

INTRODUCTION

Brahim El Guabli
Katarzyna Pieprzak
Aomar Boum

We are beyond thrilled to publish the first issue of Tamazgha Studies Journal (TSJ). The result of several years of collaboration, TSJ is a bi-annual, interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journal that seeks to foreground a critical understanding of the geocultural and intellectual space of Tamazgha through multilingual and indigeneity-informed approaches. TSJ seeks to examine the significance of rethinking and reconfiguring North Africa by accounting for Tamazgha as a broader conceptual and geographical remapping of the region. As such, TSJ aims to pay close attention to the variety of ways in which scholarship can reassess the scholarly, programmatic, and curricular implications of current Maghreb/North African studies through the Indigenous neologism of Tamazgha. As the collection of materials published in this first issue demonstrates, TSJ questions toponymies, revisits histories, resituates vocabularies, and furnishes a space for interdisciplinary scholarship to expand the boundaries of the currently canonical ways to study North Africa or the Maghreb. Most notably, this first issue reaffirms our initial premise that to renew scholarship about an area, it is fundamental to un-learn the prevalent and routinized ways of producing knowledge and challenging the basic lines that compartmentalize what we know and the way we know across geographical or disciplinary boundaries.

Global indigenous scholarship teaches us that toponymies are not innocent, and Tamazgha is not an exception. Both the Maghreb and North Africa are geographical terms that situate this geopolitical space in connection to the Middle East, the Mediterranean and Africa. The Maghreb evokes the Mashriq while *shamāl ifriqīyya* (North Africa) evokes *ifriqīyya janūb al-ṣaḥrāʾ* (sub-Saharan Africa). Evocative, rich, and generative as they are, these terms do not take into account the indigenous imaginary that has sought to reindigenize North Africa/Maghreb: Tamazgha. Extending from the Canary Islands in the Atlantic Ocean to the Siwa in south Egypt, Tamazgha complicates postcolonial borders, blurs the demarcation lines between communities, and places continuities of indigeneity between these interconnected territories at the center of any approach that aspires to capture the epistemic and critical significance of the shifts taking place in the region. As it is refigured by Amazigh activists, Tamazgha challenges geographic appellations overlaid on their ancestral space and draws out an indigenous dimension that has been absented for the best part of the twentieth century. However, Tamazgha is not merely a local idea; it is also a transnational project that has deep academic stakes for the scholarly community. This work on toponymy to open up a new path for self-renewal and methodological innovation has been long overdue. The names we use to approach our corpuses or the places we study have substantial implications for the languages we learn, the questions we ask, and the content we choose to foreground and that which we prefer to overlook. In Tamazgha, this has translated into a total

absence of the rich literary and intellectual output produced in Tamazight and other local languages, which still has not found its place in Anglophone academia.

Building off these broader considerations, this first issue aspires to open up space for rethinking the stakes of knowledge production about a place that has been, for a long time, left out of methodologies of Indigenous Studies. By focusing our attention on Tamazgha as a horizon for cultural, social, political, and scholarly production, our endeavor aims to generate interdisciplinary and transregional scholarship that centers, adopts or even writes against a historically-proven and an Indigenously-reclaimed conception of space. This approach will widen the scope of the academically thinkable and methodologically feasible to produce cutting-edge scholarship. This project will contribute to putting to rest colonialist divisions and clichés, which continue to constrict the way North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa are studied. As is evidenced by the focus on Arabic and French as the main languages of study and expertise in the area called the Maghreb, colonial legacies are not merely preventing Indigenous languages from occupying their rightful place in their nations' public life but also dictate the value of what is to be learned and what is considered worthy of pursuing as an academic discipline. Direct colonialism ended in most of the countries of Tamazgha by 1962, but its entrenched a vision of knowledge and power that continues to this day. TSJ's approach is to resist these established ways of producing and disseminating knowledge by opening a platform for everyone who has a stake in knowledge production about Tamazgha and who is working to rethink knowledge at the intersection of multilingualism, indigeneity, geography, and cultural activism is a fundamental pillar.

This first issue contains three sets of articles, addressing a wide array of topics across different spaces and time periods. The first set of articles focuses on the notion of Tamazgha, its historicity, and the current manifestations it has taken as well as its academic potential. Tamazgha may be a neologism, but the histories and linguistic and cultural continuities undergirding its mobilization are not new. As Brahim El Guabli argues in his contribution, Allal al-Fassi, one of the founders of Moroccan nationalism, resorted to the notion of Tamazgha, albeit under a different name to advocate for Arab nationalism in the Maghreb. El Guabli's article demonstrates the many ways in which the deployment of Tamazgha and its underlying histories as well as the methodological opportunities it offers can be transformative for the knowledge produced about the entire region. Paul Silverstein's article discusses Tamazgha's "multi-scalar incarnations" based on ethnographic work in both France and Morocco, revealing the multilayered dimensions of a vision of both space and history that encompasses notions of femininity, self-determination, national borders, and freedom. Accordingly, Silverstein's article foregrounds the richness and the diversity of experiences of Amazighitude. In her article, Malika Assam interrogates the words Amazigh and Tamazgha, signaling the importance of paying attention to endogenous and exogenous constructions of this terminology, including during the colonial period. Assam rightly suggests that "Tamazgha also orients analysis towards a decompartmentalized and comparative approach of languages and cultures of Berber-speaking societies." Pursuing a similar line of inquiry, Nabil Boudraa's article draws on several Francophone theorists' work to probe how a "poetic of trace" is at work in the notion of Tamazgha. From mythology to music, Boudraa uncovers Tamazgha's mnemonic and historiographical implications. Heide Castaneda's article extends the geographical reach of these three articles to the United States and a diasporic redefinition of belonging. Castaneda focuses specifically on Amazigh immigrants in the United States and their contribution to the notion of Tamazgha and to trace how Tamazgha is emerging as an identity category in the United States.

Although in close dialogue with these conceptual articles, the second set of contributions addresses specific topics related to the myriad expressions of Amazigh consciousness. Cynthia Becker revisits the production of Amazigh heritage in the 1990s. Focusing on the Aït Khabbash tribe in the Moroccan southeast, Becker's article probes the importance of local cultural production in the larger context of a transnational Amazigh activism. The interplay of tourism and Amazigh consciousness has, in Becker's analysis, contributed to preservation of Amazigh material culture. Reading against the prevailing conceptions of Moroccanness and national culture in Morocco, Azul Ramirez delves into Arab-Islamic-nationalism-oriented archeological practices in the country. Ramirez unearths how archeology participated in marginalizing Amazigh heritage by overlooking historical sites of significant importance for Amazigh history. Using the example of the Rif specifically, Ramirez answers a crucial question about the nature of an archeological Moroccan practice that would center Imazighen. The question of Amazigh history is also linked to the way the Amazigh public sphere operates. Algeria, Libya and Morocco have witnessed profound changes that re-Amazighized their public spheres. Anouar El Younssi examines the significance of the gradual integration of Amazigh signage in Moroccan urban environments for the indigenous and multilingual identity of the region. Drawing on qualitative data and observations of the Moroccan public space, El Younssi's article further enriches the existing knowledge on the work that Amazigh alphabet has been doing in the public arena since 2011.

A third set of articles models literary and archival readings of Tamazgha. Fadma Ferras's audacious article on the body in Amazigh literature is a major contribution to feminist inquiry into Amazigh women's writings. Entirely based on literary texts written in Tamazight, Ferras's article probes the multiplicity of ways in which the body works and acts as a marker of identity, intimacy, culture, and ideals of freedom and community. Ferras breaks new ground in her reading of the feminine and male bodies in Amazigh texts. Equally noteworthy is Aomar Boum's contribution on "Berber dictionaries" and their role in establishing Amazigh genealogies. Boum's richly-documented article sheds light on the crucial role that lexicography, grammar, and linguistic corpuses play in categorizing people and creating divisions between speakers of different varieties of the same language. Boum's argument explains how the uneven production of knowledge about the different dialects has had a deep impact on the evolution of Amazigh languages and culture.

Our works-in-progress section features two articles. Boum and El Guabli's article on the history of Amazigh Studies in the United States provides a historical overview of the establishment of Amazigh Studies in several American universities. In contrast to today's absence of this discipline from the institutional landscape in Anglophone academia, the article demonstrates the vibrancy that characterized the field of Amazigh Studies in the 1950s through the 1990s. Drawing on never-before-explored archival sources, Boum and El Guabli examine the institutional and academic circumstances that allowed Amazigh languages and cultures to flourish in a limited number of American institutions during the 1960s before academic and political priorities shifted funding to other areas of inquiry, leading to the decimation the small field of Amazigh Studies in the 1990s. The authors introduce the Amazigh Studies Initiative (AMASI), aiming to revitalize the field with curricular and programmatic significance. Additionally, long-term Amazighologist Michel Peyron's contribution explores Tamazight poetry practiced by Sufi-inspired bards known as *imdyazn* (singers/poets) in specific regions of Morocco. Focusing on the *imdyazn* from the Taarart valley and Ayt Yafelman country, the essay highlights their involvement in anti-French resistance (1908-1936) and addresses contemporary socio-political events.

Shifting the languages we use and the ways we use them is an important component of the change that Tamazgha enables. To contribute to this shift, TSJ's first issue presents several

translations of poems and literary texts from Tamazight into English. Conducted by Amazigh-speakers, these translations represent the beginning of an ongoing effort to make TSJ a platform for translating and disseminating original cultural production in Indigenous languages of Tamazgha. While these translations are just a small selection from a significant body of works published throughout Tamazgha and the diaspora in Tamazight, they serve as a sample to spark curiosity and encourage further translation of Amazigh literature. This translation effort is particularly urgent today, not only due to the diverse and rich corpus unknown to Anglophone readerships but also because the resulting conversations have the potential to integrate Amazigh thought into global trans-Indigenous frameworks. Therefore, these literary samples serve as an open call to translators and litterateurs to submit translations from other indigenous languages spoken in Tamazgha.

As we enthusiastically launch the inaugural issue of TSJ into the world, we want to emphasize that we are not exclusively an Amazigh studies journal. Instead, our publication aims to accord Tamazight and its cultural production a significant place in our approach to equitable and indigeneity-oriented scholarship. We conceive Tamazgha as a broader epistemology and more diverse transnational space than produced by its Amazigh-speaking populations alone, and our mission is to capture this richness by providing a scholarly and literary platform where bold initiatives that strive to shift paradigms and transform methodologies can find a welcoming home. With this first issue, we aspire to have opened a wide door in the formidable walls that, for a considerable period, have restricted Tamazgha and its Indigenous languages from reaching a broader Anglophone audience.