

Linguistic Cartographies: Navigating Amazigh Landscapes through Colonial ‘Berber Dictionaries’

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Abstract:

The article emphasizes the significant role played by colonial-era Berber dictionaries in shaping perceptions of Amazigh ethnicity and tribal genealogies. These dictionaries meticulously defined and categorized tribal groups through linguistic boundaries, grammar, vocabulary, transcription, and lexicology. As a result, they facilitated the mapping of tribal territories and the delineation of Amazigh communities. Drawing inspiration from Edmund Burke’s concept of the Moroccan Vulgate, the paper argues that, contrary to fostering a unified Amazigh identity, these dictionaries inadvertently heightened Berber divisions. Missionaries, military officers, and universities employed these categorizations to advance the objectives of colonial administration, aligning with policies that supported specific chieftains and tribal territories based on the lexicons they constructed.

Keywords: Missionaries, École d’Alger, Berber Dictionaries, Berber Studies, René Basset, Cid Kaoui, Amazigh.

I revisit and reexamine the French colonial tradition of Berber dictionaries, which represents a significant historical and historiographic landmark in Berber studies (Bounfour, Lanfry, and Chaker, 1995). Although I am aware of its pejorative connotations, I use the term ‘Berber’ instead of ‘Amazigh’ when discussing Berber dictionaries, Berber studies, and Berber language, as it was commonly referred to during the colonial period by the creators of dictionaries, grammar manuals, and language materials. The principal source for this article is the prefaces of Berber dictionaries, which provide rich repositories of personal, historical, ethnographic, and occasionally historiographical information on Amazigh communities. In addition to acknowledging individuals and institutions that contributed to the research and publication of each dictionary, they offer insights into the authors’ scholarly connections and the institutional funding or support they received. Therefore, the prefaces provide invaluable resources for understanding both the academic and political origins of the lexicon and the author’s personal background and intellectual network.

Berber dictionaries can be regarded as archival documents with profound historical, cultural, social, and linguistic implications for understanding French colonialism in North Africa, particularly in Algeria and Morocco (Mahtout, 2013). While military interpreters and the White Fathers (Pères blancs) authored some of the early Berber dictionaries, especially focusing on the

varieties of the Kabyle and Tuareg (Amaoui, 2022: 252-254), a more established movement and tradition of Berber dictionaries and language manuals emerged after the founding of the *École des Lettres d'Alger* on December 20, 1879. Founded in 1868, the White Fathers was a missionary movement with a focus on evangelical activity through education in Africa. The White Fathers were among the pioneers in producing early grammar manuals and dictionaries for Berber.

However, the establishment of a solid scientific foundation for the study of Berber varieties primarily occurred through the efforts of the *École d'Alger*, under the leadership of René Basset (1855-1924). This institution laid the groundwork for Berber studies, and Basset's disciples further expanded the field into Moroccan Berber varieties by creating dictionaries that encompassed various regions of Morocco in response to the directives of General Lyautey, the French Resident General in Morocco. René Basset, a distinguished Arabist, played a crucial role in developing the discipline of Berber studies at the *École d'Alger*. Leveraging his connections within Orientalist circles, he effectively promoted the institution's activities and contributions, garnering international recognition. As a testament to the growing significance of Berber Studies, the teaching of Berber was formally introduced in France in 1913, marked by the establishment of the Berber Chair at the National Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilizations (*Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales*—INALCO), as highlighted by Chaker (2012).

Dictionaries played a pivotal role in shaping and reinforcing diverse conceptions of Berber ethnicity and Tamazgha as a linguistic region. They served the purpose of defining, categorizing, and exerting control over the region by establishing linguistic boundaries among tribal groups through the use of local Berber dictionaries. The meticulous attention French scholars paid to grammar, vocabulary, transcription, and lexicology served to demarcate tribal communities, thereby facilitating the geographical mapping of tribal territories. Through the creation of linguistic ethnographies detailing Berber tribes and confederations, Berber dictionary-makers generated lexicons that effectively isolated and separated Berber communities. This process began with a focus on the Kabyle region and gradually extended to encompass Berber communities across North and sub-Saharan Africa.

In light of this, I propose an expansion of Edmund Burke III's concept of the Moroccan Vulgate (Burke III, 1972), specifically the Berber-Arab binary, to incorporate the Berber-Berber partitioning, which was predominantly shaped through linguistic varieties, typologies and lexicons. I contend that the compilation of dictionaries focused on the Berber region or confederation inadvertently exacerbated rigid Berber divisions rather than fostering a cohesive Berber identity and interaction with Arabic varieties. In this context, missionaries, military officers, and universities employed categorizations that, through bureaucratic enactment, ultimately advanced the goals of colonial administration. This Berber linguistic program of dictionaries would align with the French colonial administration's policy of supporting chieftains and tribal territories that corresponded to these constructed lexicons.

1. The Contested Authorship of Berber Dictionaries

In his endeavor to challenge the prevailing ideologies embedded within colonial Berber dictionaries established by missionaries, military and linguists of the *École d'Alger*, Cid Kaoui, an indigenous Kabyle scholar trained outside the *École d'Alger*, found himself subjected to rigorous scrutiny by the colonial custodians of the Berber lexicographic tradition headed by René Basset. The acrimonious exchange between René Basset and Saïd Cid Kaoui (1859-1910), an indigenous Algerian lexicographer, during the period of 1907-1908 (for the full dispute see Ould-Braham,

2015:74-88) serves as a compelling illustration of my thesis, which posits that French colonial knowledge played a pivotal role in the construction of a divided Berber identity, partly achieved through the prism of linguistic and political categorizations of Berber varieties. Through this exchange, I elucidate the fundamental tenets of the colonial framework of Berber dictionary-making and outline its historiography through examining its key authors. Within the dialogue between Cid Kaoui and René Basset, an intricate exploration unfolds, delving into the essential qualifications for individuals engaged in dictionary creation. At the core of this combative exchange lies a pivotal question whether the mere identification as Amazigh inherently confer the ability to become a proficient dictionary-maker.

The exchange between the colonial linguist and the native speaker serves as a valuable lens through which we can elucidate the foundational categories shaping the colonial lexicographer's understanding of Cid Kaoui's local ethnicity. In this context, a noteworthy observation surfaces: the colonial Berber dictionary-making process is underpinned by the meticulous application of dialectological definitions. The lexicographers, in their pursuit, systematically classified and documented Berber linguistic varieties, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic landscape. This dialectological approach not only elucidates the diversity within the Amazigh linguistic tapestry, but also reflects the intricate dynamics at play within the colonial discourse. As Cid Kaoui and René Basset engage in this discourse, the conversation evolves into a nuanced exploration of identity, expertise, and the complex interplay between colonial authorities and local communities. The dialectological foundations of the colonial Berber dictionary-making process illuminate the efforts invested in shaping linguistic narratives and classifications, thereby underscoring the importance of this dialogue in comprehending the broader socio-cultural landscape of the time.

René Basset:

The author [Cid Kaoui] does not bother to inform us where he gathered the materials for his dictionary, but in the preface, he informs us that “three main Berber dialects are spoken in Morocco: Tamerrokit (?) in the Rif mountains, Tachelhit in the region of Sousse (sic for the Sous region), and Tamazirt in the South and East.” The dialects spoken in the Rif region have never been called Tamerrokit, which means nothing, and the author demonstrates his ignorance by adding that they “resemble a lot to Kabyle from Djurdjura.” ... If it [*Dictionnaire français-tachelh'it et tamazir't (dialectes berbères du Maroc)*] does not contain, like the author's previous Tamasheq dictionary, absurd translations ..., it is filled with questionable translations, expressions fabricated by sticking a Berber word onto a French word, and inaccuracies.... Therefore, this vocabulary cannot be consulted with confidence and cannot provide any of the services that one might have expected from it...

Cid Kaoui:

... I have indicated the populations that speak the discussed dialects.... I have compiled a dictionary and I am by no means obliged to precede it with grammar notes.... I have employed a transcription system that I consider preferable to that of General Hanoteau [see below in my discussion]; I have created a pocket dictionary [*Dictionnaire pratique tamâhaq-français*], and including examples would have taken me too far.... Allow me, Mr. Director of the École des Lettres d'Alger, to point out first and foremost that your critique

lacks courtesy: You do not hold back; you refer to me as ignorant, you, a *Roumi*, when it comes to my native language! If you were to say that I do not know French, that I do not know Arabic, I might perhaps bow to your observations; but when it comes to Berber, you are mistaken, and you judge me unfairly.

Your assessments do not prevent me from being of pure Berber descent, born in the Beni Sedka tribe, raised in the Oulad Abd-El-Djebbar tribe, and educated in Bougie. I am therefore a pure Berber, and despite your erudition, you will never come to know my native language as I do; you will always falter in some way, be it in pronunciation or in the myriad subtleties of the language! I hope, for your sake, that I am wrong.

René Basset:

Upon my return from Palestro [region in Algeria], I found your pamphlet, to which I did not respond immediately. However, it is important to dispel a misunderstanding: that your work was published with my “stamp of approval,” to use your expression. The observations you mention are general remarks, not applying solely to your work but to the series of grammars and dictionaries that the General Government intended to publish.

Regarding your origin, I knew, through friends like Motylinski, Rémy, and Patorni, which was confirmed during my visit to Bou-Saâda, that you are from the Beni-Sedka tribe, whose ethnonym Sedkaoui became Cid Kaoui (similar to Cid Campeador). However, the fact that you spoke Kabyle from childhood does not necessarily mean you are more capable of providing a grammar or lexicon of a different dialect unless you have been prepared for it through studies that appear to have eluded you. Otherwise, those Kabyle youngsters with whom I conversed just yesterday in the Gorges of Palestro could also claim to be capable of producing Tuareg and Rifain vocabularies.

As for your Tamasheq Dictionaries (see references), I did not have to specifically mention them in the *Revue Critique* since they date back to a fairly old period. However, I did appreciate them; the first one in my report at the 11th International Congress of Orientalists in 1897 and the second one at the 13th congress in Hamburg in 1902, where I was a delegate of the General Government of Algeria. I am aware of the opinion that a personal friend of mine, Commander Lacroix, holds about them. Since my opinion might be viewed as suspect, I also learned from Colonel François-Henri Laperrine, with whom I am closely associated, about the difficulties he encountered while using your dictionary. He was relieved to find out that you were not in charge of the papers left by Mr. Motylinski. You are not unaware that your letter on this matter (long before the publication of my article) was not taken into consideration. I was informed of this matter both in Bou-Saâda and here after a negative response had been given.

.... As for trying to prevent the sale of your books, that is an entirely baseless accusation that I won't even bother to refute. If you have read the issue of the *Revue Critique* in which I discussed your book, you will see that in the following article, I praised the publication of Mr. Saïd Bouliha (a Kabyle) on his Berber manuscripts. At present, we are publishing these Berber texts from the Atlas Mountains dialects (where you will have much to learn) by the same author. They will be followed by a study by Mr. Nehlil (another Kabyle), an officer-interpreter, on the R'at [Ghat] dialect. Kabyles can provide us with significant contributions, and I am the first to acknowledge it, provided they have sufficient philological and linguistic preparation and possess “method and critical thinking.”....

Cid Kaoui:

Your letter dated April 24, in response to my pamphlet, does not refute any of the observations contained in the latter; I expected this result.

.... I regret to say, however, that it ill suits you to forget: YES, my manuscript was handed to you by the General Government for examination and advice, following a request for funding made on my behalf. You provided your opinion on my work and your report has been officially transmitted to me, and I have it before me. This report concerns solely my Moroccan dictionary, and Mr. the Governor General added: "subject to these observations (yours) and on the condition that they are taken into account, I am fully prepared to grant the requested funding for the publication of the work." Is this not clear?

Regarding my origin, here you become somewhat humorous and a bit mocking. I do not deny this origin, sir, and I am proud to be Kabyle. The ethnonym Sedkaoui became Cid Kaoui due to a joker, an Intendance secretary, who, at the time of my enlistment in the 1st Spahis, found it amusing to change the spelling of my name, and it stuck. Otherwise, I have nothing in common with Ródrigue Diaz de Bivar!

Certainly, sir, the fact that I spoke Kabyle from childhood gives me a certain advantage over a Roumi in dealing with other Berber dialects. But please note that I have only dealt with two of these dialects, while you, of French origin, perhaps in Algeria only recently, have worked on fifteen or sixteen of them. No one has reproached you for it, and yet you cannot claim that your work is flawless and solely your own! Moreover, in dealing with Berber, I have never claimed to master it, as many do, and I see nothing in my work that should have required me, as you suggest, to engage in special studies to which I remained a stranger. I simply and purely translated words into words, with the concern for accuracy, and I did not delve into the parsley that some intellectuals like to spread lavishly around their writings to make them more palatable. I did not seek to provide any etymology or to compare with Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, etc. I stayed in the realm of modesty, that of one who strives to be useful and has no other aspirations.

I laugh at the comparison you make; perhaps you think you can diminish me by likening me to the little Kabyles in the Gorges of Palestro? Rest assured; I appreciate the education and instruction I have received. Nevertheless, I do not belittle these little Kabyles, my fellow countrymen.

Furthermore, I believe that I should enjoy legitimate respect from all good French people in memory of the services rendered by my father, who died as a result of the seven wounds he received at Sedan, where he fought as a volunteer for the duration of the war. I wish France to have many subjects like him and me.

I remain silent on the opinions of the individuals you mentioned; I respond only to those who attack me directly and unjustly. Allow me only to inform you that I too heard Motylinski speak of my works here, upon his return from his journey: "With a few exceptions, your work is good," he had told me. Please note, he did not say perfect but good, with a few exceptions; one does what one can. I do not name the many officers who have used my works in the Hoggar region; these gentlemen have only had praise for me. Obviously, if my dictionaries are taken as guides among the Aouellimiden, that changes everything, or nearly so.

I could have refrained from responding to you on all of the above because, in my opinion, there is no need for a response. However, what I want to make clear is that I affirm that I have never written to anyone or asked anyone for the papers left by Motylinski. The individuals who spoke to you about this were mistaken, unless they intended to deceive you. Name those individuals, and I will address them.

Therefore, do not hide behind Mr. Saïd Boulifa and Mr. Nehlil; I know well that they are both Kabyles, and you should have consulted them before sending your article to the *Revue Critique*; they would certainly have advised against it. Therefore, leave these gentlemen to their work; tell us about yours, the translations you have done by some and others (such as the fables of Loqman, for example) that you publish under your name, after embellishing them with Latin, Greek, Chinese, etc., adornments; you did not even realize that most of these translations are incorrect! Is this the result of the “philological and linguistic preparation” that, according to you, should be sufficient for writing well and, consequently, override one's natural knowledge of a language!...

Despite the criticisms put forth by René Basset, Cid Kaoui, a native Kabyle, staunchly defended his capacity to undertake the creation of the Berber dictionary (*amawal*) that not only rival, but actively contest the colonial Berber lexicons produced by Basset and his disciples. In advancing this perspective, Cid Kaoui challenged the colonial assumptions about linguistic authority and underscored the profound depth of indigenous knowledge and cultural nuances that can be harnessed in dictionary-making. Cid Kaoui also contended that local perspectives, intimately entwined with the lived experiences of the community, possess a unique insight that can significantly enrich and diversify the linguistic landscape portrayed in dictionaries. This will be clear during the post-independence period when a number of Amazigh linguists produced dictionaries in Arabic, French and Darija. In making the case for the right of natives to produce dictionaries, Cid Kaoui emphasized the importance of empowering communities to define and articulate their linguistic heritage. In essence, Cid Kaoui's stance goes beyond a mere rebuttal of Basset's critique of his Toureg's dictionary; it serves as a pivotal point in advocating for a different lexicographic paradigm that recognizes and values the richness inherent in native linguistic traditions and challenges the hegemony of colonial representations.

2. An Indigenous Berber Dictionary in Colonial Times

In his introduction to the *Dictionnaire Français-Tamâheq (Langues des Touareg)*, Saïd Cid Kaoui expressed his concerns regarding the early history of Berber dictionaries, stating that:

Berber dialects have only recently become the focus of public attention and official concern; there was a time when hardly anyone thought about this kind of study. The initial efforts in this direction were somewhat hasty. People boldly started writing and translating Berber before fully grasping the language; hence, misunderstanding and serious misinterpretations arose [*my translation*] (Cid Kaoui, 1894: vii).

Cid Kaoui highlighted the colonial academic focus within the *École d'Alger* and the official French military recognition granted to Berber varieties starting with Algeria and Tunisia before its extension to Morocco. This underscores a historical period when the exploration of these linguistic variants was a specialized pursuit, primarily undertaken by of a handful of missionaries and military personnel. During this early period, the scholarly and public focus on Berber varieties was markedly scarce. Cid Kaoui astutely observed that the nascent forays into Berber studies were

characterized by a sense of haste, as individuals including René Basset, delved into writing and translating Berber texts without fully mastering the intricacies of the language. This precipitous engagement, as Cid Kaoui pointed out, had consequences, manifesting in misunderstandings and consequential misinterpretations. The eagerness to explore and document the Berber linguistic landscape outpaced a comprehensive understanding, resulting in a nuanced tapestry of dialects being potentially oversimplified or inaccurately represented. Cid Kaoui's insight serves as a crucial historical commentary, highlighting the importance of methodical study and nuanced linguistic exploration, particularly in the context of Berber dialects.

In contrast to many colonial lexicographers associated with universities and missionary work, Cid Kaoui's educational journey took him through the French-Arab Lycée of Constantine, where he received a comprehensive education in both French and Arabic (Ould-Braham, 1994). This educational foundation opened doors for him, eventually leading to a career in the military interpreter corps during his time at the University of Algiers. In 1884, an intriguing opportunity arose when he was appointed as a juror for Berber exams. This experience fueled his ambition to create a practical Kabyle Dictionary. Cid Kaoui was dissatisfied with existing Kabyle dictionaries that predated his involvement in the French military (de Venture de Paradis, 1844; Creuzat, 1873; Olivier, 1878). However, his pursuit of this Kabyle Dictionary was temporarily halted when he was assigned to the southern post of Ouargla in 1887. There, he initiated a new project: the development of a French-Tamasheq Dictionary (Cid Kaoui, 1894). After immersing himself in the native Tamasheq-speaking community of In-Salah, Cid Kaoui completed his French-Tamasheq Dictionary in 1890. This monumental work was eventually published in 1894, followed by an abridged version in 1900.

Similar to other colonial lexicons, Berber dictionaries primarily served as “functional tools of the colonizing power” of France in North Africa (Peterson, 1997:257). These Berber dictionaries were mainly motivated by the needs of the French military, missionary endeavors, and medical practitioners to understand and communicate with local populations. In the Kabyle region, Aylward Shorter, an active member of the White Fathers Society, observed that Charles Martial Allemand Lavigerie (1825-1892), Archbishop of Algiers and Carthage, Primate of Africa, and Apostolic Delegate for the Sahara and the Sudan, emphasized two key aspects when encountering native Kabyles. Members of the religious order were required to wear a *burnus* and a local hat (*chachia*), as well as speak local dialects. This ethnographic approach of living like the natives allowed the White Fathers and Sisters to integrate with the indigenous Kabyle population. Their aim was to win hearts and gain converts, and this approach included the creation of Kabyle dictionaries for future use. Between their arrival in Algeria in 1873 and the late 1930s, the White Fathers published several dictionaries, primarily by Gustave Huyghe (1901, 1902-1903, 1906, 1907). In 1947, Fathers Jean-Marie Dallet (1982) and Jacques Lanfry (1973) established the Center of Berber Studies (Centre d'études Berbères) in Ouaghzen, a small hamlet in the Kabyle region. Sister Madeleine Allain followed suit and established the female Center of Berber Studies in Tizi Ouzou in 1953. These institutions played a fundamental role in producing numerous linguistic and ethnological studies on Kabyle communities and language.

At a time when the *École d'Alger* was gaining recognition in the field of Oriental Studies, Cid Kaoui argued that early French Berber lexicographers had been misguided by their ethnographic approach due to their failure to pay sufficient attention to pronunciation and to the lexicon. He noted that:

While paying tribute to all those who have worked on my mother tongue, I cannot, however, in the interest of its study, remain silent about certain shortcomings that are found in a large number of works that have been published (Cid Kaoui, 1894: vii).

This native perspective on Berber lexicons outside the School of Algiers and the White Fathers raised questions about who could author Berber dictionaries and how they should be conceptualized. Instead of focusing solely on grammar, transcription, and lexicology, Cid Kaoui advocated for learning Kabyle and Tamasheq by listening to native speakers and encouraged specialists to pay greater attention to pronunciation:

The pronunciation of Tamasheq being the same as that of Kabyle, in this work, I have given special attention to this aspect and ensured its accurate representation using French characters. This is because attempts to transcribe Berber words have not been carried out with complete certainty until now. This is attributed to various reasons, with the primary one being the frequent situation where the European author and his Berber collaborators only have a partial understanding of each other (Cid Kaoui, 1894: vii).

Cid Kaoui thus highlighted that the process of collecting Berber words, which often involved European linguists, military officers, or missionaries working with selected native informants, was flawed and impacted transcription, and consequently, dictionary-making.

3. Military Officers Compile Berber Dictionaries

The development of a corpus of Berber dictionaries gained momentum in the wake of the conquest of Algiers, with particular emphasis placed on the creation of Kabyle and Tuareg dictionaries during the early phases of French colonial policy in Algeria. The pivotal role of native collaborators became evident as the military sought to produce practical linguistic and cultural documents by the late 1850s. The Arab Bureaux (Bureaux Arabes), established in 1844 under the leadership of Marshal Bugeaud as a successor to the Directorate of Arab Affairs, served as a tool for French officers in their efforts to exert control over the local indigenous population. Officers assigned to the Arab Bureaux undertook some of the earliest and most significant anthropological, linguistic, and sociological studies on Algeria and the Kabyle region (Burke III, 2014; Hannoum, 2001).

Adolphe Hanoteau (1814-1897), an officer within the Arab Bureaux and the military establishment, played a central role in championing studies encompassing linguistics, anthropology, and literature in the Kabyle region. Initially involved in supervising statistical surveys with the Arab Bureaux in Mitidja, Hanoteau later assumed the position of chief officer, overseeing a diverse team comprising military and civilian officers, medical personnel, interpreters, and indigenous assistants, including a local judge, notary, and a military detachment of spahis (indigenous auxiliaries, infantry, and cavalry). In his capacity as a military officer, Hanoteau authored his Kabyle dictionary with the assistance of Si Saïd ou-Ali (1829-1876), an indigenous Kabyle from Igawawen, also known as Zwawa. The production of these dictionaries was complemented by the publication of grammar manuals, with printing costs being covered and subsidized by the French Army administration in Algeria.

In 1857, Baron Henri Aucapitaine participated in a military expedition in the Kabyle region. Although Aucapitaine did not compile a Kabyle dictionary, he provided a detailed account of this military operation, shedding light on the Kabyle dialect, society, and culture (Aucapitaine, 1864). His ethnographic and historical descriptions of the community played a significant role in

shaping early French policy regarding the integration of Kabyles within the broader context of the ethnic Arab and Berber colonial divide (Aucapitaine, 1861).

Laurent-Charles Féraud (1829-1888), an Arabist, served primarily as a translator during the military campaign in Algeria. Féraud authored numerous works that delved into the history of Algeria and Kabyle culture, society, and language. Equally important is his work on the history of military translators during the military occupation of Algeria, which provides valuable context for understanding the process of Berber dictionary-making (Féraud, 1876). It is worth noting that, with the exception of Cid Kaoui and a few indigenous Kabyle Berberologists associated with René Basset's school in Algiers, native Berber individuals served primarily as informants rather than co-authors in the early colonial Berber dictionary projects.

4. René Basset and his Disciples, Berber Lexicons and Language Manuals

René Basset an Arabist and Berberologist pioneered a movement of Berber lexicons in Algeria when he joined the School of Letters in Algiers in 1885 as the first Berber dialects lecturer. Building on the work of Hanoteau, Basset underscored the importance of producing dictionaries based on a framework that combines linguistics and ethnography. At a moment when Cid Kaoui was waiting for the military approval and financial support to publish his Tamasheq dictionary, Basset presented his colonial intellectual vision of French Berber studies at the 9th Congress of Orientalists held in London in 1891 where he celebrated the work of Hanoteau on the grammar of Tamasheq and Kabyle languages as a framing conceptual principle. Basset founded Berber Studies in Algeria giving a positive nod to Hanoteau's work and his transcription system. In 1887, two years after his appointment as Berber dialects lecturer, Basset published a manual of the Kabyle language with a grammar and bibliography. Special acknowledgement was given to the work of Francis William Newman (1805-1897) and General Adolphe Hanoteau. Basset notes in his introduction to *Manuel De Langue Kabyle (dialecte Zouaou)*:

Until now, there existed only the excellent grammar of General Hanoteau, which, along with Mr. Newman, paved the way for serious research on this dialect. Six years of experience, spent among Berber populations in Algeria, the Sahara, Tunisia, Tripoli, and Morocco, along with two years of teaching, have allowed me to appreciate the value of his book. However, besides the fact that this grammar, which is not likely to be surpassed for a long time, has become quite rare, the somewhat scattered richness of the information it contains might confuse a beginner rather than assist them. At the time when Mr. Hanoteau published it, there was no French-Zouaoua lexicon. The word lists he included in his work filled a gap at that time but would now be seen as a burdensome and unnecessary luxury, given the publication of two vocabularies, admittedly of uneven quality, with the more commendable one being that of Father Olivier (1887, vi).

This excerpt clearly shows that Basset acknowledged the contributions of the missionaries and military administrators in early collections of Berber linguistic material. He gave a similar interest to the work of Charles de Foucauld and continued to critique and ignore the contribution of Cid Kaoui to dictionaries of Tamasheq. In fact, in 1908, and in collaboration with Charles de Foucauld (1858-1916) and Adolphe de Calassanti-Motylnski (1854-1907), Basset then director of the École Supérieure des Lettres in Algiers sponsored the publication of a collection of variety of Tuareg texts from Ahaggar region with a Tuareg-French dictionary (1908; 1922). The two-volume publication was meant to honor the work of Calassanti-Motylnski who passed away unexpectedly.

Basset had a vision to engage with English and German scholars of Arabic and Berber and potentially build a renowned French school of Berber studies. Therefore, while he chose to move away from the military method of Berber dictionaries by focusing on theoretical linguistic aspects of the dialects, he still maintained a relationship with the army for financial reasons. In fact, building a school of Berber studies required funding that he sought through grants offered mainly by the Académie des Inscriptions et des Belles Lettres. By carrying out ethnographic and linguistic work among many tribal communities, Basset aspired to contribute in collaboration with his students a general comparative grammar handbook of Berber dialects.

In addition to research and writing, Basset shifted his attention to address the lack of Berber textbooks. In 1887, Belkassam Ben Sedira (1844-1901) amassed a 600-pages book of teaching Berber material (Ben Sedira, 1887). Saïd Boulifa came later to compile a larger set of Berber textbooks. Unlike Ben Sedira's text, Boulifa relied on material collected directly from local populations. In addition to dictionaries, language and grammar textbooks were required to prepare individuals for a Kabyle Certificate and the Diploma in Berber Dialects. The École des Lettres d'Alger was tasked primarily with research on Berber dialects including the making of dictionaries while the École Normale de la Bouzaréa d'Alger was involved in teachers' training. The occupation of Morocco brought a different opportunity for the École des Lettres d'Alger and the École Normale de la Bouzaréa d'Alger in terms of expanding Berber studies both in terms of research and teaching.

Following the French occupation of Morocco in 1912, Lyautey invited Émile Laoust (1876-1952) to serve as the first professor of Berber dialects in Morocco after the establishment of the École Supérieure de Langue Arabe et des Dialectes Berbères in Rabat in 1915. By 1920, the Institut des Hautes Études Marocaines (IHEM) was founded to encourage scientific research related to Morocco. These institutions would attract a number of specialists in Berber culture and society and Moroccan history in general such as Mohammed Nehlil, Ismaël Hamet, Mohammed Abès, Edmond Destaing, Robert Montagne, Djinn Jacques-Meunié, and Henri Terrasse. These Berberologists draw largely on fieldwork in their publications which featured primarily in *Les Archives Berbères*, the *Bulletin of the IHEM* and *Hespéris*. While, a linguistic and theoretical debate emerged regarding the appropriate theoretical and practical linguistic methods and approaches to follow in Morocco, the publication of dictionaries and language as well as grammar manuals in Morocco paralleled to a large extent the work on Kabyles and Tuareg.

The focus on Berbers as a key category of French Social Sciences in Morocco highlighted the colonial strategy of separating communities in linguistic terms to support its political and ideological framework of Berber-Arab divide. In Meknes, Mohammed Abès a Kabyle was tasked with writing a practical manual for teaching Berber to military officers stationed in the Morocco. Mohammed Nehlil, a Kabyle graduate of the École Normale de la Bouzaréa d'Alger, was another Berberologist who was central to the establishment of the École Supérieure de Langue Arabe et des Dialectes Berbères. However, despite the work of these Berber linguist in Morocco, the most productive scholar from the school of Alger remained Edmond Destaing given his massive publications on Berber language, societies, and cultures. As Chair of Berber Studies at the INALCO, Edmond Destaing dedicated his academic career to the Berber dialect of the Anti-Atlas of Morocco. While a number of Berberologists continued to focus their attention on the Kabyle region and the Morocco's Middle Atlas and the Rif areas, Destaing and Léopold Justinard (1878-1959) contributed to the ethnological and linguistic documentation of the Berbers of the Anti-Atlas.

Like Cid Kaoui, Justinard stressed the importance of listening to the natives and acknowledging their authorship or at least their voices in the production of the Berber dictionary. In Manuel de Berbère marocain (dialecte Chleuh), Justinard, Captain of the Moroccan Tirailleurs, prefaces the book with acknowledgment of the tirailleurs role in helping him collect the texts of the volume. These soldiers were members of the second company of tirailleurs stationed in the region of Fez. Despite the circumstances of the war, Justinard credits Sergeant (kateb) Si Tahar Souso and corporal (maouns Moulay Lahssen Hahi, Si Mohammed Soussi, Larbi Mizmizi) and soldiers Tahar Mtouggi, Si Mokhtar Mtouggi, Boujemaa Hahi and Lhaoussine Guedmioui. These Moroccan Berber riflemen were credited for being his “Berber teachers” and the principal narrators and translators. The stories were told in the format of folktales, proverbs and even dances such as Ahouach and Ahidou. This gesture was largely missing from the corpus of dictionaries produced in Algeria.

Closing Reflection: Native Lexicographers Update the *amawal*

Following independence, both Algerian and Moroccan governments made the deliberate decision to close down colonial-era Berber institutions and publications. This marked a significant turning point in the study of Berber languages and culture within the Maghreb region. In the post-independence era, the exploration of Berber languages gained newfound importance (El Guabli, 2022), closely intertwined with the political and cultural resurgence of Berber identity over the past few decades. The unfolding of this cultural renaissance has been facilitated by a relatively supportive political climate that has allowed for the flourishing of an Amazigh public sphere across various platforms, including public and private media, local schools, and universities.

Despite facing administrative constraints and hurdles imposed by North African states, the Amazigh culture has been progressively reclaiming its significance. In this context, a significant surge in the creation of new Amazigh dictionaries has been observed in the post-independence period. It is essential to recognize, however, that the tradition of Berber dictionaries initially emerged as part of a French colonial project, with Spain and Italy similarly producing such works during their colonial presence in Morocco and Libya. This colonial influence has indelibly shaped the linguistic landscape of the region. In the contemporary landscape, a simple Google search yields a plethora of Amazigh dictionaries covering numerous Amazigh varieties spoken in Morocco (Chafik 1990; 1996; 1999a), Algeria, Libya, Mali (Heath, 2006), and Niger (Prasse, Ghoubeïd, and Ghabdouane, 2003). The majority of these dictionaries continue to be published in French, with only a few available in Arabic and English. Notably, some of these dictionaries are innovatively conceptualized as illustrated children’s books, representing a creative approach to language preservation.

Like other indigenous languages (Frawley, Hill and Munro 2002), Tamazgha-speaking communities and Tamazight face the dual challenge of preservation and revitalization, necessitating the concerted involvement of governments, educators, and linguists to ensure its survival. Dictionaries, as integral components of this initiative, play a pivotal role. In Morocco, Mohammed Chafik has significantly advanced the field of dictionaries by delving into the intricate relationships among Arabic, Darija (Moroccan Arabic), and Tamazight. This intersectional approach acknowledges the dynamic linguistic environment in which Berber languages not only survive but flourish.

Prior to the establishment of the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture (Institut Royal de la Culture Amazighe or IRCAM) in 2001, Chafik laid the foundation for Amazigh bilingual

lexicography. His work was based on a sociolinguistic database derived from extensive fieldwork and consultations with various dictionaries. In publications such as “*Le dialecte marocain: un domaine de contact entre l’amazigh et l’arabe*” and “*Dictionnaire bilingue: arabe-amazigh*,” Chafik advocates for the pedagogical significance of transforming the Amazigh dictionary into a bilingual lexicon, with introductory material in *Darija*. Chafik, along with other Amazigh linguists, argues that the availability of such encyclopedic, educational, cultural, medical, and religious lexicons will contribute to the development of a subsequent educational environment conducive to academic pursuits within universities.

In conclusion, as a reflection on language, family history, and identity, I end this note by drawing upon a personal anecdote growing up in Lamhamid, Fom Zguid, in the Province of Tata, southeastern Morocco. I recall vividly the fusion of Moroccan *darija* enriched with Berber words, seamlessly integrated into conversations about farming and various aspects of daily life. Words such as *tafrawa*, *tasukt*, *lkhabia*, *amzgar*, *tamskart*, *tadart*, and others were intrinsic to our daily discourse. Expanding on the arguments and perspectives put forth by Cid Kaoui, who challenges a colonial-centric approach to dictionary-making, Chafik, alongside other indigenous linguists and Berber lexicographers, emphasizes the necessity of analyzing Tamazight within the framework of local *darija*. I employ this colonial case study as a cautionary note concluding with the noteworthy contributions of Chafik. His work resonates with Cid Kaoui’s message, emphasizing the significance of not overlooking the intricate relationship between Arabic and Tamazight varieties. While this exploration of Berber dictionary-making helps us trace the larger genealogies of knowledge about Tamazgha, it also underscores that the study of Berber culture today cannot be divorced from the enduring legacy of French colonial influence, which extends to linguistics and dictionaries covering diverse regions across North Africa. Acknowledging and navigating this historical context is crucial for cultivating a nuanced comprehension of Berber languages, cultures, and the continuous endeavors to safeguard their rich heritage through their authentically compiled, crafted and updated *amawal*.

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