

Inauguration of the IEA
27 February 2009
Inauguration of the aisle Jacques Berque
Speech by Jean-Marc Ayrault
Deputy Mayor of Nantes
President of Nantes Métropole

“There is no under-developed society. There are societies under-analyzed, underestimated, under-loved.” Jacques Berque’ words make sense as we inaugurate the Institute for Advanced Study.

Translator of the Koran, a professor at the College de France for a quarter of a century, the orientalist Jacques Berque, who died in 1995, was at the same time a man appealed to fieldwork and a scholar, an erudite and a poet.

A harmony he had drawn from his profoundly original vision of the Arab civilization.

Written in a unique magnificent language, his work is rehabilitating people who are regarded as eternal unloved, and helps to understand them.

Jacques Berque has played an essential role of intermediary between cultures.

He trained a multitude of Eastern and Western researchers, carrying dialogue in many countries.

He always reminded the rights and duties of partners in the Mediterranean and participated to many political actions, through articles, conferences, missions that he led.

To his students, he passed on but more than an amount of knowledge.

He passed on a vision of the world by denouncing the bureaucratic authoritarianism of colonialism, the ravages of the War in Algeria, the contempt of a Europe walled in its arrogance towards the people of the South.

The alley which now bears his name pays homage to this work, to the commitment of a lifetime.

And the IEA to which it leads will be this place of tolerance and openness, of exchange and meeting between the North and the South, in order to decompartmentalize cultures and knowledge and to create a network of intellectual solidarity between the East and West.