

Amazonian terraforming to environmental degradation at Cahokia. This points the way for incorporating the First Nations more fully into global medieval history. Geraldine Heng's afterword likewise underlines how central China and India—the central cogs driving premodern Afroeurasian technological innovation, industrial production, and commercial exchange—must be in any “global” approach to the premodern past.⁵

This does not diminish the book's value. There is much here for non-specialists—“Three Ways of Mis-reading Thomas Jefferson's Qur'an” (Ryan Szpiech) or “Celtic Crosses and the Myth of Whiteness” (Maggie Williams) could feature in American Studies courses, for example—while we medievalists will be using it for quite awhile.

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⁵ Cf. B. Campbell, *The Great Transition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); G. Parker, *Global Crisis* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), esp. 115–51 and 642–67, on China in relation to other polities in the premodern world.

Ramzi Rouighi, *Inventing the Berbers: History and Ideology in the Maghrib*. The Middle Ages Series. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019. 312 pp. ISBN 9780812251302. \$79.95

The study of North Africa has long suffered neglect in Anglophone academy and media. This is perhaps especially true of the history of the region, about which there is little published compared to the traditional areas of attention in the Middle East. Reporters and analysts who can write knowledgeably on Tunisia, Algeria, or Morocco in English are exiguous (you would have to read French for any discussion in depth). And perhaps only Morocco has a place in popular consciousness, mostly as a tourist destination that is beautiful and distinct. At the center of this distinctiveness is its unique demographic, cultural, and linguistic makeup, often identified with its Berber culture, a term usually glossed, quite simply, as the indigenous culture of North Africa (or the Maghrib).

Ramzi Rouighi's *Inventing the Berbers: History and Ideology in the Maghrib* takes this formulation apart, arguing persuasively that it is, in many ways, not true. There is not a single culture with a sense of common unity and destiny that self-identified as “Berber” and retained this sense in the face of Arab conquest, colonization, and conversion. A Berber identity most certainly exists, but it came together after the Arab conquests and evolved historically. *Inventing the Berbers* (and this is the book's major contribution) examines key junctures in historical writing, mostly Arabic, in which Berber identities were articulated. In doing so, Rouighi describes the evolution of the term and its different uses in different genres and text types, inflected by particular perspectives and fields of activity (e.g., Berbers as nebulous foreigners, Berbers as slaves, Berbers as ethnically distinct military groups).

The term “Berber,” to begin with, is curious: a vague exonym with strong echoes of the generic “barbarian,” eventually embraced in local and regional usage but superseded in post-colonial usage by “Amazigh,” a term Rouighi describes as “ultimately just a calque of

‘Berber.’ The change of categories has no bearing on linguistic analysis, archeological finds, or computational genomics—although it is critical to the politicization of the knowledge these disciplines produce. The switch was, however, full of significance: it naturalized the inscription of (colonial) indigeneity into history and foreclosed the historicizing of the category Berber . . . ” (189). The term Berber (Arabic *barbar*) has a complex history and relationship to the Maghrib, which Rouighi explores in six chapters, devoting some two-thirds of the work to the medieval or premodern context and the final two chapters to the modern, colonial, and post-colonial production of Berber identities and histories.

We follow the history of the term from its origins, which Rouighi places in Egypt, in the way that Coptic and Greek speakers differentiated between Berber and barbarian, and first used it to identify groups in East Africa but later, revealing an Egyptian perspective, in the conquest (or *futūḥ*) narratives in which it is used to designate peoples west of Egypt. In subsequent conquest narratives, the closer the action gets to the Maghrib proper, the less the term appears, replaced by more specific identifiers such as Hawwāra, Zanāta, and Ṣanhāja. Arabic writers who wrote for Maghribi readers or those well acquainted with the Maghribi context rarely used the term, which only became politically significant, according to Rouighi, in al-Andalus, where the concept of Berber took on palpable social and political significance. The Andalusī articulation of Berber identity would have long term impact in its articulation.

Perhaps the most important figure in Rouighi’s historiography of Berber identities is Ibn Khaldūn, the fourteenth-century Maghribi historian and pioneer social theorist. Ibn Khaldūn’s work marked the culmination of the process in which a pan-Berber identity with a sense of a unified and coherent history was given a fully articulated form in which Berber genealogies participated alongside Arab ones in the formation of the dynasties that built Islamic civilization. This vision gathered what had been a disparate group of communities with no shared identity and created a coherent unity, which in turn had a close relationship with a region and a meaningful place in Islamic history. “The Hawwāra became the Hawāra Berbers; the Zanāta, Zanāta Berbers, and all became Berbers” (2). This process, in which the groups of North West Africa developed a unified identity through the interaction with Arab-Islamic empire, Rouighi calls Berberization and is, broadly, the subject of the book. Ibn Khaldūn is a centerpiece, moreover, because on top of giving the historical narrative its classic late medieval form, his historical writings are picked up by colonial scholars in the process of writing and rewriting the past and colonial present of Maghribi social groups under colonial administration. With the emergence of vibrant cultural and political movements championing Berber/Tamazight culture in the post-colonial period (and through the present), the process can be seen to be ongoing.

The book is thus divided into three parts. Part I, Medieval Origins (Ch. 1: Berberization and its Origins and Ch. 2: Making Berbers) explores the earliest uses and formations of Berber identities as they appear in a variety of texts, notably in conquest narratives and later historiography, but also in legal texts, including passages in which Berber appears as a class or type of slave. As noted above, the emergence of military groups in al-Andalus

was formative for the political narratives. More important even was the state and empire formation in the Maghrib (which interacted with the Andalusí tradition) such as the Almoravid and Almohad empires (the latter famously introduced written Berber into government administration and proselytization). These are taken up in Part II, Genealogy and Homeland (Ch. 3: The Berber People and Ch. 4: The Maghrib and the Land of the Berbers), and includes the discussion on Ibn Khaldun. Part III, Modern Medieval Berbers (Ch. 5: Modern Origins and Ch. 6: Beacons, Guides, and Marked Paths) takes up the colonial production of Maghribi history, in which Berbers become recast as indigenous and in which Ibn Khaldūn's work becomes a central text of reference. The Conclusion argues for the value of understanding the historical evolution of the category or identity and its post-colonial aftermath and importance in contemporary political movements. "The invention of the Berbers is and has always been historical," Rouighi concludes.

This is a deeply historiographical book and its greatest contribution is providing a map of the development of a historiographical subject or category ("The Berbers") across historiographical, geographical, and legal text (among others). The organizing argument of a book that flows essayistically can be a bit distracting. That the people of the Maghrib had no sense of unified culture, history, and identity before the Arab conquests and that a sense of that history and identity evolved historically seems incontrovertible to me, and I would not imagine that historically-minded readers would disagree. At the same time, the discussion brings up a whole number of questions on indigeneity and national and regional cultures that, in one way or another, are shared by other cultures with similar patterns of evolution and paradoxes of identification. As the author points out, the process is paralleled in the creation of national European cultures out of disparate and diverse premodern and medieval ones. Such parallels and the broader theoretical questions they imply and elicit could have been given more attention. But generating questions is hardly a criticism for a book of such ambitious scope. Rouighi has given us a framework to further investigate a rich topic, and the production, including the use of subtitles identifying sections and the inclusion of a helpful index, make the text accessible to non-specialists.

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Hannah Barker, *That Most Precious Merchandise: The Mediterranean Trade in Black Sea Slaves, 1260–1500*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019. 328 pp. ISBN 9780812251548. \$79.95

Hannah Barker's book is a unique contribution to the study of medieval slavery. It combines the study of both Latin and Arabic sources to present the eastern Mediterranean as a space of shared social norms and commercial practices. These norms and practices facilitated the enslavement and export of slaves from the Black Sea region to Italy and the Near East. The study focuses on the Italian trading powers of Genoa and Venice as well as on the Mamluk sultanate, which controlled Egypt and the Levantine