

Article title: The Lexical Violence of Imperial Culture

Author: William Gallois

Affiliation: Associate Professor in Middle Eastern and Mediterranean History, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter

E-mail: w.gallois@exeter.ac.uk

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Abstract

This article studies the history of a single word and its movement from pre-Islamic Arabia to the languages of modern Europe. It focuses on the key moment of the early nineteenth century when the Arabic ‘*ghazwā*’ served as the root and model of the French ‘*razzia*’ in the early Algerian colony. Tracing the history of the *ghazwā* through Islamic history and its subsequent emergence in Romance forms, the essay is comparative in the sense that it asks what happens in the movement of ideas and practices through loanwords. It suggests that the violence of modern empire was linguistic in a sense which encompasses the connections between thoughts, words and deeds, whilst critiquing literatures on lexical borrowing which tend to assume the innocence of linguistic exchange. A broader conclusion on transnational history is essayed through a consideration of the *razzia* in the context of the so-called ‘*langue franque*’: that *métissage* of Romance languages and Arabic which prevailed amongst traders across the Mediterranean in the early modern period, and which disappeared in the imperial Mediterranean of the nineteenth century.

The Lexical Violence of Imperial Culture

1. Introduction

What role did language play in the violence of modern imperialism? ¹

For Edward Said, Napoleon’s Expedition to Egypt inaugurated the modern encounter between Europe and the Arab-Islamic world. France’s military and technological superiority

was paired with an assuredness of civilizational ascendancy, such that twin political and cultural processes of invasion and the expropriation of indigenous life were intertwined in the problematic of Orientalism. While the normative and explanatory power of Said's argument has been much debated, less attention has been paid to the possibility that the interlacing of culture and imperialism which lay central to his project could be studied more forensically, such that the knitting of texts and power could be unthreaded, with the interstice between ideas and deeds examined in detailed studies of words and things in particular places and times.²

This essay shows that close examination of cultural interchange from the early imperial period has the potential to develop Said's thesis, whilst explicitly connecting the language games of metropolitan power with specific instances of annihilatory violence in empire.

Using the example of the French Conquest of Algeria in the 1830s and '40s, this article reveals the ways in which a new repertoire and language of force was deployed by France in the Maghreb. While punitive, retributive and massacring forms of violence were presented as organic responses to the harshness of the African environment in which European soldiers operated, they were in fact inorganic, for they emanated from a set of explicit, motivated ideas and policies shared by imperial elites in Paris and Algiers. These notions coalesced in new words which were not themselves generative of new modes of violence, though they naturalised and normalised the practice and effects of such acts (

Until it is etymologically picked apart, language is conventionally seen to mirror the world and to be without origins. Neologisms, however, have the potential to unmoor and remake reality at great speed, spreading a sense of shared cultural praxis in the way in which a virus spreads through a body, and those who deployed such new words in the 1830s and '40s must have had some idea of the malign consequences which would ensue from their speech.

‘For Napoleon’, Said wrote, ‘Egypt was a project that acquired reality in his mind, and later in his preparations for its conquest, through experiences that belonged to the realm of ideas and myths culled from texts, not empirical reality.’³ The Other of the Orient was contrasted with the Enlightened European Self, serving as an archetype for European political and military incursions into the Middle East which were grounded upon cultural and moral claims. Even ‘the military failure of Napoleon’s occupation of Egypt did not [...] destroy the fertility of its over-all projection for Egypt or the rest of the Orient’, for ‘Quite literally, the occupation gave birth to the entire modern experience of the Orient as interpreted from within the universe of discourse founded by Napoleon in Egypt’.

Nevertheless Said’s identification of this particular imperial ‘universe of discourse’ (that which he believed had been missing from Michel Foucault’s *œuvre*) placed greater emphasis on the ‘realm of ideas and myths’ than it did on ‘empirical reality’.⁴ It depended upon a model of causation which required an imaginative leap from the realm of discourse to lived reality; which concentrated much more on the textual worlds of the Occident than it did on the detailed instantiation of empire in the Orient.⁵ It is that space between idea and action, the text and the world, the Occident and the Orient, which this article fills.

As Racevskis notes, Said disdained the “‘linguacentricity’ of much French structuralist thought’ and ‘the ‘labyrinth of ‘textuality’” of literary theory in France and US⁶, yet while he saw it as the duty of the critic to connect the world and the text⁷, the nature and mechanisms of such connections lie curiously underthought in his work. Put another way, if Said’s notion of power depended too much on intentionality and will – whilst power for Foucault was overly networked and anonymised⁸ – is there some means of connecting the agency of thought and speech, their dispersal into discourse, and then lived realities?

In spite of Said's view that Foucault's 'Eurocentrism was almost total'⁹, Robert Young suggests that empire haunts Foucault's body of work, arguing that 'colonial discourse analysis' possesses a liberatory potential which moves beyond its present narrowing into 'a form of literary criticism that focuses on a certain category of texts'.¹⁰ This depends on a recognition that 'Foucault is not interested in ideas or their history in the abstract, but in how ideas of medicine, psychiatry, penalty, cash-out as part of material practices.'¹¹

It is this process of 'cashing-out' which lies at the heart of this essay. The originality and significance of its claims are dependent on the rigour imposed by the analysis of a single term – *razzia* – along with its lives and afterlives from 1830 onwards. Specific critical literatures from linguistics (on loanwords, as well as lexical borrowing over the *longue durée*) are deployed in a historical project which also depends for its originality on the new primary sources which are marshalled in support of its arguments.

The piece is also a detective story, for it traces the movement of a word from pre-Islamic Arabia through hitherto unstudied medieval Iberian forms in Castilian, Catalan and Portuguese (as well as Maltese), into its relationship with early modern Mediterranean creoles (the so-called *lingua franca*, *langue franque* and *sabir*), and its subsequent emergence in nineteenth-century French and, henceforth, English, German, Dutch and other modern European languages.¹² Like the work of all sleuths, this project began with a set of corpses – in this case, the bodies of Algerian villagers massacred in the 1830s – and a determination to get to the roots of the crime.¹³

The formulation 'lexical violence' is not new, though the one scholarly instance of its use offers neither a definition of the term, nor any real exploration of the idea.¹⁴ Here it is used as a means of pairing language and violence not simply as concepts which may be broadly related, but as conjoined notions, such that we are able to identify forms of violent praxis

which are causally motivated in linguistic fashions, which are experienced as modes of communication, and which are subsequently analysed and understood in forms of language which re-inform and re-animate the cycle which began with the use of the word.¹⁵

The article begins with a consideration of two important contexts: the movement of loanwords from Arabic to French over the *longue durée* and theories of lexical borrowing. It then goes on to trace the etymology of the *ghazwā* and its movement into a variety of European languages. Details of the use of the term ‘razzia’ in colonial Algeria in the 1830s and ’40s follow, along with the broader backdrop of the relationship between language and power in the nineteenth-century Mediterranean. A conclusion assesses the significance of this case for studies of empire and violence across the academy.

2. Loanwords

This study originated in a finding made whilst reading thousands of pages of letters, reports, books and pamphlets written by French soldiers, administrators and politicians in 1830s and ’40s Algeria; namely, that very few Arabic words were borrowed by such writers and that one term migrated into French much more extensively than any other. This was the *razzia*, and its quickly acquired neologic verb form, *razzier*, taken from the Arabic *ghāzwa*, or ‘raid’. Subsequent analysis confirms its predating the movement of terms such as *gourbi*, *couscous* and *bled* into French.

While the French language had had a long history of lexical borrowing from Arabic and the languages of the Middle East, such loan words had tended to be medieval in origin. Some (like *sucre* and *turban*) had passed through Italian, others through Turkish (*minaret*, *café*), or through the Crusades in Palestine (*gazelle*, *tasse*), Islamic Iberia (*hasard*, *amiral*), or via

more complex routes – such as *aubergine*, which came into French via Catalan, by way of Arabic and Persian – as well as the great translation projects from Arabic into Latin in Toledo (*alchimie, carafe*).¹⁶

Lexical borrowing in the modern imperial age, however, never repeated this earlier sense of sophisticated forms of culture migrating into French from a progressive eastern civilization (*zénith, algèbre*), instead concentrating on the practical need to describe the differences of life in the Maghreb (*couscous, burnous*) and the environment which confronted French soldiers (*oued, bled*).¹⁷ The *razzia* formed a part of this world of linguistic appropriation which had as its purpose the description of the specificities of the Algerian environment; in this case, the human mores of the landscape of the mountains and the desert.

The little that linguists have written about the movement of loanwords from Arabic into French in the nineteenth century has contrasted the ‘prestige’ of medieval lexical borrowing with the importation of informal or ‘argotique’ terms into French in colonial North Africa.¹⁸ Henriette Walter, for instance, dismissively compares the modern arrival of terms such as *toubib, clebs* and *kif-kif*, with the ‘much more important [earlier] borrowing from Arabic of a vocabulary of science and learning’.¹⁹ Similarly, Georges A. Bertrand contrasts medieval “Mediterranean” borrowing, which ‘was a result of the undeniable scientific and technical advances of the Muslim world and [...] their radiance across Europe and, in particular, France’ with ‘popular’ forms of ‘slang and vulgarities’ spread by colonial soldiers in the nineteenth century.²⁰ Sociolinguistic and historical linguistic literatures also offer no guide as to why some terms migrated from Arabic to French, with their tendency to list and classify, rather than to assess the significance of specific instances of lexical borrowing. Furthermore, current literatures in linguistics tend to display more interest in bilingualism and hybridisation, and rather less in the rare instances of a powerful language borrowing from its

perceived inferior. The default assumption of such work is also that borrowing tends to be either natural or innocent, with motivated appropriation rarely being considered.

There is therefore no history or detailed etymology of terms such as ‘razzia’, though we are able to draw on broader literatures on lexical borrowing to contextualise its importance and its relations to a broader field. We know, for instance, that loanwords tend to be nouns that they make up a small part of most languages and that ‘recurrent loan types’, as in this case, are rarer still.²¹ They seldom address a true lexical need²² and, as the largest crosslinguistic survey²³ concluded, ‘aspects of social organization ([the] modern world, possession or commerce, religion, law, household) are more prone to borrowing than concepts that mirror natural or physical surroundings (physical world, body, emotions, perception, space, kinship).’²⁴

Using the technical language of linguistics, the *razzia* might be described as a *loanshift*, which is to say that an attempt has been made at ‘complete substitution of native morphemes’, though we will see that it is more debatable whether it ought to be classified as a case of *importation* ((‘If the loan is similar enough to the model, so that a native speaker would accept it as his own’) or *substitution* (‘inadequate reproduction of the model’).²⁵ Drawing on Einar Haugen’s terminology, this article will show that as a loanword, the *razzia* arguably moved from being a *loan synonym* – ‘When there is a certain amount of semantic overlapping between the old and new meanings [...] which only adds a new shade of meaning to the native morpheme’ – through a phase of *semantic displacement* – ‘in which native terms are applied to novel cultural phenomena that are roughly similar to something in the old culture’ – to an end state of *semantic confusion* – ‘in which native distinctions are obliterated through the influence of partial interlingual synonymity’.²⁶ In other words, that the sociolinguistic character of the *razzia* changed markedly over a short period of time in the early colony.

Such shifting ground would suggest that the *razzia* was a rare form of loanword, borne out by the fact that it was also not a product of the development of a bilingual culture (early French users generally spoke little or no Arabic), belying Hermann Paul's observation that borrowing is 'predicated on some minimum of bilingual mastery of the two languages.'²⁷ According to Poplack, 'agents of introduction tend to be bilinguals and elite', yet the *razzia* was seemingly popularised by non-elite soldiers without bilingual credentials.²⁸ Its emergence at a time of war did, however, fit an established pattern of borrowing, as in the crusades and the Italian wars, identified by scholars such as Dauzat.²⁹

More generally, the linguistics literature tends to assume that loanwords are the product of shared cultures' coming-into-being. Peter Trudgill's study of early (pre-seventeenth-century) colonial borrowing argued strongly against the idea that colonial dialects were expressions of new national identities, but he nonetheless contended that 'dialect mixture is the inevitable result of dialect contact, and that the mechanism which accounts for this is quasi-automatic accommodation in face-to-face interaction.'³⁰ This notion of unconscious 'accommodation' implies a certain sense of dignity accorded to others by selves, which is seemingly absent from the early Algerian colony, where the primacy of 'face-to-face interaction' in the earlier colonial moment was replaced by a greater sense of distance in the imperial age. Indeed, the very identity of interlocutors necessary for the fusing of languages could be said to be different in Algeria, where a term such as the *razzia* gained currency through its use in conversations between Frenchmen, rather than between colonists and indigenous subjects.

The automatic qualities of lexical borrowing are therefore defied in this case. Pelech's argument that 'Linguistic diffusion and new-dialect formation are "mechanical and inevitable" because linguistic accommodation is automatic' and Cappella's claim that it is an aspect of 'the relatively automatic behaviors manifested during social interaction'³¹ raise the

question as to whether we might in this case be able to speak of motivated, rather than automatic, borrowing.

Tuten observes that, 'Given that most contributing varieties in a *prekoine* linguistic pool are mutually intelligible . . . many of the alterations in speech that take place are not strictly speaking necessary to fulfil communicative needs', instead claiming that, 'Rather, speakers accommodate to the speech of their interlocutors in order to promote a sense of common identity.'³² Could this instance of imperial loanshifting instead relate more to this sense of the borrowing of language as the means of promoting a form of common identity? At the very least, such an idea introduces a sense of the motivated direction of linguistic change, though again it operates with benign assumptions about human encounters, in which accommodation is a form of deference to the other, rather than a means of subjugating their alterity. Linguists' insistence on the model of 'interactional synchrony' (in which the child's acquisition of language emerges in speech with the parent such that there is a syncopation of their communication) as a model of human communication reflects, as Pelech observes, their 'the basic survival needs of bonding . . . safety, and comfort'.³³ What, though of interactional displacement, of the human needs for destruction, for violence, for the uncoupling of peoples, the elimination of their safety and comfort?

Dauzat is surely right that 'for a given period, the examination of loanwords allows us to reconstruct the character of relations between peoples'³⁴, while Gardner-Chloros's instinct that the metaphor of borrowing may be inadequate as a means of characterising exchanges between peoples introduces a productive form of unsettling to linguistic analyses.³⁵ As Haugen also writes:

At first blush the term 'borrowing' might seem to be almost as inept for the process we wish to analyze as 'mixture'. The metaphor implied is certainly absurd, since the

borrowing takes place without the lender's consent or even awareness, and the borrower is under no obligation to repay the loan. One might as well call it stealing, were it not that the owner is deprived of nothing and feels no urge to recover his goods.³⁶

One gift which this essay proposes to offer back to linguistics is the detailed study of a form of borrowing which took place not simply 'without the lender's consent' – though with the explicit 'awareness' of both parties – in which 'stealing' and the deprivation of the interlocutor's goods was the unequivocal goal of borrowing.

Etymology of the ghazwā

The 'ghazwā' has a complex etymological history in Arabic. The root GH-Z-W is pre-Islamic in origin and, as Johnstone writes in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*:

The *ghazw* (colloquial *ghazu* , pl. *ghizwān*) was one of the oldest institutions of the camel-breeding tribes of Northern Arabia and continued, unmoderated by Islam, well into the present century. Unlike the other warlike activities of the Bedouin, namely war for territory (*manākh*) and punitive raids of retaliation (*tha'r* /coll. *thār*), its primary concern was the acquisition of camels. In practice it operated as a fairly effective means of redistributing economic resources in a region where the balance could easily be upset by natural calamities.³⁷

In terms of its origins, and indeed its usage into the modern period in some parts of the Arabic-speaking world, the ghazwā therefore described a form of raiding which was as connected with social balance as it was with destruction (hence the positive, rather than ruinous, connotations of the word). As Johnstone continues:

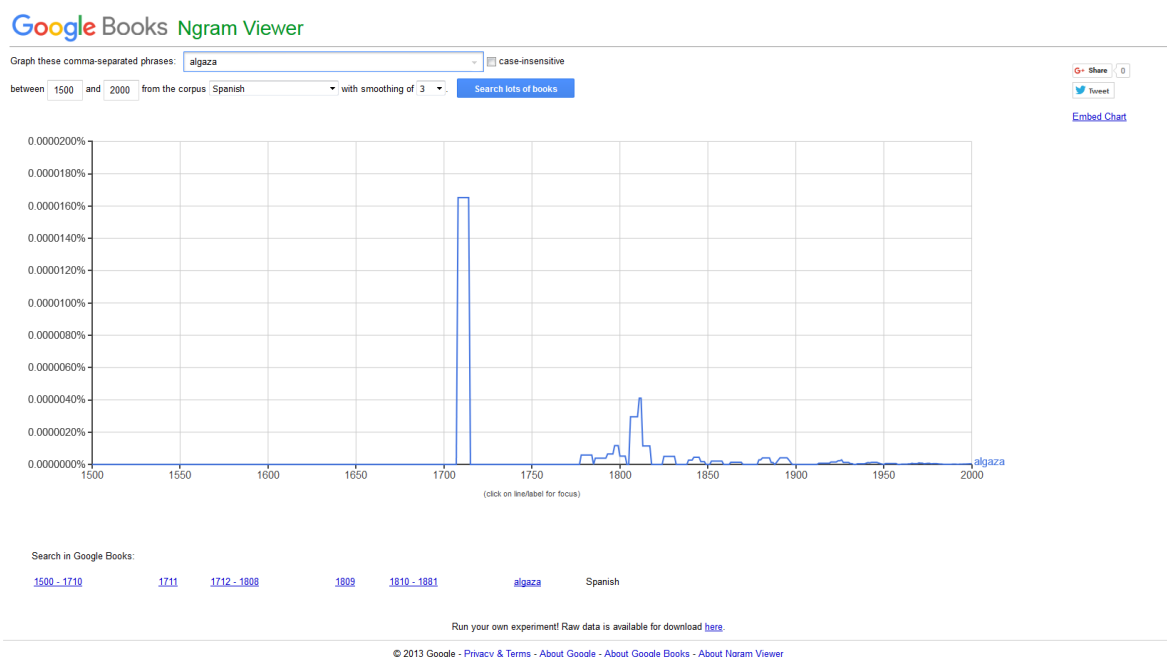
The *ghazu*, therefore, minimized the effect of localized drought or disaster on the breeding of properly balanced camel herds, the only form of wealth which could give economic security in this society. Since the acquisition of camels was the aim of a *ghazu*, very little blood was ordinarily shed during the course of it, mercy (*man‘*) being freely granted. Indeed the whole course of a *ghazu* was governed by elaborate protocol.³⁸

The constructive qualities of the *ghazu* were replicated in later derivations from the GH-Z-W root, such as the term ‘*ghāzi*’, or mercenary, which described those religiously-motivated fighters who battled for Islam on the border with the Byzantine world.³⁹ Other variants also stressed the sense in which warring might be imbued with a sense of religious duty, though it seems, as in the case of *jihād*⁴⁰, that the predominant usage of the root and the term came in descriptions of tribal raiding in which the goods or livestock of rivals were seized. Critically, the *ghāzwa* was quite specifically a form of assault which was by definition limited in scope.⁴¹ It was governed by protocols, if not laws, and it was ecologically conservative in the sense that it preserved forms of social order which depended upon the management of the environment. As we shall see, while the French neologism retained the sense of the *razzia* as a constructive form of human relations, it would ultimately be its destruction of the natural world which was envisaged as productive and fruitful.

While existing literatures assume that all modern European derivations of the *ghazwā* emerge from the complex of versions which appear in nineteenth-century Algeria – *razzia*, *rezzou*⁴², *radsja*, *bazia*, *razzier* – the first ‘European’ appropriations from the Arabic in fact come, unsurprisingly, from medieval Iberia. The term ‘*algaza*’⁴³ first appears in the *Cid* of 1140 C.E., with distinct variants and offshoots – such as ‘*gazi*’⁴⁴ – developing in Castilian⁴⁵, Catalan⁴⁶ and Portuguese⁴⁷ (*gazua*). The meaning of the Iberian term appeared to match that of the Arabic original, being used to describe raiding of a limited and controlled form.⁴⁸

From the late medieval period, there appears to have been some degree of linguistic confusion in the Romance world relating to two separate loan terms deriving from the Arabic: *algaza*, which came from the root GH-Z-W and *algazara*, which derived from GH-Z-R. At some points the two words were used interchangeably, though the dominant meaning of the former related to raiding and the latter to a sense of commotion or hubbub. The origins of this uncertainty pertained partly to the linkages between these two roots in Arabic, with the notion of abundance associated with GH-Z-R connecting with the possibilities that emerged in seizing such wealth in GH-Z-W.⁴⁹

It is less plain how commonly the term *algaza* was used in Iberian Romance languages in the late medieval period, though it seems to have been little utilised in the period after the unification and nationalization of Spain and Portugal from the fifteenth century onwards, as revealed in this ngram (showing Spanish-language instances of the term from the Google Books corpus from 1500-2000)⁵⁰:

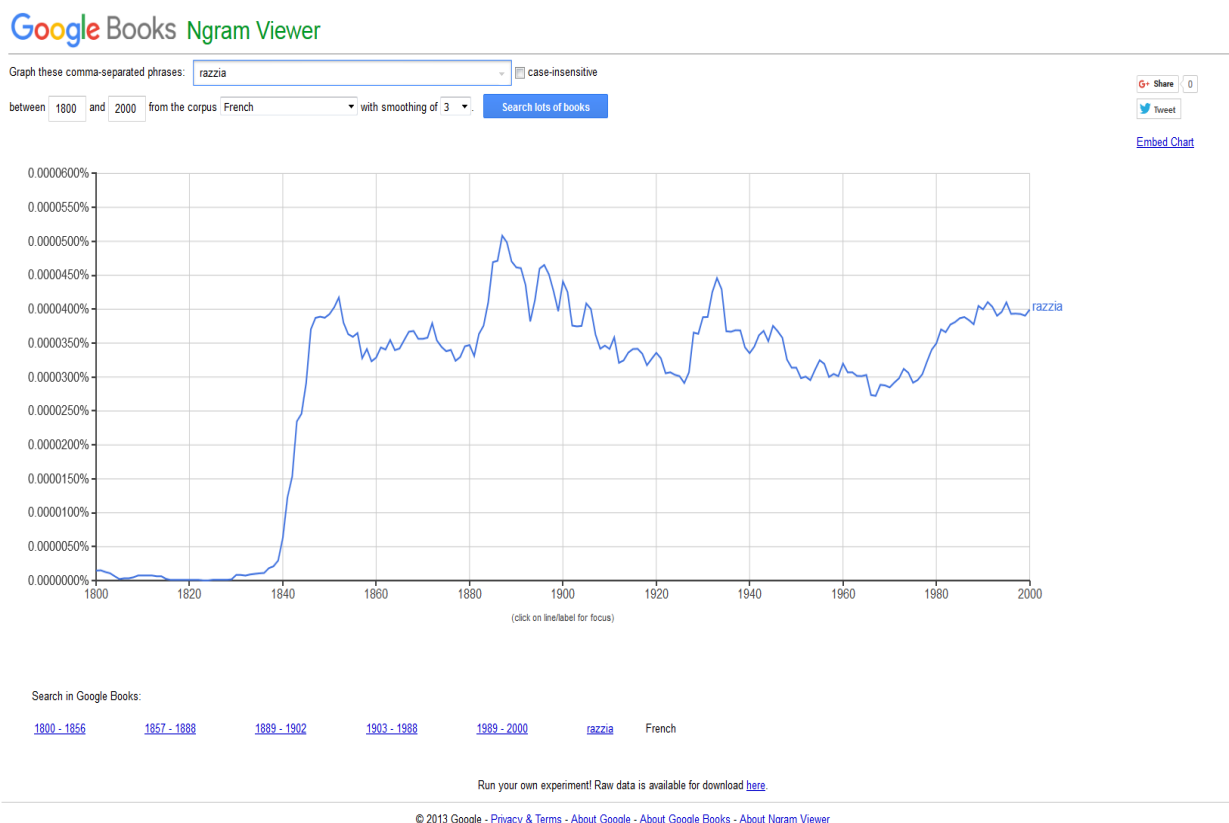


The apparent early-eighteenth-century spike in usage is in fact chiefly made up of misidentifications and proper names, though the term ‘algazara’ was used to describe decapitatory violence by the medical author Diego de Torres Villaroel in 1736 in a description of the severing of ears (a trope much repeated in French instances of ‘razzias’, both as an idea and an imitated practice).⁵¹

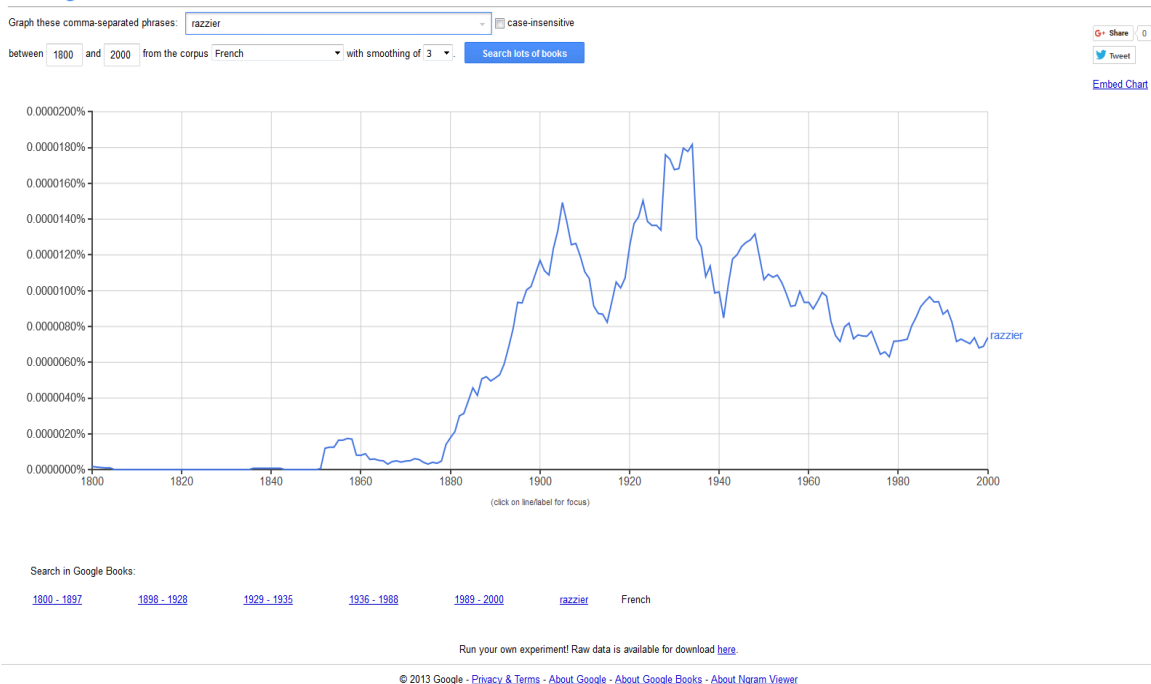
By the nineteenth century, it seemed that the term ‘algazara’ had transcended any connection with violence itself and, as the etymologist Don Pedro Maria de Olive remarked, it had become an ‘innocent’ term’, used figuratively to describe the excitement of the bullring or a sale in shops.⁵² Its meaning still encompassed armed assaults⁵³, but metaphorical forms, such as those deployed in religious works⁵⁴ or accounts of discontented theatre audiences⁵⁵, predominated as the term tended to be synonymous with “hubbub” or “uproar”.

This confusion of the two terms in Castilian may explain why nineteenth-century, neologic Iberian forms of the ‘ghazwa’ do not derive from the Arabic original or the Arabised Iberian terms ‘algaza’ or ‘algazara’, but from the French ‘razzia’. Indeed, Castilian followed the pattern of other major European languages – such as English, German and Italian – in adopting a version of the French razzia, soon after the Arabic original had made its way into French. In the case of non-Romance languages such borrowing can be explained by necessity, yet the fact that Castilian and other Iberian romance users felt the need to borrow a neologism, rather than using long-established indigenised terms, also tells us something about the kind of linguistic need that must have existed in those languages. The ‘razzia’ must in some important sense have not been the ‘algaza’ and, as we will see, there is a strong case for arguing that it was the special levels of retributive violence which were associated with the new French term which could not be accommodated by the ordered and limited sense of raiding connoted by ‘algaza’.

Current scholarship judges that the French form of *razzia* first appeared in either 1840⁵⁶ or 1841⁵⁷, and that it ‘rapidly passed into common usage’.⁵⁸ This seems to be confirmed by an ngram⁵⁹ which shows a clear spike beginning in 1840 (earlier claimed references are erroneous and based on mis-attributions):



The French verb ‘*razzier*’ took rather longer to gain currency, seemingly being used only sporadically in published texts before 1880⁶⁰ (reflecting the general tendency for French to borrow almost no verb forms from Arabic, and none from Berber languages⁶¹):



While both words were primarily used in speaking of Algeria, from as early as 1848 they were also employed in descriptions of violence in France and Europe⁶², though there were discrepancies in usage at this early moment in the manner in which the foreignness of the term was sometimes highlighted by the use of italics, yet not at other times.⁶³ The same was also true of other European languages: English newspapers, for instance, italicised and stressed the foreignness of the word on some occasions throughout the 1840s.⁶⁴

Nineteenth-century dictionaries and etymologies were united in their view that the *razzia* connoted a ‘military incursion’⁶⁵, borrowed by soldiers from the Algerian use of the classical Arabic term.⁶⁶ This consensus continued into the twentieth century, when the sense of ransacking, raiding and pillaging predominated in accounts of the term and its migration into French.⁶⁷ While studies of loanwords moving from Arabic to French in Algeria are scant, it is helpful that comparable studies of linguistic borrowing exist with regard to Morocco and Tunisia. Lahcen Amargui, for example, poses the pertinent questions: ‘why did local forms of French borrow words from Moroccan Arabic? [...] How was a language, such as Moroccan

Arabic, able to supply words to a dominant language, in spite of its dominated status?’⁶⁸ The answer, according to Amargui, was the demonstrable ‘linguistic need’ to be able to ‘describe the specific realities of the Moroccan milieu; realities which were hard to express in metropolitan French.’⁶⁹ Driss Gaadi concurred with this position, contending that the need to be able to describe local realities explains borrowing from Arabic to French in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.⁷⁰

In the case of the *razzia* in mid-nineteenth-century Algeria, however, was it the case that French soldiers really did need a new term to describe their raiding in the Maghreb? Military language, after all, already included a wide range of terms to describe different forms of assaults: ‘*attaque*’, ‘*descente*’, and ‘*rafle*’, to take but three; all of which had been deployed in the period of Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars in and outside France.

Naming the unnamed

Could it have been the case that the *razzia*’s emergence into French in the 1840s fulfilled a need in the sense that it named something which had previously lain unnamed? And that this act of naming allowed for the crystallization, theorization and extension of a set of practices which had existed in more inchoate forms before the invasion of Algeria? Such assertions need not preclude the revolutionary qualities of *razzias* in Algeria, but they situate such violence within existing language games.

The massacre, Philip G. Dwyer, has written, became a conventional tool of warring for French armies from the late eighteenth century onwards, particularly in the period from the Revolutionary wars of the 1790s.⁷¹ The ideology of the civilizational qualities of exterminatory warring emerged in the Napoleonic period, marrying a progressive belief in the

eventual gains which would come to transformed societies with a form of excusing atrocious behaviour in the present.⁷² The laboratories for the implementation of this belief system were primarily colonial.

If one looked, for instance, at the practice of war on the Iberia peninsula, 1808-14 C.E., Goya's accounts of the horrific systematization of massacre, pillage, rape and collective punishment lie extremely close to the cultural world of Algeria in the 1840s. Yet, on the part of both actors and those acted upon, there was no word which labelled such violence. Curiously, of course, the *algaza* could have moved into French, though this does not appear to have happened.

Key tropes of the *razzia* were established well before 1830, including the French army's sacking of foodstuffs to sustain large armies which had been strategically under-provisioned by a military-political class in Paris. This much was clear from the memoirs of generals such as Soult, who, like many of the architects of the Algerian strategy, had directed warring in Spain and Portugal (Maréchal Soult, later Duc de Dalmatie, would serve as Minister of War and/or Prime Minister for almost all of the period 1830-47, making him by far the most important political and military designer of the Conquest of Algeria). As Lenoble wrote of Soult's campaigning in Portugal in 1809:

When the inhabitants fled, they escaped our bayonets, whilst across the countryside, they fled in fear and to save their foodstuffs [...] from an army whose reputation of theft and forced labour preceded it.⁷³

When such populations defended themselves against the invading forces, they were invariably accused of having exacted unjust revenge against the French, as in the case of the 'treacherous' killing of General Foy, who was 'ignominiously massacred'.⁷⁴ Claims would often then be made that in spite of the (civilian) populations having provided the motive for

the army to impose ‘the horrors of war’ upon them, they were instead treated in a humanitarian fashion, demonstrating the elevated civility and ethics of French warring. The truth of such claims was often called into question by concomitant accounts of the ‘inhabitants’ of other villages being ‘punished’ and ‘examples being made’ in the burning of settlements such as that of Castro-de-Caldelas.⁷⁵ Notorious massacres, such as those at Leyria, Evora and Guarda, were understandably described in harsher terms by British generals, such as John T. Jones:

At the former place [Evora] the means of defence were organized by general Leite, with a body of Spanish troops, and consequently the resistance was regular warfare, rather than a popular commotion; notwithstanding which, Loison on its capture on the 29th of July, delivered it over to pillage, rather encouraging than repressing the atrocities of the soldiery. Those spared, still shudder whilst they relate the deliberate and sportive cruelty with which for a whole day, that unrestrained licentiousness prevailed, multitudes of women and children, but, above all, priests, were drawn from their places of refuge, and either ill-treated or destroyed. Credible witnesses assert that several thousand individuals were killed or maimed during the massacre. At Guarda twelve hundred dead were numbered on the ground. Of the excesses at Atalya, another scene of Loison’s exploits, the particulars are unknown; as the inhabitants being few, it is understood that mercy was extended to none to perpetuate the incidents.⁷⁶

As we shall see, this notion of futurity and the communicative, pedagogic, quality of the massacre – the ‘perpetuation of the incidents’ – would become integral to the idea of the razzia, for, as Jones writes, it was the idea that the afterlife of a raid should echo towards the future which was critical in conceptualising such forms of assault. This in itself was predicated on what might be called a form of anticipatory ethics, such that the forms of moral

twisting required to claim that brutal behaviour could be seen to be good was explained by a higher logic, clear only to adepts, in which the goodness pregnant even in acts of harm, would ultimately become clear.

The secret history of the razzia

Such debates on the morality of acts of war lay central to discussions of the razzia in the early Algerian colony which took place well before the first published instances of the term in French. The first such reports in military documents generally identified the razzia as a form of local culture – such as that launched by the bey of Constantine against a rival tribe in August 1833⁷⁷ – though as early as October of that same year, a French general (Schauenbourg) was reported to have undertaken a razzia against a hostile portion of the El Krachna tribe.⁷⁸

Such borrowing was disdained by a portion of the military-political class which administered Algeria in the late 1830s, such as Valée, Governor General from 1837-40. In 1838, he had announced that he wished to abolish the practice of the razzia⁷⁹ and in November 1840 his correspondence had revealed the contours of the moral debate which was in train between legalists, such as himself, who believed that the imitation of indigenous barbarity was a poor advertisement for French civility, and realists, who countered that forms of violence appropriate to an Algerian environment needed to be adopted. He wrote:

We must accept Algeria warts and all. The effects of the climate have led to the hospitalisation of a good part of the army, necessitating the construction of military buildings, the despatch of beds for the soldiers and abundant foodstuffs [...] of good quality, which are the only means of ameliorating this situation. [...] I am far from

convinced that this war can be concluded quickly – one cannot submit a people in a matter of days – so [my] system has much greater merits than that of treks and aimless razzias [‘razzias sans but’].⁸⁰

Realists, led by Maréchal Soult and Maréchal Bugeaud (Governor General from 1841-47) instead countered that the razzia ‘was the true form of war which one must enjoin upon the Arabs’ (‘voilà la véritable guerre qu’il faut faire aux Arabes’), blending pragmatism and idealism in a manner which had arguably been learned in the campaigns of submission of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.⁸¹ This was hard-headed in the sense that the cost of the conquest of Algeria had far exceeded initial estimates, and owing to domestic resentment at such spending, it was necessary to use razzias as a means of expediently completing the conquest. Yet the razzia was also ideological in that it expressed a set of views about ‘native’ beliefs, the forms of language which ‘indigènes’ might understand, the revolutionary qualities of particular forms of violence, and the romantic ideal of what a conquered nation might become.

Critically, these debates took place in the private correspondence, as well as public pronouncements, of French military and political elites in Paris and Algiers, before the term ‘razzia’ was adjudged to have moved into French from the demotic talk of ordinary soldiers in Africa (who left relatively few documentary records it ought to be noted). It therefore seems reasonable to question whether the ‘razzia’ really was a subaltern response to the Algerian theatre of war, or a theory of conflict which emanated from metropolitan elites.⁸²

The fact that both proponents and opponents of the razzia described it as a *system* of war from the early 1840s onwards is suggestive of its governmentality and the degree to which the dissemination of the motif and the idea was not organic in the sense that it reflected the spread of language in the field, but the imposition of language *upon* that military arena. Thus,

in November 1841, Bugeaud charged General Changarnier with organising a ‘system’ of razzias and ambushes from Blida⁸³, whilst English newspapers used the term as a means of critiquing the character of French imperialism:

The French are beginning to reap the fruit of their nefarious razzia system in Algiers. They have taught the Arabs a lesson in retaliation of which, notwithstanding their proverbial genius for pillage, they had no conception and which it remained for them to learn from the civilization of European invaders.⁸⁴

This routine commentary from a provincial English newspaper in 1842 also reveals the ways in which it was instinctively understood that the severity of French razzias went well beyond the brigandage of Arabs; that it was a form of extreme violence doled out to Algerians as a form of civilizational lesson in power and appropriation. French belief in the instructive power of the razzia was equally plain in the private correspondence of figures such as Soult, for, writing of a razzia in the Erdough region, he noted that ‘the terrible lesson that they [the tribes] received has left them aware that their lives lie at our moral discretion’.⁸⁵

Leaving aside, then, the changing character of the effects of French razzias upon their enemies in the early colony, it is quite clear that the sociolinguistic character of the razzia changed markedly over a short period of time. Returning to linguistic classification, the razzia was a form of *loanshift* in the very earliest days of the Conquest, in that an attempt was made at a ‘complete substitution of native morphemes’, which was arguably a form of *importation*, rather than *substitution*, in the sense that the practices of native (Arabic) speakers were described such that they might accept the use of the term as their own.⁸⁶ The word both sounded like the original and aped what were understood to be its defining characteristics.

This moment of loanshifting, however, lasted only from 1830 until 1838 at the latest. By then, the *razzia* was morphing into a *loan synonym* – in that there was ‘a certain amount of semantic overlapping between the old and new meanings [...] which only [added] a new shade of meaning to the native morpheme’ – but a contest over meaning was underway amongst French adopters of the term, with both proponents and opponents of the use of the *razzia* keen to stress its radical and exterminatory qualities, moving it further and further away from its original form. By 1840 this process of *semantic displacement* – ‘in which native terms are applied to novel cultural phenomena that are roughly similar to something in the old culture’ – was almost complete, for the French *razzia* expressed forms of violence which were quite new in the Maghreb, though the claim remained that they were founded on indigenous archetypes.

Whether one can speak of a final phase of *semantic confusion* – ‘in which native distinctions are obliterated through the influence of partial interlingual synonymy’ – depends partly on the audience for the term. Many Frenchmen sincerely believed that such distinctions were not obliterated, but for the Algerian addressees of imperial violence, ‘confusion’ well describes the state of groups who had been used to the application of certain forms of colonial pressure by the Ottomans (such as military parties being sent to the mountains to gather taxes), but who were bewildered by the determination of their new overlords to deploy annihilatory violence as a first political move in encounters with tribes who were described as ‘recalcitrant’.

French writers in the nineteenth century were determined to see their countrymen’s *razzias* as forms of continuity with pre-existing cultural norms, yet indigenous texts tell a quite different story. In his *Grand Dictionnaire* Larousse claimed that ‘Razzias have been used from the time of the Turks; pillaging tribes who refused to pay taxes and forcing them to submit [...] We imitated the Turks’⁸⁷, yet writers such as Hamdan Khodja and Ahmed, Bey of

Constantine, stress the novel horrors of modern imperial violence. Cataloguing such crimes, Ahmed Bey wrote that ‘these are forms of injustice which are alien to histories of oppression here.’⁸⁸

Forms of political control and subjugation had of course existed in north Africa as they do in all cultures, but the revolutionary quality of the French *razzia* was the combined speed of its implementation and its unmooring from its semantic roots such that it rapidly came to embody new practices and cultures of violence. Returning to linguistics, Haugen’s notion that the loanword might connote theft rather than borrowing seems peculiarly apt in this case. Haugen could not imagine how lexical borrowing could entail the owner of a word being deprived of her goods by its borrower, yet this was the consequence of the unmooring of the *razzia* from its original meaning and its reimagination as a codification of a new system of political violence. Such praxes were not invented in Algeria, for they had been foreshadowed in the Revolutionary conquests, where they had lain curiously unnamed.

This linguistic need was now fulfilled by the *razzia* with remarkable rapidity, such that by the early 1840s French, other European and Algerian audiences were comfortable in using the *razzia* as a description of project of eliminatory violence designed to secure complete control of a land and its people. This linguistic process had taken less than a decade, overturning more than a millennia of semantic development from the root GH-Z-W in which clear family resemblances were apparent in the limited set of extensions of the root term across a vast geographical area.

For the French architects of the conquest and construction of Algeria, the *razzia* became a cipher and a word imbued with magical properties. As one general wrote, ‘the *razzia* is the only means at our disposal’, yet this strategic and moral investment also served to cloak the rapid changes in the acts which were connoted by the *razzia*.⁸⁹ In 1838, the *razzia* might

describe a retaliatory raid against an intransigent foe, often in which huge quantities of goods, livestock and perhaps hostages were taken, yet by 1842 the razzia was as likely to be a raid in which most of the civilian population of a rebellious tribe were slaughtered, with survivors left only to testify to others of the horrors the French were willing to impose and their determination to rule for all time.

Whereas in 1838, French razzias were primarily directed towards the seizure of material goods which would aid their own under-provisioned army, by 1842 many razzias had as their goal the destruction of crops, stores of grain and orchards, so as to economically and socially capture those Algerians who remained on the land. Such realities at this distinct moment were quite familiar from other settler colonies, such as Australia, New Zealand and America, though academic literatures on Algeria have been curiously unwilling to accept such facts or make such comparisons.⁹⁰ Indeed, in a form of symbolic violence, Algerians themselves tend to lie as absent from such texts as they were absented from the world in the early decades of the colony.

For the French in that initial state, the razzia became totemic. Did the word make the deed? Perhaps not, but logos cannot be separated from praxis, for it was the word which systematised and encultured a varied and changing set of behaviours, unifying and conceptualising innovative breaks from the term in its original language and its rapid mutations in French. The French language had arguably needed such a word for some time, for the revolutionary conquests had lacked a term which encapsulated the practices and ethos of punitive, massacring raids.⁹¹

The neologic form of the razzia represented a new moment in imperial cultural borrowing, which linguists have generally perceived to be uninteresting because of the lack of prestige of the loanwords involved. Yet, if anything, such lexical movement should be seen to be even

more intriguing than the classical medieval movement of advanced Arab culture into European society through lexical borrowing. As Attewell and other historians of colonialism in the eighteenth century have observed, as late as that moment, Europeans were instinctively open to the idea that they might borrow superior concepts, ideas and knowledge from the colonised world, yet by the 1830s, the *razzia* represented a new form of malignant appropriation, in which a form of perverse mirroring would allow Europeans to reflect forms of incivility and barbarism onto the body politic with the incorporation of a new generation of loanwords into European languages.⁹² It was no accident that Hamdan Khodja entitled his 1833 critique of the brute realities of imperialism in Algeria, *The Mirror*, pointing to the false mimesis of an invasion predicated on civilization, yet grounded in terror, and hinting at the role in which European cultural mirrors played in laying the structural ground for such work.

Mare nostrum, again

‘The Mediterranean had long been a Roman lake; it now [in the late medieval period] became, for the most part, a Moslem lake’, Pirenne famously wrote, adding that ‘Mediterranean unity was shattered’.⁹³ Retaining a clear focus on the linguistic encounter of the French and Algerians in the 1830s and ‘40s, how might the story of the *razzia* intersect with other histories of language at this moment, critical as it was in the waning of the Mediterranean as a ‘Moslem lake’? Was the *razzia* part of a larger story of language and power in which we might say that Mediterranean unity *was* finally shattered?

In the same year that France invaded Algeria, an extraordinary, anonymously-written, book was published in Marseille: the *Dictionnaire de la langue franque ou petit mauresque*.⁹⁴ This was a linguistic study with a practical purpose for it announced that its goals was to ‘facilitate communication between the French and the inhabitants of the country in which they would be

fighting'.⁹⁵ It included sections on everyday Arabic – on subjects such as numbers, metals and foodstuffs – but, as its title revealed, it was a guide to the 'langue franque' or 'petit mauresque', that Mediterranean creole which had existed for centuries – centred on the trading ports of the Maghreb, but also including the coastal towns of Spain, Malta, France, Italy, Greece and Turkey. The *lingua franca*, as it was also known, or the *sabir* [from the Catalan for 'knowledge'], or *Franco*, amalgamated terms from across the languages of the sea in the name of effecting communication amongst those who traded and worked across the Mediterranean. It was primarily an oral language, and the author of the *Dictionnaire* provided sections of conversational phrases on themes such as compliments, questions, time and the weather. He also provided expressions which might be of use 'in asking what's new' [Pour demander ce qu'il y a de nouveau]:

Il fait chaud.	fazir caldo.
Il fait froid.	fazir frédo.
Il fait du vent.	fazir vento.
Il pleut.	casar agoua.
Il fait une chaleur étouffante.	fazir caldo mouchou.

N^o 8.

Pour Demander ce qu'il y a de Nouveau.

Que dit-on de nouveau?	qué nouova?
Je n'ai rien entendu.	mi non sentito nada.
Que dit-on dans la ville?	qué hablar in chità?
On dit que nous avons la guerre.	genti hablar tenir gouerra.
La guerre, avec quelle nation?	Gouerra, con qué natzion?
Avec les Français.	con Francis.
Que peuvent faire les Français contre Alger?	qué poudir counchar il Francis contra di Algeri?
Par mer rien, mais par terre ils sont redoutables.	per marénada, ma per terra il Francis star mouchou forti.
Si les Français débarquent Alger est perdu.	se il Francis sbarkar, Algieri star perso.
Je pense que les Algériens ne se batront pas.	mi pensar l'Algérino non combatir.
Le Pacha sera donc obligé de demander la paix.	dounqué bisogno il Bacha quérir paché.
Oui, s'il ne veut périr.	si, sé non quérir morir.
S'il veut la paix les Turcs feront tapage.	se quérir paché l'Yoldach fazir gribouila.
Pour quoi ne fait-on pas la paix?	perqué non counchar paché?
Parce que le Pacha est en-tété.	perqué il Bacha tenir fantét-zia.

Nous faisons suivre ces Dialogues de la manière de compter et de quelques mots arabes.

Manière de Compter en Arabe.

FRANÇAIS:	ARABE.
Un.	ouad.
Deux.	tenin.
Trois.	teléta.
Quatre.	arba.
Cinq.	kramsa.
Six.	seta.
Sept.	seba.
Huit.	teménia.
Neuf.	teça.
Dix.	achera.
Onze.	adach.
Douze.	tenach.
Treize.	telétach.
Quatorze.	arbatach.
Quinze.	kamtach.
Seize.	setach.
Dix-sept.	sebatach.
Dix-huit.	tegmentach.
Dix-neuf.	teçatach.
Vingt.	acherin.
Vingt-un.	ouad ou acherin.
Vingt-deux.	tenin ou acherin.
Vingt-trois.	teléta ou acherin.
Vingt-quatre.	arba ou archerin.
Vingt-cinq.	kramsa ou acherin.
Vingt-six.	seta ou acherin.
Vingt-sept.	seba ou acherin.
Vingt-huit.	teménia ou acherin.
Vingt-neuf.	teça ou acherin.
Trente.	teletin.

As is made clear, though, this was a guide to offering answers rather than posing questions, for it described a preordained reality in advance of the Conquest. 'Si les Français débarquent Alger est perdu': if the French disembark, Algiers will fall. 'Le Pacha sera donc obligé de demander la paix. Oui s'il ne veut périr.': the Pacha will be obliged to make peace, if he wishes to live.

This is evidently not dialogue as a form of conversation, but a form of exchange analogous to, and predictive of, loanwords such as the razzia. The conversational self possesses all power, including the capacity to make time and history, and the language of his interlocutor

serves only as a vehicle for those without agency to comprehend that which will happen to them.

The dialogic world of the Mediterranean which had developed a hybrid form of speech which incorporated words and grammar from across national borders and peoples was now 'shattered', to use Pirenne's term, and the Muslims rulers of the lake who had incubated a culture in which creoles developed now lost control of their sea (which was never, of course, their sea, for they always knew it to be manifold). What was clearer still was that the imperial project of knowledge and power, which began tentatively in Egypt, found deep footholds in Algeria, such that Europeans could know the Mediterranean as *mare nostrum*, again.

Language lay at the frontline of modern European imperialism's cultural assault, as shown by the French Conquest of Algeria. For Damila Saadi-Mokrane, this was 'The Algerian Linguicide', in which, 'For the French colonizer, it was necessary to cut to the quick the Arabic and Islamic roots of a conquered land in order to crush its core values, which offered a refuge and thus a source of resistance.'⁹⁶ Writing on the period after 1870, for Ambroise Quéffelec, language lay at the very heart of the implementation of colonial rule, for:

In order to sustain a military conquest which was far from easy and to realise the economic and political goals of the colonial ideologues of the Third Republic, the colonizers attempted to remove the very foundations of Arab life through the practice of an intensive war against Arab culture and languages.⁹⁷

Such insights come not only from critical literatures, but also from the avowed strategies of early colonists, such as the Duc de Rovigo, Governor General 1832-33, who wrote that, 'I regard the spread of education and our language as being the most effective means of spreading our domination in this country.'⁹⁸

Such trends were also apparent elsewhere in the Mediterranean, for at this exact moment ‘western’ Greeks were also breaking away from ‘eastern’ Turks, purifying their language along nationalistic lines as a part of this project.⁹⁹ It was also the case that there was a rising interest in European languages in the Islamic world¹⁰⁰ and that as military academies and other emblems of western modernization opened in the capitals of the Islamic world, the prestige of such languages was enhanced still further.¹⁰¹

And yet, however real were such trends, they tend to raise even more questions about the *razzia*, for how could it be the case that at a time of linguistic conquest and the growing prestige of European languages in the Islamic world, that terms such as the *razzia* should migrate into French? The answer would seem to be that as a loanword the *razzia* also represented a shift from the *langue franque* to what Perego calls ‘pseudo-sabir’¹⁰²; from organic forms of mixed languages in the Mediterranean to a new politics of language which accompanied and was constitutive of the making of empire and modern states on both littorals of the Mediterranean.¹⁰³

In speaking of the *langue franque*, it is important to stress that although it was an ‘innocent’ language, it too was imbricated in patterns of geography and power, for at times it was as much the means of communication between masters and slaves as it was traders dealing with their equals (though, intriguingly, a variant of the form emanated from the Romance terms learned by Maghrebi captives in Iberia¹⁰⁴). Nonetheless, trade and free movement across the sea was its lifeblood.¹⁰⁵ In around 1600 C.E., Haedo identified five communities who used the *langue franque* as common ground – Turks, renegade Christians, Christian captives, Jews, and “*moros*” – which later linguists have subdivided further to include ‘Turks, Arabs, Berbers, Western Europeans, whether renegades or captives, of all nationalities (Spaniards, Portuguese, Frenchmen, Italians, Catalans, Englishmen, Provençaux), as well as the ubiquitous Greeks, Armenians, and Jews.¹⁰⁶ As Haedo wrote, ‘This *langue franque* is so

ubiquitous that there are no houses where it is not spoken. There are neither Turks nor Moors, old or young, man or woman, right down to children, who do not speak it some extent, and most speak it very well.’¹⁰⁷

Though some linguists would seek to trace the origins of the *langue franque* to the ancient world¹⁰⁸, most are agreed that it was in existence from around 1300 C.E until the nineteenth century (it is, though, intriguing to think of the Latinate/Roman influences on both the *langue franque* and forms of Arabic and Berber languages in the Maghreb¹⁰⁹). Dakhliia notes that the rise of the *langue franque* coincided with hostility and tension in the Mediterranean between Europeans and Muslims, but that:

The *lingua franca*, as a separate language and a language of contact with the other, reflected, above all else, a form of no *man’s land* of communication, a liminal space for a language community. It decoupled the ideas of identity and language, aspiring neither to “civilisation”, not to prestige.¹¹⁰

For Dakhliia, the classical *sabir* raises the question as to whether one could conceive of the idea of a ‘neutral language’, with the implication that this was as close as humans have come to such a form.¹¹¹

The contrast with the development of the pseudo-*sabir* at the end of the nineteenth-century could not have been more revealing as to the shifting relations of power and language in the western Mediterranean.¹¹² The *lingua franca* became disdained in a binarised linguistic world in which proficiency in languages of prestige and power (such as French) was contrasted with the imperfect *métissage* of *sabirs*. As Perego remarked, the *langue franque* ‘disappeared after an agonising struggle of fifty years, leaving its nomenclature of “*sabir*” to a quite different linguistic reality.’¹¹³ These five decades, from 1830 to the 1880s, of course coincided with

the French project of linguistic conquest in Algeria and the disappearance of the *langue franque* marked the ultimate success of that project.

The pseudo-sabir was a pidgin rather than a creole; a form of poorly spoken French used by Arabs, Berbers, and those Maltese, Italians, Spaniards and Greeks who had come to Algeria to “become French”.¹¹⁴ As such, it incorporated some terms from Arabic, but lost most of the Spanish, Italian, Maltese, Portuguese, Catalan, Greek and Turkish diversity of the *langue franque*. The disdain which colonial elites felt for such talk at the end of the linguistic conquest of Algeria was apparent in Faidherbe’s remarks of 1884 that ‘what is curious is the fact that in using such language, the French soldier convinces himself that he is speaking Arabic and the Arab persuades himself that he is speaking French’¹¹⁵, combining elite disdain for both *indigènes* and the footsoldiers of empire.

Conclusion

By 1880, therefore, there was a new Mediterranean¹¹⁶ in which French power had substantially remade reality on both the northern and southern littorals of the sea. It seems curious that scholars have not been interested in the imperial loanshifts which accompanied this transformation, and that the low status and *argotique* qualities of the new *langue franque* have seemed less intriguing than the migration of prestigious terms from Arab high culture into medieval European languages. This case study of the *razzia* has tried to show the merit in undertaking such work, arguing that it is only through the undertaking of detailed cross-linguistic etymologies across time that we might come to ask why, for instance, modern French borrowed the notion of the ‘*razzia*’ from the Arabic ‘*ghazwā*’ than from Romance forms of the ‘*algazara*’. This in itself raises important questions about the notions of motivation and significance in linguistic change, for most studies of loanshifts from Arabic

into European languages tend to be uninterested in the historical importance of such movement, as well as being predicated on the assumption that the movement of words across languages is in some sense a natural process. It is arguable that the contextual and political dimensions of sociolinguistics ought to have more play in such work in (imperial) historical linguistics.

This article has also suggested that the lexical violence of imperial culture pertains not simply to the relationship between cultural texts and political power (after Said), but to the linguistic encounter in empire between colonists as well as between the coloniser and the colonised. The linguistic encounter instantiated the violence of empire on the ground and in the case of the *razzia* it is plain that this process began not with the talk of soldiers in far-off deserts and mountains, but in the writings, directives and reports of political and military elites in Paris and Algiers.

It is a trap to believe that language or linguistic change must be natural, for they are features of human culture as amenable to forensic analysis as any other part of life; and it is arguably the illusion of linguistic evolution which demands interrogation, for change in language possesses the ability to unmoor and remake reality at great speed, as we have seen in the story of the *razzia*. For Algerians, there was nothing deadlier than the sign, for rather than the French formulating an eliminatory masterplan, the borrowing and perversion of language allowed for a widescale annihilatory project which was as dispersed as the spread of words across a polity (allowing for *razzias* to be relentlessly described as exceptional, when they were in fact systematic).

This denial of the programmatic character of the *razzia* was also connected with the complex and curious nature of the development of the so-called ‘colonial mind’¹¹⁷ and the moral and cultural forms of ambivalence which accompanied the idea of reprising features of primitive

indigenous culture in such a manner that the European could momentarily, and reluctantly, allow themselves to be possessed.¹¹⁸ In this respect, the Algerian theatre was a critical stage in the broader story of modern empire, and it seems curious that the Conquest of Algeria should be so overlooked in the work of scholars such as Said and Foucault, for whom the study of the relationship between language and power in the nineteenth century was critical. In Said's case this is doubly surprising for he argued that the modern imperial age began with the arrival of Napoleon in Egypt, yet he ignored the manner in which the French reacted to that historic failure to mount the invasion and incorporation of Algeria three decades later. The violent subjugation of Algeria had important genealogical roots in the savage pairing of massacre and high culture, knowledge and power, in Egypt, but it arguably developed more durable and influential forms of imperial rule than were essayed in 1798-1801.

Such templates are critical in terms of understanding the manner in which forms of violence were structured into life in empire such that they had the capacity outlast the end of formal imperial control; issues greatly debated in postcolonial Algeria and states such as Syria.¹¹⁹ This much is made plain in language if we look at the manner in which the term 'razzia' is used in French in contemporary Algeria and the warped manner in which it has been gifted back to the originators of the term. This is as true of the talk of novels (here Yasmina Khadra's 1999 *A quoi rêvent les loups?*):

My son was deeply pious. He would never touch the women who were captured on razzias, for he had faith.¹²⁰

As it is of reportage (from the French-language Algerian newspaper *El Watan*, also from 1999, on the Civil War):

In terms of the murders, he claimed that he was only responsible for the logistics of transporting the executioners, though he also, smilingly acknowledged that he had “visited” villages for the purpose of undertaking razzias.¹²¹

The razzia of the Algerian ‘black decade’ of the 1990s was therefore precisely that which had been remade and reimagined by the French in the late 1830s and ‘40s. The allusive nature of the effects of such ‘visits’ upon the inhabitants of villages mirrored the tone adopted by the ideologues and practitioners of imperial violence, while the murderous consequences of such raiding upon civilian populations were quite the same in the late twentieth century as they had been in the early nineteenth century. The razzia was a form of loanword which borrowed malignly rather than innocently, and as it then polluted indigenous modes of speech in Algerian French and Arabic, it was radically unmoored from its own linguistic and cultural roots; attached instead to the colonisation of language.

¹ I should like to thank the following for the counsel they or their work offered in composing this piece: Ilan Pappé, Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison, Ann Thomson, Steve Nutt, Ann Laura Stoler, Michael Taussig, Robert Young, Hosni Kitouni, Jonathan Wrytzen, Dionisius Agius, Steven Hutchinson, Adam Watt, Zoe Boughton, Aidan Coveney, and Gavin Murray-Miller.

Interested readers may also wish to consult my book *A History of Violence in the Early Algerian Colony* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) and ‘Genocide in nineteenth-century Algeria’, *Journal of Genocide Studies*, 15-1 (2013), pp.69-88.

² Perhaps the best exploration of such connections can be found in: Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxiety and Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

³ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1979), p.80.

⁴ See: Robert J.C. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), p.395.

⁵ Recognising that Said saw himself as the initiator of an intellectual project, rather than its end point. This particular lacuna has been developed in a loyal sense by Joseph Massad in *Desiring Arabs* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007) and *Islam in Liberalism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015).

⁶ Karlis Racevskis, ‘Edward Said and Michel Foucault: Affinities and Dissonances’, *Research in African Literatures* 36-3 (2005), pp. 83-97 (84-85).

⁷ Racevskis, ‘Edward Said’, 85. And: Edward Said, *The World, the Text and the Critic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

⁸ Racevskis, ‘Edward Said’, p.92.

⁹ Racevskis, ‘Edward Said’, p.93.

¹⁰ Young, *Postcolonialism*, p.394.

¹¹ Young, *Postcolonialism*, pp.399, 408-10.

¹² See Laurent Dubreuil's important *Empire of Language: Towards a Critique of (Post) Colonial Expression* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), especially p.107, as well as Roel Frakking's forthcoming work on Dutch counter-insurgency in Indonesia.

¹³ As Shula Marks remarks, 'In our recent concern with discourses and texts, we may be in danger of forgetting that there is another history of actual morbidity and mortality, difficult as these may be to determine especially – but not uniquely – in colonial situations.' 'What is Colonial about Colonial Medicine? And What has Happened to Imperialism and Health?', *Social History of Medicine*, 10-2 (1997), pp.205-19 (207).

¹⁴ Delaney, D., 'Semantic Ecology and Lexical Violence: Nature at the Limits of Law', *Law Text Culture*, 5, 2000.

¹⁵ In developing this argument, I have been hugely helped by the insights of Jeffrey Guhin and Jonathan Wrytzen's brilliant essay on Violence, Knowledge and Said: 'The Violences of Knowledge: Edward Said, Sociology and Post-Oriental Reflexivity', *Postcolonial Sociology, Political Power and Social Theory* 24 (2013), pp.231-62.

¹⁶ Hilary Wise, *The Vocabulary of Modern French: Origins, Structure and Function* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp.72-75. See also, Alfred Ewert, *The French Language* (1943), pp.296-97 and Albert Dauzat, *Précis d'histoire de la langue et du vocabulaire français* (Paris: Larousse, 1949), pp.136-37.

¹⁷ Wise, *The Vocabulary*, p.207.

¹⁸ See general works such as: Rebecca Posner, *Linguistic Change in French* (Oxford: OUP, 1997); Jacques Chaurand, *Introduction à l'histoire du vocabulaire français* (1977); Edmond Huguet, *L'évolution du sens des mots depuis le XVIe siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 1967); Henriette Walter and Gerard Walter, *Dictionnaire des mots d'origine étrangère* (Paris: Larousse,

2009); M. Girard and C. Morieux, 'La langue française en algérie', in A. Valdman (ed), *Le français hors de france*, 1979; S. Guemriche, *Dictionnaire des mots français d'origine arabe* (Paris: Seuil, 2007); R. Dozy, *Glossaire des mots espagnols et portugais dérivés de l'arabe* (Leiden: Brill, 1869); and Ewert, *The French Language*, p.320.

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¹⁰² Pierre Perego, 'Les sabirs' in André Martinet (ed) *Encyclopédie de la Pléiade: le Langage* (Paris: Pléiade, 1968), 597-607 (604).

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