



The Persian Compound in the Maghreb between the 1st and 6th centuries AH (7th and 12th centuries CE): A Study in the Origins of Human Names and Geographical Settlement Areas

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ABSTRACT

The subject of this study is concerned with researching the origins of the naming of non-Arabs and their ethnic meanings in the Maghreb during a period that extends over six full centuries of the Middle Ages, by tracing their historical roots from ancient periods up to the period under study. The research highlights the extent of the influence of political, social, cultural, and linguistic factors in the formulation of non-Arab names, while monitoring the transformations that have occurred to them, especially since most contemporary historical studies have transmitted the list of names of Maghrebi human groups without investigating their historical origins and ethnonymic connotations, or considering the temporal contexts that contributed to their crystallization, taking Islamic source fields as a fixed reference from which to derive the names of the inhabitants of the Maghreb, despite the changes that the narrative, geographical, jurisprudential knowledge and the texts of Arabic genealogical literature have brought about to the original nominal forms of the Maghrebi population, and overlooking the usefulness of identifying the situation of human structures and the names of their components during the ancient period, and excluding the role of the Islamization and Arabization movement in the nominal transformation of the ethnonymy of human groups during the period that followed the Islamic conquest campaigns of the Maghreb regions.

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Introduction:

It is not unreasonable to consider the ethnonym "Pers" as referring to the term "Ajam," since this latter ethnic designation appeared in early Islamic sources to denote the Persian communities present in the eastern regions of the Islamic world, and was known as "Ajam" in the Islamic Maghreb. This term appears after the year 260 AH in explicit texts by al-Ya'qubi, who used it to refer to the Persian ethnic group. He also employed the same word to describe the ancient ethnic groups settled in the region. Thus, assuming a semantic relationship between the two terms, "Ajam" and "Pers," leads us to first study the demographic distribution of the Ajam groups, and then to address the issue of the settlement of the Persian and Khorasani communities in order to accurately map the settlement patterns of Ajam, Persian, and Khorasani peoples in the Islamic Maghreb.

Before delving into the terminological definition of the ethnonym 'Ajam' and its linguistic suffixes, the following question must be posed: What is the meaning of the term 'Ajam' in descriptive and historical texts? Does its syntactic form and linguistic derivatives possess implicit meanings not revealed by sources from the early Islamic period? Did not historical, political, sectarian, and geographical contexts influence

this ethnic designation? And what was the geographical distribution of the Ajam, Persian, and Khorasani groups in North Africa?

1/ Persians... Khorasanis... Ajam... Ancient Ajam... Returning to the Problem of Ethnomical Pluralism

1-1/ The Ethnome in Modern Studies:

Researcher Gabrieli identifies the origin of the word 'ajam and its semantic developments in Arabic. He states that it corresponds perfectly to the meaning of the Greek ethnonym known as "barbaro" (βάρβαροι). According to the basic meaning of the root from which it is derived, the word 'ajam (adjam) refers to the inhabitants who speak in a foreign language (udjma), a linguistically obscure and incomprehensible manner of pronunciation. In Arabic, 'ajam is the opposite of eloquence, and 'ajam refers to non-Arabs. This is what gave rise to the connotation associated with 'barbarism,' meaning an incomprehensible and obscure style of speech.

Although the ethnic designations given to human groups by Islamic sources reflect ethnic distinctions, the duality of the general meaning of the term "Ajam" cannot be ignored. It became necessary to define the term precisely, despite its multiple connotations. This was pointed out by Tadochlycki, who considered "Ajam" a term used to designate non-Arabic speaking populations, or rather, non-Arabs. Its meaning applies to human groups of non-Arab ethnic origins in general, or to groups of Persian ethnic origin in particular.

Charles Platt established the ethnomique of 'Ajam, offering a definition consistent with the information provided by Ibadi sources on the subject. Its meaning is limited to groups of Persian descent who integrated into Islamic civilization. However, contrary to this definition, which reduces the term 'Ajam to the Persian element, researcher Fathi Bahri points to the use of the word 'Ajam thirteen times by the Abbasid geographer al-Ya'qubi. He notes that it refers to groups of people known by this name, while at other times presenting them in a somewhat ambiguous manner. Indeed, the ethnomique of 'Ajam was used to denote Persians in Kairouan, as confirmed by funerary inscriptions containing social elements of Khorasani and Persian origin, as well as in the cities of Baghaia, Beja, Tubna, and Maqra, where the 'Ajam element settled.

However, the term "Ajam" (non-Arab) gained wider meaning after al-Ya'qubi began using it to refer to certain Berber groups, as he mentioned in his discussion of the Berbers, saying "Berber Ajam" or "Ajam among the Berbers." Furthermore, ethnic groups in Gabes who were neither of Arab nor Berber origin were also called by this name, such as the ancient Romans, Africans, and Berbers in the region of Castile. The author also employed the word "Ajam" in its compound form, "Ajam al-Balad" (the people of the land), referring to the remnants of ancient groups who were born in the Maghreb, thus narrowing its meaning to the Berbers and Romans of Kairouan and the descendants of the Romans in Baghaia.

Researcher Ibrahim Bakir Bahaz believes that the meaning of the word 'Ajam applies to an ethnic group made up of Persians. There is no doubt that they came from the East in the Abbasid armies, especially during the time of Abu Jaafar al-Mansur, alongside the Arabs and soldiers, and settled in the Islamic cities of the Maghreb. Or perhaps the word 'Ajam corresponds to the remnants of ancient groups of Romans, Africans, and Byzantine communities that settled in the region during the pre-Islamic period. Therefore, the ethnic name 'Ajam' was used more in Ibadi sources than the word 'Persians' despite its prevalence and widespread use.

According to a recent study by researchers Odile Comro, Salvatore Liccardo, and Andrea Novak, the term "Ajam" or "Ajam" was applied to non-Arab groups, or more precisely, non-Arabic speakers. These groups can be categorized as those of ethnic origins different from Arab, or ethnic groups of Persian origin, within an ethnic classification that arose from the Arab-Persian conflict or the Shu'ubiyya movement, beginning in the second half of the first century AH/seventh century CE. During this period, Persian nationalism gained power and its threat escalated as they sought to undermine the Arabs and diminish their cultural superiority. After non-Arab elements, particularly Persians, assumed high positions in the Abbasid state, the Arabs used the term "Mawali" (clients) to denigrate other ethnic groups, such as the

Nabataeans, Copts, Zutt (from Sindh and Sudan), and Berbers (from North Africa). This new ethnonym became one of the terminological markers that led to ethnic differentiation within the human landscape of Islamic society during the Abbasid era, and it was explicitly employed To designate an ethnic group represented in the Persian ethnic composition.

1-2/ The Ethnome in Sunni and Ibadi Sources:

Furthermore, geographical sources reveal the use of the term 'Ajam' or 'A'jam' to denote a geographical area located in the east of the Islamic state, bearing the toponym Bilad al-'Ajam or the hydronym Lake al-'Ajam. Thus, the ethnonym 'Ajam' and its various derivations is one of the most ambiguous terms, despite its presence in various Arabic sources to refer to Persian groups. This is evident in works of jurisprudence, historical accounts, geography, and even Arabic poetry and literature. Whether it was used to refer to Persian 'Ajam' or non-Arabs, the purpose behind this usage was perhaps to establish the superiority of the Arab element over other social groups, including Persian and Khorasani clients, and to suppress their sense of superiority over the Arabs.

During his visits to the Islamic Maghreb in the second half of the third century AH, and while recording his observations and descriptions, the Abbasid geographer al-Ya'qubi noted a mixture of ethnic elements that constituted the social fabric of the Islamic Maghreb. He mentioned several groups of people with various ethnonyms, such as the 'Ajam, the ancient 'Ajam, or the 'Ajam of the land, referring to them in sixteen places in his book "al-Buldan" (The Countries).

The term 'Ajam' was not used solely to refer to ancient population groups present in North Africa during the Byzantine period. Its meanings and connotations evolved to encompass non-Arabic-speaking ethnic groups, whether ancient communities of Romans and Africans or the indigenous Berber population. Furthermore, chroniclers and geographers in the 3rd century AH/9th century CE preferred to call the influx of peoples into the region 'Ajam' during the conquests, as they formed a human component of the Umayyad and later Abbasid armies. This included Persians and Khorasanis who settled in numerous cities and became a fundamental element of the human geography of North Africa and the central Maghreb.

This ethno-native diversity presented a problem concerning the definition of ethnic names for population groups, a matter that remains shrouded in ambiguity and obscurity, especially in the early medieval period. A prime example is what we mentioned earlier: the Arabs used the term 'Ajam, which, in its meaning, corresponded to the term 'Persians' as a human element, on the one hand, and to the remnants of the Romans, Africans, and even the Berbers, who were grouped under a single, vaguely defined term: 'Ajam al-Balad' (the non-Arabs of the land).

The term 'Ajam' appears in al-Ya'qubi's geographical texts, Ibn al-Saghir's book on the history of the Rustamid imams, and even in Riyad al-Nufus. Despite the scarcity of information on this subject, we find that sources on the conquests touched upon the ethnonym of 'Ajam'. Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam mentions Hassan ibn al-Nu'man imposing a tax on 'Ajam Ifriqiya' (the non-Arabs of Africa), a term encompassing all inhabitants who did not speak Arabic, or those who spoke the local Berber, Latin, or Greek language, including Berber groups, Byzantine communities, and Latin African groups. 1-3/ Al-Ya'qubi and the Multiple Meanings of the Term 'Ajam:

A list of the nominal forms of the term 'Ajam' and its verbal suffixes, along with their ethnonymic connotations, as mentioned in Al-Ya'qubi's texts on countries, can be presented in the following table

Page	The city	Its general meaning	The term and its verbal suffixes: Ancient Persians
180.	Remada	The term reflects all the ancient elements of the Berbers, Romans,	Persian Persians

		and Africans.	
184	Tripoli	It refers to non-Arabic speaking ethnic groups.	Berber Persians
185	Gabes	It is characteristic of the barbaric masses.	Persian Persians from Khorasan / Persians of the land from the Berbers, Romans, and similar groups
187	Kairouan	It has two meanings: firstly, it refers to the Persians and Khorasanis who came to the region from the lands of the East, and secondly, it refers to the Berber groups and the remnants of the Romans and Africans.	Persian Persians
187	Cherik Island	It carries a general connotation that cannot be confined to a specific ethnic group.	Berber Persians
188	Médéa	It is characteristic of the barbaric masses.	Persian
188	Béja	It carries a general connotation that cannot be confined to a specific ethnic group.	The term and its verbal suffixes: Ancient Persians
189	Tozeur	The term reflects all the ancient elements of the Berbers, Romans, and Africans.	A people of non-Arab origin, including ancient Romans, Africans, and Berbers
	Hamma		
	Taqious		
	Nafta		
190	Tabna	It carries a general connotation that cannot be confined to a specific ethnic group.	Persians
190	Baghaya	It has two meanings: firstly, it refers to the Persians and Khorasanis who came to the region from the lands of the East, and secondly, it refers to the Berber groups and the remnants of the Romans and Africans.	And non-Arabs from the people of Khorasan and non-Arabs from the land, remnants of the Romans
190	Tijis	It is characteristic of the barbaric masses.	Berber Persians
191	Maqra	It carries a general connotation that cannot be confined to a specific ethnic group.	Persians
The term "Ajam" and its verbal suffixes, according to Al-Yaqubi's book "Al-Buldan".			

Comment:

I observe from the table data that the general meaning of the term "Ajam" during the first period of the Middle Ages, in its practical aspect, branches into three sections:

- Ajam: The term "Ajam" or "A'ajam" was used during the early Islamic period to generally refer to all non-Arabic-speaking population groups, despite the diversity of their settlements, ethnic origins, and contributions. The term was used as a designation specific to the societies of the western regions of the Islamic world, and more specifically to the inhabitants of the Islamic Maghreb, including Berbers, Africans, Romans, and Christians, as well as the inhabitants of Sicily, the Iberian Peninsula, and southern France. - The ancient non-Arabs: This term appeared in descriptive and historical texts starting from the second century AH/eighth century CE. It was used to refer to the ancient human groups that settled in the Maghreb, whether Berber populations or Latin-Byzantine communities of Byzantine Romans and Africans. For example, the inhabitants of the city of Baghaya consisted of tribes of soldiers, non-Arabs from Khorasan, and non-Arabs from the region itself, remnants of the Romans. Around it lived Berber tribes of the Hawwara. "...and the great city of Zab, Tabna...has a mixture of Quraysh, Arabs, soldiers, non-Arabs, Africans, Romans, and Berbers..." The areas extending between Tripoli and the Nafusa Mountains were inhabited by groups of non-Arab speakers. The term "ancient non-Arabs" was also applied to the inhabitants of the city of Remada, which is considered the first settlement on the eastern side of the Islamic Maghreb.

- Non-Arabs from Khorasan: Islamic sources used this ethnic term to describe the Persian and Khorasani communities, revealing the significant participation of Persians and Khorasanis alongside Arabs in the Umayyad and later Abbasid campaigns to North Africa. Al-Shammākhi cites a staggering figure of sixty thousand Khorasani soldiers who comprised the Abbasid expedition under the command of Yazid ibn Hatim ibn Qubaysa. Similarly, al-Nuwayri mentions the presence of thirty thousand Khorasanis in the army of Muhammad ibn al-Ash'ath, sent to North Africa in 143 AH (790 CE). These two campaigns were aimed at suppressing the Kharijites. It seems that their military roles within the Islamic armies, their contributions to religious propagation, and their assumption of high political positions such as governorships led them to be called "non-Arabs from Khorasan." This term, derived from their geographical origin, allowed them to be identified as a distinct ethnic group, setting them apart from other groups arriving from the East.

The ethnic designation is thus based on their geographical origin. In the late third century AH/ninth century AD, Ibn al-Saghir used the word 'Ajam' thirty-five times in his book 'Akhbar al-A'imma al-Rustamiyyin' to refer to an unknown ethnic group, unlike the compound names found in the texts of al-Ya'qubi and in 'Futuh Misr wa'l-Maghrib'. For Ibn al-Saghir, the term appeared in an ambiguous and unclear lexicon, its ethnic connotation possibly referring to the Persians who came from the lands of the East and settled in Tahert, or to ancient groups of Berbers, Romans, and Africans, especially since archaeological finds and indications from source texts confirm the settlement of the Rustamid capital, Tahert, and its surrounding areas by ancient human groups such as Berbers, Romans, Byzantines, and others. About half a century later, we do not find the word "Ajam" in the texts of the image of the earth by the traveler Ibn Hawqal al-Nasibi, and the word completely disappears in the sources of the fourth and fifth centuries AH/tenth and eleventh centuries AD. It did not appear in al-Maqdisi's divisions nor in al-Bakri's routes, in its places related to the Maghreb, which makes us ask a legitimate question: Is the main criterion adopted in the genealogical division of population groups in the Maghreb after the completion of the conquest operations a linguistic criterion?

The answer to this question, even if only tentatively pending the results of specialized studies on the processes of Islamization and Arabization, can only be found by examining the Arabization of Moroccan regions and the extent to which philological and linguistic factors were employed in genealogical classifications and the naming of population groups in the Maghreb during the early medieval period with obscure ethnic names, influenced by the specific circumstantial and political contexts of that pivotal period in the history of the western part of the Islamic world.

Finally, while the term 'Ajam' became associated with the Persian ethnic group during the second and third centuries AH/eighth and ninth centuries CE with the arrival of the Persian 'Ajam' from the Levant and their emergence on the settlement scene alongside the original groups and Latin-Byzantine communities, the ethnonymous term 'Ajam' does not negate the older groups. It may symbolize two main meanings in various historical, descriptive, and religious texts. The first meaning applies to all ancient population groups, including Berbers, Africans, and Byzantine Romans. The second meaning reflects the Persian and Khorasani element that came from the Levant in the Umayyad and Abbasid missions. 2/ The Geographical Distribution of Non-Arabs, Persians, and Khorasanis in the Islamic Maghreb:

During the first century AH/seventh century CE, non-Arab groups emerged prominently in the eastern part of the region. They settled in the city of Remada, located at the eastern entrance to the Maghreb, "which was the first Berber settlement, inhabited by people from the Mazata and other ancient non-Arabs, as well as Arabs from the tribes of Bali, Juhayna, and Bani Madlaj." The non-Arab presence continued in the areas between Tripoli and Nafusa, where they mixed with indigenous groups such as the Nafusa, who belonged to the Ibadi Kharijite sect. According to al-Ya'qubi, these non-Arabs did not speak Arabic, nor were they proficient in it.

The non-Arab groups also settled in Beja, which had "an ancient army of Banu Hashim and a people of non-Arab origin," and they settled in the city of Gabes alongside the "Berber" groups and the Arab communities that entered the Maghreb during the first century AH/seventh century AD. Sources agree on the spread of the non-Arab group in the Arab base of Kairouan and their coexistence with multiple "Berber" and Arab ethnicities. Data concerning the demographic composition of central Morocco confirms the settlement of non-Arabs in both central and peripheral areas of the Zab region. The city of Tubna was inhabited by "...a mixture of Quraysh, Arabs, soldiers, non-Arabs, Africans, Romans, and Berbers..." Relations between Arab and non-Arab groups were not always peaceful. Al-Bakri noted differences between them, stating that "when war broke out between the Arabs and the mixed-race people, the Arabs drew support from the Arabs of Tahuda and Setif, and the mixed-race people drew support from the people of Biskra and its surrounding areas." Near Tahuda, we find Malshun, which formed a settlement center for the non-Arab element. Although it is a small village within the Biskra region, it became associated with and considered part of the non-Arab community. Abu al-Arab states, "Malshun is a non-Arab village in Tahuda." The jurist Abu Abd al-Malik al-Malshuni and his son Ishaq ibn Abd al-Malik al-Malshuni were also associated with this village.

The non-Arabs settled in central and peripheral areas of the Zab region. On the other hand, archaeological evidence reveals the dense distribution of various types of archaeological remains and the widespread presence of urban centers in the western part of the high plains extending from Kairouan to the Aurès Mountains. These areas must have witnessed human settlement during antiquity, particularly during the Byzantine period. It is evident that a complex of non-Arab groups settled there and intermingled with the original and incoming populations. Many Aurès cities were inhabited by these groups, such as the city of M'Sila, whose inhabitants were "a people from the Banu Dabba tribe and a people of non-Arab origin," located in the southeast of the Aurès Mountains.

The human scene is repeated on the island of Cherik, located in the Sahel region of Africa, where its human composition was a mixture of ethnic elements, consisting of "people from the clan of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab and other Arab and non-Arab tribes," and Baghaia, which was settled by "tribes from the army and non-Arabs from the people of Khorasan and non-Arabs from the country, remnants of the Romans," and among the non-Arabs who came to Tahert were those who were settled in the city of Majana, which formed a Byzantine fortress on the mountains of Ouenza in the northeast of central Morocco. In the western part of central Morocco, Tahert is considered a major homeland for the Ajam groups. Ibn al-Saghir indicates their settlement in the Rustamid capital, followed by their migration from it with the Nafusa to nearby areas, such as the fortress of Tanabghilt, which they used as a base during their long

conflict with the Arabs in Tahert and its surrounding regions during the reign of Abu al-Yaqzan. The continued presence of Latin-Byzantine communities in the region, in addition to the arrival of Persian and Khorasani communities who played a role in establishing the foundations of the Rustamid Imamate, makes determining the ethnic identity of these population groups extremely difficult, given the broad and generalized meaning of the term "Ajam" to refer to Persians, Romans, Africans, and the groups known as "Berbers." However, according to Ibadi texts, the groups known as Ajam most likely refer to the Persians and Khorasanis coming from the East. Al-Ya'qubi states that Tahert was "conquered by a group of Persians called the Banu Muhammad ibn Aflah ibn Abd." Al-Wahhab ibn Abd al-Rahman ibn Rustam al-Farsi.

While sources remain silent on the political and cultural roles of non-Arabs in Moroccan cities during the 3rd and 4th centuries AH (9th and 10th centuries CE), Ibn al-Saghir's texts implicitly suggest the integration of the non-Arab ethnic group into the social fabric. Their influence is evident in Maghrebi Islamic architecture through their construction of palaces, buildings, and markets. In Tahert, for example, "...there was a non-Arab leader, a grocer named Ibn Warda, who had built a market known for him. The chief of police, Aflah, was so fearful that if he traveled through the city, he wouldn't dare enter Ibn Warda's market...and this man was one of the prominent non-Arabs, a remnant of whom remains today called the Majana." This reference leads us to conclude that non-Arab influence was strong in Tahert, and that a significant human movement was evident in the Rustamid capital's attraction of non-Arab elements who had settled in the city of Majana, located in the northeastern Aurès Mountains.

Therefore, Ibn al-Saghir frequently mentions the non-Arabs as possessing a unique social status that remained unchanged throughout the Rustamid period. They were distinguished by their close ties to the rulers, and as a minority, their privileges, particularly financial ones, elevated them to the point of standing on equal footing with the soldiers and Arabs when security deteriorated in Tahert during the reign of Imam Abu Bakr ibn Aflah. It seems that this element was present only in Tahert or the major cities of the central Maghreb during the Rustamid era, much like the Arab element in the second and third centuries AH.

In fact, the human settlement of these groups undoubtedly remains a complex and difficult-to-answer issue, shrouded in ambiguity and complexity. Sources offer no explicit indications of the ethnic origins of those known as 'Ajam (non-Arabs). Consequently, it is undeniable that Arab chroniclers referred to the Byzantine communities known as Rum (Byzantines) as 'Ajam, alongside the 'Berber' and African groups. This ethnonym continued to be widely used with the same meaning throughout the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE (8th and 9th centuries CE). This is confirmed by al-Maliki's text in *Riyad al-Nufus*, where he mentions that in 212 AH/827 CE, "Asad ibn al-Furat arrived in Sicily, and its king, Balata, marched against him with a large army. Asad began to encourage his companions, saying, 'These are the 'Ajam of the coast, these are your slaves!' He carried the banner, and God defeated them. Asad's statement, 'These are the 'Ajam of the coast,' refers to those who had fled the coast when Africa was conquered." Archaeological evidence further confirms this. Researcher Virginie Prevost notes the widespread presence of Christian church remains in the Nafusa Mountains. These sites retained their sanctity even after being converted into mosques for worship during later periods in the early Middle Ages. It is quite natural that the inscriptions found in the Sharoush Mosque clearly demonstrate the Ibadi community's desire to cultivate friendly relations with the Christians, who continued to maintain their churches until their disappearance from the region. We believe that the Ajam (Berbers) were among the population groups scattered throughout the Nafusa Mountains, given their ethnic ties to the Latin and Byzantine communities, as well as the local Berber groups. Furthermore, Christian bishoprics were established in areas near Tlemcen at the end of the Roman period. Indeed, Christian influence is evident in several monuments left by local rulers in the 6th century CE, particularly in Altafa in Morocco and the mausoleums of local kings known as the "Jidar" near Frenda.

Despite the Arab conquerors' simplification and exploitation of the Byzantine defensive line and its architectural components during their conquest of North Africa, this does not negate the Christian presence in the region. The expulsion of all Byzantine groups from their homelands is established.

Although the Byzantine presence in many North African countries diminished, and Arab civilization began to take shape, with the Arab element dominating the geographical space after the fall of the old structures, this does not negate the ethnic presence of remnants of the Byzantines in the post-conquest population. Most of the cities conquered by the Muslims witnessed the continued settlement of Byzantines and indigenous groups in fortresses, castles, and defensive centers, as evidenced by various descriptive and historical Arab sources and the remains of archaeological sites.

The indications in the earliest historical sources that transmitted the accounts of the conquests and painted a picture of the general human landscape of Islamic North Africa during the first century AH/seventh century CE, particularly in urban areas, confirm that the non-Arab element was one of the most prominent ethnically diverse components. This element varied in its ethnic origins, ranging from an indigenous majority called Berbers—a vague and complex classification—to Latin-Byzantine communities known as Romans and Africans. The term "non-Arab" nominally applies to all local human groups, in addition to the non-Arab element. The Latin-Byzantine term was used during the first century AH/7th century AD, and also during the second and third centuries AH/8th-9th centuries AD, to refer to the Persians and Khorasanis who came to the region as part of the Abbasid armies.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, it can be said that the linguistic criterion played a significant role in the demographic classification of the Maghreb within Arabic source fields during the Abbasid era. The ethnonym "al-'ajam" encompassed all non-Arabic-speaking inhabitants, despite their diverse ethnic origins, varied names, and geographical locations. Although al-Ya'qubi referred to local Berber groups as "al-'ajam," this description was also applied in his writings to Latin-Byzantine communities of Africans and Romans, and even to Persians and Khorasanis who entered the region as part of the Arab armies during the Abbasid campaigns. Despite the presence of the ethnonym "al-'ajam" in the system of names applied to the inhabitants of the Maghreb, this did not prevent the continued use of the common and well-known term "Berber" to refer to all Maghrebi inhabitants throughout the medieval period. It can be said that the human settlement of the non-Arabs is an extension of the settlement of ancient communities in the Byzantine period, specifically during the sixth century AD, which witnessed the construction of many defensive centers such as fortresses, castles, and garrisons. The ethnic mixing between the Byzantine Romans, Africans, and the groups known as the Berbers, and their settlement of many cities in the Maghreb, is largely consistent with the non-Arab homelands referred to in the descriptive and news texts of the Arabs during the first century AH/seventh century AD. Meanwhile, the period in which the Persian and Khorasani migrations followed intensively at the beginning of the first half of the second century AH/eighth century AD in the lands of Ifriqiya and the central Maghreb will make the ethnonym carry a second meaning that we consider synonymous with the word for Persians, and the human composition within the cities will witness profound transformations with the entry of new Arab, Persian, and Khorasani elements that will affect social life and dominate geographical areas, especially in the lands of Ifriqiya and the central Maghreb.

Citations

1. The ethnic classification of group names during the early Islamic period was undoubtedly influenced by the biases and prejudices of the sources who wrote for the court and were subject to specific political authorities. Their opinions, therefore, did not deviate from the official circles to which they belonged. In reality, the ethnic conflict between Arabs and other groups caused the local ethnonymies within the Islamic world to change chronologically over time and geographically from one region to another. This shift occurred at the end of the pre-Islamic period and continued into the early Islamic period, witnessing significant transformations during the Abbasid era with the beginning of historical documentation.
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4. Charle Pellat, «al-Furs», in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-furs SIM_2405. It should be noted in this regard that I relied on al-Ya'qubi's **Kitab al-Buldan** (Book of Countries) to enumerate the ethnonym "al-'Ajam" (the non-Arabs) in its various forms and structures, without limiting the geographical scope to Africa as researcher Fathi Bahri did in his studies. My reference here is related to al-Ya'qubi's use of the word "al-'Ajam" when discussing the regions of the Islamic Maghreb, treating it as a unified geographical entity. After employing the statistical method, I recorded the mention of the word "al-'Ajam" in its various forms sixteen times. See Appendix No. (4).
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9. Fathi Bahri, "Les 'Adjam al-balad une minorityité sociale d'origine autochtone en Ifrîqiyya aghlabide IIIe-IXe siècles" (The Book of Countries: A Social Minority of Autochtone Origin in Ifriqiya during the 3rd-9th Centuries). In *Mutations, Identités en Méditerranée*, 2000, pp. 68-69. *Des conversions, des hommes et des biens en Ifrîqiyya musulmane : le cas des 'ağam*, Africa XVI, Tunisia, 1998, pp. 132-133.
10. Ibrahim Bakir Bahaz, *The Rustamid State: A Study in Society and Systems*, 1st ed., Kitabak, Algeria, 2019, p. 35.
11. For further details, see: Ibn al-Saghir, *Akhbar al-A'immah al-Rustamiyyin*, ed. Muhammad Nasir and Bahaz Ibrahim, *Al-Matbu'at al-Jamilah*, Algeria, 1986, pp. 54-55. Al-Shammākhī, *Kitab al-Siyar*, ed. Ahmad ibn Saud al-Siyabi, vol. 1, Al-Nahda Press, Muscat, 1987, vol. 2, p. 104. Odile Kommer, Salvatore Liccardo, Andrea Nowak, «Comparative Approaches to Ethnonyms The Case of the Persians», *Hungarian Historical Review* 7, no. 1, 2018, p.41.
12. An anti-Arab movement aimed at glorifying the Persians, Turks, Copts, Africans, and other ethnicities, recounting their achievements, histories, and love for their homelands, and asserting their existence, distinctiveness, virtues, and superiority. This movement intensified during the Abbasid era to demonstrate that the Arabs were not superior to other nations, but rather inferior to them. (Al-Jahiz, *Political Epistles*, ed. Ali Abu Mulhim, 2nd ed., Dar wa Maktabat al-Hilal, Beirut, 2002, p. 19; Ibn Abd Rabbih al-Andalusi, *Al-Iqd al-Farid*, ed. Mufid Muhammad Qumayha, vol. 3, 1st ed., Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1983, pp. 351-352).
13. Hussein Atwan, *Heresy and Shu'ubiyya in the Early Abbasid Era*, Dar Jeel, Beirut, n.d., p. 149. A real dilemma plagued social relations between Arabs and non-Arab Muslims (mawali). While hierarchies existed among Arab tribes based on their pre-Islamic and Islamic heritage, there was a consensus on the inferior status of the mawali and the contemptuous view they and other non-Arabs held in comparison to the Arabs. This is confirmed by the narratives that have emerged in this context. It seems that the abundance of later works clarifies the problematic nature of these relations and the character of the conflict that arose over them, especially after the mawali became an integral part of the economic and social structure, to the point that removing some of them became impossible. Yet, they remained in their inferior position. (Zuhair Hawari, *Power and Opposition in Islam: A Study of*

- the Intellectual and Social Problem 11-132 AH/612-750 CE, 1st ed., Arab Foundation for Studies and Publishing, Beirut, 2003, pp. 447-448.)
14. Odile Kommer, Salvatore Liccardo, Andrea Nowak, Op. Cit., p. 41. Hussein Atwan, previous reference, p. 149 and following.
 15. See: Ibn al-Faqih, Kitab al-Buldan, ed. Yusuf al-Hadi, 1st ed., Alam al-Kutub, Beirut, 1996, p. 609. Ibn al-Wardi, Kharidat al-Aja'ib wa Faridat al-Ghara'ib, ed. Anwar Mahmoud Zanati, 1st ed., Maktabat al-Thaqafa al-Islamiyya, Cairo, 1428 AH/2008 CE, p. 381. Al-Himyari, previous source, p. 323.
 16. Ibn Rushd, Al-Bayan wa al-Tahsil wa al-Sharh wa al-Tawjih wa al-Ta'lil li-Masa'il al-Mustakhraja, ed. Muhammad Hajji et al., vol. 8, 2nd ed., Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, Beirut, 1988, pp. 254-255. Al-Qarafi, Al-Dhakhira, ed. Saeed A'rab, vol. 2, 1st ed., Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, Beirut, 1994, p. 126. Al-Tabari, *History of the Prophets and Kings*, vol. 2, 2nd ed., Dar al-Turath, Beirut, 1387 AH/1967 CE, p. 234. Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidaya wa'l-Nihaya*, ed. Ali Shiri, vol. 7, 1st ed., Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1988 CE, p. 101. Ibn Khaldun, *Al-'Ibar*, vol. 1, p. 446.
 17. Al-Hamdani, *Al-Amakin wa ma Iftaraq Musmahu min al-Amakin*, ed. Hamad bin Muhammad Jasser, Dar al-Yamamah for Research, Translation and Publishing, Saudi Arabia, 1994 CE, p. 88. Al-'Umari, *Masalik al-Absar fi Mamalik al-Amsar*, ed. Abdullah bin Yahya al-Suraihi et al., vol. 3, 1st ed., Cultural Complex, Abu Dhabi, 2002 CE, p. 259. Ibn Fadlan, the aforementioned source, p. 43.
 18. Al-'Akbari, *Sharh Diwan al-Mutanabbi*, ed. Mustafa al-Saqqa et al., Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, p. 161. Al-Maqqari, Nafh al-Tayyib min Ghushn al-Andalus al-Ratib, ed. Ihsan Abbas, vol. 5, 1st ed., Dar Sader, Beirut, 1997, p. 444.
 19. Al-Jahiz, Rasa'il al-Jahiz, ed. Abd al-Salam Muhammad Harun, vol. 2, Maktabat al-Khanji, Cairo, 1964, p. 384. Ibn Qutaybah, Adab al-Katib, ed. Muhammad al-Dali, Mu'assasat al-Risalah, Lebanon, n.d., pp. 36-39. Al-Mubarrad, Al-Kamil fi al-Lughah wa al-Adab, ed. Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim, vol. 2, 3rd ed., Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, Cairo, 1997, p. 167.
 20. Odile Kommer, Salvatore Liccardo, Andrea Nowak, op. cit., p. 41. This includes all the population groups that settled in the Maghreb and succeeded one another in the region during the ancient period, including the Moors, the Berbers, the Romans, Byzantine communities, and other human elements predating the Islamic era. It is impossible to list them all here. For further information, see: Al-Arabi Aqoun, Economy and Society, p. 153 and following.
 21. One manifestation of the multiplicity of meanings and connotations of ethnic names in Islamic historiography is related to the term 'Ajam. Some sources present it as a general term with multiple connotations, making it difficult to fully grasp its meanings, particularly in Ibadi texts. In contrast, another approach expresses the names of ethnic groups in the Islamic Maghreb by using the term in conjunction with another word or two words, such as 'Ajam Berbers' or 'Ajam from the people of Khorasan.' This duality of the term unlocks many ethnonyms associated with the populations known by this ethnic designation. See: Ibn al-Saghir, the aforementioned source, p. 73. Abu Zakariya Yahya, *Siyar al-A'immah wa Akhbaruhum* (The Lives and Accounts of the Imams), ed. Ismail al-Arabi, 2nd ed., Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, Beirut, 1982, pp. 49-51. Al-Shammakh, *ibid.*, 2/104. Al-Ya'qubi, *ibid.*, pp. 189-190.
 22. Murad Ar'ar, *ibid.*, p. 165.
 23. Ibn al-Saghir, *ibid.*, pp. 54-55.
 24. Al-Maliki, *Riyad al-Nufus fi Tabaqat Ulama' al-Qayrawan wa Ifriqiya wa Zuhaduhum wa Nusakuhum wa Siyar min Akhbaruhum wa Fada'iluhum wa Awsafuhum* (Gardens of Souls on the Classes of the Scholars of Qayrawan and Ifriqiya, their Ascetics and Devotees, and Biographies of Their Accounts, Virtues, and Attributes), ed. Bashir al-Bakoush, 2nd ed., Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, Beirut, 1414 AH/1994 CE, 2/354.
 25. Hassan ibn al-Nu'man arrived as governor of the Maghreb by order of Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan in 73 AH/693 CE, accompanied by a large army, according to Eastern accounts. After completing the conquest and suppressing local resistance, and establishing his garrison in Kairouan, he built the city's mosque, established administrative offices, and imposed taxes on the non-Arab inhabitants of Ifriqiya and on those Berbers who adhered to Christianity, most of whom were Berbers, with the

- exception of a small number of Butr tribes. (Ibn Abd al-Hakam, previous source, p. 271). Al-Raqiq al-Qayrawani recounts the complete story in his book, pp. 49-50. (History of Ifriqiya and the Maghreb, ed. Muhammad Zaynhum Muhammad Azab, 1st ed., Dar al-Farjani for Publishing and Distribution, Libya, 1994 CE).
26. Fathi Bahri, "Conversions of Men and Property," Op. Cit., pp. 132-133.
 27. Tadeusz Lewicki, Op. Cit., pp. 419-420. It is important to commend the functional and significant use of the book "Al-Buldan" in the field of ethnic research on the societies of the Islamic Maghreb during the first and second centuries AH/7th-8th centuries CE, especially since it provided a list of elements of the human map that enabled us to almost completely understand the names of population groups and their areas of settlement. Accordingly, I conducted a statistical survey that touched upon all the ethnic terms related to social elements and their meanings, which I have clarified in the table attached to the text. The word al-Adġam "the non-Arabs", al-ʿAdġim "the non-Arabs" which corresponds exactly to the Greek βάρβαροι, signifie in the Arabic nomenclature of the moyen âge all non-Arab people, but this applies to the words that concern them. Partie of the Arab world, tout à fait régulièrement à the Romanian population and the Chrétienne du Maghreb, of the Sicile of the Espagne or the middle of France. Gabrieli, F. "Adjam." The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition, edited by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs. Leiden: Brill, 2012.
 28. No geographical area within the Islamic world is devoid of population groups that Islamic sources have traditionally referred to as 'Ajam. It is worth noting the role of the philological and linguistic criterion in the ethnic distinction between human groups. Groups speaking languages other than Arabic, regardless of their geographical origin, were called 'Ajam. Data from Eastern, Western, and Andalusian sources indicate the use of the ethnonym 'Ajam to designate certain ethnic groups in Islamic lands. See: Al-Waqidi, Futuh al-Sham, vol. 2, 1st ed., ed. Abd al-Latif ibn Abd al-Rahman, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1997, p. 156; Al-Baladhuri, *ibid.*, p. 409; Ibn Fadlan, Rihlat Ibn Fadlan ila al-Turk wa al-Rus wa al-Saqaliba, ed. Shakir Laibi, 1st ed., Irtiyad al-Afaq, Jordan, 2003, p. 43 and following. Ibn 'Idhari, previous source, 2/192. Al-Himyarī, Description of the Island of Andalusia, ed. Lévi-Provençal, 2nd ed., Dar al-Jil, Beirut, 1988, pp. 36-37.
 29. Al-Ya'qubi, previous source, p. 190.
 30. The same source, p. 90.
 31. A city located in the far east of Tripoli, Libya, on the border adjacent to the Egyptian territories to the west. It is considered the first stop for those entering the Islamic Maghreb. Al-Ya'qubi mentioned this in his book, Al-Buldan, saying: "...then Al-Ramada, which is the first settlement of the Berbers, inhabited by a people from the Mazata and other ancient non-Arabs..." Al-Buldan, p. 180.
 32. Al-Ya'qubi, previous source, pp. 187, 190. Al-Baladhuri, previous source, p. 325. Al-Raqiq, previous source, p. 125.
 33. Kitab al-Siyar, pp. 122-123.
 34. Al-Nuwayri, Nihayat al-Arab fi Funun al-Adab, ed. Abd al-Majid Tarjimi, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, n.d., 24/39-40.
 35. Persian and Khorasani elites held important religious and educational positions in the Maghreb, such as Ahmad ibn Ahmad ibn Ziyad, who worked as a teacher; Abdullah ibn Farrukh, who was appointed a judge but resigned due to his piety; and Mawla Ismail ibn Ubayd Allah ibn Abi al-Muhajir, who was among the ten scholars sent by Caliph Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz to Ifriqiya. See on this topic: Abu al-Arab, Tabaqat Ulama Ifriqiya, Dar al-Kitab al-Lubnani, Beirut, n.d., p. 35; Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Akhbar al-Qudat, ed. Abd al-Aziz Mustafa al-Maraghi, vol. 1, 1st ed., al-Maktabah al-Tijariyya al-Kubra, Egypt, 1366 AH/1947 CE, p. 364.
 36. This includes the appointment of Ubayd Allah ibn al-Habhab, a client of the Banu Salul, as governor of the Maghreb during the caliphate of Hisham ibn Abd al-Malik, after the dismissal of the governor Ubayda ibn Abd al-Rahman. During the Fatimid era, Hamid ibn Hamdan al-Hamadhani was appointed governor of Fez in the far west of Morocco. (Al-Nuwayri, previous source, 24/31).
 37. Ibrahim Bakir Bahaz, previous reference, p. 33.

38. Pierre Cadenat, "Notes d'archéologie tiarétienne", *Antiquités africaines*, 24, (1988), pp. 44-45.
39. Stéphane Gsell, *Les monuments antiques de l'Algérie*, Paris, Albert Fontemoing, 1901, 28, p. 234.
40. Ibn Hawqal, *Surat al-Ard*, Dar Sader, Beirut, 1938, p. 86. Al-Hamawi, *Mu'jam al-Buldan* (Dictionary of Countries), 2nd ed., Dar Sader, Beirut, 1415 AH/1995 CE, p. 126.
41. Pierre Cadenat, "Notes d'archéologie tiarétienne" (Notes of Tiaret Archaeology), *Antiquités africaines*, 24, 1988, pp. 43-66.
42. The term "Ajam" was used by Ibn Hawqal when discussing the human groups settled in the eastern Islamic Caliphate, such as Sistan, Khorasan, and Transoxiana. We lack evidence indicating the continuity of this ethnonym during the 4th century AH/10th century CE. See: *The Image of the Earth*, 2/417, 468, 472.
43. The term "Ajam" appears in the Book of Divisions only in connection with the inhabitants of Daylam, al-Rahab, Khustan, Fars, Kerman, and Sindh. See: *al-Muqaddasi: The Beginning and History*, Library of Religious Culture, Port Said, n.d., pp. 9-16-284.
44. Al-Bakri stated in one instance that cannot be relied upon to prove the existence of the Ajam group in the Maghreb during the 5th century AH/11th century CE, as the account pertains to the Umayyad conquest of North African cities during the early medieval period. We are focusing on geographical references that establish the presence of the Ajam ethnonym during the 5th century AH, when he mentioned that the city of
45. Voir: Allaoua Amara, "The Islamization of the central Maghreb (VIIe Cyrille Aillet, "Islam and Arabisation in the Muslim Médiéval: an introduction to the case of the Occidental Muslim (VIIe- la Sorbonne, 2011 Yassir Benhima, "Questions on the conditions of Islam in Ma'rib al-Aqṣā: aspects of religion and linguistics", in Dominique Valérian (dir.), *Islam and Arabisation of the Occidental Muslim Médiéval (VIIe XIIe Siècle)*, éditions. de la Sorbonne, 2011.
46. Al-Yaqubi, source Previous, p. 180.
47. Ibid., p. 184.
48. Fathi Bahri, "Les 'Adjam al-balad une minorityté sociale", *Op. Cit.*, pp. 68-69. "Des conversions, des hommes et des biens", *Op. Cit.*, pp. 132-133.
49. Al-Yaqubi, previous source, p. 190.
50. Muhammad Hassan, *The Historical Roots of the Maghreb: The Dialectic of Power, Society, and Space* (during the second and third centuries AH/seventh and eighth centuries CE), 1st ed., Al-Atrash Complex, Tunis, 2022, p. 15.
51. Al-Bakri, previous source, 2/712. Muhammad Hassan, *The Historical Geography of Africa*, p. 15.
52. Abu al-Arab, previous source, p. 98.
53. Al-Bakri, previous source, 2/714. Al-Hamawi, previous source, 5/192.
54. Al-Tahir Tawil, *The Historical Geography of the Central Maghreb*, p. 161.
55. Al-Ya'qubi, op. cit., p. 187.
56. Ibid., p. 191.
57. News of the Rustamid Imams, p. 74.
58. Ibid., p. 73.
59. Al-Ya'qubi, op. cit., p. 192.
60. Ibn al-Saghir, op. cit., p. 55. Source texts do not shy away from the issue of the privileged position enjoyed by non-Arab groups among other populations in the Islamic Maghreb. One indication of this is that Ibn al-Saghir refers to the period when Abu al-Yaqzan ibn Aflah arrived from Iraq, "...and found his brother Abu Bakr as emir, the non-Arabs in their usual state, the Nafusa in their established ranks, and the rest of the people as they were." This reference reveals the prominent position the non-Arabs held in Tahertian society and their continued existence as an ethnic group situated at the top of the social hierarchy. They remained close to the imams and maintained their possessions and privileges. (Ibn al-Saghir, *ibid.*, p. 63)
61. Ibrahim Bakir Bahaz, *ibid.*, p. 34.
62. Virginie Prévost, "Des églises byzantines converties à l'islam?" "Quelques mosquées ibadites du djebel Nafûsa (Libye)", *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 3, 2012, p. 336.

62. Al-Ya'qubi, *ibid.*, pp. 180-184.
63. Alaa Amara, "The Position of Tlemcen in the Chronology of the Spread of Islam in the Maghreb 2nd-6th centuries AH/8th-12th centuries CE", in: *Maghreb Awsatiyat (Studies in the History and Civilization of Algeria in the Medieval Islamic Era)*, 2013, p. 27.
64. Byzantine studies indicate the continuation of the defensive policy in the Maghreb until the late ancient period. These military installations were built specifically for security purposes, such as monitoring rebellious and defiant tribes or imposing a kind of semi-permanent control over the access points of African provinces, such as the main roads, paths, and routes used by trade caravans. Therefore, we find, in the early period of Islamic rule, the spread of forts and garrisons, particularly in the Maghreb, Numidia, and later Mauretania Tingitana and Setif. (Mohamed Meouak, "Le Hodna occidentale entre régions méditerranéennes et plaines désertiques: organization des terroirs, communautés rurales et productions agricoles au Moyen Âge", *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, 126 (2009), p. 121)
65. Hisham Jaït, *The Founding of the Islamic West, First and Second Centuries AH/Seventh and Eighth Centuries CE*, Dar al-Tali'a, Beirut, 2004 CE. p. 141.
66. Al-Ya'qubi, *op. cit.*, p. 190. Al-Bakri, *op. cit.*, 2/689. Ibn al-Faqih, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
67. Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam, *op. cit.*, p. 231. Al-Raqiq al-Qayrawani, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
68. Duval Noël, "Inscriptions byzantines de Sbeitla (Tunisie)", III. *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité*, tome 83, no°2. 1971. pp. 423-443. 105-116.
69. It is indisputable that Arab chroniclers referred to the Byzantine communities known as the Romans as 'Ajam' and the 'Berber' and African groups as well. This ethnonym continued to be widely used with the same meaning during the second and third centuries/eighth and ninth centuries CE. This is confirmed by al-Maliki's text in *Riyad al-Nufus*, where he mentions that in the year 212 AH/827 CE, Asad ibn al-Furat arrived in Sicily, and its king, Balata, marched against him with a great army. Asad began to encourage his companions by saying: 'These are the Ajam of the coast, these are your slaves,' and he carried the banner, and God defeated them. Asad's statement, 'These are the Ajam of the coast,' means those who had fled from the coast when Africa was conquered. (Al-Maliki, previous source, p. 272).