

The Problem of the Origin of the Berbers

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ABSTRACT

The subject of research on the origins of societies is one of the most important and difficult historical research topics, especially the study of authentic society.

Accounts of the origin of the word "Amazigh" or "Berber" vary, some of which are of Roman or Greek origin, some of which attribute it to Arab origin, and some of which are due to displacement and migration from Yemen or the Arabian Peninsula.

Historians also differed about the origin of the Amazigh, some of them attribute it to European or Indo-European origin, some attribute it to Illiterates, and some of them believe their origin is protector, as the theory of double origin appeared.

It is clear that the problem of origin still exists, and that it needs more archaeological, genetic, linguistic and cultural research to clarify the relationship of the Amazigh with other peoples throughout history, with the need to stay away from theses with ideological motives, colonial or otherwise.

Keywords: Berber, Amazigh, Origin, Phoenician, North Africa

INTRODUCTION

The topics of historical research in the origins of societies are one of the most important and difficult topics of historical research, especially the study of the indigenous society of North Africa, Berbers or Amazighs, due to the diversity of civilizations and their circulation on the North African region from the Phoenicians, the Romans, Alo Nadal, the Byzantines, and finally the Arab Islamic conquest.

The study of history does not only address the details of the past, but also provides us with keys to the problems posed in our present life, and the study of the origins of society leads to knowing the roots from which the origin of societies emerges. Thus, building a strong nation with solid roots, as history is an expression of the pride of peoples, and here I quote a quote by Dr. Hisham Safadi in his article Towards a better awareness of the history of Algeria, "Peoples are like living trees, their resistance to hurricanes increases as they take root in the depths of the earth", the studies that have been read through the completion of this topic, whether orientalist or orientalist, were not committed either accurately or objectively, whether intentionally (for example, orientalist to pass their colonial settlement project or unintentionally to Al-Mashreqa). Their knowledge of the specificity of Maghreb society is sufficient), and here we must not let others write our history. Thus, through their writings they lay out their various ideologies that will

undoubtedly not serve our goals of prosperity, development and advancement. Therefore, the problem of the subject will be limited to the search for the roots or rather the origin of the Berbers, as we take from history its genealogical part, which is considered a research on the beginning and origin of the Berbers, i.e. the concept of origin and formation.

Therefore, we must answer the following problems:

- What are the main theories put forward about the origin of the Amazigh, and what are the advantages and disadvantages of each theory?
- What historical, archaeological, linguistic and genetic evidence can be used to support or refute different theories?
- Is it possible to say with certainty a specific theory of the origin of the Amazigh? Or does the evidence point to multiple roots and overlap?

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- To what extent have colonial or other ideologies influenced the writing of the history of the origin of the Amazigh?
- How can traditional narratives of migrations and displacement from certain regions to North Africa be assessed?
- How can future research contribute to clarifying the historical picture of the origin and formation of Amazigh society?
- What is the impact of the ambiguity of the historical origins of the Amazigh on issues of identity and belonging today?

FIRST THE CONCEPT OF THE WORD BERBER

Berbers [1] is one of the oldest inhabitants who settled in the Maghreb, or rather the indigenous population, and the Berber nation is based geographically between Cyrenaica and the Atlantic Ocean east and west and between Sudan and the Mediterranean Sea north and south, this is geographically either linguistically the origin of the name of the word Berber can be traced back to several novels circulated by most historians, divided in their entirety into five novels, each of which gives a special concept to the word "Berber".

THE FIRST NOVEL THE ORIGIN OF THE WORD ROMAN

A category of historians [2] who dated the origin of the word Berber to the Roman civilization after they derived its meaning from Greece, where it is said that its source is the Greek word Varvaros, which means murmur and speech is incomprehensible, as they mean all those who do not speak their language, and with the transition of the balance of global power to the Roman civilization, they borrowed the word from Greece and in turn called all peoples and tribes outside their influence the term barbarians, "Barbar", that is, all peoples who do not speak Latin [3] believing that the Roman civilization is superior about all the civilizations of the world, which is a racially discriminatory view.

THE SECOND NOVEL: THE ORIGIN OF THE WORD ARABIC

Several historians have stated that the meaning of the word "Berber" is due to the great-grandfather of this people. Thus, they attributed it to "Barr bin Qais bin Ilan bin Mudar bin Nizar" [4], and the narration has been woven that "Barr" married his cousin "Baha" and fled because of the enmity of his brothers towards him, especially his brother "Amr bin Qais" and moved to North Africa with his wife. From there, the people transmitted the word Berber, meaning righteousness went out into the wilderness.

THE THIRD NOVEL: THE NOVEL OF DISPLACEMENT

Its narrators claim that King Nu'man ibn Himyar ibn Saba told his sons that he wanted them to rebuild the Maghreb, so they emigrated to it and from their descendants came the various Berber tribes [5].

I gathered a mess of your idols for a cat (for death) (Swafa) (Hxora) (Sanhaja) (Lamta tribe).

THE FOURTH NOVEL: THE NOVEL OF MIGRATION

This narration mentions that a king from Tabab'a [6] called "Ifriqish ibn Saifi" invaded the Maghreb and called it Ifriqiya, and here it is mentioned that he was the first to use the word "Berber" when he arrived in a country that did not understand the language of the indigenous people, so he stated, "How many more Berbers." The definition of Berbera in an article that justified the saying of Ibn Manzur [7] in the dictionary of Lisan al-Arab is "a lot of speech and fuss with the tongue, and it was said: shouting. And the man is a barber if he is, and a barber if he is guided. The barbarian is uselessly talkative. Berbera in his words Berbera if more. And Berbera voice and speech of anger, has Berbera like gossip is talkative and in the hadith of Ali honored God and his face when the people of Taif asked him to write them the secretariat on the analysis of adultery and alcohol refrained: they rose and grumbled and barbarians, and from him Berbera confusion in speech with anger and aversion, and Berber. And the Berbers: a generation of people who are said to be born Barr bin Qais bin Allan, he said, and I do not know how this is, and the Berbers are a group of them, they increased the distraction in it, either for the Ajama or for the lineage, which is correct, said the essence and if you want to Hadvtha. Berbera was said: "The voice of the comforter" and the term Berbera al-Assad is used to mean an incomprehensible voice with anger.

This novel mention that "Abraha That Manar" King of Yemen is the one who ordered his children to populate the Maghreb and not "Ifriqish", although the names differ, but they agree with these historians, especially the Arabs, on the novel of migration.

THE FIFTH NOVEL THE NOVEL OF EXILE AND DISPLACEMENT

This novel focuses on exile and displacement and that the Berbers of Ould Ham and that they are an ancient generation have inhabited Morocco in the past and then joined them races bin Canaan from the Levant when they were exiled by "Joshua bin Nun" peace be upon him first and then David peace be upon him when David killed their king Goliath and from him the Arab genealogists return that the Berbers are a mixture of Canaanites and giants who all migrated to the Maghreb after the killing of Goliath [8], and from him they agreed that the Berbers trace their lineage back to Yemen. Or the Arabian Peninsula, especially Al-Bakri and Al-Masoudi (the theory of the evacuation of the Berbers from Palestine), as for Ibn Khaldun, he repeated that the Berbers

are descendants of Canaan bin Ham bin Noah, specifically from Yemen, i.e. from Hadhramaut [9] and thus attributed the origin of the largest Berber tribes to Yemen, such as Sanhaja and Kutama, who played an important role in the history of the Islamic Maghreb, Sanhaja, the founder of the Almoravid state and Kutama, the founder of the Fatimid state [10].

From it concludes that the name of the Berbers is an imported label and not stemming from the essence of the indigenous people (Berbers) and it was necessary to apply historical criticism to this term and that the Berbers asked themselves about their name to prefer the Amazigh, the general names of the peoples in history put by the colonizer, for example, the name of the Phoenicians is not developed by its owners, but by the Greeks and if one of the Phoenicians asked about their real name, his answer would have been "Sidon" relative to the city of Sidon.

SECOND THE ORIGIN OF THE BERBERS

It has been found that the Berbers do not consist of a single element, but a human mix¹¹ formed over centuries and centuries, and from it we find that most researchers divide the origins of the Berbers into one of the following hypotheses [11].

A. European Origin [12]

Some Western historians believe that the Berber origin is Indo-European, i.e. of Japheth's origin, attributed to Japheth son of Noah, peace be upon him. Based on human characteristics such as Caucasian whiteness and hair density, they emerged in ancient times from India, passed through Persia, then the Caucasus, and crossed northern Europe to settle in North Africa.

B. Semitic Origin [13]

Which of the sons of Shem bin Noah to Yaft bin Noah, according to geological or spatudies, the Geology, the Arabian Peninsula, the home of the first Semites, was covered with snow in ancient times, and Yemen was the cradle of the first sons of Shem, mixed with their cousins, the sons of Ham, when the snow receded, the heat intensified and the people dispersed, so the Semitic branch moved from the Berbers to North Africa.

C. Protective Origin

It is mentioned that they are sons of Ham bin Noah, and it is reported that the Banu Ham [14] disputed with the Banu Shem, and as a result of this conflict, the Banu Ham migrated to Morocco. From it, these genealogists agreed that they were the sons of Copts [14] ibn Ham and that when he came to Egypt, his sons went out to the Maghreb, that is, at the borders of Egypt, beyond Cyrenaica to the ocean [15].

D. Double Origin [16]

The proponents of this theory argue that the Berbers belong to two dynasties, a dynasty of European origin (the Indo-European) that migrated to Africa from Asia and then Europe, and a second Semitic lineage. From there, the two strains met, forming the element "Berber", and they infer that there is a difference in human characteristics [17] of Berbers such as skin color, hair, eyes, as well as the shape of the skull.

THE END

From it we conclude that the problem is still on the table and that the origin of the Berbers abounded in theories and hypotheses based either on displacement, migration, exile or displacement, all of this with the aim of denying their authenticity on their land to reach a result that serves their interests with different ideologies, i.e. passing the idea of settlement, which is the right of everyone to be present on the land of the Berbers, a dangerous idea suffered by the Berbers throughout the historical eras of the Roman occupation of the Byzantine Vandals and even from the injustice of the Umayyad dictators.

Thus, we find it difficult [18] to find a country from which the Berbers did not mention that the Berbers came from, as the Arab genealogists focus on the kinship between them and the Berbers from the Arabian Peninsula, while the European orientalist authors, in turn, focus on the European origin in order to be able to pass their colonial settlement project, while the hypothesis that the genealogists and historians did not focus much on is what if the Amazigh did not come from any country [19] and the evidence of the excavations that found the oldest sane man in the world was found in the North African region (Specifically, Mascara), from which the theory of local origin can be of interest in relation to recent studies of anthropologists.

Let us accept that one of the previous narrations is true, especially the narration of Ifriqish, who descended in the Berber region, since he and based on the above mentioned that he heard the hadith of the Berbers and called them by this name, which means that the inhabitants existed before him. Thus, we conclude that the Berbers were a people who existed before the migrations mentioned by the Arab genealogists. The evidence of the large number of Berber tribes and the strength of their spread in the Maghreb does not suggest that they migrated to it from any country, but at the same time it is no secret that the Berbers with their different tribes and stomachs differ in terms of morphology (physical characteristics), for example, there is a difference between the Aurean Berbers and the Tuareg Berbers including the theories of migration and mixing should also not be abolished. Thus, the term Berbers is not an ethnic concept [20]. as much as it is a linguistic concept as we have seen previously through the multiplicity of narrations, as the ethnic term that defines them is Amazigh because they themselves preferred it, as the sources state that a delegation of Berbers belonged to Mazigh when the Caliph Omar bin

Khatab asked them about their lineage, and the delegation did not mention that they were Berbers, but they mentioned that their great-grandfather was Mazigh and that they had no cities. Most genealogists agree that the Berbers are united by two branches, Prince and Madghis (amputation), these are the sons of Mazigh, who was the son of Canaan son of Ham son of Noah.

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