

## **The Masters' Ritual State of Servitude Remembering the State of Servitude in the Oued Noun Oases (pre-Saharan Morocco)**

Claire Cécile Mitatre<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Université Paris Ouest Nanterre, Laboratoire d'ethnologie et de sociologie comparative, Nanterre, France

claircec@gmail.com

In the Oued Noun oases, to be of servile descent is not an unenviable position. It instead recognizes the dedication and selflessness that characterized the attitudes of slaves against their masters with qualities comparable to that of religious devotion. Reenacting the servile status, if transposed to God, is transfigured into a spiritual state of mind. Each year in August, a ritual ceremony is celebrated on the former human markets where slaves used to be traded and sold. Slave descendants reenact the privileged relationship their ancestors once shared with God. On this occasion, the descendants of the masters are also invited to ritually become slaves to be graced by the same mercy God grants to those who were enslaved.