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Editorial: A New Journal for a New Vision of North Africa

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Editorial: A New Journal for a New Vision of North Africa

On behalf of our editorial board, I am delighted to announce the publication of the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Amazigh Studies*. This journal has been nearly three years in the making and is an outgrowth of the only Amazigh magazine in the United States, *The Amazigh Voice*, which first appeared in New Jersey in 1992. The *Journal of Amazigh Studies* is an open-access peer-edited online publication hosted by Scholarship@Claremont, in Claremont, California.

For centuries, North Africa, a region that stretches from the Oasis of Siwa in Egypt to the Canary Islands in the Atlantic, has been a vast geographical space of exchange and commerce as well as invasion and colonization. As a result, North Africa has also been of interest to scholars and travelers of all horizons as far back as the 5th century BC (Herodotus). This space—material and extractive, textual, and imaginative—was construed as either a province of the Western world or as a province of the so-called “Arab” world (that is, an extension of the Middle East). And so, the constant and ubiquitous presence of its indigenous populations known as “Berbers,” who call themselves Imazighen (sing. Amazigh), was either ignored, dismissed, or suppressed.

As a journal, *JAS* is concerned with addressing the Amazigh component of this vast territory throughout North Africa and its diaspora in a novel way, that of collaboration, just like *azetta*, the collective weaving practices of Amazigh women. Indeed, *JAS* is a commitment to a new idea of North Africa where the expression of different informed perspectives is encouraged, as well as communication across national frontiers and especially across North Africa and the rest of the world. *JAS* promotes scholarship across disciplines and encourages younger academics and established scholars to submit English, French, and Tamazight articles. The journal will publish articles in these three languages. Also, because *JAS* is based on the American continent, it will support dialogue between emerging American (and Canadian) scholarship on Amazigh Studies and scholarship from North Africa and Europe, where there is a large North African diaspora. As Abdelkebir Khatibi once told me, reflecting on our continent from the United States provides some healthy distance away from the fray of the two spaces we usually evolve, namely North Africa and its former colonizers. He called it the “third space.”

JAS joins several other Amazigh journals today, mainly based in Europe and North Africa. There is *Études et documents Berbères*, founded by Ouahmi Ould-Braham, and *Awal*, founded by Mouloud Mammeri and Tassadit Yacine, both based in France. We recognize and honor in Algeria *Timsal n Tamazight* and the brand new *Tangalt*, which appeared a few months ago. *Tangalt* is dedicated to Amazigh literature in Tamazight and is especially welcome, given its mission. In Morocco, *Asinag* (founded by Ahmed Boukous in 2008) was recently joined by *Revue des Études Amazighes* (founded by Abdelâali Talmenssour in 2017). There are also specialized journals such as *Libyca* (founded in 1953, dedicated to prehistory, archeology, and anthropology) and *Ikosim* (founded in 2012 and focused on archeology).

The planning for *JAS* coincided with the 60th anniversary of Algerian independence (1962-2022), so we decided to dedicate this first issue to Algeria’s 60 years of independence and the Amazigh question. This inaugural issue consists of articles in sociology, with Harzoune’s exploration of the Kabyles’ presence/absence in France and Zoreli’s insights on solidarity in Kabylia. There is also Berkai’s linguistic study of the lexical influence of Tamazight on Algerian Arabic and Kremer’s

novel intertextual reading of Feraoun's texts. This issue also features one film review about a women's pastoral activity in Kabylia called "nnuba" (At Qasi-Kessi) and four book reviews. The first of the reviews concerns Djerba's traditional Amazigh tales (Ben Maammar); the second is a book on Kateb Yacine and Debza during the Amazigh Spring (Aït Ferroukh); the third review is of Mahfoufi's two volumes of poems and songs of Kabylia during the Algerian war, and the last is on Amazigh politics during the Arab Spring (Maddy-Weitzman). There are also two essays: one is about hearing Idir in Bouïra for the first time (Roberts) and the other is a retrospective of the life and activities of Mouloud Mammeri during the Battle of Algiers (Sadi). This issue closes with a translation from French into Tamazight of a famous poem by Jean Amrouche (Rabia) and a moving recollection of a woman named Hjila, singing a memorable lament (Aknine).

This inaugural issue is made possible by the efforts of many people who must be acknowledged. Thanks are first due to Jennifer Beamer and Scholarship@Claremont, who agreed to host JAS and provided technical assistance, everyday advice, and encouragement. The latter entity is a service of The Claremont Colleges Library for the five Claremont Colleges (Pomona College, Scripps College, Harvey Mudd College, Pitzer College, and Claremont McKenna College) and the Keck Graduate Institute. Thanks are also due to my managing editors, especially Wafa Bahri and M Kamel Igoudjil, who generously gave their time and energy to make this project happen. Their attention to detail, good humor, and patience made this work a busy yet enjoyable and meaningful process.

Finally, and for myself, I dedicate this issue about Algeria's independence to the numerous Amazighs in Algeria who were at the forefront of the fight against colonialism, some of whom were active as early as 1926 when they created the ENA (*L'Étoile nord africaine*, the North African Star) and demanded the independence of North Africa. Some of these people—heroes! —were assassinated, or their lives were destroyed because of their activism or for advocating their Amazighity within the liberation movement, during the struggle, or even after Algeria's independence. Here is only a partial list of some of these outstanding individuals whose names have been forgotten, perhaps, but whom we remember here:

- Amar Imache (founding father of ENA)
- Mohamed Si Djilani (founding father of ENA)
- Mohand amokrane Khelifati
- Ali Laïmèche
- Ouali Bennaï
- Mohand Idir Aït Amrane
- Mohand Aarv Bessaoud
- Mohamed Haroun
- M'barek Aït Menguellat
- Amar Ould Hamouda
- Ammar Negadi
- Mohand Saïd Hanouz
- Redjala Mbarek

We cannot forget the present in the name of the past. So, I also dedicate this issue to the Amazigh activists who continue to be imprisoned without due process, such as Kamira Naït Sid, an Amazigh

human right activist, who was sentenced to five years in prison for, among other reasons, threatening national unity.

Fazia Aïtel
Editor-in-Chief