



# The Berbers

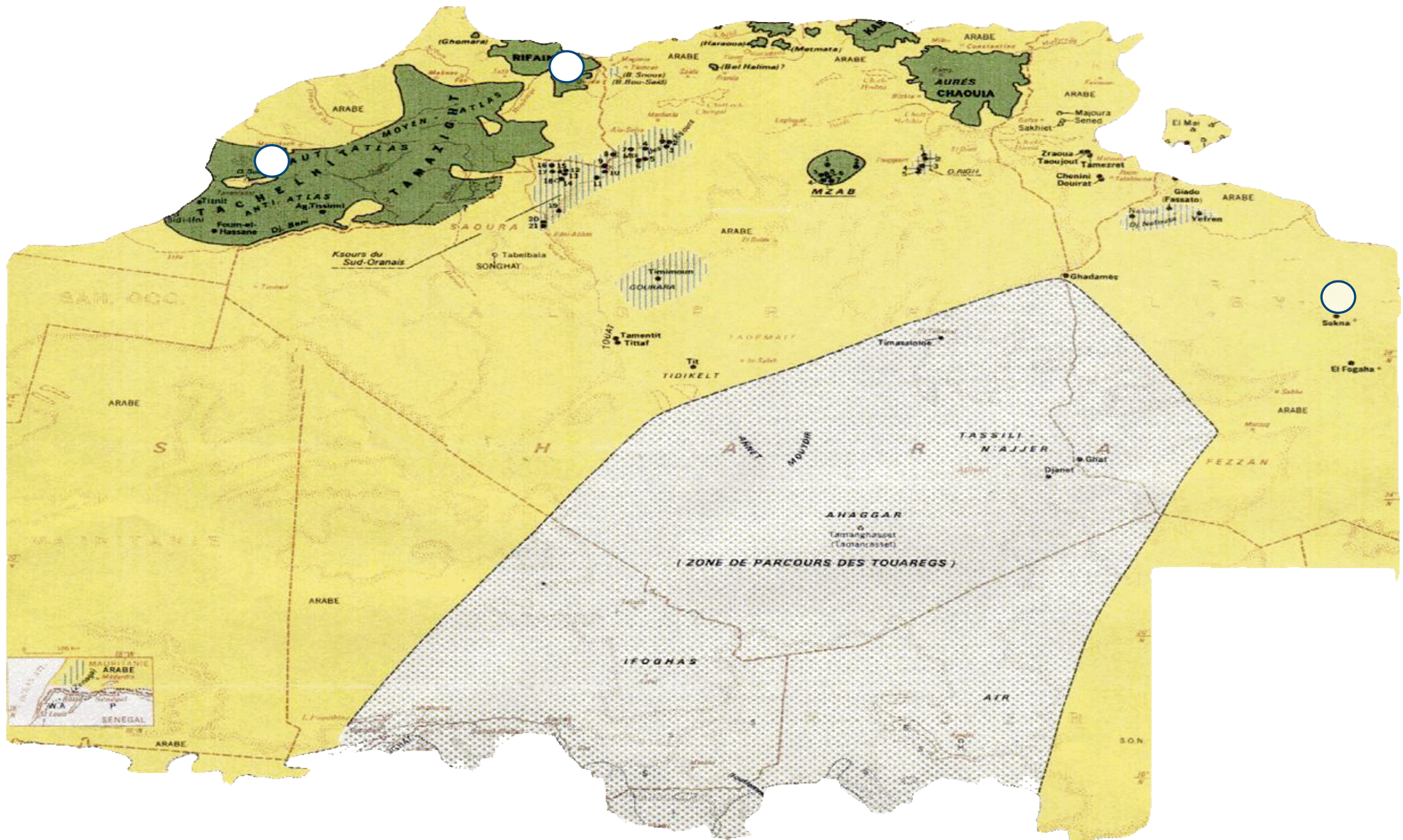
## Linguistic and genetic diversity

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# The Berber 'world'

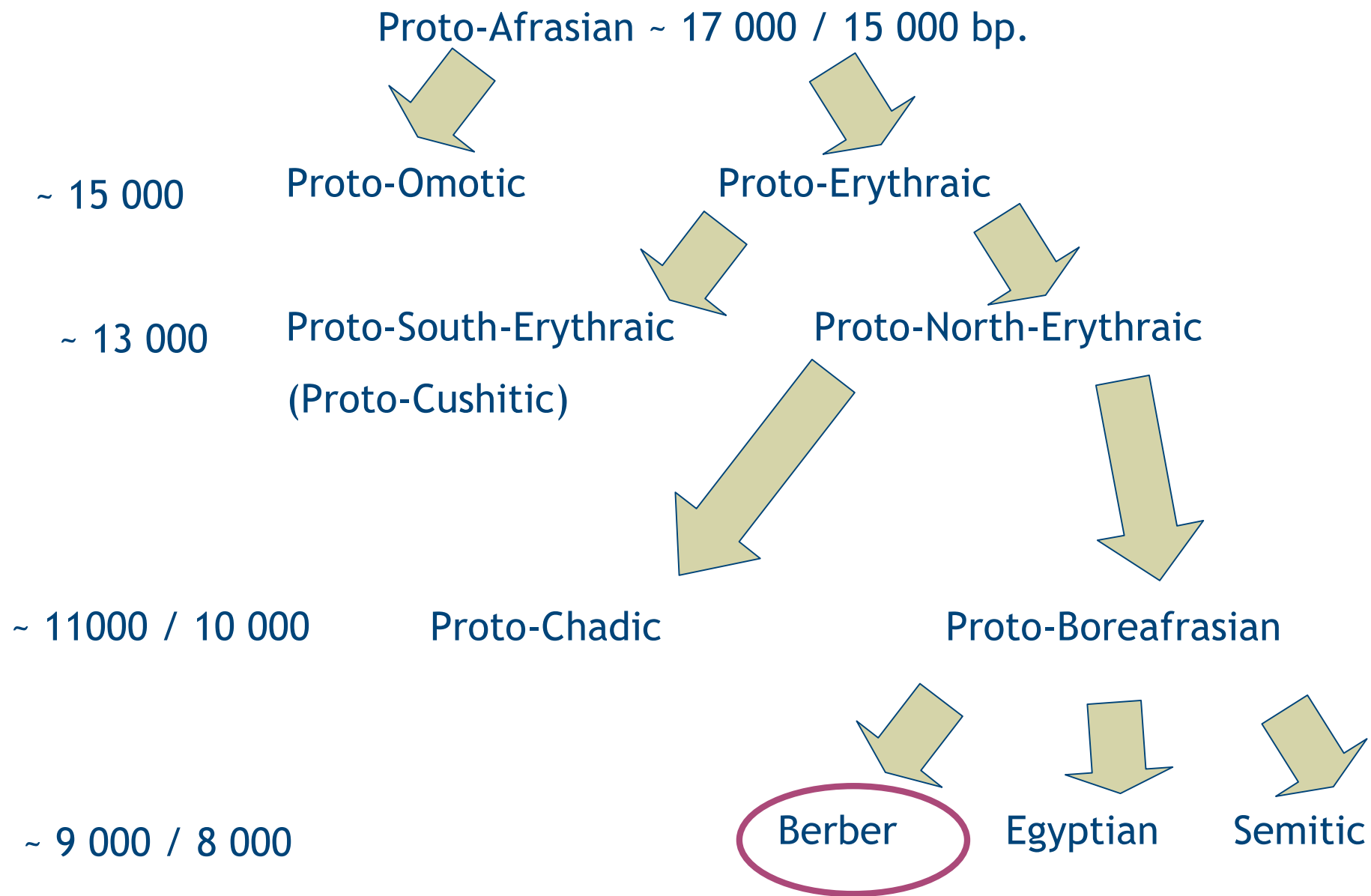




## Linguistic approach

- ♦ The Berber language and its place in Afro-Asiatic
- ♦ Sub-Classification
- ♦ Characteristics of Siwi
- ♦ The case of Tuareg
- ♦ Berber and Afro-Asiatic





After Ehret (1995)

## Typological characteristics of Boreafrasian 1

- 1) VSO word order > anteposition of derivational morphemes
- Ex. : Oromo (Cushitic) : *baq - s - ani* : they melted  
melt - CAUS - 3Pl
- *nyaat - am - e* : it was eaten  
eat - PASS - 3MSg
- Kabyle (Berber) *ss - fsi - n* : they melted  
CAUS - melt - 3Pl
- *y - mm - cca* : it was eaten  
3MSg-PASS - eat

## Typological characteristics of Boreafrasian 2

- 2) More widespread use of templatic patterns :
- Oromo (Cushitic) : *dhal-t-ee* : she gave birth, *dhal-t-a* : she gives birth, *dhal-uu* : giving birth (animals only)
- Zenaga (Berber) : *t-urag* : she gave birth, *t-arug* : she gives birth, *tarwah* : giving birth
- Limited occurrence of templatic patterns in some Cushitic languages, but systematic in Boreafrasian



## Tentative Berber classification 1

Cf. Kossmann, M.(1999) *Essai sur la phonologie du proto-Berbère*, Cologne, R. Koeppe

- Three conservative languages :
  - - Zenaga (Mauritania)
  - - Tuareg (Mali, Niger, Algeria, Libya)
  - - Ghadamsi (Libya)
- Have partly retained the proto-Berber vocalic system:
  - \*a, \*i, \*u, \*aa, \*ii, \*uu



## Reflexes of the proto-Berber vowel system in modern languages

*PB	Zenaga	Tuareg / Ghad.	Others
a	a	ɐ	∅
i, u	i, u	ə	∅
aa	a	a	a
ii	i	i	i
uu	u	u	u





## Northern Berber

- Fairly homogeneous : Tashelhiyt (Morocco), Tamazight (Morocco), Kabyle (Algeria), etc.
- Most distinctive sub-group (genetic ?) : "Zenati"
- - core group : Tarifit (Moroco), Beni Iznassen (Morocco), Ait Seghrouchen (Morocco), southern Morocco oases (e.g. Figuig), Beni Snous (Algeria) etc.
- - but some features recurrent in Algeria (Chenoua, Chaouia), Tunisia (Senned), Libya (Zuara, Nefousi) and many Saharan isolates in southern Algeria (Timimoun, Ouargla, Mzab) and Libya (Sokna, El Foqaha, Augila), east to Siwa oasis (Egypt)



## "Zenati" features 1

- 1 - Retention : proto-Berber \*g and \*j are kept distinct
- Proto-Berber : \*j = Tam. g, Ghad. ɟ / Rif ʒ, Chen. ʒ
- Proto-Berber : \*g = Tam. g, Ghad. ɟ / Rif y, Chen. g

## Examples of Proto-Berber \*g / \*j

	bird	among	hang	draw
Tam.	agd <sup>ɣ</sup> id <sup>ɣ</sup>	gər	agəl	agəm
Ghad.	aɟad <sup>ɣ</sup> id <sup>ɣ</sup>	ɟar	aɟəl	aɟəm
Rif	aɣd <sup>ɣ</sup> ið <sup>ɣ</sup>	ɣar	ayər	ayəm
Chen.	aɣd <sup>ɣ</sup> id <sup>ɣ</sup>	ɣar	agəl	agəm



## "Zenati" features 2

- 2. inflectional change (innovation):
    - - verbs of type IA8 (C1C2u) change their ending to -a
- |          |        |                         |        |                         |
|----------|--------|-------------------------|--------|-------------------------|
| • share  | Tuareg | <i>ebd<sup>ɛ</sup>u</i> | Rif    | <i>bð<sup>ɛ</sup>a</i>  |
| • lose   | Tash.  | <i>zlu</i>              | Seghr. | <i>ɜla</i>              |
| • accept | Ghad.  | <i>ərd<sup>ɛ</sup>u</i> | Nef.   | <i>ərd<sup>ɛ</sup>a</i> |
- (cf. M. Kossmann, 1994)



## "Zenati" features 3

- 3. Morphological (presumably innovation):
- Absence of initial vowel in CV- stems

- |                        |   |                            |
|------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| • Tash. <i>a-kal</i>   | / | Figuig <i>fal</i> : land   |
| • Tash. <i>a-fus</i>   | / | Timimoun <i>fus</i> : hand |
| • Tash. <i>ta-sa</i>   | / | Sokna <i>t-sa</i> : liver  |
| • Tash. <i>ta-fukt</i> | / | Rif <i>θ-fufθ</i> : sun    |





## "Eastern" features 1

1. Devoicing of PB /d<sup>h</sup>/ (Siwa, Augila, Sokna, Nefousi, Senned - not Elfoqaha nor Zuara; but also found in some places in Northern Algeria):
  - leg : Augila *at<sup>h</sup>ar*, Siwi / Nefousi / Senned : *t<sup>h</sup>ar*, Zuara *əd<sup>h</sup>ar*
  - lend: Augila / Nefousi / Sokna / Senned *ərt<sup>h</sup>əl*, Elfoqaha *ərd<sup>h</sup>əl*
  
2. "Zenati" retention \*j vs \*g (all except Augila)



## "Eastern" features 2

3. "Zenati" absence of initial vowel: all, but very haphazardly
  - scorpion : Augila *t-ƚardimt*, Nefousi / Zuara / Senned *t-ƚardəmt*, Elfoqaha *ta-ƚurdəmt*
  - stick: Augila / Sokna *ta-ƚarit*, Elfoqaha / Nefousi *t-ƚarit*
  - beard: Augila *ta-mirt*, Zuara *ta-mart*, Nefousi *tu-mərt*, Siwi / Sokna / Senned *t-mart*
  - hand: Augila / Elfoqaha *a-fus*, Nefousi *u-fəs*, Siwi / Sokna / Senned *fus*



## "Eastern" features 3

### 4. Morphological analogy (innovation)

Verbs in aC- (conjugation IA3) have neutralized to uC- (most general in Siwi, since even imperative is affected; other Eastern have it in aorist only)

Tash. *azən* : send    *yazən* (aor.)    *yuzən* (perf.)

Sokna *azən*                      *yuzən*                      *yuzən*

Siwi    *uzən*                      *yuzən*                      *yuzən*



## Siwi characteristics 1

- 1. Northern : PB short vowels reduce (innovation)
- Zen. *azankud<sup>f</sup>* / Siwi *azənkət<sup>f</sup>* : Dorcas gazelle
- 2. Eastern : *d<sup>f</sup>* > *t<sup>f</sup>* (innovation)
- Cf. above
- 3. "Zenati" :
  - - palatal vs non-palatal \*g (retention)
  - Tash. *rgigi* / Siwi *rədʒridʒ* : shake
  - - absence of initial vowel (innovation ?): cf. above



## Siwi characteristics 2

- 4. Siwi innovations :
  - resultative with final -a (uniquely shared with Augila)
  - Elfoqaha                      *yəmmút* : he died, is dead
  - Augila / Siwi                *immút* : he died    *immúta* : he is dead
  - complete neutralization of IA3 verbal patterns
  - cf. above





## Siwi characteristics 3

- - Berber negative marker *wər / ur* has been replaced by *la*
- Tam. izzənz-as-t he sold it to him neg. ur-as-t-izzənz
- Siwi izzənz-as-t neg. lá izzənz-as-t



## Siwi lexicon

### • out of 96 Swadesh list items:

- - 50 are found throughout Berber (including Tuareg, with one exception): big, bird, bone, breast, burn, claw/fingernail, cold, come, die, drink, dry, ear, eat, eye, fat, fire, to fly, foot, full, give, hand, head, hear, heart, horn, I, kill, knee, know, liver, louse, mountain, night, nose, one, red, say, sit down, see, skin, sleep, stand, sun, tongue, two, vomit, walk, water, we, white, you / thou
- - 24 are Arabic loans, rather widely spread (less often in Tuareg - a few seem specific to Siwi) : all, bark, blood, cloud, egg, feather, fish, good, hair, hot, leaf, long, many, name, not, person, root, seed, small, smoke, tail, tree, way, yellow
- - 17 are shared with a sub-group of Berber only, mostly Eastern: belly, bite, black, dog, earth, green, male, meat, moon, new, rain, sand, star, stone, swim, tooth, woman



## Siwi linguistic affinities

- ♦ Mostly Eastern, with the other Libyan oases, but rather notable impact of "Zenati" features
- ♦ Genetic research urgently needed in Libya and in the southern Moroccan oases (Figuig), Algeria not being practicable at present



## The Tuareg dialects

- ♦ Divided into three main groups: Northern (Algeria), Western (Mali) and Eastern (Niger) with some spill-over into neighbouring countries.
- ♦ Conservative group, fairly well-known linguistically, the Malian dialects being slightly underdescribed
- ♦ Genetic and linguistic research to concentrate on Mali (contacts already established). Also a few small groups in Niger speaking apparently non-Tuareg Berber languages (Ayt Tawari, etc.)



## Berber origins

- ♦ Berber languages are very different from other Afro-Asiatic languages - so a long time since split-up (Ehret : 9000 BP)
- ♦ But internal differentiation in Berber is slight (TMRCA : 2500 BP ? - roughly comparable to Germanic or even Romance)
- ♦ So two stages must be recognized: Proto-Berber 1, the earliest split-off from Afro-Asiatic, whose genetic correlate might be the M81 mutation (cf. Jean-Michel's talk) and the much more recent Proto-Berber 2, the putative ancestor of modern Berber languages



