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On the 23rd of July 2017 our highly respected colleague James Bynon passed away at the age of 91, after a life devoted to the study of Berber languages and cultures.

His training had been in archaeology and cultural anthropology, first under V. G. Childe and then Stuart Piggott at the University of Edinburgh. From an early age he took a special interest in photography and filming.

His first stay in Morocco was in January 1951 where he was immediately fascinated by the Berbers and their culture. As a photographer he was inspired by the book *Le Maroc central* of Robichez. One of his early plans had been to make a documentary film on the Berbers of the Middle Atlas region. With this in view he joined the *Studios des Souissi* in Rabat, a company that made documentary films for the French Protectorate Government, but he soon realized that he could not carry out his plan without first learning the Berber language.

In 1957 James Bynon began to study Berber with Lionel Galand (*École nationale des langues orientales vivantes*, Paris), and Maghrebi Arabic with George S. Colin (Paris, Rabat). He gained his diplomas in Arabic and Berber. In 1961 he was appointed Research Fellow in Arabic and Berber at the *School of Oriental and African Studies* (SOAS), London. Under Galand's supervision he worked on his PhD on the Berber vocabulary of weaving which he defended in 1963 at the *Sorbonne* in Paris. It was in these years that he started filming the Ayt Hdiddu tribe, a well-known Berber tribe living in the regions around Imilchil, Southern Middle Atlas, Morocco.

In 1964 he was given the position of Lecturer at SOAS, first in Arabic and Berber, subsequently in Berber. He remained at SOAS until his retirement in 1990. In his university career he developed into a descriptive linguist with personal interest in the role of language within tribal culture.

James Bynon used his study leave in 1964 to deepen his knowledge of the Ayt Hdiddu, working with native Berber speakers. He worked most intensively with Zayd u Abbu who stayed, as his Berber language assistant, in London over three extended periods, funded by SOAS.

At SOAS James Bynon not only taught Berber but also African Art and Oral Literature, courses that were very well received by the students.

Nineteen years after his retirement, on Friday the 9th of October 2009, I had the pleasure of visiting the Bynons at home in Loughton. I was very warmly received by James and Theodora and was given ample opportunity to see his Berber materials, in fact a huge archive based on more than 30 years of intensive research. From the notes that I had made of my visit I read that I had counted some 50 brown cardboard boxes of A4-format, approximately 8 cm wide, containing Bynon's fieldwork notes, meticulously arranged according to the various stages of their development. The Berber

texts collected during his fieldwork were all digitally stored on two Apple-Macintosh computers. During this visit it became entirely clear to me that James Bynon had managed to collect an impressive wealth of material on the Ayt Hdiddu tribe: folktales, ethnographic texts (descriptions of the daily life and the annual agricultural cycle), songs (for events such as marriage, rainmaking, sheep-shearing, grain-grinding), riddles, proverbs, children's games, etc. A genuine treasure trove from both the cultural as well as the linguistic point of view.

In July 2016, a year before he passed away, James published an impressive work entitled *Berber Prose Texts from the Ayt Hdiddu (Central Morocco), part 1 Transcription*, Köln (Köppe Verlag) 2015 (iii + 537 pages with an accompanying CDRom containing the audio-files of the published texts). With the publication of this book James Bynon did three things at the same time: firstly he provided berberologists with the largest collection of Berber text material from these parts of South Morocco; secondly he gave them a first glimpse of the wealth of the archive that he left behind; thirdly he showed them his scientific capacity to meticulously publish his field work material.

Apart from his impressive archive of texts James showed me, during my visit, a collection of wonderful, high quality photographs of Ayt Hdiddu women of the sixties and seventies, photographs that had been used in an exhibition in London. James also mentioned his slides collection to me, of which I did not see any on the occasion of my visit, due to lack of time.

Of great importance also are James Bynon's audio files of his fieldwork texts. They are stored on reel-to-reel tapes, on cassette-tapes and partly in digital format.

Everyone interested in Berber language and culture hopes that all of James Bynon's archive materials be stored in the best possible way and become available for research in the near future.

As a final point it should be mentioned that James Bynon, in cooperation with his wife Theodora, took an active part in the organisation of some international conferences and in the publication of their proceedings.

With sadness in our hearts we give a final salute to our great colleague James Bynon. May his wife Theodora find the strength to bear the loss of her beloved husband.

May James rest in peace.

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