The Official Archaeological Perspective in Morocco and the Rif Heritage

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Abstract:
While the historical and social experiences of the several post-colonial North African states were different after independence, the ruling elites followed similar patterns on the Imazighen's concern: the path of incorporation and Arabization of these heterogeneous tribe-oriented populations under a homogeneous national identity of Arabic and Sunni Islamic faith. A false notion of a uniform territory, known as the "Maghreb" or the "Arab Maghreb" became popular in the political and academic world. In Morocco, the large Arabization campaigns included the building of an official history in which the original populations had little representation. As it happens with other disciplines sponsored and institutionalized by the state, archaeological practice is mainly linked with state interest. Archaeological practice in Morocco privileges the study of Prehistoric, Pre-Islamic, and Islamic periods, leaving aside a number of archaeological sites linked to Amazigh societies of several temporalities that do not fit with official periodization and interests. But what would happen if archaeological practice were to start from a perspective in which the Imazighen were placed in the center of the North African history? The aim of this essay is to explore this problematic taking the example of the archaeological practice in Morocco and the Rif Heritage.
Keywords:
Northern Morocco, Tamazgha, Archaeological Heritage, Amazigh, Rif.

Introduction

Parallel to the process of the emergence of a North African history centered on the Imazighen, a series of reflections on the territory that has sheltered the Imazighen for several millennia has been elaborated.

The different territories of North Africa have been named in various ways throughout history: *Mauretania Tingitana, Mauretania Cesarienis*, *Numidia, África Preconsularis*, *Barbary,* as well as *Al-Maghrib Al-Aqṣā, Al-Maghrib Al-Awṣat, Al-Maghrib Al-Adnā* and *Ifrīqīya* (Cornell 1998; xxiii). All these names refer us to a historical construction that focuses on the societies that have settled the region. In particular, these names remind us of Romans and Arabs, but what would happen if instead of focusing on them, we focus on the Imazighen, their history, and the material vestiges associated with the various Imazighen societies?

Recently, there has been talk about Tamazgha as the "land of Imazighen." Although this concept is a modern elaboration linked to the process of developing a history of North Africa

centered on the Imazighen, as described below, Tamazgha should be developed as a concept to be used in the archaeological discipline, something I argue here through the example of the Rifian heritage.

1. The Rif and the emergence of a notion of Rifian heritage

The Rif region is located in the northeast of the mountainous area of the current Kingdom of Morocco. Most of its inhabitants speak Tarifit (one of the three variants of Tamazight spoken in that country) as their mother tongue. At present, the Amazigh-speaking Rif covers the Moroccan provinces of Al Hoceima, Nador, Driouch, Berkane, and a mountainous area north of Taza: areas that have a high rate of migration to Western Europe and a low percentage to other continents.

The Rifian political landscape has been shaped by the lack of infrastructure in the region, poor economic development, and a historically conflictive relationship with the central power headed by the incumbent sultans of the urban areas (Makhzen), taking place both before the period of the Franco-Spanish Protectorate (1912-1956) as well as during and after Independence (1956). Thus, political, cultural, and social conditions have led to the emergence of social movements and rebellions over time (Ramirez, 2017).

One of the most significant historical events for the Rifians was the creation of the "Rifian Republic" (in a period known as the "Rif War" in Spanish historiography). Under the leadership of Abdl Krim el Khattabi, between 1921 and 1926, the tribes of the Rifian chain united in an armed anti-colonialist movement, pushing back Spanish and French forces. They subsequently formed an independent territory that was again incorporated back into the Franco-Spanish Protectorate when the Rifian leader surrendered after a Franco-Spanish coalition dropped chemical bombs on the civilian population (Hart 1976, 369-403; Peyron 2021, 149-160).

Similarly, the conflictive events that took place after independence under the rule of Mohammed V, Hassan II, and Mohammed VI (1958-59, 1980, 1980, 2011, and 2016 to the present), are relevant for the Rifians and have contributed to shaping a local identity that the state finds to be in conflict with national identity (Ramirez 2011b, 2017). The Rif has suffered heavy repression throughout its history, both by European powers and, more recently, by the Alaouite state; political prisoners, martyrs, and missing people are common in Rifian narratives, a circumstance that has given rise to political action and solidarity at the international level. All these events, in addition to being part of the oral tradition and historical memory expressed in different ways, are linked to the local geography. Each mountain, each place, topographical features of various kinds, and houses in an archaeological context, all constitute a trace of the great mural of Rifian history that does not appear in traditional historiography.

The most recent political upheaval in the region is known as the Hirak; a social movement with a transnational reach that began in Al Hoceima in November 2016. People took to the streets as they broke their fasting during Ramadan, catalyzed by the outrage caused by the death of Mohcine Fikri, a fish vendor who was crushed to death in a garbage truck while trying to retrieve his merchandise confiscated by the police. Simultaneous demonstrations took place in different localities of the Rif and in different parts of Europe. Later, in Morocco, the demonstrations were harshly repressed by the police, leading to the murder, torture, and imprisonment of leaders who emerged at that time, such as the activist Nasser Zefzafi, who was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

In summary, the conflicts between the Rifians and the sultans in the pre-Franco-Spanish Protectorate, the European powers during the Protectorate, and the Alawite state in the independence period have all played an important role in the construction of the Amazigh Rifian

identity that contrasts with the Arab-Islamic identity promoted by the state. In conjunction with the influence of the Amazigh cultural movement that emerged in Europe, this situation has resulted in the construction of not only an identity that unifies all the original populations of North Africa, but also of a local and counter-public notion of the heritage and history of the Rif, centered on the Rif Imazighen.

My first approach to this heritage was in 2007. When I was visiting the Rif for the first time, a group of Rifians participating in a cultural festival took me to see an abandoned building that, to my surprise, had been the government house of the Rif Republic in Ajdir. In 2013, O. Karkar and I were doing fieldwork in the Rifian mountains. When we asked a group of young people belonging to different cultural NGOs to show us the archaeological sites they knew in the region, they first showed us Adrar Abarcan (Black Mountain). Adrar Abarcan is a mountain located near the villages of Azraf and Kassita, famous for marking the division between the French and Spanish Protectorate and for having a series of trenches built by the Spanish (it is said that they were used by Rifians who fought under the leadership of Abdl Krim). During that visit, our guides included old Spanish military buildings, vestiges of houses said to have belonged to Rif War period Rifian leaders, and a settlement near the saint (imrabḍen) of Sidi Abdlah n Tazimi named as Dcar Acemerar (Ramirez and Blancas 2019). On another journey to the mountains near Nador in the company of Y. Driouech, the trail pattern was the same: domestic units of Rifian vernacular architecture in archaeological context of various periods, vestiges associated with olive oil production areas, as well as Rifian imrabḍen and military buildings of the Spanish Protectorate period. Similarly, during the development of my doctoral thesis, men and women of different ages who were not linked to cultural NGOs held historical reference points such as caves, springs, and imrabḍen. Of particular note, they also pointed to an abandoned house, very well preserved due to once having belonged to a saint (Ramirez and Karkar 2012).

With each new period of fieldwork, I realized that what the Rifians considered to be historical and archaeological heritage was far from the idea that I had of archaeological sites in the Rif and in Morocco in general. From the point of view of the institutionalized praxis of this discipline, archaeological heritage consists of Roman or Phoenician sites, prehistoric caves such as Ifri n Amar, or Islamic cities such as Medinat n Nakur, founded at the end of the 8th century when the Islamic conquest of the region began, among others.

Most of the sites pointed out by the Rifians correspond to more recent temporalities or are linked to the particular history and beliefs of the Rif. For the most part, none of these seem to be of interest to the archaeology promoted by the nation-state.

This local perspective of Rifian heritage has acquired a political dimension for local youth and represents, in my opinion, a contesting ideology shaped by the influence of the cultural movement initiated by the Imazighen/Berbers of Kabyle in France in the 1960s. This cultural current had a strong impact on all Amazigh regions, because the Arabization-Islamization, as the axis of the construction of a national identity in countries with Amazigh population (namely Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Mali, and in Egypt, the Siwa Oasis)[1], has certain similarities which will not be mentioned in detail here.

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[1] With the exception of the Canary Islands, which, although experiencing a reconstitution of its Amazigh identity that also disrupts the historical and archaeological field, has taken place in a particular context that we will not deal with in this text.

2. The strategy of post-colonial Morocco in the construction of the nation and the birth of an imagined community founded on a North African Amazigh identity

Morocco achieved independence from France and Spain in 1956. Although the protectorate laid the foundations for an independent and unified central government, the ruling elite (which lacked Amazigh political consciousness representation), faced many challenges to achieve a unified state politically, territorially, and ideologically. There were 11 million inhabitants; 90% were illiterate and more than two-thirds of the population lived in rural areas - mostly desert and mountains that were difficult to access due to lack of infrastructure - with the majority being Imazighen speakers of one of the three main linguistic variants of the country (Maddy-Weitzman 2011).

Following the trend of modern European states in the nation-building process, the new government created historical and cultural myths of continuity and homogeneity, coupled with applying different strategies to overcome poverty and illiteracy. In 1958, Morocco joined the League of Arab States and began to promote an Arab-Islamic policy:

> [...] Mohammed V used the Berber element in government to counterbalance Istiqlal influence in keeping with nation-building logic, a fresh Vulgate concentrated on Pan-Arabism and Oriental culture, militant sympathy and support for the Palestinian cause, together with the spiritual legacy of Islam, possibly as a reaction to long exposure to French culture and a supposed attempt to Christianize the Berbers (Peyron 2021, 245).

In the field of education, the Arabic language and Islam were seen as symbols of unity that could shape a modern national identity as well as a cohesive society. In this context, one of the main challenges was to incorporate the heterogeneous, tribally organized Imazighen populations (non-centralized societies, which, in many cases, remained independent of the powers of the urban areas ruled by dynasties of Arab-Islamic tendencies) (Gellner 1969; Hart 1976; Maddy-Weitzman 2011 and Peyron 2021). In 1961, Article III of the Fundamental Law defined Morocco as an Arab and Muslim state, declaring Arabic as the national and official language (Benítez 2021, 103, 104). Thus, Arabization began to be promoted in the educational system. The intellectuals who spearheaded this process agreed in seeing the Amazigh language and identity as an obstacle to unity. Tamazight was banned in schools and Arabic became the main language of the official administration along with French. The Arabization process was accompanied by the elaboration of an official national history in which the original populations were poorly represented:

> Moroccan history began with the arrival of Islam and the Idrisid dynasty [descendants of the Prophet]. The Berbers, 'the sons of Mazigh', were ethnified into Arabs: the Berber language was sister to Arabic, the origins of the Berbers were said to be in Yemen and they lived primitively in caves until Islam showed them the light. (Maddy-Weitzman 2011, 89)

This official history focused on the historical perspective of the Arab Maghreb and therefore placed the Arabs at the center of the story, leaving aside the perspective of the original populations, which includes considering North Africa as a territory populated since ancient times by different Imazighen groups.

Abd al-Wahab Ben Mansour, the official historian of the kingdom, assumed that, with the implementation of an Arabized education system and the expansion of the transportation infrastructure, the Amazigh language and identity would disappear in almost fifty years and be replaced by standard colloquial Arabic.

While the historical, political, and social experiences of other North African states differed, the ruling elites developed similar strategies for the national construction of the Amazigh question, namely, the path of incorporation and Arabization under a homogeneous national identity of Arab

and Sunni Islamic faith. This affected not only the Imazighen populations but also Jews and other groups of several origins settled in Morocco (Maddy-Weitzman 2011). Arabization was more successful in urban areas than in the rural context, and the results were almost similar in each country. Despite the efforts of the North African states, these policies had the opposite effect of the desired one.

It is generally the case that ethnic identities are a product of nation-building and not its precursor, therefore, instead of producing a unitary identity, power relations in nation-states tend to exacerbate differences. Although some authors indicate that the first traits of ethnicity usually appear during the colonial period due to the classification of the population by the colonizers (Smith 1997), in Morocco, the Berber Dahir (1930) and the implementation of the Amazigh language in the educational system by the French colonial administration (1923) (personal communication, A. Hannou, August 2020) contributed to marking the distinction between Arabs and Imazighen since the Protectorate period. Thus, instead of disappearing, Imazighen identities underwent a transformation due to local and historical circumstances, combined with the influence of the Amazigh Movement (AM), which originated from the first migrations from North Africa to Western Europe in the 1950s.

This movement was initially led by a group of Kabyle intellectuals (Algeria) who, in 1966, created the first Amazigh/Berber association in France: the *Académie Berbère*. A few years later, other cultural associations and artistic collectives emerged in Europe and North Africa. The initial objective of these diaspora organizations was to promote awareness and knowledge of the Amazigh issue in universal terms, attempting to reach out to marginalized Imazighen (Maddy-Weizman 2011.) who, despite regional particularities, had experienced similar situations in their countries of origin.

These circumstances can be summarized in different types of discrimination: prohibition to speak the mother tongue in educational spaces or administrative buildings, bias in the administration of justice for not speaking the official language, repression for speaking out in favor of cultural and other rights, and marginalization as well as lack of opportunities in general. For those who experienced such situations, assimilation into the culture of the host country, or Arabization, was not an option, so joining Amazigh cultural associations proved to be an alternative in line with their experiences.

In Morocco, inspired by the associations created in France, the first Amazigh cultural association was formed in Rabat in 1967 by a group of young Imazighen university students (Id Belkassem 2000, 110). Over the years, this type of organization multiplied in the North African states, and a network was gradually consolidated between all of them and the diaspora. This allowed the emergence of a North African Amazigh identity that blurred regional particularities (Ramirez 2011b), becoming the basis of an imagined community (Anderson 2006 [1983], Bengio and Maddy-Weitzman 2013) with an important political potential, one whose unity does not depend on physical borders, but on a shared ideology and social ties of various kinds.

Diasporas tend to nostalgically recreate the homeland of origin and keep social ties alive. The interaction between them and their compatriots builds a scenario that facilitates the emergence of counterpublics and spaces of dissent in which unofficial opinions are expressed and alternative knowledge is produced. Parallel to the transmission of news, the sending of monetary remittances, recurrent visits, and definitive returns, there is an important exchange of ideas between the diasporas and the communities of origin which, together with social and economic changes, give rise to new perspectives on culture and identity (Bernal 2005, 176).

Traditionally, interactions between the Imazighen diasporas and their compatriots in their communities of origin took place through joint activities such as cultural and political encounters in addition to the exchange of publications. Today, however, the transnational space for interaction is created mainly through the web and media technologies (including social networks and platforms popularized by mobile applications). Technologies and different media facilitate political activism through the web, not only through participation in online political gatherings but also in political protests occurring in real-time (as was initially the case during Hirak). Further, online interaction logically increased during the peaks of Covid-19.

Ideas expressed through the media and online meetings have found fertile ground among young people grouped in cultural associations. These have become the main actors in ideological exchanges and political discussion, creating networks and virtual spaces of dissent that have given rise to the emergence of counterpublics and unofficial points of view. Likewise, these spaces of interaction have created the conditions for establishing solidarity networks of various kinds that become visible in particular situations, including various protests occurring at both ends of the Mediterranean.

3. The Amazigh Movement (MA) and the Amazigh Cultural Movement (MCA) in Morocco

A variety of significant political and social changes occurred in Europe at the end of the 20th century: the decline of the communist bloc, the reunification of Germany, the end of the Cold War, the resurgence of ethnic and nationalist movements, and the processes of European integration, to name a few. These were all reflected in social and cultural movements that were in favor of the vindication of ethnic minorities and the recognition of their rights in general. Following this trend, Amazigh cultural associations multiplied in the 1990s. Such circumstances showed that the globalization process failed to achieve the socio-cultural homogeneity expected by modern nations.

In the Rif, the first Amazigh association emerged in the city of Nador in January 1978, named the "Association for Cultural Development" (Arabic: *Al-intilaqah taqafiah*). Due to political circumstances, the names of the NGOs created before 1990 were in Arabic. Their names in Tamazight did not appear until after that year, and it was then that these organizations multiplied in the Rif (Personal communication, M. Fathi in May 2020).

These NGOs were the expression of a political and cultural movement whose goal was to achieve recognition of the cultural, identity-based, and linguistic rights of the Imazighen in Morocco, who at that point constituted two-thirds of the population. To achieve this goal, the associations followed the path traced by NGOs in Europe, holding artistic, cultural, and academic meetings, producing publications, and promoting the teaching and use of the Neo-Tifinagh script. The state did not receive these initiatives in the best way, and some events were banned at the last moment. Moreover, several publications were censored, and some members of these NGOs were put behind bars while others became parts of imprisoned persons.

One of the world's best-known cases of repression in Morocco was the imprisonment of seven members of the "Tilili" (Freedom) association, founded in Goulmina in 1990. These young people were arrested after raising a flag containing characters in Tamazight (Tifinagh). Amnesty International intervened to obtain the prompt release of the detainees and, following these events, several NGOs participated in international forums, such as the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations held in Geneva in July 1994. This meeting laid the foundations for the *Congrès Mondiale Amazighe* (CMA) that was created in France in 1995 (Ramirez 2011b).

The joint actions of the MA in Europe and Morocco finally bore fruit. In 1994, King Hassan II announced that the "Berber" language would be included in the educational system. However, it was not until 2011 that his son, King Mohammed VI, carried out this incorporation and created the *Institut Royal de la Culture Amazighe* (IRCAM). Unfortunately, this incorporation was done in a deficient and partial manner, so much so that some Imazighen activists consider that the demands of the MA have not been fully met (Personal communication, A. Hannou, August 2020). In 2011, due to pressure from social movements that developed in the framework of the so-called "Arab Spring" (or, more properly speaking, People's Spring), Tamazight was declared an official language in the Moroccan Constitution. These circumstances opened up new possibilities for activists who, following the model of the Kabyle, began to delineate a local perspective on cultural heritage that does not correspond to official views and could be defined as a counter-public perspective.

This followed a notion of "creation," but not in the sense of "invention" *per se*. Rather, it was one of "shaping," "structuring," and "enhancing" various interpretations of the tangible and intangible cultural elements that are part of the Imazighen's historical memory, hailing from many regions of North Africa. To a large extent, this perspective does not correspond to that of state institutions on history and archaeology, because these are not vestiges that can be classified as prehistoric, medieval, Roman, or Phoenician, strictly speaking. Further, although the Rifians were gradually Islamized since the end of the 7th century, neither can we speak of an Islamic archaeology using current archaeological praxis vocabulary. The latter has focused its attention on the study of complex societies and consequently, of urban settlements, and the Rifians did not have cities or nucleated settlements. In the Rif, based on the existing studies, it is possible to affirm that the archaeological settlement pattern was dispersed and corresponded to a non-centralized organization (Ramirez 2011a; Ramírez and Karkar 2012; Ramírez 2017; Ramírez 2018l; Ramírez and Blancas 2019 and Ramírez 2021).[2]

The archaeological legacy defined as such by the Rifians encompasses elements of diverse temporalities and includes, to a large extent, vestiges that could be framed within the so-called archaeology of the contemporary past. This is a thematic archaeology, whose theoretical bases - which follow the rhythm of the movement of post-processual archaeology- were constituted, or reborn (in the words of González Ruibial) in 2001 with the publication of *Archaeologies of the contemporary past* by Victor Buchlis and Gavin Lucas (González 2014).

In some contexts, it emerged from a debate between official and unofficial perspectives as to what should or should not be part of the national heritage or considered important. In South Africa, for example, with the triumph of democracy in 1994, there was also a critique and reconstitution of national identity:

> [...] the state heritage management agency, the National Monuments Council (NMC), has had to redress the imbalance in the list of officially recognized heritage sites, i.e., heritage sites declared National Monuments under the National Monuments Act (Act No. 28 of 1969, as amended in 1989). This list has been heavily criticized for being largely composed of white colonial buildings or structures, leaving aside, in general, heritage sites relevant to the majority of South Africans (Frescura 1992).

To redress this imbalance, there is a tendency to identify, interpret and commemorate heritage sites that are symbols and expressions of recent political change and that promote the concept

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[2] I have concluded this from the archaeological and anthropological research I did in the region between 2008 and 2018 which resulted in my doctoral thesis and several publications (Ramirez 2011a, Ramírez and Karkar 2012, Ramírez 2017, Ramírez 2018, Ramírez and Blancas 2019 and Ramírez 2021).

of a new South African identity and nationhood (Hart and Winter 2001:84). Although in the case of Morocco, there has only been significant progress on the language issue and, more recently, on a rethinking of the place of the Imazighen in the country's history.

According to my experience, derived from formal and informal talks with Rifians belonging to NGOs and non-politicized peasants, it is possible to say that the Rifian tangible and intangible heritage can constitute a set of:

> [...] houses and granaries, words, landscapes, myths of origin, technological knowledge and bodily gestures [...] fragments of a very ancient history that survive to this day, sometimes, transformed into weapons of resistance, into tools to maintain certain political values and a sense of community under the pressures of the State, of more powerful groups or of globalization (González-Ruibal 2014, 2[1684]).

This structuring of what is the tangible and intangible heritage of the Rif, as well as its enhancement, is not an isolated phenomenon. In multiple contexts globally, there are minority groups fighting for the recognition of their identity and their cultural, political, social, and economic rights. It is here that the issue of heritage becomes an instrument of cultural resistance. In addition to the spaces for reflection created by NGOs, the academic field, composed of the same disciplines that state institutions sponsor and promote (such as anthropology, linguistics, history, and archeology, among others) constitute the tools that have allowed for the development of a counter-public vision of this heritage.

In the present moment, there are a variety of examples of this process: the publications of the *Institut Royal de la Culture Amazighe* (IRCAM) and of several other authors, such as Hassan Banhakeia, Mohamed Boudhan, Mustafa Aarab, Khalid Bouyaala, Kadi Kaddour, Asmaa Aouattah, among many others; different kinds of initiatives such as academic events, Amazigh music festivals, or artistic and cultural meetings between associations. At some point, as witj the South African example cited above, with the case in Sudan (Salomon 2020), and with the Indigenous populations in North America, Latin America, and many other regions, this process of reflection and awareness-raising ends up questioning the official praxis of academic disciplines that address cultural heritage and the classification of national heritage as elaborated by official bodies that hold a monopoly on cultural management today.

4. The emergence of a North African history centered on the Imazighen and the valorization of a Rifian notion of history and cultural heritage.

Since the French colonization of Algeria in 1830, travelers, military, and religious men began producing a plethora of ethnographic documents and observations, on the populations of the region. In the mid-19th century, the first publications on the Berber world appeared from the École Supérieure des Lettres (which became the Faculty of Letters in Algiers). Hanoteau and Letourneux, René Basset, and Stéphan Gsell, among others, became obligatory references. However, the prehistoric North African, Carthaginian, Roman, Christian, Vandal, Byzantine, Arab-Muslim, Ottoman, and French worlds were presented as separate and unconnected. The Berbers, or Imazighen, appeared as passive subjects, unfit to conform state entities while external actors were overvalued. Similarly, each specialist conducted research disconnected from other related disciplines. Gabriel Camps is the one to whom, satisfyingly, we owe the articulation of these worlds; he is responsible for having placed the Berbers center stage in North African history, as well as for having shown their permanence from the perspective of the *longue durée* (Salem Chaker 2007[1980], 13-20).

Camps' scholarly work, as well as that of his predecessors, such as Mouloud Mammeri (Algeria), Saïd Sifaw (Libya), Mohammed Chafik (Morocco), and other important figures, served as the basis for what we could call the foundation of a dynamic Amazigh history and a notion of Amazigh Cultural Heritage, initially driven by the Kabyle diaspora that established the first Amazigh cultural association in France, in 1967. This modern notion of North African history centered on the Imazighen (or, Berbers)[3], had an impact on all North African Imazighen communities. The names of historical figures from various periods such as Sheshonq I, Massinissa, Syphax, and Youba, among others, began to form part of the historical narratives of all cultural NGOs in favor of the Amazigh identity.

Likewise, important dates began to be commemorated within the framework of this new conception of Amazigh history. Some examples of these commemorations are the Amazigh Year (Yenayer) and the Berber Spring (*Tafsut imazighen*), the latter of which recalls the repression suffered by the Kabyles in Algeria in 1980. The academic work of intellectuals of Amazigh origin and non-Imazighen "Berberists" of the time laid the foundations for a dynamic process of construction, developing an identity and history that incorporated the knowledge produced from any avenue committed to the Amazigh cultural movement and Amazigh studies in general.

In the Rif, the previously mentioned Nador association, Al-intilaqah taqafiah, played an important role in "raising awareness of Amazigh identity" (Personal communication with M. Fathi, June, 2020), as well as in shaping a local identity and cultural heritage. Its members were mainly intellectuals, artists, students, and university professors, some of whom had studied in France and maintained a close relationship with Kabyle NGOs in that country. This association was the first to promote the use of Neo-Tifinagh and, later, Latin characters instead of the Arabic alphabet for writing in Tamazight. Likewise, some of its members stood up for the promotion of Amazigh academic studies. Kaddour Cadi (1952-1995), who received his doctorate from the Sorbonne University in Paris, is an outstanding example who is remembered for encouraging linguistic studies of the Tarifit language, as is Marzouk el Ouariachi, who played a relevant role in the field of sociological studies.

Rifian intellectuals also encouraged the reading of anthropological works such as *The Ayth Waryaghar of the Moroccan Rif*, by David Montgomery Hart, a work recently translated into Arabic by the diaspora in the Netherlands. Similarly, through a critical revision of official historiography, Abdl Krim el Khattabi (Moulay Muhand), became a symbol of the struggle of the Rif people and not simply a warrior who "had fought colonialism in support of the Alawite regime," as the official version of Moroccan history says, having before been completely ignored.

Al-intilaqah taqafiah was the first NGO to organize cultural festivals in Morocco, in which a new genre of Rifian music flourished.[4] Other associations followed the path traced by this Nador-

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[3] Of course the work of Gabriel Camps is not the only one to have placed the Imazighen at the center of the history of North Africa; more recently other scholars have followed this trend such as Mohand Tilmatine (a distinguished researcher at the University of Cadiz, Spain) among others, but in this paper emphasis has been placed on Camps for being the precursor of this perspective.

[4] Parallel to the emergence of the "New Kabyle (Kabyle) Song" phenomenon in the 1970s (Goodman 2003 and 2004), the "New Rifian Song" also emerged as a revitalization of traditional Rifian poetry (izlan), accompanied by a new style of poetry (taqsist) (Personal communication, A. Chahid, August, 2020). A group of singers, members of the Al-intilaqah taqafiah association in Nador, became the founders of a musical style called "Committed Amazigh Rifian Music" (Personal communication with O. Karkar, June 2020). Walid Mimoun, Alal Chilah, Hassan Tibarnit, and some Rifian groups such as Irizam, Isefdawen,

based organization, giving way to the current academic, artistic, and political activities regularly carried out by Rifian activists on both sides of the Mediterranean.

In conclusion, with the emergence of the nation-state flourished numerous social and historical disciplines that serve the ends of the state, promoting ideologies of identity and cultural unity. Meanwhile, as a reaction against the homogenizing tendencies of the nation-state, unofficial points of view have emerged within these same disciplines as well as in non-academic spaces. Further, from different fronts, alternative knowledge has been produced to legitimize ethnic minorities that have little or no political representation. Thus, although the academics representing each point of view adhere to a certain scientific rigor, the public (official) and the counter-public (unofficial) inevitably become a political action whose *raison d'être* depends on each other.

5. Archaeological praxis and theory in Morocco

Julian Thomas points out that archaeology as an institutionalized academic discipline emerged parallel to the nation-state in Europe, developed to study the past to legitimize national myths underpinning identity and territorial unity (Thomas 2004). In modern states, the institutions dedicated to the study of archaeological heritage are, in general, those that have a monopoly on cultural management. Through the training of specialists, they determine which material remains should be part of the national heritage. Today, however, the interest of nation-states is not limited to the legitimization of national ideologies, but, depending on the country, archaeology can also have an economic orientation linked to the development of tourism in parallel to academic research. However, for several decades, ethnic minorities in different latitudes have begun to question and challenge the knowledge institutionalized by the State through the production of their own historical narratives and the enhancement of a heritage defined within the framework of their own traditions.

In Morocco, since the Protectorate, there was a tradition of studying Roman sites and prehistoric vestiges, among others (Gozalbes-Cravioto 2005). More recently, the Institut National des Sciences de l'Archéologie et du Patrimoine (INSAP), was created by the Moroccan government in 1985 -and reorganized in 2011- for the study and protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

This institution has a first cycle, in which master and doctoral academic programs offer the following specializations: Anthropology-Museography; Archaeology (which includes Prehistory, Pre-Islamic Archaeology, and Islamic Archaeology); Conservation-Restoration; and Intangible Cultural Heritage. Current research projects include the prehistoric, pre-Islamic, and Islamic periods, as well as a line of research on anthropology focusing on Moroccan archaeologists since 1956 in coordination with the Jacques Berque Center (France). Most of the current INSAP projects are developed in collaboration with local universities and with groups in the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany, and Australia, who are mostly concerned with the study of Roman and Islamic urban settlements or prehistoric caves.

It is striking that in a country where at least one-third of the population is Amazigh, IRCAM collaborates in a single research project with INSAP: the Tamanart *Étude des sites rupestres* project, dedicated to the study of rock art sites in that area located in the province of Tata, within the region of Guelmin Smara. This heritage is considered part of the legacy of the ancient

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Iniumazigh, Tufali, and Ithran, followed in the footsteps of Kabyle singers such as Idir (Hamid Cheriet), Lounis Ayt Meguellet, Ferhat Mehenni, and Matoub Lounès.

Imazighen as the original inhabitants of North Africa. However, this heritage is much broader and is not necessarily in line with what INSAP considers part of the national heritage (a statement that is not intended to detract from the important research work done by this institution).

In general, it can be said that the archaeological practice sponsored by modern states has had a great influence on the development of the discipline in Western Europe, in connection with the perspectives of social evolutionism that first appeared in the second half of the 19th century. European archaeology was especially influenced by the evolutionary theories initially led by V. Gordon Childe and later developed in various directions as shown in the works of Leslie White (1900-1975), Julian Steward (1902-1072), Marshall Sahlins (1930), Elman Service (1915-1996), Robert Carneiro (1927-2020), and Marvin Harris (1927-2001) (Sanderson in Barfield 2000, 224-228).

In the different perspectives of social evolutionism, social complexity is determined by variables such as technological development, the appearance of writing systems, and urban settlements (centralized organizations with bureaucracy), among others (*Ibidem*). On the other hand, prehistory deals with the study of societies with less social complexity (without the development of writing systems). In this context, Egyptians, Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Christians, Vandals, Byzantines, and Arab-Muslims are examples of complex societies, while those societies that do not fit these criteria are relegated to the moniker of prehistory. It bears asking: what are the classification and periodization criteria for vestiges that do not fit any of these criteria of the praxis promoted by the state? Indeed, the perspective of official archaeological praxis entails multiple complications when we look at the link between material culture and its various temporalities, as well as with myths and stories from the Amazigh perspective at the local level.

6. Archaeological legacy in the Rif: official perspectives and counterpublic interpretations

Although the Rif is a little-explored region, there are some archaeological works framed in the official praxis covering the prehistoric, pre-Islamic, and Islamic periods. The Ifri n'Ammar cave (Nami 2010; Richter *et al.* 2010; Eiwanger *et al.* 2012), with an occupation history between 78000 and 130000 years old, Hassi Ouenzga, Rjem Souk, Ifri el Baroud, Taghit Haddouchm and various caves located on the coast between Alhoceima and Nador (Tomasso and Ross 2017), all constitute examples the region's importance for studying the first societies that populated North Africa. Their study is of great interest, not only in Morocco but worldwide. As far as medieval archaeology is concerned, Medinat al-Nakur (today, under the waters of the Abdelkerim El Khattabi Dam), Badis, and Ribat Nakur in the coastal area (Redman 1983; Bonne *et al.* 1990 and 1999; Cornell 1998; Cressier 2001 and 2010), are vestiges of importance for understanding the development of the first Islamic urban centers in the region.

When the subject of the archaeological heritage of the Rif is discussed in cultural and political meetings, not strictly academic, these sites are the focus of attention for the Rifians. While it is common to discuss the importance of their study and their enhancement, the Rifian heritage is much broader. Despite the significance of the aforementioned sites, it is crucial to note that they are not representative of the more recent history of the region that has shaped contemporary Rifian identity.

Similarly, the Islamic sites of the medieval period only partially depict the Rifian societies of the time, which were beginning to be Islamized:

> Arab societies that arrived in North Africa in the seventh century built urban centers in the Atlantic plains and coastal regions - in some cases on the remains of Roman settlements (Akerraz 1998, 295-304)—whose designs were linked to a centralized organization [...]. (Ramirez and Blancas 2019:1)

In contrast, the Rifians had a non-centralized socio-political organization at the time of the Arab conquest and a dispersed settlement pattern, lacking administrative buildings (Ramirez and Blancas 2019). In that context, only the relatively nucleated settlements with a geopolitically strategic location (Gellner 1969), which served as centers of trade and political mediation, were those inhabited by the holy lineages (Ramírez and Karkar 2012). In general, medieval archaeology -as it has developed so far- cannot tell us much about the Rifian vestiges belonging to this period. Further, collecting more information about Rifian vestiges is limited because their study is simply not contemplated in the official praxis. Instead, interest is focused on the Islamic states and the material remains associated with them.

From the point of view of the study of socio-political organization in archaeology, we can say that it is precisely the remains linked to this non-centralized organization (with holy lineages as mediators of conflicts at different scales), in addition to the remains of Spanish military architecture, are those that the Rifians point out as an important part of their archaeological heritage when asked. The reason for this is, in my opinion, because these are material elements associated with recent history, preserved by collective memory and inseparable components of contemporary Rifian identity. The system encompassing the non-centralized Rifian socio-political organization and its relationship with central powers (Ramirez 2017) constitutes an element immersed in a historical process of long duration (*longue durée*), without whose knowledge, to my mind, it is impossible to understand "recent history."

Remains of housing units, mosques, tombs of saints (*marabouts*), springs, water channels, and various topographical features, as well as Spanish military architecture from the Protectorate period, constitute part of this legacy that, because of its temporality and that it does not form part of the interests of official archaeological praxis, could be cataloged as a counterpublic conception of the Rifian heritage, whose "creation" (in the sense of being intellectually structured and not invented), is the parallel result of the emergence of a counter-public history of North Africa, centered on the original populations.

Conclusion:

To speak of Tamazgha in an archaeological sense, we must elaborate a historical background that allows us to focus on the different Imazighen societies that have populated the territory of North Africa over several millennia. We must focus on their social systems, the different religions they have professed over time, the relationship with other populations that have also occupied the distinct territories of North Africa throughout history, and the material vestiges associated with these societies. In this sense, I consider that Tamazgha is a counterpublic concept that emerges from the need of the different Imazighen societies to retrace their history and origins from their own perspective and not from a Eurocentric or Orientalist one.

For this to happen, it is necessary to break the model of traditional archaeological praxis. We must draw on the archaeological remains that refer us to the Imazighen societies (many of which had no palaces or urban centers as Arabs and Romans). We must explore other theoretical perspectives and other archaeologies, such as the archaeology of the recent past, the archaeology

of the domestic sphere, the archaeologies that study segmentary societies, and the archaeologies that study pastoral societies, amongst other possibilities.

It is necessary to get out of the mold of official archaeology and start considering that there is a huge Amazigh heritage unexplored simply because the official archaeological praxis has not considered it. Marabouts, uninhabited *Igherman* in the deserts, remains of housing units, old mills, etc.: these all constitute archaeological vestiges that would allow us to trace the history of the Imazighen societies from their own perspective.

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