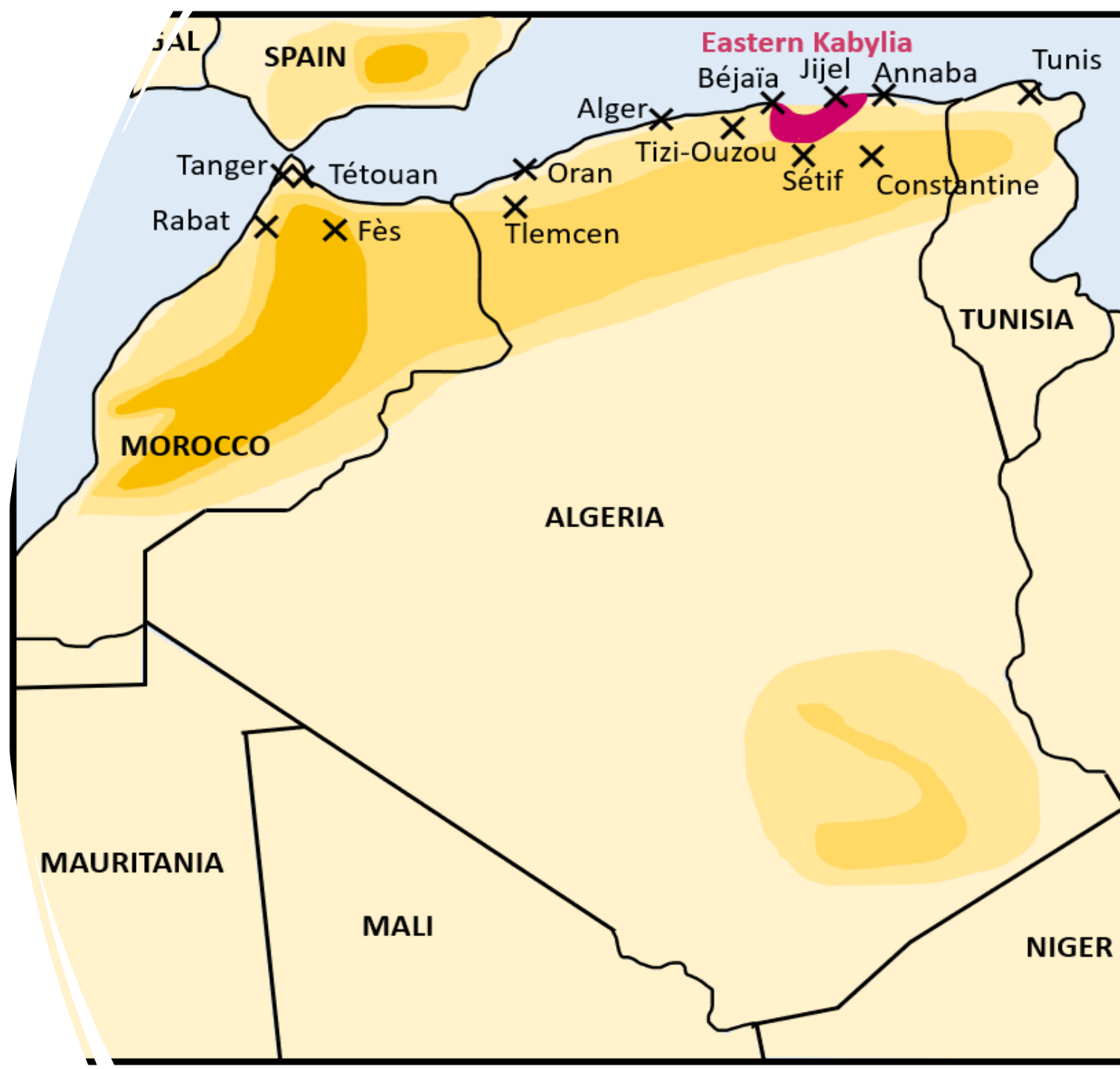


Phenomena of contact through oral literature:

The names of the Ogress & the Ogre in Tasahlit Berber

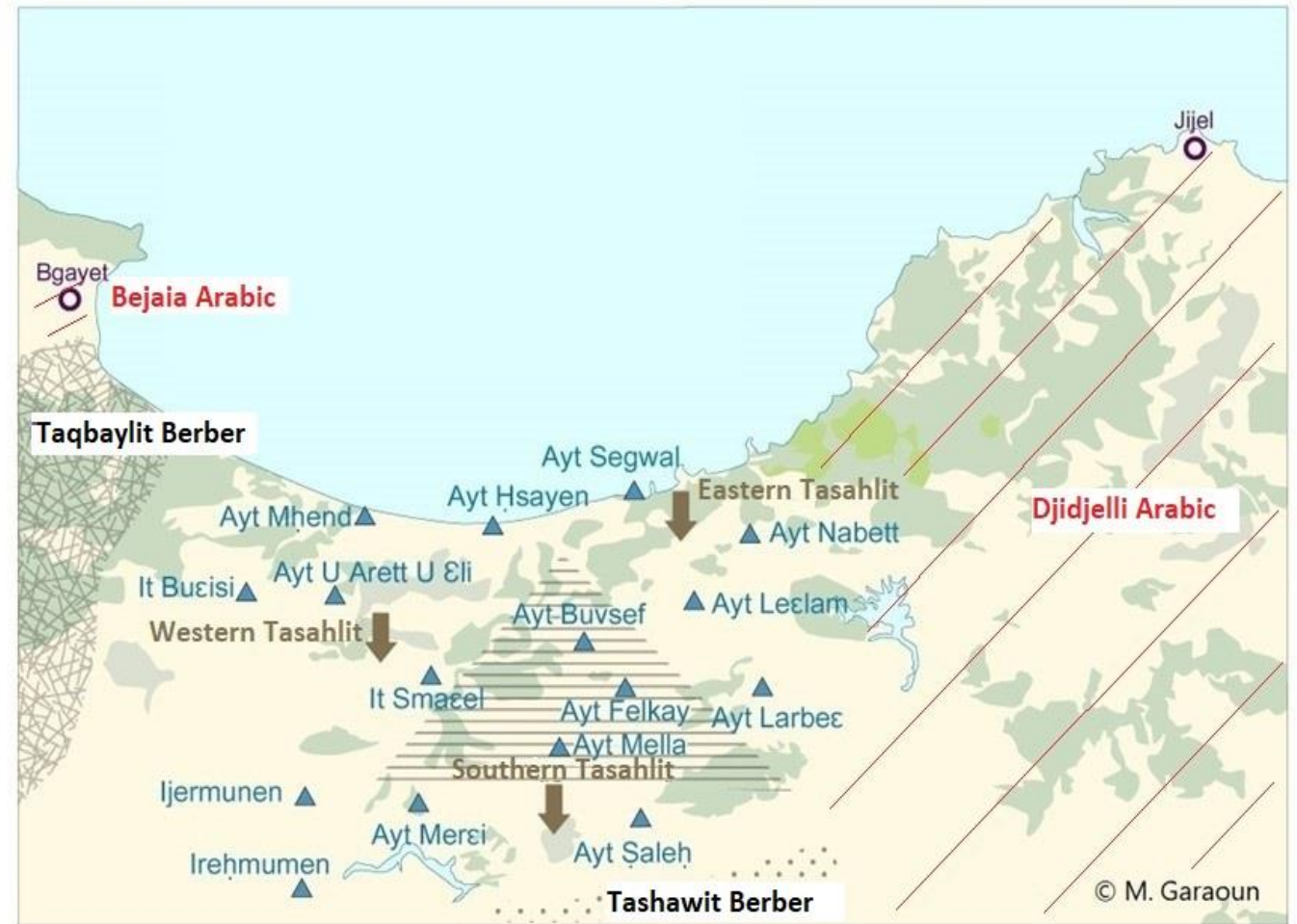
Tasahlit Berber

Tasahlit is a Northern Berber language spoken by approximately 200,000 speakers in **Eastern Kabylia** (Algeria)



- ❖ It can be divided into 15 varieties belonging to the following subgroups:
 - **Southern Tasahlit** (in contact with **Tashawit Berber**)
 - **Western Tasahlit** (in contact with **Taqbaylit Berber**)
 - **Eastern Tasahlit** (most isolated group from intra-Berber contact)

- Tasahlit is in extensive contact with **Arabic** (for more than 12 centuries)
 - This region was also historically in contact with Punic and Latin



The Ogress/Ogre in Berber oral literature

- ✓ Each Berber language has a name for the **ogress** & sometimes a masculine form for the **ogre**.
- ❖ Associated with a common type of tale in Amazigh literature : the **ogress stories**.
- ❖ Proposals for **psychological and societal explanations** (Lacoste-Dujardin 2010).
- ❖ Some have linked them to **Amazigh mythology** (Hamou 2015).
- ❖ Advances in the study of the **links between oral literature and history** (Uzoigwe 1980, Vansina 1985) allow us to suggest that they may be linked to (pre)historical events.

Question

- I collected **ogress's tales in Eastern Kabylia (2018-2020)**
 - There is a wide **diversity of names** for the ogress & the ogre
 - Many of the denominations collected correspond to **borrowings**
- ❖ I wondered what the distribution of these names could **tell us about the history of the figure of the ogress & the ogre in North Africa & its link with cultural contacts with other populations?**

The corpus

- **13** varieties investigated
- Ogress **8** variants / ogre **9**, belonging to **3** roots:
 - **MZ** native, **XWL** <Arabic, **(W)RGW** <Latin

AREA	WESTERN-TASAHLIT					
Tribe	Aït Bouaïssi	Aït Mhend	Aït Waret Ou Ali	Aït Smaïl	Aït Hassaïn	Aït Bouysef
Ogress	<i>lyula</i>	<i>ṭiminza</i> ~ <i>lyula</i>	<i>ṭiminza</i>	<i>ṭaminza</i>	<i>ṭiminza</i> ~ <i>ṭaminza</i>	<i>ṭamza</i> ~ (<i>ṭamziwt</i>)
Ogre	(<i>ayiliw</i>)	(<i>ayuliw</i> ~ <i>uyiliw</i>)	<i>aminziw</i>	(<i>ayiliw</i>)	(<i>ayiliw</i>)	<i>amziw</i>

AREA	EASTERN-TASAHLIT				SOUTHERN-TASAHLIT		
Trib	Aït Nabet	Aït Laâlam	Aït Segoual	Aït Saleh	Snadla	Aït Meraï	
			Aït Bouhfan	Aït Khlifa			
Ogress	<i>lyula</i>	<i>tergu</i>	<i>turgu</i> ~ <i>lyula</i>	<i>turgat</i> ~ <i>lyula</i>	<i>ṭamza</i>	<i>ṭamza</i>	<i>ṭamziwt</i>
Ogre	<i>lyul</i>	<i>argu</i>	<i>amergiw</i> ~ <i>lyul</i>	<i>lyul</i>	<i>amziw</i>	<i>amziw</i>	<i>amziw</i>

The native root MṢ (ⵎⵙ)

✓ **8/13** varieties : MṢ

- ❖ Pan-amazigh root associated with **seizure** verbs:
 - seize, catch, take (cf. Haddadou 2007:137)
- ❖ MṢ "ogress" : Tarifit [Morroco], Tashawit [Algeria], Siwi [Egypt], etc.
 - Origin of the MNṢ variants: root contamination by NṢ "challenge, observe, examine" (Haddadou 2007:152)?

The Arabic root ĠWL (غول)

- ✓ **7/13** : ĠWL, borrowed from Arabic
- ḪWL is used in Arabic to refer to creatures close to the Amazigh ogress/ogre (cf. Classical Arabic *ḡawl/ogre*)
- ĠWL primary meaning: **seizure**

The Latin root (W)RGW

- **3/13 (W)RGW**
- Borrowing from Late Latin ***orgo** (~ **orcus**)
<French ogre, Spanish **ogro**, Italian **orco**, etc.
- Related to the verb **urgeo** « to attack, to pursue, to be threatening"

The geographic distribution

- **Native root:** southern Tashlit area
- **Arabic root:** coastal strip
- **Latin root:** eastern Tashlit area



Gender opposition

- ✓ **5/13** varieties => etymological variation linked to the creature gender
 - Ex. Aït Smail *taminza* “ogress” vs. *ayiliw* “ogre”
- I have noticed that in a many Berber languages, the ogre is much rarer than the ogress (Farès 1994) while In Middle Eastern Arabic literature the ogre is much more common than the ogress.
- **The penetration of the Arabic root Σ WL went through the borrowing of *ġūl* “ogre”**

An antique Latin loanword

- * **Orgo** = circum-Mediterranean word
 - Proposed being of Etruscan origin (Shipp 1961)
- Attested in Amazigh in varieties outside of the zone of Latin influence (e.g. South-Eastern Morocco)
 - This borrowing was widespread at the time of Roman Africa.
- ❖ Could this loanword have been linked with the borrowing of oral literature elements or myths to the Romans?



Questioning about the native root

- In Berber, MṚ is very widespread in Zenatic.
 - In Tasahlit MṚ is the only root observed in Southern Varieties, directly in contact with Tashawit Berber which is a Zenatic variety also using this root (Boudjellal 2006)
- ❖ Could the distribution of MṚ be linked to intra-Berber contact?

Conclusion



- Berber oral literature borrowed a lot from the Arab one (cf. Lacoste-Dujardin 2002)
- ✓ In the Mediterranean region, the names of several “legendary/mythic/tale creatures” have traveled as a result of various & ancient contact situations
- ✓ In Tasahlit, two of the three etymons used to name the ogress/ogre were borrowed & the one of native origin is suspected to have originated from intra-Berber contact.
- ❖ It would be interesting to seek to differentiate the elements of oral literature also finding their origin in the contact. One avenue for this research would be to compare ogre/ogress in regions using different etymons and to observe if anything sets them apart.



*O the one who is at the mountain
pass, at the mountain pass
Tell to Mhend my dear, my dear
At seven brothers, brothers
Your father was eaten by the
ogress, by the ogress*

