

CALL FOR BOOK CHAPTERS

Decentering North Africa/the Maghreb/Tamazgha: Enduring Colonialities and Spatial Imagination

Editors:

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Background

This edited volume centers the space that is bounded by an Arab East, a European North, an African South, and an Atlantic West. Generally encompassing Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, the label used to name this region variously includes or excludes Mauritania, Libya, and Egypt. Tamazgha, the Maghreb, *al-Maghrib al-'Arabi*, and North Africa: each label originates in specific historical-political junctures and comprises particular power relations. Both North Africa and the Maghreb signify one geographical region in contradistinction to another: the Middle East, the Mashriq, Europe, or Sub-Saharan Africa. *Al-Maghrib al-'Arabi* grew out of the movement for Arabism (*'uruba*) during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, starting in *bilad al-Sham*. “The Maghreb” was later repurposed by French colonial authorities to separate the region from the Levant. Subsequently, the term was (unsuccessfully) reclaimed as a revolutionary, anticolonial concept in the service of armed struggle and national liberation. Partly responding to an elitist endeavor that was neither representative of nor responsive to the diversity of populations, Tamazgha emerged in the 1970s as a mythical homeland for Imazighen and an activist proclamation of indigenous auto-affirmation. Throughout the 1990s, an Amazigh cultural movement gained momentum, at home and among the diaspora. Yet this movement too reframed the politics of inclusion/exclusion in sometimes controversial ways. Our starting point for this edited volume does not take any of these labels for granted. Rather, we encourage contributors to critically examine their own classificatory conventions and the taken for granted divisions that each label promotes.

Whether conceived as a geopolitical, geocultural and geostrategic entity, the space is rich in historical, cultural, and intellectual traditions. We do not presume an isolated, self-contained social unit, but seek contributions that trace rhizomatic geographic and cultural continuities, the region’s intersections, overlaps, exchanges, mobilities, imaginations, and solidarities across a range of ethnic, religious, social and political domains. Against an often-monolingual scholarship that presumes binaries, barriers, or insularity, we invite contributions that advance multilingual analyses and that repopulate and recover layered and generative zones of contact.

The locus of multiple converging imperialisms comprising sites of conflict and confrontation, the area is shaped by Amazigh, Roman, Islamic, and Arab trajectories, as well as Ottoman and colonial legacies. It is a site of exchange and mobility and of creative, cultural, and theoretical production, including in borderland spaces and

zones of circulation that unsettle fixed regional boundaries. Linkages extend across trans-Saharan and trans-Mediterranean networks, reaching into West Asia, the Sahel, and beyond.

Despite this indeterminacy and the palimpsestic layering of histories, the advent of European colonialism in the 19th and early 20th centuries ushered in flattening forms of representation and governance that continue to influence cultural, political, and scholarly formations today. Colonial-era photography, travel literature, Orientalist paintings, and architectural designs constructed a Western imaginary of exoticism and timelessness, a land of sensual allure, religious otherness, and striking cultural contrasts. Orientalist images and imaginaries deeply fashioned global perceptions of the region and helped reproduce asymmetrical power relations through aesthetic discourses.

Locally based writers, travelers, and artists have developed counter-narratives that contest, draw on, or reformulate colonial-era Orientalist tropes. Challenges to Orientalist representation draw on local histories that predate and outlive colonial eras to reconstitute identity. At times, however, nationalist movements, post-independence literature, modern art, and diasporic voices reflect an ongoing and uneven reckoning with the legacies of empire and enduring colonialities. Indeed, current cantonization, aggressive ethnonationalism, and nativist discourses reconstitute and revive colonialities for the present.

We invite contributions spanning early travelogues to contemporary digital media productions that subject these complex expressions, appropriations, and productions to critical inquiry. We are interested in contributions that analyze and unpack how contemporary self-fashioning and emic expressions are complicated by histories of migration, identity politics, and the appropriation of imposed frameworks. Contributions might address questions such as: How have people and communities engaged, resisted, and appropriated colonial frameworks of modernity and representation? How have supposedly binary gazes evolved over time? Does the contrapuntal nature of identity formulation enliven border-crossing and transmutation or does it reinforce othering and re-entrench boundaries? Which cultural myths perdure and which ones have been contested, subverted, or reimagined?

This collective book seeks to provide a view of visual, literary, and cultural aspects of the region to explore and critically interrogate the multifaceted encounters between the peoples and ideas of Tamazgha, the Maghreb, North Africa, and the world. It invites chapters that examine how Western images of this region have evolved over time and how local representations of the West have developed in response—including through trans-Saharan and trans-Mediterranean networks, borderland formations, and other sites of mobility and encounter. Emphasizing a contrapuntal reading and a multidisciplinary and decolonial methodology, the book seeks to reassess how this region of complex and contested identities and cultures have been shaped by engagements with Western and non-Western thought, aesthetics, and ideology. It centers local and indigenous perspectives in shaping and contesting cultural representations, while fostering dialogue across disciplines. The book encourages innovative methodologies that challenge previous approaches and discourses while also opening space for more nuanced and decolonial readings of cultural production and exchange.

Suggested topics may include but are not limited to:

1. Tamazgha

- ✓ Arabism and *Amazighité*
- ✓ Amazigh oral traditions, poetry, and performance as repositories of collective memory
- ✓ Re/Writing history: indigenous historiographies and decolonial approaches to Amazigh pasts
- ✓ Interactions across colonial, post-colonial, and indigenous languages, terms, and cultural production (including continuities, tensions, resistances)

2. Representations of the Maghreb/ North Africa

- ✓ Orientalism and the legacy of colonial knowledge production; representation, contestation, appropriation
- ✓ European travel writing, photography, and painting across the region
- ✓ Representations of men, women/femininities, masculinities, and gendered imaginaries
- ✓ Stereotypes, tourism, commercial fantasies, and regimes of im/mobility

3. Maghrebi/ Local Representations of the world

- ✓ Cinema, theatre, art, and other forms of cultural production as spaces of negotiation, contestation, resistance
- ✓ Navigating modernity, secularism, and technology through a local lens/ and/or as situated knowledge
- ✓ Postcolonial literary responses and critiques of Western modernity
- ✓ Reflections of/on Europe and America in diasporic Maghrebi, North African, Tamazghan narratives

4. Sites of Cultural Contact and Performance

- ✓ Archives, exhibitions, and the politics of curating and performing identity at domestic, regional, and international scales
- ✓ Music, dance, and ritual as embodied encounters
- ✓ Language, translation, and multilingual expressions of identity

5. Gender, Power, and Embodiment

- ✓ Feminist and queer interventions that re/define taken for granted divisions
- ✓ Intersections of gender, class, and race in colonial and postcolonial narratives
- ✓ Feminism in literature, film, and visual arts
- ✓ Women's activism, resistance, and participation in cultural production
- ✓ Masculinities, femininities, and the politics of gender across temporal/spatial/colonial/nationalist/activist domains

6. Migration, Memory, and Diaspora

- ✓ Memory and transgenerational transmission in the diaspora
- ✓ Representations of migrants and borders in art, film, and literature
- ✓ Nostalgia, displacement, and hybrid subjectivities
- ✓ Diasporic return narratives and cultural re-routing/re-rooting

7. Digital Cultures and Contemporary Media

- ✓ Digital creators and influencers negotiating identity online
- ✓ Social media as a site of cultural production
- ✓ Cyber-Orientalism and digital contestation

- ✓ Youth culture, activism, and aesthetics of belonging
- 8. The Mediterranean as a Space of Exchange**
- ✓ The present-day performance of antique inheritance/s
- ✓ The Mediterranean basin as a historical and cultural crossroads
- ✓ North-South and East-West flows of goods, people, and ideas
- ✓ Shared heritage and contested memory in Mediterranean narratives
- ✓ Maritime routes, cosmopolitan ports, and layered zones of contact

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Submission Guidelines

Chapter length: 7,000-9,000 words (incl. abstract and references)

Abstract: 250-300 words

Bio: 100-150 words

Style: Chicago Manual of Style

Language: English

Formatting: 12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced

Full chapter submissions should be sent to Lahoucine Aammari at Sultan Moulay Slimane University (ammarielho@gmail.com) and Mariam Taher at Indiana University, Bloomington (taherm@iu.edu).

Deadline: January 30 2027

General queries about the project can also be directed to the editors.