to agree, asking Atlas to hold the globe while he put on a hat - and happily walked away with the apples! On his way back home Hercules crossed Libya. We return for refreshments at the delightful Hotel El Minzah, thence, time permitting, to explore further the fascinating city of Tangiers on foot, perhaps stopping to barter for that "essential" souvenir and to admire the many beautiful handicrafts, to return to your ship and the continuation of your adventure at sea. A lot of history in one brief excursion into the past to be absorbed as we return to our awaiting ship. **R.**

**OUR PRICES WILL INCLUDE:** Private circle trip transportation in an air-conditioned vehicle from Tangier's Port. Medical and Accident insurance. Private guided sightseeing excursion and all related entrance fees as listed in the itinerary. An English-speaking Licensed National Guide throughout. Light refreshment. Bottled or gaseous water en-route.

**OUR PRICES WILL NOT INCLUDE:** Gratuities to waiter, guides and driver. Any expenditure of a personal nature, nor anything not specifically mentioned in the itinerary.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED YOU BRING WITH YOU:** Day pack and hygienic 'wipes;' trainers or sandals; camera and Ziploc bags for sensitive lenses; sunglasses, sunscreen.