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A study of the problem of the transformation of the names of human groups in the Maghreb during the medieval period: From Moors to Berbers as a case study

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Abstract:

This study seeks to investigate the social and ethnonymic transformations that resulted from the Islamization and Arabization process in the Maghreb, affecting various aspects, including the names of the inhabitants and the lists of names of tribal confederations and human groups in urban and rural areas. The reference in news and descriptive texts to the term Berber, with its singular meaning, was applied to the original groups settled in the region, along with the mention of the ethnonyms of the Latin-Byzantine community known as the Romans and Africans during the first three centuries after the completion of the Umayyad conquests. This is contrasted with the unjustified and mysterious disappearance of the term Moor from the settlement scene and the significant presence of the term Berber in the source sources. Undoubtedly, it is the ethnonym that was inserted into various sources and historical studies throughout the medieval period without any reservations, or the study of the phenomenon of "Berberization" from its emergence, its crystallization and the mechanisms of its use to the present period.

Introduction:

Reaching definitive conclusions regarding the ethnonymic origin of the term "Berber" is extremely difficult, as it is based on purely ideological interpretations and is fraught with



methodological pitfalls and historical contradictions. Furthermore, defining the ethnonym of "Berber," its origins, and its meanings is a complex and ambiguous undertaking, marked by considerable uncertainty. It also necessitates expanding the scope of research into sources from the late antiquity period to identify the features of the social, ethnic, and ethnonymic transformations of the Maghrebi populations, in order to compare them with the data from Arabic texts at the beginning of the early Islamic period.

At this juncture, it is worthwhile to inquire into the reasons for the ethno-sectarian continuity of tribal group names in the Islamic Maghreb, despite the partial philological shifts that affected their names, such as Lawata, Hawwara, Sanhaja, Zenata, Kutama, and Nafusa. Does the presence of these tribal confederations' names in the region correspond to the sudden disappearance of the term "Moor" from various early source sources, replaced by the term "Berber"?

This prompts us to raise a legitimate question about the reasons for the ethnonymous break and the mysterious and rapid disappearance of the term "Moor," and the emergence of the term "Berber" in various early source sources. Furthermore, how can we explain the absence of an ethnonym that was widely used in Byzantine sources during the sixth century CE to denote large and widespread local population groups in the Maghreb, only to then disappear from the sources of the early medieval period?

- Moors and Berbers: The Problem of Ethno-Specific Classification and Ethno-Specificity: What Ambiguity?

1/ Population Classification in Modern Studies:

Ancient historical sources and Byzantine studies confirm the presence of groups of people called the Moors during the Vandal and Byzantine periods. Historical evidence also demonstrates the continuity of independent Moorish emirates, free from the authority of Carthage and Sbeitla, during the Byzantine era. Then, with the beginning of the Islamic period, the term "Moor" disappeared entirely from Islamic Arabic texts in a sudden and mysterious ethnographic break. The beginning of the Arabization of toponyms, ethnonyms, and anthroponyms in historical and descriptive geographical sources throughout the early Islamic period led to ethnographic changes in the system of names for populations and human groups in the Maghreb.

Georges Marçais provided a definition of the term "Berber" referring to the local population groups that settled in the Maghreb, living in ethnic proximity to the Latin and Byzantine communities since ancient times. According to the texts of the Islamic conquest, they were classified under the name "Berbers," while the other communities were called "Rum" and "Africans." Then, from the ethnic group "Berber" branched out the names of local

confederations and tribes, all belonging to this ethnic group. There is no better evidence of this than the important list provided to us by Ibn Hawqal al-Nasibi regarding the names of tribal groups and human gatherings of "Berber" people in the Islamic Maghreb. Gabriel Camps, for his part, attempted to define the meaning of the term "Berber" by rejecting the hypotheses that the name "Berber" spread during the Roman period at the expense of names like "Moor," "African," "Numidian," and "Getullian." These latter names are based on the geographical locations of the human groups from which they were derived—names of African kingdoms that later became Roman provinces. Evidence for this lies in the continuity of the Moorish kingdoms until the Byzantine era as independent entities. Although the term "Berber" broadened during the medieval period, applying it to the ethnic components of society in the Islamic Maghreb, Camps attributes the classification of the Maghreb's inhabitants under the label "Berber" to Islamic sources. This classification, he argues, is based on perceptions entirely different from those of ancient Latin sources. He justifies this by pointing to the fact that Arabic source fields lagged behind the events of the Islamic conquest by approximately two centuries. He further adds the influence of genealogical literature in both the East and the West, specifically the writings of Ibn Khaldun in the 8th century AH/14th century CE, which he considers the cornerstone of this classification and its formation. There are chains of lineage that end with a common ancestor, and through this, some groups claim to descend from a single ancestor and are named after him, such as Zenata, who descend from Madghis al-Abtar, and Sanhaja, who descend from Barnis, and they are the sons of Barnis.

According to the Frenchman Tuxier, the ethnonym "Berber" is derived from the word "Barbarians" (Les barbares), which the Romans used to refer to the nomadic groups concentrated in the eastern and southern regions on the borders of the Limes. They were known for their wars and conflicts with the Roman armies and their control over the desert routes and trade caravan routes, which represented an important strategic resource for the Roman Empire. The term "Barbarians" is confined to its Greek and Latin ethnonymic meaning, referring to the Getulian groups, along with the Luwata and Hawara confederations distributed over the eastern part of the Maghreb during the Roman era, or the term "Barbarians of the East" is used to refer to uncivilized Arabs. Then, with the Umayyad military campaigns and the conquest of North Africa, the Muslim conquerors found the human name "Barbar" in Greek and Latin texts and derived from it the word "Berber," which was then used to refer to all North Africans. Its usage expanded in various Islamic sources, particularly in accounts of the conquests, where it was reproduced and applied indiscriminately to all North Africans.

Therefore, what unites the Maghreb human formations is their ethno-identity belonging to the term "Berber" in their nominal identity, which formed a vessel in which all population groups were fused to be classified under the ethno-Berber. After examining the Greek and Latin origin of the roots of the name "Berber" according to the study of Tuxie and Flatters, it remains useful to point out the variation in the system of tribal and human names in the region during the

ancient period between groups called Numidians and Libyans and others called Gaetulians and Afris, in addition to the ethnic communities mentioned in Islamic sources such as the Romans and Africans or Africans, alongside the names of tribal groups such as the Luwata, Hawwara, Zenata, Kutama, Sanhaja, Nafzawa and other nomadic and settled population groups. One of the most recent studies addressing the demographic classification of human groups in the Islamic Maghreb is the work of researcher Alawa Amara. This study involved a comprehensive examination of Arabic texts from the 3rd century AH/9th century CE to the 9th century AH/15th century CE, analyzing their discourse. This analysis began with accounts of the conquests, followed by historical narratives, genealogical texts, biographical dictionaries, and descriptive geographical texts. The aim was to identify the criteria and classificatory foundations used to categorize the components of the social fabric in the Maghreb into a single ethnic group called "Berbers."

Researcher Alawa Amara asserts that, two centuries after the Islamic presence in the Maghreb, all the local inhabitants at the time of the Umayyad conquest were classified into a single category called "Berbers." To accomplish this, early chroniclers resorted to ancient myths and traditional methods of constructing historical and genealogical knowledge in the field of Arab genealogy. This approach became increasingly prevalent and deeply ingrained in Moroccan historical scholarship due to the political stakes involved in the rise of indigenous dynasties to power in the region. This led to the formalization of a demographic classification for Moroccans, merging them into a single human element known as "Berber." Therefore, it appears that belonging to the "Berber" community was primarily linguistic and cultural.

It is certain that traces of ethno-sectarian presence in the Zab region are found in source texts, such as (Al-butr/Butrus), (Mazyca/Māzig), (Barbarius/Al-barbar), and (Magsen/Māksan). However, it is noteworthy that the term (Maurus), widely used in the ancient Byzantine period, was neither employed nor cited in source texts during the medieval Islamic period. This led to the adoption of the prevailing classification that grouped all the populations inhabiting the Maghreb before the Islamic conquests under the name "Berbers," known in Latin literature up to the third century CE as (Barbarius). The term (Maurus), as well as those used for Africans and Romans, were gradually abandoned in favor of a new term, "Muwalladun" (mixed-race peoples), by which these groups were referred, paving the way for their integration into a single group. The human component that bore the name "Berber," especially after the 4th century AH/10th century CE.

Focusing on the study by researcher Ramzi Rouighi, published in 2011, specializing in the history of populations and ethnonymy in the Maghreb and Andalusia during the medieval period, Solina Chéni, in her research, divided the components of Moroccan society after the completion of the conquests into three main elements: Berbers, Romans, and Africans. These ethnic designations were used in texts of the conquests and historical accounts to refer to the inhabitants of the eastern part of Islamic Morocco. However, while the ethnonym "Romans" refers to the Byzantine groups settled in the region since antiquity, and the term "Africans" has a

narrow meaning limited to Latin communities, the ethnonym "Berber" broadened its scope to encompass all local social elements distributed across its territories. It thus denotes confederations, tribal unions, and the indigenous populations settled in rural and urban areas.

Researcher Solina Chini also identified three main criteria adopted by early Islamic sources in classifying human composition elements under the name "Berbers," alongside Latin-Byzantine communities. The first of these criteria is the linguistic criterion, which is based on spoken discourse and philological definitions as a basis for distinguishing Moroccans from other population elements from the Byzantine and Latin communities. Therefore, the use of a "Berber" language common among the Maghrebi ethnicities and local dialects specific to the inhabitants of Morocco on the eve of the Islamic conquest allowed them to be classified within a human group that came to be known as "Berbers." Since "Berber" dialects were among the components of population identity in the Maghreb since ancient times, they remained with its societies, which preserved their dialect system, at least partially, from the conquest period until the end of the Middle Ages, despite the Arabization movement that affected many geographical names, tribal ethnonyms, and anthroponymic names of human figures. According to Solina Chéní's study, anthropological characteristics classify the inhabitants of the Islamic Maghreb into distinct human groups. The researcher, based on the available source data, determined that clothing was a second classificatory criterion. Clothing styles are considered one of the prevailing features during the conquests and can be seen as precise mechanisms for defining the image of the local human element known in Islamic literature as "Berbers," in addition to the Byzantine Roman communities and the heirs of the Punic-Roman civilization represented by the Africans. For example, the clothing of the Maghrebis was "mostly made of wool, including the plain ones from the marked cloaks, and they would put the black burnouses on top of them," as Ibn Khaldun mentioned in his discussion of the duality of the cloak and the burnous. Therefore, in order to understand the human composition and its social elements, and how they were classified under these ethnic names in light of the difficulties of source and methodology, researcher Solina Chini directs us to trace the linguistic criterion included in the texts of the conquest related to the narrative of Afriqish ibn Sayfi and the naming of the Maghrebis with the ethnonom "Berbers" based on their language. Add to that the criterion of dress and physical structure as classification bases indicated by medieval historical knowledge to define for us the population groups of the Islamic Maghreb (Berbers-Romans-Africans) with their ethnic distinctions and differences. The origin of the term "Berber" and its connotations cannot be determined without referring to ancient sources that provide researchers with the names of population groups before the Islamic conquest of North Africa. A system of ethnic names was widespread in ancient texts, epigraphic sources, and archaeological inscriptions, denoting all human groups such as the Afri, Gaetuli, Numidians, Buar, and Buqawāt. Furthermore, studies presented by researcher Ahmed Mcharek in recent years have demonstrated the ethnic and ethno-epistemological continuity of human groups and local tribal confederations that settled in

ancient North Africa and maintained their human presence and nominal identities during the medieval period. Among these, Ahmed Mcharek mentions the Zenata (Zanata/Les Dianenses ou Zanenses), Hawwara (Les Awares/Les Hawwāra), Nefzawa (ou Nefzu/NefzaNefzāwa (les Nefzi)), Maghrawa (Les Macreneses ou Magarenses/Maghrāwa)), and Kutama. Ucutamini/Les Kutāma)) and Lawat (Levathai/Laguatan/Lawāta)... and Sanhadja (Usinazenses /BanuSinag / Sanhadja)

Professor Ahmed Musharek also used ancient sources and sources of the Islamic period to demonstrate the ethnic and ethnonomic transition from ancient times to the medieval period for groups that inhabited the Maghreb, such as the groups mentioned above. The names of these human structures in the Byzantine period were identical to the names of the population formations during the medieval period, but they were affected by some partial transformations as a result of the distortion that occurred in them in the Arabic sources due to their subjection to the Arabization process that was involved in the system of ethnic and anthroponomic names and geographical locations with their local and Latin heritage.

While the transformation of ancient ethnonyms such as Numid and Moor into the term "Berber," which quickly imposed itself on authors of Arabic texts during the early medieval period to refer to local population groups and remains in use throughout the period under study and up to the present day, is essentially nothing more than a new form of an ancient nominal identity derived from the Greek heritage of antiquity. The word is derived from the term "Barbarius," which was used in Greek sources to denote various geographical locations, such as the Berber region on the Red Sea coast, as well as the non-Greek-speaking peoples, particularly the Persians. In Latin and Roman sources, the terms "Berber" and "Barbarians" referred to various population groups living outside the Roman cultural sphere. They were also applied to the Vandals and Germanic tribes—the barbarians—who invaded the Roman Empire, conquered its capital, and subjugated its territories. The Moors acquired the designation "Barbarians" in North Africa before the Islamic conquest in a Byzantine text where Procopius referred to the confederation of the nomadic Lawata tribes, stating "the Moors." The Berbers, those called Levathai (Les Maures barbares, ceux que l'on appelle Levathai).

Researcher Ramzi Rouighi contributed his in-depth studies to tracing the origins of the ethnonym "Berber" in medieval Arabic sources. He adopted a different approach from previous studies, with the exception of Harry Norris's work, which examined Arabic literary sources to reveal the presence and connotations of the term "Berber" in the Arabic literary heritage. This approach is similar to Rouighi's research in its examination of the term's roots through the primary sources of pre-Islamic literature, particularly the poems composed during the pre-Islamic period. This does not mean abandoning the exploration of historical sources, genealogical texts, and descriptive and geographical Arabic texts. Indeed, his bibliography is extensive, encompassing narrative, legal, genealogical, descriptive, and poetic texts.

The Berbers are those called Levathai (Les Maures barbares, ceux que l'on appelle Levathai). Thus, the researcher Roygi delved deeper into the evidence of historical, literary, and geographical discourse as fields of knowledge in which the ethnoneme "Berber" was used. He turned his attention to a highly significant Iberian work entitled "Crónicamozárabede," the only Latin source written in 754 CE (during the 8th century CE), which serves as a historical record containing information about the end of the Visigothic Kingdom, the beginning of the Islamic conquest of the Iberian Peninsula, and the era of governors appointed by the Islamic West after its incorporation into the Islamic world.

The idea established in primary sources that the "Berbers" were the original inhabitants of the region was not a rapid ethnographic production characteristic of the Umayyad conquest of the Maghreb. Rather, the process of "Berberization" was gradual and crystallized at specific time points and at a slow pace, especially before the end of the Almohad era. Ramzi Rouighi considers the use of ethnological concepts such as "Berber" by contemporary historians, archaeologists, and anthropologists to refer to the "indigenous inhabitants" as complicity in the "Berberization" process related to medieval sources that chronicled the population of the Islamic Maghreb. He explains that the success of this process, even if only partially, is primarily due to the continued perception among historians that the Arab conquerors subjugated Maghrebi human groups called "Berbers." Ramzi Rouighi noted that the term "Berber" was not first used to refer to the inhabitants of the Islamic Maghreb, and classifying the Maghrebis nominally under this term to identify their identity does not have sound foundations. Latin and Greek sources used this term in the feminine form before the Muslims conquered the Maghreb, to refer to a geographical area located on the Red Sea coast between Abyssinia and the land of the Zanj called "Bilad Barbara" or "Sahel Barbara." Arabic literature texts demonstrate the Arabs' knowledge of the words "Barbaria," "Barbara," and "Barbar," from which the ethnonym "Berber" appears to have been derived before the Islamic period. This is supported by Imru' al-Qais's reference in verses of a poem to the "Berbers" and their horses, and this evidence is reinforced by another poem by Adi ibn Zayd in which he mentioned the ethnonym "Berber" during the pre-Islamic era.

Although Yves Modirand denies the use of the ethnonym "Berbers" to refer to the Moors, and points to the disconnect between the terms Moor and "Berber" in Africa and the Maghreb in general during the late Byzantine period, Professor Alaoua Amara, in light of a comprehensive reading of the oldest accounts of the conquests, notes that this argument remains questionable. For example, the Lawata and Zenata were considered to be of the "Berber" category during the first century AH/seventh century AD, and the Lawata during the ancient period were among the largest Moorish tribal confederations. Recent works by Ahmed Moucharek have shown the continuity of the ethnic composition and names of some local groups from the Roman era to the medieval period. However, after two centuries of Islamic presence in the Maghreb, most of the settled population groups in the region were grouped

under the name "Berbers." The data from Procopius's book, **The War of the Vandals**, a later Byzantine source, demonstrates his regular use of the term "Moor" in his texts. Conversely, we note the absence of ethnonymic terms like "Berber," "Barbarians," or "Barbarians" as terms used in their broader sense to refer to the inhabitants of North Africa during the Byzantine period. This explains the lack of the term "Berber" and its derivatives in its general usage to denote the various human groups in the region. Instead, the term "Barbarian" appears attached to the name of a specific population group, such as the Levathai confederation, as mentioned above, or explicitly states in another passage the two words "Barbarian Moors" (*Les Maures barbares*) when discussing the Moorish alliance with the Vandal leader, Iglimiar, against the Byzantine forces.

Consequently, the ethno-classification that lumps all human groups together under the name "Berbers," as previously explained, is a product of the early Islamic period. This is when Arabic writing gave the word "Berber" paramount importance by coining it and applying it to the Maghreb. Arabic literary production far exceeded that of Latin and Greek literature during antiquity. It began with the documentation of the conquests, followed by literary, legal, and historical works in the early medieval period. This latter period reached its zenith at the end of the 8th century AH/14th century CE with Ibn Khaldun's *"Al-Ibar,"* whereby they were classified, named, and defined for the first time as a nation, people, and race. Thus, their nominal and geographical identity was established through their affiliation with the Islamic Maghreb.

In contrast, the political influence of the Umayyad Emirate, established by Abd al-Rahman I in al-Andalus, was evident in the issue of Moroccan ethnonymy. The Arab conflict with the Maghrebi faction during the reign of the Umayyad caliphs in Cordoba and its surrounding areas created conditions that necessitated a distinction between the Iberian Maghrebis and those residing in the Maghreb (North Africa). Therefore, the term "Berber" was introduced in al-Andalus as an ethnonym with ideological implications, applied to the groups of people originating from the Islamic Maghreb.

Furthermore, the term "Berber of al-Andalus" did not appear in Latin or Greek sources prior to the establishment of the Umayyad state in 138 AH (756 CE). According to researcher Ramzi Rouighi, the classification of the Maghrebis likely stems from the primary sources compiled by Muslim historians in Andalusia. These historians used the ethnocentric term "Berber" to refer to all the Maghrebi social groups that played a role in the political formation of the Umayyad Emirate. After Abd al-Rahman I declared his independence in Andalusia and established his state, he attempted to attract the Maghrebis to his fold and make them loyal to the Umayyads by integrating them into the social structure of the emirate. This resulted in the formation of a population group that provided human and political support to the Umayyad regime in Andalusia. Because the Maghrebis remained a distinct ethnic component from other population groups, they were labeled and classified under the term "Berber." This word then became an ethnic designation widely used in the Maghreb, Andalusia, and the Islamic East.

2/Criteria for the Population Classification of "Berbers" in Islamic Morocco:

Perhaps the most prominent foundations and classification criteria that accompanied the formation and crystallization of the term "Berber" in source materials, and upon which the main criteria for ethnic classification indicated by modern studies were based, which is based on grouping all the original human components in the Islamic Maghreb under the ethnic name "Berber," are what we will clarify in the following points:

2-1/The Linguistic Criterion: This criterion is based on the fact that the basis of population classification is the language used by the human groups who spoke languages and dialects that were difficult for those who interacted with them in peace or war to understand. Among the source indications that support this argument is:

- The account of the genealogist Ibn al-Kalbi, regardless of its accuracy, which is related to the arrival of King Afriqish ibn Qays ibn Sayfi, "who conquered Ifriqiya, and it was named after him, and he killed its king, Jurjir, and on that day it was called Berber. He said to them: How much you babble!" Although Ibn Khaldun categorically rejects this narrative, expressing this in the following text: "Among the weak reports of the historians is what they all transmit in the news of the Tubba' kings of Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula, that they used to raid from their villages in Yemen to Africa and the Berbers of the Maghreb, and that Afriqish bin Qais bin Sayfi was one of their greatest early kings, and that during the time of Moses, peace be upon him, or a little before, he raided Africa and inflicted heavy losses on the Berbers, and that he was the one who named them with this name when he heard their gibberish and said, 'What is this brevity?' So they took this name from him, and they were called by it from that time on, and that when he returned from the Maghreb, he settled there tribes of Himyar, and they settled there and mixed with its people, and among them were Sanhaja and Kutama. From this, al-Tabari, al-Jurjani, al-Mas'udi, Ibn al-Kalbi, and al-Bili concluded that Sanhaja and Kutama were from Himyar, and the genealogists of the Berbers reject this, and it is the correct view..." The second piece of evidence comes from al-Hamawi's text, which confirms the presence of groups of people who, as he stated, were "very black and had their own language, incomprehensible to others." Therefore, the term "Berber" was used by the sources of the conquests to derive the term "Berbers" and to refer to the groups of people in the Islamic Maghreb, despite its Eastern origin. The Muslim conquerors' lack of knowledge of the natural and human geography of the Maghreb during the first century AH/seventh century CE, and their ignorance of the languages and dialects spoken by the indigenous population and the languages of the Latin-Byzantine communities, resulted in their writings being replete with subjective interpretations and flimsy stories about this society, so foreign to them. Thus, the linguistic definition, according to Ibn al-Kalbi's testimony, alone explains the term "Berbers" as a comprehensive term for all the population groups in the Islamic Maghreb, coined by the Yemeni king Afriqish ibn Sayfi when he arrived in Ifriqiya before the Islamic period. This classification is based on the local "Berber" language and is derived from a

narrative whose origins and accuracy are unknown, as the genealogist Ibn al-Kalbi was the first to mention it during the first quarter of the 3rd/9th century CE.

2-2/ Geographical Criterion: Toponymy. We observe a clear influence of geographical place names on the names of population groups in the region. Ancient and medieval geographical texts record the presence of the term "Berber" when the Greek geographer Ptolemy referred to the region opposite the Yemeni coast, a geographical area bordering Abyssinia and the Zanj (Ethiopia). Since this toponym was known to the Arabs before the Islamic period, referring to a geographical location on the east coast of Africa, and since its inhabitants, according to al-Hamawi's text, were "very black and had their own language that no one else understood," the term "Berber" was used in the sources of the conquests to derive the term "Berbers" and to refer to the human groups in the Islamic Maghreb, despite its eastern origin. Thus, the ambiguous use of the term "Berber" in Arabic sources appears with the beginning of the reconnaissance operations of the Umayyad armies, which set out from Fustat in Egypt and began with Amr ibn al-Aas to explore the region geographically and humanly. Since it is not possible to add a new ethnic term to name the inhabitants of the Maghreb, and since the Arabs in fact had already applied the term "Berber," which was known and used in the eastern region of Africa, to population groups inhabiting this geographical region, which is confined to eastern Sudan between Abyssinia and the land of the Zanj, and the chroniclers did not start from this toponym only to name the population groups in the Islamic Maghreb, in addition to "Berber Gulf" or "Berber villages" or "Berber coast" in eastern Sudan or on the shores of the Red Sea as described in the texts of geographical works, Ibn Abd al-Hakam refers to the existence of a market in Fustat in Egypt before the Islamic period called "Berber market." This is what made the ethnonym "Berber," which was known and used by the peoples settled on the shores of the Red Sea basin, a point of reference for the early historians who apparently preferred to apply it to the inhabitants of the Islamic Maghreb, in light of the absolute, explicit and ambiguous adoption of this term in the early Islamic sources, East and West. Consequently, from this perspective, all the local human groups in the Islamic Maghreb region are united by one name, "Berber," so that this term occupies a position in all fields of Islamic knowledge, with the ambiguous and illogical cancellation of the term "Moor," which referred to the human groups and political emirates in the Maghreb of the ancient Byzantine period. This, of course, is what the sources of the early medieval period portray to us.

2-3/The Lineage Criterion: The human formations inhabiting the Islamic Maghreb belong to fictitious genealogical chains, ending with the Israelite legend that the ethnic descent of the Maghrebis "Berbers" is from Goliath and the sons of Noah. Following the pattern of the narratives of the Children of Israel, all population formations in the Maghreb were attached to this Hamitic lineage or to Goliath in Palestine and the Levant, or descended from the Yemeni lineage in Yemen, as we have observed in the sources of the Islamic period. We find it repeated in various source texts throughout the medieval period. It is noteworthy that the "Berbers," by which we mean the Maghrebis, of course, based on medieval historiography, represent a

"nation, people, race, ethnicity, or lineage" of human beings united ethnically, like other human lineages such as the Arabs, Persians, Sudanese, and Copts... and their ethnic identity cannot be known except by giving them a name by which they are known among the other human lineages belonging to the House of Islam. The written traditions concerning the origin of this "Berber" nation, as envisioned by historians and genealogists during the medieval period, necessitated a unifying ethnoname for the Maghrebis. Thus, the ethnoname "Berber" became accepted in both Eastern and Western texts. These traditions demonstrated the "myth" of Eastern origin, highlighting significant historical parallels with Christian and Jewish genealogical records written in medieval Europe. Among these shared characteristics, we can emphasize the preservation of a common tribal background between Arabs and "Berber" groups, such as the selection of ancestors from biblical figures, the writing of genealogies to elevate the status of one's lineage among others, to justify the usurpation of political power, or conversely, to legitimize political actions, and so on. One of the phases in which the historical narrative of the Berber origins in Islamic Morocco shifted from examining the general lineage of the population to focusing on family lineage was during the Almohad dynasty. This period saw a new approach to documenting the ruling family's genealogy, abandoning the myth of "Berber" origins. This shift involved moving from a traditional method of recording lineage to one that focused on constructing a family lineage to legitimize the ruling family's authority. This transformation took into account all the social and political changes in Islamic Morocco, addressing the issue of legitimizing the regime and justifying the seizure of power to all segments of Maghrebi society. The legitimization of the usurpation of political power had long been a tradition in medieval Islamic society, as rebellion against legitimate authority was considered by religious and legal authorities to be an act of defiance against the ruler.

2-4/The Cultural Standard: Replacing historical facts related to the ethnic and ethnonomic landscape of the inhabitants of Islamic Morocco with an established ideological knowledge material that served the center of power in Damascus and then Baghdad by the oldest Arab narrators, chroniclers, and genealogists, in the context of organizing the newly affiliated Islamic human groups in the House of Islam and establishing their classification schemes, gave a new nominal identity to the inhabitants of the region, manifested in the word "Berbers," which was adopted as an ethnonymous name for the Maghreb group. This was done by abolishing the names of the old population groups and displacing human ethnicities from their historical and social position in the region, especially those old groups such as the Moors, Afro-Georgians, and Numidians. This is explained by the organizational necessity and the desire to show the unified character of this orientation and their effect on facilitating its management and planning for the process of Berberizing the Maghreb space through Arab writing and what it carries of historical fallacies produced by the Arab ideology that added the term "Berbers" to the societies of Islamic Morocco, and it came to be used for the Maghreb inhabitants in general. It was also

attached to the names of the original tribes, so the Hawara became a "Berber" tribe, and the Zenata also became a "Berber" tribe, and the Kutama also became a "Berber" tribe, and other local groups that were given this ethnonym. It is established that the compositional approach by which this ethnic classification was produced became subject to reconsideration, when Arab chroniclers and geographers invented the name "Berbers" to be used for all human groups in the region, and divided the Maghrebis into two sections, the Butr and the Branes, in an ethnic division that is not without doubt about its validity, given that ancient sources did not refer to it. The position of the inhabitants of the Islamic Maghreb in medieval historiography differs from the position taken by other human races, especially after the Arabic language replaced the Greek and Latin languages as the language of civilization from Tripoli to Tangier in the far Maghreb. Arabic literature on the subject of "Berbers" was much more important than the Greek and Latin knowledge production, and this importance reached its peak in the late eighth century AH/fourteenth century AD when Ibn Khaldun wrote the book *Al-Ibar*.

2-5/The Religious Criterion: The influence of Islamic religious discourse on shaping the nominal identity of the inhabitants of the Islamic Maghreb is evident through the prophetic hadiths and religious traditions that popularized the use of the ethnonym "Berbers" in the early period of Islam during the time of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, and his companions. This supported the integration of the Maghreb people into the orbit of Islam, which is a clear encouragement for their integration and acceptance into the new culture that did not deprive them of their interests but rather provided them with means of belonging to the institutions and systems of the state for social and political integration into the Islamic society. Because they are classified ethnically in the category of Muslim clients who are not Arabs, the ethnic and ethnonymic classification that was specific to the human groups in the region was mentioned in the hadiths of the Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, and the traditions narrated from the companions, may God be pleased with them, which we discussed previously, which increased its prevalence and adoption by Muslim authors. While some religious and legal elites in Africa, in particular, resorted to the practice of not acknowledging Berber ethnic origins and the label "Berber," which was attached to personal names, political rivalries played a role in shaping this practice to secure political influence, advance in positions of power, and gain favor with princes and rulers of Arab ethnic origins, especially during the Aghlabid dynasty. This would have a lasting impact on the rejection and condemnation of ethnic affiliation with Berber origins. The strongest evidence of this is the story of Bahlul ibn Rashid, who prepared and served food to a group of his companions. They asked him about the reason for preparing it, saying, "O Abu Amr, why did you prepare this food when you have nothing else to cook?" He replied, "I was afraid that I might be Berber because of the hadiths about them. So I asked someone who knew about my origins, and I was told that I am not Berber, so I prepared this food." Another piece of evidence is found in *Riyad al-Nufus*, where it is mentioned that when Ibrahim ibn al-Arabi performed the Hajj pilgrimage with Atiyya al-Jamajiri... So that he might benefit from his company, when they arrived in Barqa—the origin of Abu Ibrahim—he inquired about his lineage there and learned that he was of non-Arab origin.

He wrote a letter to some of his brothers in the Jazira region, saying: "I had claimed to be of Berber descent among you, but I investigated my lineage in my homeland and discovered that I am of non-Arab origin. We thank God Almighty for not making me a Berber." Al-Maliki continues his testimony, stating: "He feared, and God Almighty knows best, that he might be a Berber because of hadiths narrated in condemnation of them. Among these is what was mentioned in the Musnad of Ibn Sanjar on the authority of Uthman ibn Affan, may God be pleased with him, on the authority of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, who said: 'God Almighty divided evil into seventy parts, and He placed sixty-nine parts in the Berbers and one part in the two weighty things (humanity and jinn)'." These testimonies, it seems, undoubtedly support the issue of the elite aversion of the scholars of Ifriqiya to "Berber" lineage and confirm the existence of a kind of unifying identity that was established with the beginnings of the success of the Arabization movement through positioning oneself behind the Maliki school of thought and combating Kharijite thought, especially during the Aghlabid period when it was active. Religious and political currents, such as the Ibadi movement in Tahert and the Sufri movement in Sijilmasa in particular, played a key role in shaping Eastern perceptions of the Maghreb and its ethnic and ethnonymic inhabitants. The religious elite of Kairouan worked to solidify the "Berber" origin and reinforced the traditional classification of the Maghrebi people in Sunni Maliki sources as "Berbers," despite the contempt some religious figures expressed for them and their refusal to be associated with them. While this idea was present in Maliki texts, Ibadi historians supported this demographic classification, referring to the Maghrebis as "Berbers." However, this was quite the opposite of what Ibadi sources, written under the supervision of the local "Berber" authority, suggested. Texts such as Ibn Sallam's "The Beginning of Islam," al-Darjini's "Tabaqat al-Mashayikh," and Abu Zakariya's "Siyar" (Biographies of Sheikhs) begin with material praising the "Berbers," enumerating their virtues, and highlighting their roles in preserving Islam. Thus, Ibadi literature immortalized the achievements and glories of the Maghrebis known as "Berbers." The term "Berber" is an ethnic designation that applies to all components of the population structure in the Islamic Maghreb throughout the Middle Ages.

2-6/The Anthropological Criterion: In light of this comprehensive criterion of language determinants, physiological characteristics, and dress patterns, the difference between the population groups settled in the Maghreb on the eve of the conquest can be determined, such as the Moroccan groups called "Berbers" in the texts of the conquest, and the Latin-Byzantine communities represented by the Romans and Africans. Despite the great absence of accurate data on the social characteristics and anthropological indicators related to dress patterns and the types of languages and dialects used locally, in addition to the physical features of the "Berber," "Africans," and "Romans" elements in the source sources, we have a text by Ibn Khaldun in which he presents some anthropological data, indicating the type of clothing worn by the inhabitants of the Islamic Maghreb, especially the "Berber" groups, the Berbers, whose "clothing and most of their furnishings were made of wool, and they would cover the plains with

marked cloaks, and they would throw black cloaks over them, and their heads were mostly bare." As for the Butr elements, they wore a short robe by which their groups were known. Al-Maqdisi's testimony proves that the Berbers wore black burnouses. Although the human groups in the Maghreb were divided into two groups, "Butr and Burnous," the classification of the Maghrebis as "Butr Berbers" and "Brown Berbers" was not based on the facts of ancient history, but rather on the status of these people in the new system within the House of Islam. For this reason, it was necessary to establish a social division that was taken from the Islamic sources that established the theory of the ethnic descent of the Maghrebis from the two groups of "Butr and Burnous," which was not mentioned by the ancient Greek and Latin sources. It is also not possible to limit the criteria for the social division of the Maghrebi population into these two population groups to the lineage dimension (Butr or Burnous) or to the lifestyle (Bedouin or settled) or the nature of contact with incoming foreigners. Clothing style is another key criterion for identifying human groups in the Islamic Maghreb during the early medieval period, particularly the "Berber" groups, regardless of their affiliation with the Butr or Baranis, alongside the Roman and African communities. Otherwise, how can we explain the Arab conquerors' distinctions between the ethnic groups inhabiting the Maghreb on the eve of the Islamic conquest, which historical texts identified ethnically and ethnonymically, labeling them "Berbers," "Africans," and "Romans"? Clothing is among the mechanisms that enable us to differentiate between population groups in the region. The Berbers are known for their clothing, which is distinct from that of the Byzantine Romans, especially the Butr and Baranis groups, who share affiliation with this ethnic group ethnonamed "Berber." Added to this is the mechanism of physiological characteristics and physical features of the "Berber" element, as mentioned in the book "Al-Ibar" regarding the Maghrebis' hairstyles. Ibn Khaldun states that "their heads are mostly bare," a fact supported by an Ibadi account concerning the arrival of groups of "Berber" from the Lawata tribe. Shaved heads and beards were the custom of Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab. The Berbers were known for their physical beauty and strength, and were distinguished by their courage, protection of women, hospitality, and defense of the Islamic faith. They were even enlisted in the front lines of the Islamic army in Egypt under the command of Amr ibn al-As. In any case, anthropological aspects have emerged based on textual data that establish new criteria, represented by dress, language, and physiological characteristics, which enable us to distinguish between the original inhabitants of the Islamic Maghreb, whom Islamic sources called "Berbers," despite dividing them into two groups: "Berber Butr" and "Berber Branes." Foreign groups, such as the Byzantines, were called "Rum" (Romans), while those of mixed Roman and mixed ancestry were called "Africans," a term whose roots extend back to the pre-Islamic period.

• Conclusion:

In conclusion, this study has revealed the classification of the populations who inhabited the Maghreb during the Roman, Vandal, and Byzantine periods—namely, the Numidians, Gaetulians, Baguettes, Bavarians, Moors, and other groups—under the term "Berber," a term

with deep roots in ancient Greek and Roman heritage. Historical, descriptive, and legal texts during the medieval Islamic period worked to solidify this ethnonym and generalize its application to encompass all local Maghrebi inhabitants, with the exception of groups of Latin Africans and Byzantine Romans. This may be related to some of the goals that the Umayyad authority sought to achieve after the conquest, by linking the origins of Maghrebi population groups to an Eastern identity in order to integrate them into its cultural and civilizational system. The transformation of the names of the inhabitants known as Gaetulians, Numidians, or those collectively referred to as Moors—a term prevalent during the Byzantine era—did not stop at this new ethnonymic classification. It extended to another ethnic classification through which the Umayyad Caliphate, via its apparatus, sought to... The historical record links the Berbers to a deep genealogical connection extending to Hamitic and Semitic ethnic origins, from which the "Berber" groups descend, or to an Arab origin to which some local tribes, attributed to the Himyarite Yemeni tradition, such as the Kutama and Sanhaja tribes, belong.

Reconstructing the nominal identity of the Maghreb population groups, by demonstrating their continuity or disappearance, necessitates a return to the diverse sources of the ancient period, both literary and archaeological. It also requires examining the names of human remains in various languages, including local Libyan, Latin, and Greek, to uncover the ethnonymic lists associated with the region's past inhabitants. Overcoming the temporal gaps and the discontinuity between the ancient and Islamic eras allows for a more precise reading of the history of population names, enabling the tracing of transformations. This includes changes in ethnonymic continuity or discontinuity between the ancient and Islamic periods, as well as partial changes in the ethnonyms of human groups due to Arabization and its penetration into Maghrebi social and cultural circles.

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- The various Arabic sources that chronicled the Islamic conquest and the Byzantine-Arab conflict are of pivotal importance, especially for studying events in the later period of Byzantine rule. They contain an indispensable resource for understanding various aspects of Byzantine history. This has led researchers to engage with these sources not only in the field of medieval Islamic history but also in the Vandal and Byzantine periods, making them a valuable resource for researchers studying the Vandal and Byzantine eras. See on the topic of employing Islamic sources in Byzantine studies:
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- Ahmed Moucharek points to the continued settlement of the Zenata and Haouara ethnic groups in the steppe and mountain regions of central North Africa, and their ethnocentric continuity due to the similarity in their lifestyle (semi-nomadic/settled) and the result of alliances formed between them from time to time. He states: "Regarding the continuity of the people, the main result of our investigation is certainly the discovery of this tribal principality led by the Avars (Haouara) and the DianensesouZanenses (Zanata), two confederations associated in the same territory (mountains and steppes) and allied in a sustainable manner due to their lifestyle (both semi-nomadic and settled)." sédentaire) and the actual location of the geographical situation (confins of desert and limestone, of Ifrîqiya and central Maghreb). And it's also possible for me to propose to you to compare the value of the tickets from Victor de Vita: *AbaritanaatqueGetuliaprovincia. et dianenses ou zanenses (zanāta)*», Op, Cit, p. 470.
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- The use of the ethnonym "Berber" in historical sources of the Levant, and the complete abandonment of the term "Moor," particularly in the early medieval period, provoked

- indignation and astonishment from the researcher Yves Modirand, who stated in his study entitled "The Moors and Roman Africa (4th/7th centuries CE):
- "The translation of 'Moors' as 'Berbers' was immediately imposed on the first historians of late Africa without them feeling the need to justify it, and it has been preserved until today. In fact, as we shall see, if in the 6th century the Moor was certainly still an indigenous African whom the Romans judged 'non-Romanized,' he could possess a cultural complexity."
- That the beauty of the "purple" came from the XIX century. With respect to the sources, and to improve all anachronism and all the ambiguity of the ideological trends of "Berberes", our parlerons don't seem to be in "Maures". Also, as on the verra, the stylistic raisons provide the font that we have no choice but to write "Birds" in certain phrases.
- "Sur les different kinds of people of Maures and the origin of his son to design the Africans jugés non-romanisés." Yves Modéran, *Les Maures et l'Afrique Romaine (IVe-VIe siècle)*, Op. 13. RamziRoughi, "The Berbers of the Arabs", Op, Cit, p.69.
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- Researcher Ramzi Rouighi has completed numerous historical studies on the subject of "Berber ethnonymy" and the origins of the Maghrebi population in the Islamic West during the medieval period. A faculty member at the University of Southern California in the United States, he is considered among the leading figures interested in the history of the Maghrebi population and ethnonymy. Much of his research focuses on the history of the term "Berber" and its roots in Islamic sources. In 2011, he published a study titled "The Berbers of the Arabs," followed by an article in the journal **Story** in 2017 titled "Berberization and Its Modern Artifacts." In 2019, he published an article titled "The Mediterranean between Barbaria and the Maghrib: Questions for a Return to History," and in the same year, Pennsylvania Press published a 268-page book titled "Inventing the Berbers." In 2021, La Casa de Velázquez published a new study by him. The book: "Les Berberes entre Maghreb et Mashreq" is entitled: "(The berbérisation and these masks: the people berberère in a question (VIIe-Xe siècle)).
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American scholar Michael Pratt and archaeologist Elizabeth Fanciris, based on physical anthropology studies, assert that the Maghrebis are more closely related to the Sicilians, Spaniards, and Egyptians than to the Nigerians, Saudis, and Ethiopians. See: Ramzi Rouighi, "Inventing the Berbers", *Op. Cit.*, p.3.