IV

Opening Space for Religion

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Amazighité, Arab/Islamic Hegemony, and the Christian Evangelical Challenge

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> If people do share oppressions, are some more fundamental than others? Is it possible to ignore differences in order to form alliances against the powers that be? Which differences are to be articulated, and which are to be left for a later struggle? Around what points—moments, surfaces, events—are people to be mobilized?
> —M. Keith and S. Pile, 1993:35

Introduction

The Amazigh struggle in North Africa has taken the form of a classic nativistic movement. It has consisted of an indigenous people, feeling that their language and identity have reached the brink of extinction, setting out to both "revive and perpetuate selected aspects of their culture" (see Linton 1943: 499). At the same time, both Islam and Arabism have experienced a similar kind of resurgent mobilization—both politically and spiritually—less oriented toward retrieving a lost or disappearing identity than in fulfilling their perceived legacy, the formation of hegemonic scriptural states. Islam and Arabism are inextricably united through Qur'anic revelation in Arabic, the language of God. While not at all nativistic in Linton's terms, resurgent Islamic scripturalism—that is, strict adherence to Qur'anic text and Islamic Shari'at law—and its concomitant global Arabization are both, in A.F.C. Wallace's sense, classic revitalization movements with enormous global momentum (see Wallace 1956). And,

more recently, a third strand must be braided into the mix here, the Christian Evangelical movement—in the vein of Yonina Talmon (1962), i.e., a movement in contrast to the above that is millenarian to the core.

Nativistic and millenarian movements may be envisioned as being at polar ends of a revitalization continuum. Nativism seeks to return or preserve aspects of one's own identity, often heavily idealized and filled with nostalgic sentiment—the language of our ancestors, the customs of our people, our ancestral land, homeland, fatherland, mother tongue, tribal religion, sacred clan mythos, drum beats of our spirits, and the like—in the face of hegemonic domination and syncretic or proselytic forces. Here, the preservation of culture is paramount in the face of forced or attempted acculturation. In contrast, millenarianism rejects both the past and the present as equally representative of spiritual corruption—comprised as it is of corporal sinfulness, materialist, covetous attachment to this world; of evil, senility, disease, wickedness wrought of ignorance, isolation, and/or spiritual calamity. The goal, then, is to strive toward an apocalyptic future that will cleanse, purge, or eradicate the corrupted physical world, bring salvation to the chosen few (i.e., believers), and send down hellfire upon those who reject the clear and prophetic vision of the movement. Where nativism idealizes the cultural past, millenarianism glorifies a transcendental future. It preaches and presages the fall of society in its entirety in favor of a postapocalyptic kingdom of God. Both are linear, both may be militant, but they are heading off in opposing directions. Revitalization movements, in contrast to the above, may choose any number of options, past and future, as well as the rectification of the present in a multitude of possible directions, from reform to importation of foreign elements to the creation of something entirely new (Wallace in Lessa and Vogt 1956: 509). They neither seek necessarily to obliterate the past nor to glorify it, but to amend and reconstitute a social system suffering from some kind of diagnosed terminal failure.

Such movements compete, in one way or another, in North Africa and on the global stage, each working hard to win the affiliation, if not the affinity, of the Amazigh people. In sum, these types of movements—nativistic, revitalization, and millenarian—pull at once in opposing philosophical directions. The indigenous people of North Africa are called *Berber* by Europeans, but prefer their own term *Amazigh,* which translates as "Free People." Those Amazigh with nativistic aspirations demand a return to this condition or mythos of "freedom," and the return to and preservation of some semblance of archetypal Amazigh identity in the face of political, social, and cultural domination by the Arabized Islamic regimes of North Africa. This lost Amazigh identity is more rooted in the remembrance of linguistic and territorial autonomy than in less-materialist spiritual or philosophical dogmas. In contrast, millenarian Islam and Christianity preach of a world laden with secular evils and the terrible wrongness of competing religious ideologies. Islam, however, unlike Christian

Evangelical millenarianism, is designed to bring about that more perfect union well within the material, physical, and political world while at the same time awaiting, perhaps, the wrath of God on Judgment Day. Thus, Islam, which entered North Africa as early as the eighth century, was an inherently political religion that attempted to unify competing Amazigh tribal elements and create a more universalist approach to the social order. The classical 'ummah sought to rule not only over its own people, Muslims, but also over the Peoples of the Book, that is, Jews and Christians as well.

As early converts to Islam, in addition to adhering to Islamic prayer and practice, the Imazighen were directed to give priority to the Arabic language not only through their study and recitation of the Qur'an, but also in the naming of their children and changing of their tribal names. While remote Imazighen resisted the translation of tribal names into Arabic, nevertheless Arabic became the hegemonic language of the courts, administrative offices, legal documents, and education. Tamazight names and Tifinagh, the ancient indigenous writing system of the Imazighen, became proscribed. Tifinagh degenerated into folk art patterns to be found only in women's henna, tattoo, and textile patterns; pottery; and architecture, such as is found in isolated parts of the High Atlas mountains. Later generations of Imazighen outside these resistant mountainous areas came to speak Arabic almost exclusively and to hold thoroughly Arabic first names and Arabicized surnames. They have come to be seen or think of themselves simply as "Arabs." Thus, Amazigh nationalists argue that given this history, the coming of Islam was designed resolutely, consciously, and purposefully to convert the Amazigh population into Arabs by making them Muslims first. Thus, they argue that Islam was the vehicle of a kind of ethnic cleansing: Amazigh identity would cease to exist, and only Arabs would remain. This nativistic point of view was validated when the governments of five North African nations joined together in 1989, officially forming the *Arab* Maghreb Union (AMU), a designation that remains to this day.

The Islamic political order is designed such that the non-Muslim peoples under the hegemony of the state will have relative autonomy and self-administration, even when their own laws conflict with Islamic law. Thus, the classical Islamic State recognizes, accepts, condones, fosters, and defends the rights of peoples practicing divergent religious customs, as long as these practitioners do not attempt to influence or corrupt Muslims. A strictly scriptural approach to Islam in this way recognizes more than one path to salvation as well as more than one religious law within the confines of the state. Once Muslim, however, an individual or a community is under the jurisdiction of Shari'at law. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1924, Islamic law came to be subsumed under the colonial rule of the French in North Africa. By the 1960s, these same nations became independent, and their national laws integrated Islamic and European legal systems. Deliberations in each nation of North Africa since

independence have focused on the degree to which secular law or religious law prevails.

The Genesis of Amazighité in the Face of Perceived Arabization

The Amazigh, or indigenous peoples of North Africa, were called by the Romans "Berber"—Barbarians—and their coast along the southern Mediterranean and eastern Atlantic, the "Barbary Coast." These appellations gave reference to an unruly people, a people, that is, who are unwilling to be ruled. Their own name for themselves, *Amazigh*, means "Free People," and this name too attests to their resistance to and abhorrence of domination. Fourteenth-century Arabic philosopher and jurist Abd er-Rahman Ibn Khaldûn in his classic introduction to history, *Al Muqaddimah* (1377), spoke of these same qualities:

> The Arabs outnumbered and overpowered the Berbers, stripped them of most of their lands, and also obtained a share of those that remained in their possession. … Their situation approached the point of annihilation and dissolution. (1989: 30)

and

> Whenever one [Berber] tribe is destroyed, another takes its place and is as refractory and rebellious as the former one had been. Therefore, it has taken the Arabs a long time to establish their dynasty in the land of Ifriqiyah [Tunisia] and the Maghrib [Algeria–Morocco]. (1989: 131)

The Amazigh today, like the Amazigh of the past, fluctuate between the poles of compliance and defiance. Both the terms *Berber* and *Amazigh* capture the quality not only of their resistance but of their long-standing resilience as well. From the outside, it might appear that the Amazigh have long ago given up their struggle to remain culturally, ethnically, territorially, and linguistically distinct as a people. The nations comprising North Africa today, after all, are known collectively as the *Arab* Maghreb Union—as if the entire indigenous population of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Mauritania had somehow abdicated Amazighité in favor of Arabism and ceased to be Amazigh at all. For some, this is precisely the case. But not for all. Since the coming of the Arabs and Islam in the seventh century CE, Arabic became the legislative language, Islam the prescribed religion. Amazigh proper names and surnames have been increasingly Arabized, and the naming of a child in Tamazight, the language of the Amazigh people, has long been prohibited by the ruling dynasties in North Africa. Nevertheless, the Amazigh as a people remain, remnants of their language do as well, and in the twentieth century they began to perceive themselves as having been too resilient in the past, and a renewed militancy ensued.

The contemporary Amazigh, or Berber, movement ignited in North Africa when the Algerian government prohibited a conference on ancient Tamazight poetry that was to be held at the University of Tizi-Ouzou in the spring of 1980. The conference had been organized by prolific Algerian writer, poet, playwright, and anthropologist Mouloud Mammeri (see Moukhlis 1994: 63–65). This moment—first known as the "Kabyle Spring" or simply as "the events of Tizi Ouzou"—is known today throughout North Africa, and indeed to Imazighen throughout the world, as the "Amazigh Spring"—the moment of Amazigh reawakening—and Mammeri came to be known as the founder of the Amazigh movement. While it could be said that North Africa has had more than its fair share of revolutionary movements—from the bitter war of independence in Algeria (see e.g., Fanon 1967; Gibson 1999) to the antimonarchist socialist opposition in Morocco that culminated in the Ben Barka affair (see e.g., Derogy and Ploquin 1999; Guerin 1991)—it could also be said that the movement to preserve Amazigh language and identity is equally critical, uniformly ignored, and increasingly volatile. And like its predecessors, is as well a conflict that easily could have been averted.

The Algerian government's action at the Tizi Ouzou conference on ancient Tamazight poetry kindled the first-ever demonstrations in the history of the independent state. They began as a protest "merely" against the cancellation of a conference on Kabyle poetry. The protests quickly escalated into full-fledged nativism working toward the larger question of the preservation of indigenous language and culture, as well as a demand for constitutional recognition and teaching of indigenous language at least in primary school education (see esp. Chaker 1975).

The call for Tamazight revival in Algeria was met with increasing suppression, violence, demonstrations, arrests, reputed torture, and assassinations. As a result of the growing volatility in North Africa, the movement came to be coordinated by expatriates—increasingly vitriolic Amazigh intellectuals, artists, and exiles living and working abroad, primarily in France—with enough freedom to publicly lift their voices in Europe but not enough to return home to North Africa again without fear of retribution.

The more Amazigh patriots urged legal recognition of indigenous language and culture, the more governments in North Africa steadfastly embraced Arabism. Indeed, Pan-Arabism had been a growing ideology since the late 1940s, especially in Egypt. Moreover, Arabic was not merely the language of political society but the sacred language of Islamic revelation, the Qur'an, for centuries the dominant religion of the region.

It is simplistic to think that these "larger" identities—Islam and Arabism—were promoted by Maghrebi governments in the twentieth century merely for the sake of eradicating tribal and ethnic provincialisms. Instead, it easily could be argued that there was at the time a more current and formidable adversary

pressing its cultural hegemony: French colonialist and postcolonialist dominance in North Africa. Arabism, and especially Pan-Arabism, was a stronger position from which to defy European influence, whether manifested in the political, economic, or cultural domain. Arabism and Islam constituted world civilizations in their own right, known not simply for their conquests but for significant contributions to natural philosophy, the arts, and the sciences. "Berberism" on the other hand, was associated, in both the Arab and the European colonial mind, with something like the nineteenth-century social evolutionary stage, and was, after all, the prototypical Barbary Coast:

> It is easy to find sarcastic Arab references to Berbers such as the story that Adam, father of mankind, had declared Eve to be divorced when he was told that she was the mother of the Berbers as of the rest of humanity. But in such stories the word *Berber* seems to be used to describe a rustic, illiterate person rather than a racial or cultural group. (Barbour, quoted in Norris 1982: 3).

Ibn Khaldûn uses the Berbers as the prime example of a population resistant to the dynastic authority of Muslim Arabs:

> The first [Muslim] victory over them … was of no avail. The Muslims massacred many of them. After the Muslim religion had been established among them, they went on revolting and seceding, and they adopted dissident religious opinions many times. They remained disobedient and unmanageable. … When the Muslims deprived them of their power, there remained no one capable of making a defence or of offering opposition. (Ibn Khaldûn 1989:131)

From the Amazigh perspective, there can be no excuse for the blatant Arab Muslim suppression of indigenous identity. Ferhat Mehenni, the passionate Algerian singer/poet who was imprisoned for four years in Algeria for his Amazigh activism, put it this way:

> The Algerian independence had established arabo-islamism at the expense of an "Algerian Algeria," nationalist militants [were] excluded from the [independence movement] in 1949 under the pretext of "berberism." What followed was a hardening of the official group invaded by pan-arabist ideology … against anything Amazigh. … Kabylia [i.e., the heart of the Amazigh movement in Algeria], unjustly accused of secession, will have, to this day, a difficult time in ridding itself of this terrible image of a dangerous specter of constantly threatening national unity. In the name of this latter, the Tamazight language is ferociously fought by the "Arabization" policy, the citizen recruitment institutes, as well as security services such as police, gendarmes, customs and military security. History is falsified; it only starts in the 8th century with the advent of Islam. (Mehenni 2000)

Mehenni, in his rage, refused to utter a single word of Arabic since his incarceration, retreating to his natal Kabylie dialect of Algerian Tamazight, and

uses the French language quite literally as his lingua franca, given that his own dialect is, for the most part, incomprehensible to other Tamazight speakers of North Africa. The postindependence Moroccan and Algerian governments, in contrast, remind their citizenry that the French had strategically and systematically attempted to divide and conquer its colonial acquisitions in North Africa in part through a century's worth of provocation, if not blatant propaganda, urging Berber discontent, separatism, and revolt.

Eight years after the Amazigh Spring at Tizi Ouzou, a coalition of five North African nations—Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania—met in Algeria to discuss the formation of a "Greater Arab Maghreb." One year later, on 17 February 1989, the five signed a treaty declaring the establishment of the "Arab Maghreb Union" (the AMU). Nine days later, Mouloud Mammeri—Dda Lmulud, as he is known affectionately to Imazighen—was killed (or, as Amazigh militants believe, murdered) in a car accident near Aïn Defla, about a hundred kilometers from Algiers. "On a road," claims one expatriate Amazigh activist, "that is quite ordinary—there is no reason for such an 'accident' to have taken place. Of course it was murder." The University of Tizi-Ouzou at Hasnaoua, where the Amazigh movement began, now bears his name.

Curiously, Mammeri's own name is an Arabized Amazigh name, another reminder of the pervasive Arabization of identity in North Africa. "Mammeri" is a *nisba,* an Arabic grammatical form denoting "belonging to" the Mammer tribe or clan—making the name sound as if the family had emerged from Arab rather than Berber tribal origins. In his bilingual Tamazight and French publication of the Kabyle poetry he so loved—published in 1980, the year the Tizi Ouzou conference was to have been held—Mammeri addresses this effacement of his Amazigh ancestry, restoring the Amazigh tribal appellation, *Aït* Maammer, to honor his father who had taught him most of the poems he had been so intent on preserving (Mammeri 2001:50). The poems themselves, perhaps, can help us understand what made them appear so threatening, provocative, so dangerous. Some take the form of poetic jousting contests: fighting words between competing tribal fractions. Others are resolute affirmations of Amazigh identity, albeit framed by long, high-context introductions, postscripts, and footnotes of explanation. One poem, for example, by Yusef-u-Qasi speaks of warfare, displacement, the disappearance of villages, the transference of populations, and the little that is left of place and identity, all in four short lines:

Abizar ughalen d Iflisen	The Abizar have fused with the Iflisen,
At Yaader d Izerxfawen	The Aït Aader and Izerkhfawen
Igwra-d Berber d Mira	I'm left only the Berber and Mira [2 very small villages]
Ad wtegh agejdur yessen	To lead the procession of my deep mourning

(Mammeri 2001: 74–75, my translation)

Folklore, Folklorization, Film, and the Feminine

What Mammeri, Bourdieu, and others were trying to do was to retrieve Amazigh language and culture not only from national political obscurity, but also from out of the hands of well-meaning ethnographers and folklorists—academics who too easily may treat indigenous culture like so many museum artifacts to be catalogued, shelved, and on rare occasion dusted off to be displayed for the curious. The goal was to return the linguistic heritage to the custody of Amazigh conservators of their own identity, as part of their own living tradition. Mammeri, as a Berber academic and anthropologist, endorsed an indigenous anthropology and devoted his life to the preservation of his own people's language and culture. His father had been a bard in the Kabyle, perhaps one of the last of his kind. Mammeri saw fit that the poetry of his lineage was salvaged before it was lost; anthropology was a fitting vehicle for that preservation.

Whether through ethnographic, folkloric, or political objectification, Arabization or Islamification, the end result had been the same: the marginalization and erosion of indigenous identity. Imazighen claim that so stifled had their language become that in many regions Tamazight women had preserved aspects of their forbidden language and symbols not only woven into the fabric of their tapestries or inscribed upon their pots, but tattooed upon their own bodies and the bodies of their daughters. Indeed, the word *Tamazight* denotes both "Berber language" and "Berber woman." Tamazight written text, with the exception of the Tuareg, or Aswara of the Sahara, had been for the most part extinguished. Until quite recently, many, if not most, Imazighen have believed they have had no written language at all.

Despite the requisite Arab national identity, Amazigh symbols have survived, primarily through the efforts of women. Imazighen remain for the most part matrilineal, in contrast to the surrounding Arab culture and most of the Islamic world. They have an enduring affinity for surrender to the feminine will, if not downright matriarchy. While patriots may honor their mothers and grandmothers for painfully preserving the symbols of Amazigh identity upon their bodies and the bodies of their daughters, Islam condemns tattooing as *haram*, a forbidden act. *Lonely Planet,* one of numerous guidebooks to "exotic" Morocco, however, has no such prohibition; Moroccan tattoo patterns splashed liberally throughout their guidebook no doubt help to sell not just their publication but the country as well. The custom of tattooing, however, is frowned upon as backward and, well, barbaric, in addition to the Islamic sanction against it.

Ironically, there is no question that the rubric of "folklore" has helped to sustain the material culture of Amazigh identity. The forms, however, are increasingly static, frozen in time, commodified. They are, paradoxically, also shifting to adapt to the global marketplace. Tribal textiles, for example, can be ordered

over the internet these days, in sizes or colors modified to accommodate the desires of any international buyer.

The survival of the signs and symbols of Amazigh identity through the arts and crafts of women has been well documented. Despite longstanding Islamic condemnation, in the Amazigh territories of Morocco and Algeria where the written language had been lost, women retained a decorative epigraphy of their own, preserving a small portion of the original Tifinagh, or Tamazight script along with magical and healing symbols of their own. These remain in specific arts and crafts: weaving (see Reswick 1985; Khatibi 1994); pottery (see e.g., Gabus 1958; Sijelmassi 1986; Courtney-Clarke and Brooks 1996); body arts such as henna, tattooing, and harkous (e.g., Searight 1984); in addition to ritual and belief (Doutté 1908; Westermarck 1926; Mazel 1971; Akhmisse 1985) and women's exclusive symbols and magical practice (Laoust-Chantreaux 1939; Makilam 1996, 1999). In Tunisia, on the other hand, even the oral language has, for the most part, disappeared. Nevertheless, even Tunisia's renowned Sejnane women potters continue to produce unadorned Amazigh epigraphic angular geometric patterns in their pottery, in sharp contrast to the ornate and colorful swirling flourishes of Arabic and Islamic motifs, colors, and designs.

The works cited above by European authors, with the exception of Doutté, Laoust-Chantreaux, and Westermarck, treat women's epigraphy as entirely decorative, while Maghrebi authors imbue it with cultural, magical, and linguistic meaning—as language. Searight, who wrote the most definitive, although unpublished, three volumes on Moroccan women's tattoo patterns, goes so far as to insist that there is no relation between women's body arts and Tamazight epigraphy. North Africans, both male and female, disagree, claiming that Berber women have preserved language and *meaning* on their bodies and in their crafts, not just decorative patterns, since the Arab conquest and the coming of Islam—some insist it has been since Punic times. Linguistic evidence and Berber ideology equate woman and language: in every Berber dialect, the same word is used to denote both "Berber woman" and "Berber language." The only written work that acknowledges this relationship also dismisses and disparages it in favor of promoting Islamic identification and Arabic calligraphic aesthetics. In a classic dualistic argument separating the sacred from the profane, Khatibi relegates Berber women's tattooing decidedly to the ranks of the crude, unrefined, and provincial, in contrast to the inspired sophistication of Arabic calligraphy. The flowing script carries us closer to the mystical appreciation of the divine, a unique contribution of Islamic civilization's marriage of aesthetics and spirituality (see e.g., Khatibi 1986; Khatibi and Amahan 1995).

The Arab Maghreb Union would be quite pleased to watch Amazigh identity slip back into a rustic, folkloric obscurity, found primarily after a good long trek at higher altitudes. Amazighité is as much a natural resource to be ex-

ploited to attract tourists as the mountains themselves, providing photogenic backdrops and exotic "scenery." The film industry has long been enamored with the North African physical and cultural "otherness" of Berber territory. Most famous is perhaps George Lucas' *Star Wars* series, which not only filmed on location at the granaries of Ksar Haddad and troglodyte dwellings Matmata in southern Tunisia, but also adopted Berber clothing as extraterrestrial couture. Lucas named his "alien planet" *Tatooïne* for the southern Tunisian oasis of Tataouine. Lucas is not even the first to model an extraterrestrial ecosystem and social order on Berber territory. That honor belongs to Frank Herbert, author of the *Dune* series. In addition to spicing his fictional vernacular with a smattering of Tamazight dialect, Herbert also named his alien heroes "Fremen"—free men—a literal translation of the term *Amazigh*—the name Berbers call themselves. Exotic customs, tribalized crafts, specialized eco-adaptations—the lure of Berber exoticism has been maximized in Morocco and Tunisia, whose "other" natural resources pale in comparison to its oil- and natural gas–rich sister states of Libya and Algeria. Folkorization is a multibillion-dollar industry and fundamental to Moroccan and Tunisian economic policy.

In Imilchil, one of a number of remote villages in the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco, the very "Berber"ity of the place is plastered on postcards, posters, brochures, and covers of *National Geographic Magazine* as the "authentic," primordial Morocco. Its so-called marriage market—where young women are reputed to select their husbands the way they might pick a juicy piece of fruit—is micromanaged by governmental incentives to encourage participation. In Imilchil and the surrounding villages, women don their distinctive striped henbil blankets and renowned tribal facial markings only once a year—for the government-subsidized *moussem*, or marriage festival (see e.g., Behri 1994). The rest of the year Imilchil is indeed an authentic Amazigh village; matrilineal, yes, seminomadic, yes. But also tuned in to the world through cell phones and satellite dishes, and men off working abroad. And on the broken, twisted *other* road to Imilchil, the road that no tourist or photojournalist is likely to see, spray-painted upon the cliff and rising angrily at least ten feet tall is the symbol of Amazigh liberation and a hugely scrawled declaration climbing up the cliff in French, German, and English: "We are Free People Here." *Amazigh* in any dialect is a proclamation of freedom (although it has at times been translated as "nobility" [see e.g., Norris 1982]). It is this act of defiance that speaks of Amazigh authenticity more than the now staged and choreographed, filmed and photographed charade of painted girls like painted ponies that fill the glossy pages of coffee table picture books.

"Take some time to learn a few basic Berber words," the *Lonely Planet* guidebook to Morocco urges vacationing trekkers in the High Atlas (Gordon, Talbot, and Simonis 1998: 485). But while the Ministry of Tourism may smile benignly at this suggestion, the Ministry of Justice is loathe to allow Imazighen

the same privilege. Despite the plea for instruction, Berber dialects are not taught to schoolchildren. Nor may monolingual Imazighen be brought to trial in a language they understand. Tamazight language is not simply unofficial in Morocco and Algeria, it is suppressed, and under some circumstances, illegal. Parents are forbidden, for example, to name their children indigenous Amazigh names; only officially sanctioned Arabic names are permissible.

The Costs and Benefits of Language Affiliation

The earliest studies of Tifinagh, the epigraphic written form of Tamazight dialects, were conducted primarily by Captain Louis Rinn in the 1880s (see e.g., Rinn 1882–1895). There appears to have been little interest in Berber languages until the 1960s, with the exception of Charles de Foucault's four-volume dictionary of Tuareg dialect of the Ahaggar region of the Algerian Sahara (1940), and the linguistic "notes," or brief archaeological descriptions of epigraphic inscriptions (see e.g., Basset 1923; Marcy 1934–37). It is important to point out that Captain Rinn was a French colonial officer and that Père de Foucault's linguistic studies, too, were a means to a very specific end. His primary intention in the Sahara was to convert the Tuareg to Christianity, and thereby, save their souls. For this, and his ultimate "martyrdom" outside of Tamanrasset, he was beatified by the pope on 13 November 2006 and is being considered for canonization. While Père de Foucault's forté may not have been saving souls from hellfire, his legacy from the Amazigh point of view lies in his faithful appreciation for and preservation of Tifinagh, the indigenous Tamazight script. He did not render Tamazight language into Latin script, as Mammeri later did. And, in addition to his French-Tuareg dictionary, Père de Foucault chose to translate not the Bible—but Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* into Tifinagh, faithfully reproducing every drawing in the book. Perhaps he thought the Tuareg would identify with de Saint-Exupéry's Saharan fantasy. Three-quarters of a century later, pages of Foucault's Tamazight version of *The Little Prince* is proudly featured in the pages of the *Revue Tifinagh,* the journal of Tamazight language study.

In the 1960s to 1980s—i.e., in the development period following independence from France—the perspective of Tunisians, especially in the countryside, was fairly straightforward: speaking Arabic Arabizes; speaking French Frenchifies, and speaking "Berber" was unthinkable. Each language came with a full set of cultural, religious, and economic expectations. The approach to language usage was based upon constant reevaluation of situational costs and benefits. Each language was considered a powerful indicator of class and/or religiosity, and could be shifted strategically for economic or political gain and survival; language was not seen as a fixed statement of identity as much as a statement

of opportunity (Zussman 1992, 2000). If speaking Arabic or French can make one's family more secure, Tunisians have been all for it. In Morocco and Algeria, the attitude has been decidedly less pecuniary. There, Amazigh identity has been guarded more tenaciously, and the advantages of assimilation have been eschewed in favor of reassertion of indigenous identity despite, as we have seen, strong economic and political disincentives.

The language revival movement generated by Mammeri's thwarted conference on Kabylie poetry came to be coordinated by expatriate North Africans in France, with the goal of full cultural revitalization both through promotion of the Tamazight oral tradition (spoken word, poetry, and song) and revival of the written epigraphic orthography. To this end, Mammeri founded the Center for Amazigh Studies and Research and the *AWAL Review* in Paris in 1984. Fellow Amazigh anthropologist Tassadit Yacine and French anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu, who had conducted fieldwork in the Kabyle (1985), supported him in this endeavor. In fact, Mammeri and Bourdieu collaborated on a piece that was published in the first issue of *AWAL* promoting what would now likely be called "advocacy anthropology," befittingly entitled "Du bon usage de l'ethnologie"—"Good Use of Ethnology" (1985). The ensuing scholarship in France continued the linguistic tradition of documenting the varying Berber dialects (e.g., Halevy 1974; Chafik 1980–1982; Chaker 1994).

Regional variation, however, provided a strong barrier to the establishment of an ethnic collective consciousness. How could Amazighité be promoted if each mountain enclave spoke a tenaciously held, distinctive dialect? Studies soon turned to proposals for linguistic standardization (e.g., Mountassir 1999; Oulhaj 2000) and thus, cultural unification (e.g., Aït Amrane 1997; Benyounes 1997, 2000; Chemini 1997; and the *Revue Tifinagh,* 1990s). To this end, the Paris-based Berber Research Center at the Institut National des Langues Orientales and the Center for Amazigh Studies and Research have played a crucial role. The programs provide both undergraduate and graduate degree programs in Amazigh studies, such as linguistics and anthropology, and publish scholarly journals to disseminate the growing body of research. One of the notable contributions coming out of the Center for Amazigh Studies and Research in Paris is the massive international bibliography on Amazighité produced by Lamara Bougchiche (1997) and published by *AWAL,* in collaboration with Ibis Press. Bougchiche thanks her professor of Hamito-Semitic studies, M. Cohen, for the encouragement that "one must never interrupt the chain of knowledge" (Bougchiche 1997: 4). It is a moving acknowledgement, appropriate to a volume so clearly devoted both to knowledge in its more abstract academic sense, and to knowledge that must be passed from generation to generation—knowledge essential to ethnic and cultural survival.

Less scholarly journals, like *Tifinagh,* a journal published in Rabat, Morocco, beginning in 1994, serve a similar role in a more populist setting. Each issue of

Tifinagh (the word denoting Tamazight's own distinctive alphabetic writing) provides a chart of the mid-1990s standardization of the Berber writing system, as well as helpful tips, lessons, and exercises to aid in Tamazight literacy. For some Imazighen, especially in the Middle Atlas Mountains, *Tifinagh* provides not only their first encounter with their own indigenous writing system but also their first knowledge that they had ever had one. The journal has been used judiciously by those so motivated to educate themselves about their language and identity. For some, this has meant teaching themselves to speak, read, and write a language and study a history of which they had no prior knowledge. The first primers, grammars, and dictionaries are only just being produced (e.g., Oulhaj's standardized Tamazight grammar, 2000). Dissemination is problematic.

Pro-Islamicist North Africans, especially those who no longer identify themselves as "Imazighen," argue against indigenous separatist nationalisms, claiming that Islam transcends both ethnicity and national borders. This is certainly not a new Islamic ideology. It was central in the formative period of Islam: tribalism foments dissention, factionalism, territorial disputes, and provides only limited responsibility for the welfare of others, based entirely upon kinship and proximity of relatedness. In contrast, the Qur'an speaks of a community of believers, the 'ummah, which holds responsibility for all Muslims (and even non-Muslims living under an Islamic state) regardless of one's station of birth, tribal affiliation, race, or ethnic identity. Islam, from its inception, rejected religion as the sole property of a particular people, tied to a particular land. Further, Islam hoped to provide the antidote to ethnic religious exclusivism. By being extraterritorial and extragenealogical, Islamic affiliation could unite all peoples through shared faith: unification through truth.

Ibn Khaldûn, the fourteenth-centry Islamic philosopher/historian, proposed that Islamic faith could provide a solidarity (*'assabiya*) more powerful and even more enduring than kinship. Ibn Khaldûn actually took this idea much further:

> It is in [this] sense that one must understand Muhammad's remark, 'Learn as much of your pedigrees as is necessary to establish your ties of kindred.' It means that pedigrees are useful only in so far as they imply the close contact that is a consequence of blood ties and that eventually leads to mutual help and affection. Anything beyond that is superfluous. For a pedigree is something imaginary and devoid of reality. (Ibn Khaldûn 1967: 99)

Genealogies can be bought and sold in the marketplace, adoptions are commonplace, and a man might never know his true blood ties. While Ibn Khaldûn is cognizant of the politics and potential abuses of religious propaganda, he firmly believes that the most binding and potent affiliation is that which unifies through a sense of shared spiritual belief, that which is rooted in God. Politics alone (read: politics rooted in shared kinship alone) can never transcend worldly interests (Ibn Khaldûn 1967: 155). Only one's link to the divine is

eternal. While this message may be explicit in scripturalist Islamic teachings, it has remained an ideal far from the practice of Muslims in the Middle East and North Africa, where tribe and ethnicity remains a viable ascribed identity.

Nevertheless, the goal of scriptural Islam is the establishment of the 'ummah—a community of believers, regardless of territorial borders, ethnicities, or racial morphologies. Islam can provide spiritual globalism, in addition to insuring a place in the hereafter. The Arabic language, then, from an Islamic perspective, is quite literally the language of Allah. To reject Arabic is to reject Islam, the 'ummah, and one's place in the hereafter—in addition to being an illegal act in the Arab Maghrebi Union.

Amazigh advocates counter this with a query. Why then, they ask, has the sacred Qur'an been translated into almost every language on earth, except their own? The most common Islamic response has been that the Berbers do not have a written language, nor an adequate standardized language suitable for such an endeavor. In effect, the argument comes close to proclaiming that the Berbers, unlike Muslims throughout the rest of the globe, in fact, have no "real" language at all. An attempt at a Tamazight translation of the Qur'an was not begun until the 1990s. The project remains controversial, proscribed, and as yet unfinished (see Naït-Zerrad 1998).

Nationalist assimilationists support Arabism with or without its religious affiliation or promise of everlasting paradise. For the older generation, which still remembers the struggles for independence, Arab identity confers a kind of legitimacy in opposition to the French, Europe, and the colonial enterprise. For the pragmatist, identification with the Arab world is axiomatic. Satellite dishes are ubiquitous in North Africa. There are a plethora of television shows from the Arab world that simply take no effort to watch. Arabic is, after all, the default language throughout the Maghreb. It is in the cities, on the streets, in the courts, and taught at school. No need to struggle deciphering an antiquated, unfamiliar alphabet. No need to seek out a language that almost no one, except one's grandmother, will ever understand. For the assimilationist Arabized Berber, Arabic is the status quo, and the attempt to overthrow it is frivolous, radical, and dangerous.

Enter the Evangelicals

Christianity has had a long and complex history in North Africa, and there was a time—albeit, a very long time ago—when the church flourished from Egypt to Algeria. Saint Augustine, after all, was a Berber, born in Thagaste (today's Souk Ahras) in Algeria's now militantly Amazigh Kabylia. Would not Saint Augustine be a good place to start in the "reconversion" of the Berbers to Christianity? Imazighen rebut the significance of Saint Augustine, noting that

he rejected the Amazigh (read: "pagan") ancestry of his father in favor of the Romanized identity of his mother, Monnica. Since traditional Amazigh identity is matrifocal, Saint Augustine's adherence to the Christianity of his mother can be understood both in keeping with the matrifocality of Amazighité and in keeping with rejecting his having Berber identity at all, despite his Thagaste birthplace. He is therefore either a traitorous, Romanized Berber or no Berber at all.

Curiously, and in keeping with the Saint Augustine/Berber debate, John K. Ryan, translator of the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine, does him the injustice (from an Amazigh point of view) of referring to Thagaste today as an "Arab" village, in keeping with the post-Islamic Arabization of the region. Ryan further denigrates the indigenous population (again, from an Amazigh point of view) as having endorsed and practiced "magical rites, human sacrifice, and certain abominable practices" as part of their religious life—further elevating and separating Saint Augustine from his rustic roots (Ryan 1960: 18–20). Saint Augustine, then, from a Christian point of view, is considered to have risen above the base practices of his natal region to spiritual heights at the heart of Roman Christendom. And from the Amazigh point of view, Saint Augustine is a good example of the all-too-common rejection of both the language and culture of Tamazgha. Thus, whether from a Christian or an Amazigh point of view, there is debate over Saint Augustine as a good selling point in the re-Christianization of North Africa:

> If I have to consider St. Augustine as a traitor who adopted a language and culture not his own, I have to first treat as a traitor all those who have proposed a foreign language and culture, starting with the dynasty of Massyssiles of Massinissa up to Ptolemy … then all the Berbers who have used Arabic, and finally, those who use French: Boulifa, Belaid, Aït Ali, Feraoun, Mammeri, Chaker, Sadi, Aït Ahmed, … and even you who use French to write your message, you should be writing in Tamazight, but I doubt you even have the capacity to do so! (Iferman, 7 janvier 2007, Kabyle.com forum; L'olivier de saint Augustin—my translation).

Thus, for some contemporary Imazighen, as for Iferman above, Saint Augustine is not significantly different from contemporary Berbers who accept Arabic—or French—as their primary language, including Mouloud Mammeri and Salem Chaker, both key figures in the founding of the Amazigh movement in the twentieth century. Amazigh activist Ferhat Mehenni, too, in this light is not so different from Saint Augustine. He may protest against Arabism, but he has adopted France and French-speaking as Augustine adopted Rome.

Lucien Oulahbib in his consideration of the relationship between Berbers and Christianity in the age of Saint Augustine, argues that Christianity missed a point that Islam, three centuries later, did not in its appeal throughout the Middle East, and particularly in North Africa. This is the preeminent attachment

in the region to tribalism (Oulahbib 2004: 22–24). Islam succeeded because it did not threaten tribal structure. In this way, the Amazigh were expected to acculturate well to Arabic customary practice. Further, the form of Islamic law adhered to in North Africa is Maliki Shari'at law—the most supportive of all the Islamic legal traditions of preexisting customary tribal practice. However, while some Amazigh tribes assimilated, linguistically at least, becoming what appeared to be "Arab" tribes, others strenuously resisted.

Evangelical Christians have been exploring the most effective strategies in proselytizing the as-yet unconverted, or "unreached peoples" of the world—particularly in the Islamic world. Out of the current "Top Ten Unreached" peoples of the world of the Joshua Project—a Christian Evangelical Project devoted to converting all non-Christian peoples to Christianity—nine of the ten are Islamic cultures.

The Berbers, or "Moors" as they are called on the Joshua Project Top Ten, are listed as number ten (Joshua Project 2007). Electronic evangelism for unreached peoples is ubiquitous on the Internet. One advantage of this approach is that in situ evangelism can exact the death penalty in Islamic countries. Not only is proselytism illegal, but conversion from Islam to another religion is illegal as well. Nevertheless, there are militant Imazighen who claim, in the privacy of their own homes, that they are no longer Muslim—or even, that they and their mothers and their mother's mother never have been Muslim. That Islam is as foreign an imposition as French colonialism was. But in public, such Imazighen do not display their non-Islamic (or anti-Islamic) sentiments or identity. But neither does this necessarily draw them to Christianity.

One of the new strategies of Christian Evangelicals targeting the Islamic world advocates a "paradigm shift" for the proselytizing of "shame" cultures. This approach is perhaps a corollary of Mammeri's own spawning of the Amazigh movement, in that it is the use of anthropological methods and/or understanding to create conditions of change. The advocate of the "Gospel for Shame Cultures" is Bruce Thomas, an American Evangelical working in Indonesia. "I have discovered," he states, "that one of the most difficult aspects of evangelizing Muslims is getting them to appreciate their need for a Savior. … Muslims tend to be unaware of their sinfulness" (Thomas 1994: 1).

The classic distinction between shame cultures and "guilt" cultures is that the former externalizes culpability while the latter internalizes it. In shame cultures, it is the public display of wrongdoings that is central to social control. In guilt cultures, internal retrospection is expected to be sufficient to be aware of one's own sinfulness. Thus, it is easier to proselytize those who have internalized their own sinful nature, for they come to their new religion ready to be personally absolved and cleansed of their own wrongdoing. In shame cultures, there is much less emphasis on personal guilt. One shames one's entire family,

lineage, village, community, and people. A personal savior cannot readily purify such communicable transgression.

Thus, Thomas comes to the realization that Muslims do not worry as much about lying and cheating ("little sins" in Islam, according to Thomas) as they do about ceremonial purity, such as the abomination of eating pork. He states succinctly, "Thus, because eating pork is the worst possible state of defilement and more attention is given to ceremonial purity than moral purity, the pork eater (George Bush) is worse off than a murderer (Saddam Hussein)" (Thomas 1994: 1–2). Given his epiphany, he proposes proselytizing Muslims through their "deliverance from the tyranny of being in a near constant state of defilement" (1994: 2). He correlates the Islamic "problem" of defilement with the Christian notion of "original sin." The approach then is to demonstrate that man cannot cleanse himself of defilement, but that Christ has done so already. Thomas critiques Christian evangelism as having focused primarily on guilt cultures rather than shame cultures, stating that when Christianity takes into consideration this new cultural frame, Muslims will be more receptive to the Gospel and redemption, and the new approach could revolutionize Christian outreach in the "most resistant parts of the world" (1994: 6).

While Thomas's paradigm shift has yet to demonstrate efficacy in the Middle East and North Africa, another quasi-anthropological approach is proposed by Let Us Reason Ministries, an online Pentecostal mission. Here, a new proselytizing methodology called "redeeming the cultures" has demonstrated if not efficacy then at least relevance to the Amazigh cause. "One can find the purest thing a culture holds and make Christ relatable to them in His holiness" recommends an article on "Culturizing Christianity" (letusreason.org 2007: 1). Here, Christian missions to the indigenous peoples of North Africa have struck gold.

While maintaining a strictly millenarian ideology, Christian Evangelicals have adopted strategic nativistic methodologies. If Islam thrived in North Africa by appealing to the retention of tribal structure (while at the same time attempting to eradicate its Amazigh cultural content), contemporary Evangelicals are appealing directly to Amazighité—promising preservation of language and culture, and the eradication of a culturally hegemonic Islam. While to this day there is no complete Qur'anic translation into Tamazight dialects, the Gospels have been translated into many regional dialects of North Africa. They are available in writing and as MP3 audio files, with instructions online in Tamazight and four European languages—designed perhaps, with expatriate Berbers in mind.

This approach is reminiscent of Père Charles de Foucault, who, in his long sojourn and hermitage in the Hoggar Mountains of the Algerian Sahara, created the very first Tamazight dictionary and translated de Saint Exupéry's *The Little Prince* into the Tuareg dialect, thinking perhaps, the story would resonate

with the true inhabitants of the Sahara. While at the time circa 1906–1916) his efforts were little heeded, a century later his efforts adorn numerous issues of the journal *Tifinagh*, which is dedicated to the resurrection of Tamazight written word. Like Père Charles de Foucault, who was beatified in Rome on 13 November 2006 for his sacrifice and martyrdom in the Sahara, contemporary Evangelicals have as yet no record of effective conversions to Christianity. Nevertheless, their embrace of Tamazight as a language worthy of conveying Christian sacred texts has not gone unnoticed by Amazigh patriots.

The translation of the Gospels into Tamazight constitutes an excellent example of the new Evangelical strategy of "culturizing Christianity" and finding "the purest thing a culture holds" as a vehicle for the transmission of their millenarian message.

Conclusions

North Africans today are actively debating competing models for reframing their identity. Perhaps the question to ask is, "Why now?" The Arabo-Islamic venture in North Africa began in the seventh to eighth centuries with the founding of the Great Mosque of Kairouan in Tunisia under the Umayyad Dynasty. Is there anything new in the prevailing dominance of Islamic culture and Arabic language in the Maghreb? And why is ethnic identity at stake here and not, say, in Indonesia or Pakistan, where Arabization is not a threat? Some Berbers answer this by saying that they have been too hospitable in the past, too weak, too adaptable to conquerors—regardless of Arab Muslim perceptions to the contrary—too easily swayed by those claiming to bring them the cultural refinement of a superior civilization. Tamazgha allowed herself to become the Arab Maghreb Union and now, before cultural annihilation is complete, it is time finally to put a stop to it.

Amazigh militants reject both Islam and Arabism, claiming that Islam is nothing more than a mask for Arabism rather than the reverse. They complain that the building of enormous mosques in modest mountain (read: Berber) towns is provocative, coercive Arabism. It is seen not as an expression of governmental devotion to Islam, spirituality, or some generalized form of religiosity, but rather as an attempt to placate Arab states' investment in the Maghreb. Surely, the Arab presence in North Africa is no more or less significant than a hundred years ago, or a thousand?

What makes "now" a juncture in the struggle to maintain identity? Or is it *always* a question of "now"? Always a struggle, always a sense of urgency, always just the moment before that final, impending, imminent cultural demise? What is it about "now"? There are many possible speculations. Is it the threat of global homogenization? It is the cell phone that links the tribal Berber transhu-

mant nomad in Imilchil to his cousin, the intellectual Amazigh activist in Paris. Is it the satellite dish that emits unending transmissions of Islamic sermons, intoxicating Syrian soap operas, worldwide Arab news coverage, and pure entertainment in an Arabic well enough understood—or soon to be understood—by all? French and American programming often appears in North Africa already dubbed into Arabic, while Tamazight programming remains almost unheard of—except in Christian Evangelical broadcasts and downloadable audio files. And in which dialect would that Tamazight program be transmitted? Experiments in radio and television transmission in the newly constructed *fabriqué-en-France* neo-Tamazight have been problematic at best: no one can understand them. The construction of a unified Amazighité speaking a universal neo-Tamazight, written in a Tifinagh script agreed upon by scholars in committee, returning to Tamazgha, the Promised Land, appears a fairy tale, an impossible pipe dream. Yet Christian Evangelicals have not found the plethora of Tamazight dialects an impediment to the spread of their message. They continue their translations into Tamazight, slowly, one dialect at a time.

And as for the Internet, it is primarily in French, or perhaps in a neoglobalized English, in which the debate over ethnic survival takes place. And yet, and yet, against all odds, identities survive. They survive inquisitions and holocausts, discrimination, assimilation, and attempts at ethnic "cleansing." The model is there. It can be done. Is it worth it? This is the debate.

The Amazigh movement continues to grow in North Africa and in the Amazigh diaspora in good part because it is perceived that the preservation of Amazighité culture and language are no threat to the nation-state, no threat to Islam, nor even to Arabism. Instead, it is an opportunity, an exercise in unification that could provide strong historical and cultural raison d'être to the Maghreb Union itself, reinforcing the shared legacy of the past at the same time as it faces the political and economic imperatives of the future.

A curious feature of globalism, however, is that it puts all identities at risk—and at the same time, makes all potentially viable. Nowhere and no one is inaccessible, nowhere is remote. There is today a World Amazigh Congress, not simply a spontaneous, invisible protest of the closure of an isolated ancient poetry conference. Likewise, there is an expanding worldwide Islamic identity. A growing Arabism. An active Evangelical movement. An increased concern with international politics and world markets. Identity, even ethnic identity, increasingly becomes personal "choice" rather than an ascribed identity—at least, in the Amazigh diaspora or in the privacy of one's own North African home, or in the anonymity of one's online persona. One student "chatting" online in an Amazigh forum put it succinctly:

> . . . Globally, I'm berber, moroccan, muslim, and worldcitizen. My home is the whole world. Have a nice day. (quoted in Zussman 2001)

"Globally, I'm berber . …" In the ongoing (re)construction of identity, it may well be more the process of engagement that matters, rather than the retrieval or manufacture of any "authentic" final product.

This, and more, for Galina, with love

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