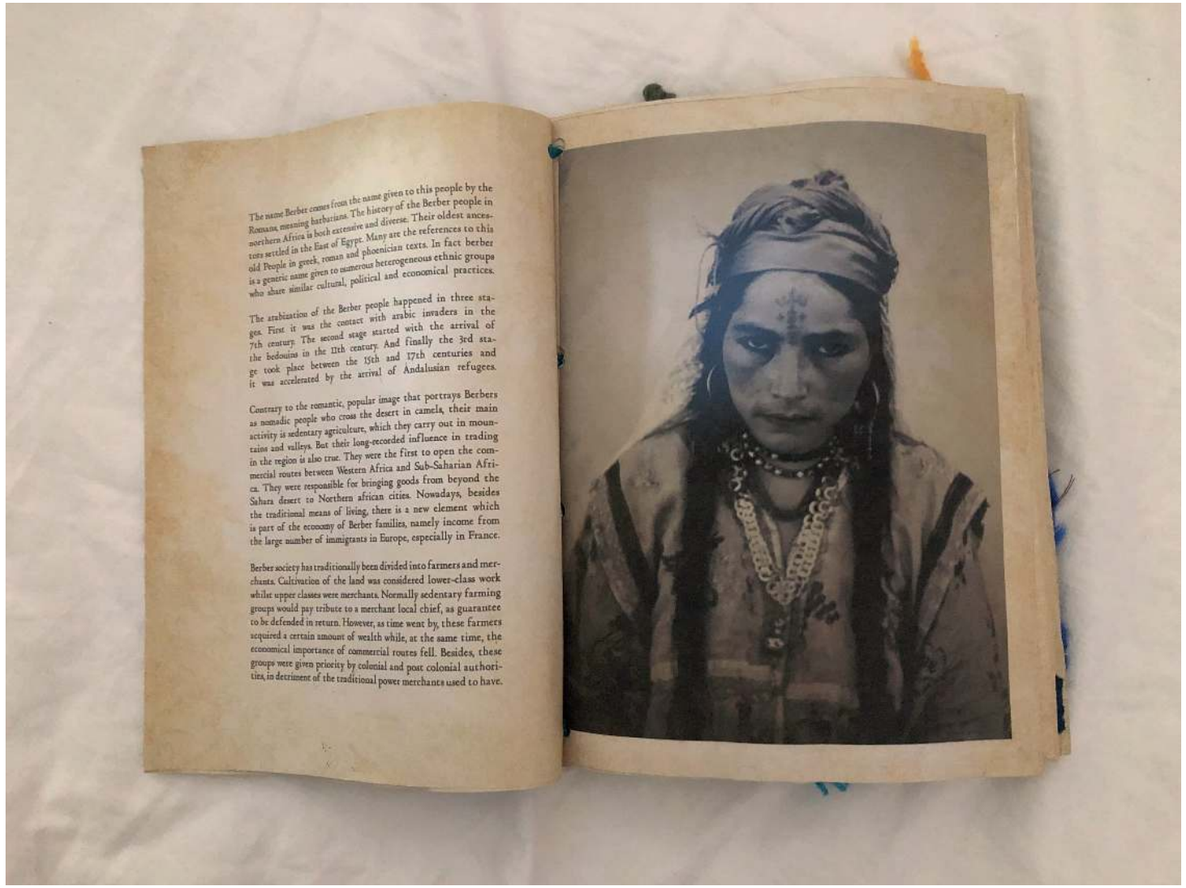
Research 01

Los bereberes son las personas pertenecientes a un conjunto de etnias autóctonas de África del norte, denominado Tamazgha. Este grupo de personas viven de la producción para el autoconsumo, mayoritariamente producción agrícola y ganadería para subsistir o comerciar. Estos son la base histórica de un pueblo y su herencia productiva.



The name Berber comes from the name given to this people by the Romans, meaning barbarians. The history of the Berber people in northern Africa is both extensive and diverse. Their oldest ancestors settled in the East of Egypt. Many are the references to this old People in greek, roman and phoenician texts. In fact berber is a generic name given to numerous heterogeneous ethnic groups who share similar cultural, political and economical practices.

The arabization of the Berber people happened in three stages. First it was the contact with arabic invaders in the 7th century. The second stage started with the arrival of the bedouins in the 11th century. And finally the 3rd stage took place between the 15th and 17th centuries and it was accelerated by the arrival of Andalusian refugees.

Contrary to the romantic, popular image that portrays Berbers as nomadic people who cross the desert in camels, their main activity is sedentary agriculture, which they carry out in mountains and valleys. But their long-ecceded influence in trading in the region is also true. They were the first to open the commercial routes between Western Africa and Sub-Saharian Africa. They were responsible for bringing goods from beyond the Sahara desert to Northern african cities. Nowadays, besides the traditional means of living, there is a new element which is part of the economy of Berber families, namely income from the large number of immigrants in Europe, especially in France.

Berber society has traditionally been divided into farmers and merchants. Cultivation of the land was considered lower-class work while upper classes were merchants. Normally sedentary farming groups would pay tribute to a merchant local chief, as guarantee to be defended in return. However, as time went by, these farmers acquired a certain amount of wealth while, at the same time, the economical importance of commercial routes fell. Besides, these groups were given priority by colonial and post colonial authorities, in detriment of the traditional power merchants used to have.