

## Why the Amazigh Studies Initiative in the United States Now?

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In the disciplines that study the Maghreb and the Middle East, Tamazight is one of the most overlooked Indigenous languages and cultures. Amazigh Studies, a dynamic, prolific, and decades-old field that focuses on the examination of all aspects of Imazighen and their language and culture, is nowhere to be found in the institutional landscape of Anglophone academia today.<sup>1</sup> However, this has not always been the case. In the latter half of the twentieth century, several scholars and institutions made serious attempts to incorporate Amazigh Studies—then known as Berber Studies—into their programmatic and curricular offerings. Yet that institutional and scholarly history is so far removed from our present moment that it might erroneously suggest that the absence of Amazigh Studies in American academia has always been the norm.<sup>2</sup> The reality is in fact quite different, and the history of Amazigh Studies in the United States is very rich and full of innovation.

Instead of waiting for this normalized absence of Amazigh Studies to resolve itself, we decided to launch an Amazigh Studies Initiative (AMASI). The African proverb says: “repeated visits to the mud pit enable the wasp to construct its nest.” In a similar fashion, the AMASI is our endeavor to follow in the footsteps of the pioneers who, from the 1960s through the 1990s, worked to anchor Amazigh Studies in American academia. With the generous and unprecedented support of the Robert Lemelson Foundation, we are launching the AMASI, which not only aims to rehabilitate Amazigh Studies in the United States but also—and most importantly—to create a variety of scholarly and curricular resources that will ensure the sustainability of engagement with Amazigh language and its cultural production in the years to come. The AMASI’s end-goal is the full-fledged recognition and inclusion of Amazigh Studies within the academic departments and centers that focus on Tamazgha, the larger Amazigh homeland where varieties of Amazigh languages are used on a daily basis to communicate, conduct business, and produce knowledge. Although a neologism, Tamazgha opens up myriad possibilities for Amazigh Studies to serve as a linchpin to connect Indigenous Studies, Arabic Studies, African Studies, and French and Francophone Studies, among others.

The University of California at Los Angeles played a pioneering role in institutionalizing Amazigh Studies in the United States. UCLA had an innovative vision for Near Eastern and African Studies under the leadership of Gustave E. von Grunebaum, whom it hired from the

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<sup>1</sup> El Guabli (2022; 2023).

<sup>2</sup> El Guabli (forthcoming).

University of Chicago in 1957 with the specific mandate to establish the Near East Center at UCLA. Original correspondence between von Grunebaum, University of California President Clark Kerr (former chancellor of Berkeley), and Dean Paul Dodd, dean of Social Sciences, shows that von Grunebaum had an inclusive vision for the center that he had been authorized to establish. It should be noted here that Kerr, as chancellor and president within the UC system, helped draft the California Master Plan for higher education in the 1960s, which created California's 3-tier system of community colleges, state universities, and the UCs. His visionary perspective was behind the support of many new programs, including UCLA's focus on North Africa. Of particular interest to us is von Grunebaum's keen choice of North Africa as a launchpad for the Near East Center. In his blueprint to Dean Paul Dodd, von Grunebaum emphasized the importance of giving the center a distinct identity that would both place it among but also distinguish it from comparable institutions.



FIG 1: GUSTAVE E. VON GRUNEBAUM. Credit Majdouline Boum-Mendoza

This vision emphasized North Africa's centrality as a Muslim, Arab, and Amazigh (Berber) region that facilitates connections to different linguistic and cultural spheres, especially sub-Saharan and West Africa. In 1957, von Grunebaum set out this vision to Dean Dodd with great clarity:

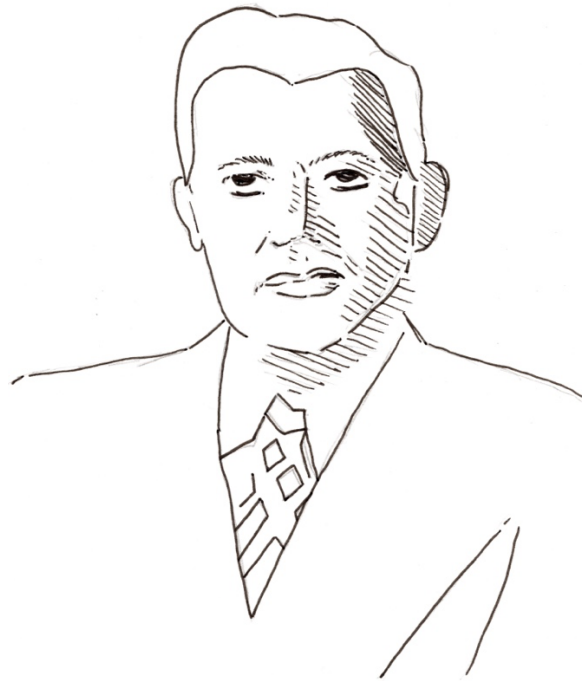
In building up a new center of any kind, it is indispensable to envisage clearly its distinctive profile.... [O]f the many cultural and political sections which have been and are now making up the so-called Near and Middle East, the Center should in my opinion, concentrate on the following. The Arab heartlands; western, i.e. North African and Spanish Islam.... The choice of Western Islam as one principal area of concentration of the Near East Center appears promising from one point of view. It is not North African Islam, its languages—for the study of one at least of the Berber languages which are spoken by

millions of people throughout North Africa must not be left out of consideration...[Finally] in terms of the plans which I understand UCLA is considering for the development of an African Center it would seem definitely desirable to envisage the Near East Center “working down” from the North African coast countries toward the area presumably to be cultivated by the African Center.

As it is spelled out in this important document, von Grunebaum’s vision stresses that Amazigh languages were spoken by millions of people at a time when Arabization policies were not yet at full steam in Morocco and Algeria, productively linking North Africa to the rest of Africa. It should be noted that von Grunebaum’s document was drafted in the context of Title VI of the National Defense Education Act. In addition to the establishment of Title VI centers, the NDEA promoted the study of foreign languages, which opened the doors for Amazigh languages to be included in UCLA’s Department of Near Eastern Languages (which later became the Department of Near Eastern and African Languages) in collaboration with the Near East Center.

This early on, it was remarkable how von Grunebaum championed an “open” Near East Center model that would leverage existing expertise within various departments at UCLA. In today’s terms, we can call this an interdisciplinary space with a focus on North Africa and Western Islam. He specifically stressed that this region had been severely overlooked, not just within the United States, but also on a global scale. This disregard had resulted in a critical shortage of qualified personnel, a deficiency that hindered American engagement with North Africa’s foreign relations. As a respected multilingual scholar of Islam and the Arab world, von Grunebaum pointed out the lack of elementary language training in American universities, particularly for the spoken Arabic languages of Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. In 1961, following a review of the Center’s languages program by Joseph Axelrod, von Grunebaum noted that one key area of the Center’s focus was “the study of the languages, the culture, and the social problems of North Africa. Thus, for example, if a spoken form of Arabic is introduced into the program in the future, the probability is it will be Moroccan Arabic rather than Egyptian or Iraqi Arabic.” In his roadmap for the Near East Center, von Grunebaum reassured Dean Dodd that North Africa held limitless research potential. He posited that the research environment in North Africa would prove more stable compared to other areas like Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. Linking research endeavors to life in Los Angeles, von Grunebaum also identified opportunities for research on diasporic minorities in Los Angeles and the history of Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey. The centrality of North Africa in this project translated into a strong interest in North African languages. Tamazight and its different dialects, grouped at the time under “Berber languages,” were a centerpiece in von Grunebaum’s vision for the Near East Center at UCLA. Instead of mere instruction in Amazigh languages, von Grunebaum advocated for the establishment of Berber Studies as an integral component of the Center, citing the complete lack of attention within the United States to the variety of Amazigh languages and to Amazigh social institutions. This early awareness of Tamazight as a language of millions of North Africans and a language in which Islam and its cultural institutions were being shaped allowed von Grunebaum to successfully create space for it in the new center. Also, von Grunebaum grew up in Europe, and the proximity to North Africa must have informed his staunch defense of Amazigh languages. Wolf Leslau, a specialist of Semitic languages and chairman of the Near Eastern and African Languages Department, played a key role in advocating for this plan at the university level. A student of Marcel Cohen, Leslau was influenced by the linguistic theories developed at the Institut National des Langues et Cultures Orientales (INALCO), where “Berber Studies” in France were housed after the independence of Algeria in 1962. It is no surprise that he

advocated at UCLA for the teaching of African languages, including Moroccan Arabic, Amharic, and Tamazight.



M3 DEAN PAUL DODD

FIG 2. PAUL DODD. Credit Majdouline Boum-Mendoza

To implement von Grunebaum's vision, UCLA hired Joseph Applegate as the first assistant professor of Berber languages in 1960. An African American and graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, Applegate had written a dissertation on the Shilha of Sidi Ifni in 1955. Although he had never set foot in Morocco, Applegate was an extraordinary polyglot and linguist; in his five years as a visiting assistant professor at MIT, he had conducted cutting-edge linguistic research of the time. He had rubbed shoulders with Noam Chomsky and even worked on some of the earlier projects involving machine translation. Because MIT had not offered him a tenure-track position, Applegate joined UCLA to become the first-ever professor of Berber/Amazigh languages in the United States. Von Grunebaum's roadmap had not only led to the establishment of an Amazigh Studies professorship but also helped create ample space for Moroccan Darija, which von Grunebaum thought should be taught before any Levantine or Egyptian dialect. With Tamazight and Moroccan Darija on the curriculum, UCLA's Near East Center positioned itself to play a major role in bridging the divide between the Middle East, North Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa within its very interdisciplinary center. Institutional and staffing initiatives were also accompanied by an effort to establish connections with booksellers across North Africa in order to build comprehensive library holdings for students and scholars.



MB JOSEPH APPLGATE

FIG. 3. JOSEPH APPLGATE. Credit Majdouline Boum-Mendoza

Applegate was both a linguistic genius and energetic scholar who enriched the Amazigh library with his prolific publications. In 1957, several years before joining UCLA, Applegate had even written an article entitled “Berber Studies I Shilha,” which mapped out the status of resources available at the time for students of Amazigh Studies. Because his primary training was in Shilha, UCLA made his full appointment contingent on him spending a year in Morocco to learn another Amazigh dialect. Funded by the university, Applegate spent a year in the Rif, where he learned Tarifit. Over the years, he learned Kabyle, the variety spoken in the Kabyle region in Algeria, and Tamashaq, the variety spoken by the Tuareg in Libya. He wrote textbooks and published papers on Amazigh linguistics. His books *A Structure of Shilha*, *An Outline of the Structure of Kabyle*, *Spoken Kabyle: A Basic Course*, and *Shilha: A Descriptive Grammar with Vocabulary and Texts* are some of the most prominent works he completed while at UCLA. Applegate did not just teach a variety of courses in the Department of Near Eastern and African Languages and the Department Linguistics, but he also trained students who would go on to become established scholars in their own right. For example, Dr. Jeanette Harries, who completed her BA and PhD at UCLA in Amazigh linguistics, earned a position as assistant professor of Amazigh languages and phonetics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Harries, like Applegate, wrote a textbook; hers was entitled *Tamazight Basic Course: Ait Mgild Dialect* in 1974. Although Applegate left UCLA in 1966 to be the founding director of Howard University’s African Studies Center, his commitment to Tamazight never waned. During his time at Howard University, he produced language materials

and audio recordings on the Libyan dialect and Tamasheq for the Peace Corps as part of the collaboration between Howard and different branches of US governmental agencies.

Applegate's departure for Howard did not mean the end of Amazigh languages at UCLA. Thomas Penchoen, a graduate of Sorbonne/INALCO, was officially hired in 1967 to replace Applegate. Even before the appointment was made, von Grunebaum approved a UCLA grant to support Penchoen's 1966 research on Berber dialects in Tunisia. Von Grunebaum believed that this was an opportunity to recruit Penchoen, noting in an official letter to the Austrian Turcologist Andreas Tietze, who was the chairman of the Department of Near Eastern and African Languages, that Penchoen's acceptance of the grant did not guarantee he would come to UCLA; the Center of Near East, von Grunebaum noted to Tietze, was "not entirely certain of his coming and consequently should another 'great' Berberologist drop from the sky, we would be morally entitled to catch him in a Sprungtuch." Penchoen's appointment was a strong signal that the university was committed to pursuing its Amazigh Studies mission. As von Grunebaum predicted, Penchoen's arrival was a huge gain for UCLA's Berber Studies program. His personal connection to French Berberologists such as André Martinet and Lionel Galand allowed him to put UCLA on the map in North Africa as well as France. He played a significant role in bringing Jilali Saib to conduct his doctoral studies at UCLA. Saib would later become a famous linguist who trained many students after he returned to Morocco.



FIG. 4. THOMAS PENCHOEN. Credit Majdouline Boum-Mendoza

The need for a professor in Amazigh Studies was also a sign of the program's viability thanks to increasing interest among students and faculty. According to Penchoen, the numbers varied between three and ten students in any given year, which was extraordinary for a language that was lacking all the programmatic and extracurricular resources necessary to undergird the

attraction of students. Penchoen, who could be said to represent the second generation of Amazigh language professors in the United States, wrote textbooks, published papers, and worked to promote Amazigh Studies despite the changing landscape of the discipline of Near Eastern and African Studies. He and Wolf Leslau co-edited the Afroasiatic dialect series, which published a number of publications on “Berber.” However, African languages and Near Eastern Studies started to part ways by the early 1970s, and after 1967 Middle East Studies became primarily focused on Egypt and the Levant. As a result, Tamazight and Darija were slowly deprived of the fostering environment of the 1960s, which had favored their integration into a larger scholarly and educational program. A letter addressed by several faculty members to the chair of the Department of Near Eastern Languages, dated January 30, 1974, reflects the connections that Tamazight had to other programs. In the letter, Arne Ambros, Giorgio Buccellati, John Gallender, Wolf Leslau, Yona Sabar, and Stanislav Segert advocated for Penchoen’s tenure at UCLA. The colleagues adduced Penchoen’s role in the building of Hamito-Semitic Studies and the launching of a series of monographs on Afroasiatic (Hamito-Semitic) dialects as well as a journal on Afroasiatic linguistics as evidence for his tenure case while also voicing their concerns regarding the future of Berber Studies at UCLA if he were to leave the university.

UCLA’s pioneering enterprise of establishing the first Berber Studies program in the United States sparked interest on other campuses. Although several social scientists and linguists knew a form of Tamazight because of their training and their focus on Amazigh areas for fieldwork, their institutions did not have professorships in Amazigh Studies. Some of these scholars were a part of the “Harvard generation,” which focused largely on racial themes and included Earnest Albert Hooton, Lloyd Cabot Briggs, Carleton S. Coon, and later David Montgomery Hart, who were all working on areas where Tamazight was the mother tongue of the populations among whom they conducted their research. This generation of scholars was contemporary with von Grunebaum’s efforts to develop Amazigh Studies at UCLA, but it is not readily apparent whether they made any efforts to start any institution-wide initiatives for the establishment of Amazigh Studies on their campuses. The exception to this, however, is the University of Michigan, which began teaching Tamazight as part of a “general program of research and training on the languages and cultures of North Africa.” Ernest Abdel-Massih, supported by a grant from Ford Foundation to the University of Michigan’s Center for Near Eastern and North African Studies, spent time in Morocco collecting materials to design his instructional materials. The University of Michigan even hired two teaching assistants from Morocco. One of the two TAs was Mohamed Guerssel who, in turn, earned a PhD in Linguistics at the University of Washington before taking a position at the University of Quebec, which he occupied until his retirement. Abdel-Massih authored *A Course in Spoken Tamazight: Berber Dialects of Ayt Ayache and Ayt Seghrouchen* and *A Reference Grammar of Tamazight: A Comparative Study of the Berber Dialects of Ayt Ayache and Ayt Seghrouchen*. Abdel Massih unfortunately passed away prematurely in 1982, and it seems that the University of Michigan did not pursue the teaching of Amazigh languages after his death.

After 1982, UCLA was the only academic institution in the US that had a fully-dedicated, tenured faculty member of Amazigh languages until Penchoen’s retirement in 1993. Nevertheless, the 1990s would see the rise of a new generation of Amazigh Studies scholars in the United States. Unlike their linguist predecessors, this new generation of scholars consisted primarily of social scientists. Although they each came into Amazigh Studies at different stages of their academic careers, it is important to note that there was a *rupture* with the experience of the linguists who taught Tamazight at UCLA and Michigan. At this point, the main academic concern was the

production of scholarship on Amazigh societies rather than the teaching of the language. Katherine Hoffmann, David Crawford, Paul Silverstein, Nabil Boudraa, Cynthia Becker, and Jane Goodman can be said to have occupied this intergenerational and transitional period from linguistics to social sciences. Their prolific and interdisciplinary scholarship on Amazigh societies and socio-cultural practices has brought knowledge about Imazighen and their worldview closer to English readerships. Their contributions to the study of Amazigh women, economies, art, and race in different Amazigh contexts has been crucial for the continued, albeit individual-driven, existence of Amazigh Studies as a field in Anglophone academia. Despite these scholars' commendable efforts and solid scholarship, the Amazigh language vanished from programmatic and curricular offerings in American academic departments. This said, these scholars have sustained Amazigh Studies through publication and engagement.

Colloquia and gatherings have also been seminal to the continuity of conversations about Amazigh Studies. Professors Nabil Boudraa and Joseph Krause have been very dynamic organizers of conferences and summer institutes that involve Amazigh Studies. In 2005, they organized an international conference entitled "The Berbers and Other Minorities in North Africa: A Cultural Re-appraisal." In 2007, they convened an NEH Summer Institute for College Professors under the theme "Berber North Africa: The Hidden Mediterranean Culture." In 2014 and 2017, they organized two NEH Summer Institutes focused on the Maghreb in which Amazigh issues occupied a big portion of the discussions. These conferences and summer institutes adopted an interdisciplinary approach to reflect on their subject matter. Most recently, Brahim El Guabli, Rachid Adnani, and Paul Silverstein received funding from the Association for the Advancement of Liberal Arts Colleges in 2023. Entitled "For an Amazigh-Inclusive Curriculum on North Africa," this project allowed the organizers to bring together several colleagues from liberal arts colleges to discuss the ways in which they could include Amazigh-focused content on their syllabi. These two examples by no means comprise an exhaustive inventory of all the initiatives and ongoing work that other colleagues are undertaking and of which we are not fully aware.

This summary of a particularly sinuous and complex landscape of Amazigh Studies in the United States begs for an explanation as to why academic departments have discontinued the established tradition of teaching Amazigh languages. Although UCLA, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the University of Michigan offered courses in the Arabic and French languages, they also were attentive to the need to teach Amazigh languages in order to give their students greater access to the diverse cultures of North Africa. These decisions were informed by what was almost a sanctification of strong language skills as a fundamental requirement for students to gain a better understanding of the places, societies, and materials they studied. Unlike today's focus on Arabic and French for studying North Africa, Tamazight was understood as a gateway into realms that these two languages alone could not unlock. The departments that had offerings in Amazigh language and culture expanded the curricular and scholarly potential of studying this area, accounting for the myriad ways in which the intersections of its different languages shaped Islam, cultures, and societies beyond North Africa alone. Von Grunebaum, Applegate, and Abdel-Massih seem to have understood what should be obvious to everyone working on North Africa—that is, the role that Amazigh languages have always played throughout the entire Maghreb in daily and intellectual life. Going against the prevalent tendency in North Africa to divest from and marginalize all cultural and pedagogical manifestations of Amazigh languages and culture, these scholars were conscious of the scholarly value of engaging with Tamazight directly. This was at a time when the Amazigh Cultural Movement was only starting



to form, with the aim of bringing attention to the threat of the ongoing Arabization process, which essentially targeted Tamazight and Imazighen despite its announced goal to replace French.

The absence of Amazigh Studies in American universities today has created a hegemonic situation in which the Indigenous language of North Africa is replaced by Arabic and French. In the context of post-colonial studies, it is almost extraordinary to watch how North Africa, which has its own Indigenous language, is simply conceptualized and read, taught, and written about without any need to account for the Indigenous language. Although much of the critique goes to Arab-Islamist political regimes in the region for creating this situation, this widespread and naturalized academic practice is equally responsible for the decline of Amazigh Studies and for the further marginalization in American academia of Imazighen and their indigeneity. The departments that have the wherewithal and the influence to set the terms for North African Studies have since chosen Arabic and French as their primary languages to approach and study North Africa, thus stripping Tamazight of its academic potential. It is jarring to see that even as the number of Amazigh scholars increases in American academia, departments are not yet rethinking this choice by creating lectureships and tenure track positions in Amazigh Studies. It is not far-fetched to say that teachings about post-colonialism and indigeneity within these departments become meaningless when they are accompanied by a disposition to question the inclusion of Tamazight and Amazigh Studies in the departmental setups. Writing and thinking about post-colonialism is wonderful, but it would be even more impactful if it were translated into actionable decisions to undo decades of exclusion of Amazigh Studies. This creates a quasi-colonial approach, whereby we mean the centering of non-Indigenous languages that have over the years been responsible for the decrease of the numbers of Amazigh speakers. When a department in the United States offers a major in North African Studies through French or Arabic without any curricular or programmatic space for Tamazight, this practice conveys to students that these are the only languages that matter for their training. In light of this reality, junior scholars and graduate students cannot be blamed for choosing more secure and clearer career paths that do not involve Amazigh Studies. However, departments could reassess how their own choices and priorities have participated in the exclusion of Tamazight while also outright contributing to its erasure. A self-reflection on the ways in which setting standards for what is important to study about an area thousands of miles away harms an Indigenous language and its culture would mark the beginning of a reshaping of academic units focused on North Africa so that they do justice to Amazigh Studies.

The lessons from UCLA and the University of Michigan demonstrate how visionary scholars can reconfigure the way disciplines are organized and connected to each other. The scholars who spearheaded these initiatives were aware that only a multilingual program can bring students closer to the realities they study. This pushes us to reiterate that a truly decolonial academic program is one that strives to enable students to learn about North Africa and the broader Tamazgha in its own Indigenous language. This decolonial program is one that aligns academic practice with Imazighen's literary and cultural achievements on the ground. The Amazigh cultural landscape is far too complicated to be understood through French and Arabic only. Imazighen are producing film, art, literature, and critical theory in their own language. They are translating from French and Arabic, and also into them. Amazigh writers have a strong presence that generates a novel intellectual ecosystem that has its own words, phraseology, and neologisms that hitherto useful approaches cannot accommodate.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In this regard, see the dossier Brahim El Guabli coordinated for *Jadaliyya* in 2021. Entitled "Tankra Tamazight: The Revival of Amazigh Indigeneity in Literature and Art," this dossier contained several

The teaching of the Amazigh language and creation of a space for Amazigh literature and thought will bring this cultural ecosystem and its ideational frameworks to the classroom, to campuses, and to academic journals. So far, these spaces have been sealed off to Amazigh cultural production. The teaching of Tamazight will be the cornerstone of a sustainable and self-renewing Amazigh Studies community in Anglophone academia. By creating lectureships for Tamazight as a critical language and making curricular offerings, particularly in courses that focus on North Africa, to include units on Amazigh indigeneity and cultural production, academic programs will then begin to create space for Amazigh Studies. The combination of language training and curricular opportunities will keep North African Studies abreast of the sea change that is happening in Tamazgha and will enable the next generation of scholars of North Africa to contribute to the renaissance of Amazigh Studies in Anglophone academia.

This brief history of Amazigh Studies in the United States indicates that the discipline can be re-energized and re-dynamized with a new vision that places Tamazight at the center of academic preoccupations in departments that cover North Africa. UCLA's story of instruction in Tamazight reveals that the language can work as a federating element that brings a constellation of disciplines together to contribute to the interdisciplinary field of Amazigh Studies. Because UCLA offered courses in the language, Tamazight had a distinct identity that positioned it vis-à-vis other languages. As such, any endeavor to rehabilitate and reinstate Amazigh Studies should fundamentally start with the teaching of Tamazight so as to spur a long-term language learning movement that would make Amazigh Studies a concrete reality.

In order to contribute to the re-dynamization and rehabilitation of Tamazight in Anglophone academia, we decided to launch an Amazigh Studies Initiative (AMASI). Rather than merely analyzing and mulling over the obstacles that have plagued the development of Amazigh Studies in the United States, we wanted to engage in an actionable program that contributes concretely to the reintegration of Amazigh studies in American universities. We have noticed that the dearth of materials that are needed for Amazigh Studies does not reflect the prolific output Imazighen have created in Tamazight and Arabic. The AMASI aims to create curricular and scholarly resources that scholars, students, and lay readers need to learn Tamazight and engage with Amazigh linguistic, literary, cultural, and social realities. The AMASI is an open invitation to all stakeholders who have a genuine interest in the integration of Amazigh Studies in Anglophone academia to partake in a large and multi-decade effort to revitalize this field in the United States. We believe that the fate of Amazigh Studies is not to be marginal but to be equally central to the specialization in North Africa. We do not see Arabic, French, Tamazight, or any other languages as staunch enemies or competitors but rather as complementary languages that will open up the horizons of any student or scholar whose work centers on Tamazgha. However, we also believe that Amazigh Studies should have value on its own and for the opportunities it offers now and which it will offer in the future.

Within the next three years, the AMASI will make it a priority to publish an Amazigh curriculum. As we have already pointed out above, pedagogical materials for learning and teaching Tamazight abound, but they have fallen behind the requirements of our time. In 1957, Applegate wrote, "there are no textbooks available for speakers of English." We wish this situation had changed and that we could say that there is an up-to-date textbook that is geared toward teaching the language to English speakers. This said, the professors of Tamazight in the 1960s through the

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articles that engaged with literary and cinematographic questions in Amazigh cultural production. See Bouyaakoubi (2021), Akounad (2021), Lafer (2021), Oudadene (2021), Laayouni and McNair (2021), Mansouri (2021).

1990s produced a rich corpus of curricular materials, adopting different approaches to the teaching of the language. However, teaching methodologies have evolved and the place of new technologies have changed the pace and the location of learning in ways that have made language learning more efficient, autonomous, and attentive to multilingualism within the same language. Guided by our awareness of the need to make Tamazight learning an enjoyable experience through cutting-edge and up-to-date materials, the Amazigh curriculum sponsored by the AMASI will follow state-of-the-art guidelines practiced in modern language teaching and based on the ACTFL standards. By making a Tamazight curriculum available for the four years of undergraduate instruction, the AMASI aims to make a lasting impact on the place of Tamazight in the college-level learning of the language.

A second pillar of the AMASI is the production of field-specific works that students and scholars need to pursue their research in Amazigh Studies. Much of the work currently being done in Amazigh Studies is conducted either through fieldwork or through European sources, which leaves a lot to be desired in terms of accounting for sources in Tamazight. By engaging in the production of a variety of scholarly and literary materials directly culled from sources in Arabic and Tamazight, the AMASI will create the largest corpus of Amazigh sources ever produced in the English language. The materials will be sufficient to allow graduate and undergraduate students as well as anyone interested in Amazigh Studies to have a fully rounded experience of engaging with materials produced originally in Tamazight and Arabic. While Amazigh sources will be mainly literary or scholarly and focused on authentic Amazigh original text, the sources translated from Arabic will be works produced by Amazigh thinkers, intellectuals, and leaders who chose to write in Arabic to reach a larger audience. At its completion, the AMASI will make enough materials available to cover an entire major in Amazigh Studies.

The third pillar of the AMASI is the launch of an Amazigh Studies Series with Georgetown University Press. The translation and publication of content produced originally in Tamazight has been lacking in the English language. The establishment of the Amazigh Studies Series aims to spur a translation and scholarly internship in Tamazight in order to create a space for Amazigh Studies in Anglophone academia. The publication agenda for book-length works will also be enhanced by the shorter scholarly articles published by *Tamazgha Studies Journal*, which we have co-founded with our colleague Katarzyna Pieprzak.

It is gratifying and satisfying for us to research the history of Amazigh Studies. However, it will be even more gratifying to see this living and extremely resilient language and its culture reinstated in the United States. The AMASI is one of the ways in which our efforts can be federated to create the synergies that will bring Tamazight to our campuses and classrooms. While we cannot carry out this massive task alone, our initiative will rely on the generosity and indefectible support of the many colleagues who truly believe that Amazigh Studies should be a full-fledged component of North African/Tamazghan Studies in Anglophone academia.

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