

The Historical and Intellectual Legacy of the Dean of Algerian Historians, Abu al-Qasim Saadallah (1930-2013)

Prof. Dr. Boughedada Elamir ¹, Dr. Ayada Ali ²

¹ Mohamed Khidr University of Biskra, Algeria

Email: boughedada.elamir@univ-biskra.dz

² Mohamed Khidr University of Biskra, Algeria

Email: ali.ayada@univ-biskra.dz

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Abstract

This study examines the contribution of Abu al-Qasim Saadallah to the development of Algerian historical studies. It analyzes his intellectual trajectory and his diverse scholarly output, including authorship, critical editing, translation, and research on prominent cultural figures. This interest is situated within a historical and intellectual context marked by changes in historical writing in Algeria after independence. It also reflects the growing role of the university in producing historical knowledge, especially with the emergence of a new generation of researchers and the expansion of research into modern and contemporary history.

Saadallah's work formed part of an intellectual project that combined scholarly rigor with a cultural and civilizational perspective. He adopted a multidimensional approach. His historical works sought to build broad narratives, as seen in *Cultural History of Algeria*, *The Algerian National Movement*, *Research and Views on the History of Algeria*, and *Lectures on Modern History*. He also sought to correct prevailing interpretations and to build knowledge based on documentation and multiple approaches. In manuscript studies, he edited and published Algerian texts directly related to social, political, and cultural history. This enlarged the source base available to researchers and created new possibilities for understanding earlier periods and writing a more coherent history.

Saadallah's distinctive contribution is also evident in translation. He translated works from English and other foreign languages into Arabic while taking account of the Algerian cultural context and the intended readership. He sometimes reformulated titles, shortened texts, or added explanatory material for scholarly and intellectual purposes. These choices were linked to the defense of national memory and to limiting the biases of foreign accounts, particularly French ones. His interest in scholars and cultural figures ranged from Islamic reformers to writers, poets, travelers, jurists, and Sufis. This breadth shows the close relationship between history, culture, and thought in his work. His historical project was therefore an intellectual and civilizational enterprise rather than a purely political narrative.

Saadallah's contribution can thus be seen in four major areas. He broadened the scope of history to include culture and intellectual life. He strengthened the use of primary sources through critical editing and publication. He used translation consciously to bridge the gap between foreign scholarship and Arabic

readership. He also helped build a corrective historical knowledge that challenged distortions and biases associated with colonial historiography.

Keywords: Abu al-Qasim Saadallah; Algerian historical studies; Algerian national movement; manuscript editing; historical translation; national memory.

Introduction

From the 1940s and 1950s onward, several Algerian historians who had participated in the Algerian People's Party, the Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties, and later the National Liberation Front began writing national history in foreign languages. This allowed Algerian history to reach a broad readership in Algeria and abroad. These historians sought a more serious form of historical writing based on realistic and objective approaches.

Among the nationalist historians who wrote in French were Mostefa Lacheraf, author of *Algeria: Nation and Society*, and Mohamed Cherif Sahli, author of *Decolonizing History* (*Décoloniser l'histoire*). Other figures included Mohieddine Djender, Mohammed Harbi, Mahsas, and others. They opposed the distortions produced by the French colonial school of history, both before and after independence.

A large group of Algerian historians also attempted to write a comprehensive history covering all periods, from antiquity to the contemporary era. They tried to connect Algerian history with the Islamic East as a response to French colonial ideology. Colonial discourse had sought historical justifications for the French presence in Algeria. Algerian historians countered this discourse by emphasizing important historical facts, while also giving historical writing an educational mission and a national purpose.

Historical writing entered a different context after independence. New political and intellectual conditions affected its orientation, subjects, quality, and methods. During the first phase, especially the 1960s and early 1970s (approximately 1962-1972), much historical writing was shaped by socialist ideology and left-wing political tendencies. At the same time, the anti-colonial movement of the 1950s had already weakened colonial interpretations. Party congress resolutions and the policies of the young Algerian state reinforced this change through a national development project. The growing number of Algerian university graduates also supported this transformation. Many obtained academic degrees that enabled them to specialize in historical research, particularly in the field of modern Algerian history.

In the 1960s, the University of Algiers still followed French curricula and organizational models. This continued until the university reform of the early 1970s. During this period, a new generation of historians emerged. Some were strongly committed to Arabic language and Arab-Islamic intellectual traditions. Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, often described as the dean of Algerian historians, was a leading figure among them.

Abu al-Qasim Saadallah was one of Algeria's major intellectuals. He was deeply concerned with the issues facing his nation and society. His work combined the authenticity he drew from Arab-Islamic culture with the effectiveness of rigorous modern Western methods. He worked under difficult and discouraging conditions, yet these circumstances did not prevent him from producing original scholarship. He contributed to intellectual enlightenment, addressed social and national concerns, served scholarship and culture, and sought to advance human knowledge.

Saadallah devoted particular attention to Algerian national history. He published many works in this field, including *The Algerian National Movement and Cultural History of Algeria*. He also edited manuscripts and translated several works into Arabic, many of which dealt directly with Algerian history. Researchers are well aware of Saadallah's extensive contribution to the military, political, and cultural history of Algeria. His publications addressed many of these topics and raised important intellectual and cultural questions. His work offered substantial responses to several fundamental historical problems. Saadallah also produced numerous translations dealing with different periods of Algerian history. This leads to the following research question:

To what extent did Abu al-Qasim Saadallah's works contribute to historical studies?

Before addressing this question, the study considers two main issues:

- The life and intellectual career of Abu al-Qasim Saadallah.
- The diverse contributions of Abu al-Qasim Saadallah.

1. Birth and Early Life (1930-2013)

Belqacem, written with three dots above the letter qaf (Abu al-Qasim), Saadallah was an Algerian researcher and historian. He was born in the village of Al-Badoua, an agricultural area west of Guemar in El Oued Province. He was his mother's eldest child. He was born during a hot summer in 1930 or 1931, although the French administration registered his birth in 1927.¹ He memorized the Qur'an and received the basic elements of language, jurisprudence, and religion. He then moved to the Zaytuna Mosque, where he remained until 1954 and obtained the al-Ahliyya certificate. In October 1955, he traveled to Cairo and enrolled in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. Four years later, he earned a licence degree in Arabic language and Islamic studies. In 1962, he obtained a master's degree in history and political science. In the same year, he moved to the United States and studied at the University of Minnesota.² He obtained a PhD in modern and contemporary history in English in 1965 and specialized in authorship and translation. At that time, he was an assistant professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. He later returned to Algeria, where he served as vice-dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Algiers from 1968 to 1972, and subsequently as professor and head of the Department of History³.

In 1996, Saadallah moved to Jordan and taught history at Al al-Bayt University until he returned to Algeria and rejoined the Algerian university system in 2001. From that time onward, he continued teaching in Algeria and supervised dozens of master's and doctoral theses. He produced a substantial body of work on Algerian history that combined historical studies, translation, and manuscript editing. He gave Algerian history a cultural and civilizational dimension. In this respect, his work followed the broad tendency of Western historical schools to expand historical study to include thought, culture, and

¹ Bachir Bellah, *Tarikh al-Jaza'ir al-Mu'asir, 1830-1989* (Contemporary History of Algeria, 1830-1989), vol. 2 (Algiers: Dar al-Ma'rifa, 2006), 434.

² Mohamed Medjaoud, "Abu al-Qasim Saadallah: Arba'una 'Aman min al-'Ata' al-'Ilmi fi Maydan al-Tarikh" (Abu al-Qasim Saadallah: Forty Years of Scholarly Contribution in History), *Al-Majalla al-Magharibiyya li-l-Dirasat al-Tarikhiyya wa-al-Ijtima'iyya* 7, no. 2 (December 2016): 12.

³ Nadjib Ben Khira, *Abu al-Qasim Saadallah bi-'Uyun Mukhtalifa* (Abu al-Qasim Saadallah through Different Perspectives) (Algeria: Alam al-Ma'rifa, 2014), 356.

the economy. Saadallah died on 14 December 2013, corresponding to 11 Safar 1435 AH, at the age of 83¹.

One of his best-known statements reads: "Nations with civilizations capable of endurance and resistance are those that impose themselves on other civilizations. They celebrate their history, take pride in it, and create symbols that become models to emulate and goals worthy of imitation. By contrast, nations that have had little share in civilization, or that have fallen behind for a time because of their inability to resist, also seek to glorify their symbols. They raise them to the highest ranks and surround them with an aura that seems to lift them to the heavens"².

2. Major Works

First: Works in History

A. Cultural History of Algeria. This encyclopedic work examines many aspects of Algerian culture, from Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic law to the fine arts and music. Several volumes discuss Islamic customs associated with the lives of scholars. The first two volumes cover the period from 1500 to 1830, from the years before Ottoman rule to the beginning of the French occupation. The next six volumes cover the period of French colonial rule. The final volume contains a comprehensive index³.

The work covers a wide field. It discusses major Algerian Muslim scholars and religious leaders, but it also examines French intellectuals, translators, and Orientalists. It further addresses Algerian Muslims educated in French and individuals with bicultural backgrounds⁴.

Its encyclopedic style combines broad coverage with detailed organization by topic. This differs from the narrowly specialized approach that characterized much Western academic writing on Algerian history after the occupation. Saadallah's work therefore investigates people, events, and subjects that were often overlooked by historians whose interests were constrained by narrow theoretical concerns⁵.

B. The Algerian National Movement. This work was published in three volumes totaling 1,223 pages by Dar al-Gharb al-Islami in Beirut, Lebanon. The first volume covers the period from 1830 to 1900 and is divided into four chapters. The second covers 1900-1930 and contains seven chapters. The third covers 1930-1954 and is divided into nine chapters⁶. The three volumes are of considerable historical value. Their completion also responded to the expectations of readers who wished to see the project finished and published in a polished form. At the end of the work, Saadallah concludes that the roots of the

¹ Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, *Hayati (My Life)* (Algeria: Alam al-Ma'rifa, 2015), 15.

² Bachir Khalaf, "A Reading of the Book Abu al-Qasim Saadallah through Different Perspectives," available at <https://massareb.com/?p=7274>, accessed 4 October 2026 at 10:30. Also available in *Al-Hiwar al-Mutamaddin*, no. 4615, 26 October 2014, <https://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=438841>.

³ Bachir Saadouni, "Al-Tanawul al-Tarikhi Kama Yarah al-Duktur Abu al-Qasim Saadallah" (The Historical Approach as Viewed by Dr. Abu al-Qasim Saadallah), *Dirasat Tarikhiyya*, no. 4: 117.

⁴ Sofiane Loucif, "Al-Mu'arrikh Abu al-Qasim Saadallah wa-Kitabat Tarikh al-Jaza'ir" (The Historian Abu al-Qasim Saadallah and the Writing of Algerian History), *Majallat Dirasat wa-Abhath*, no. 28 (September 2017): 266.

⁵ Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, *Tarikh al-Jaza'ir al-Thaqafi* (Cultural History of Algeria), 10 vols. (Algeria: Alam al-Ma'rifa, 2011)

⁶ Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, *Al-Haraka al-Wataniyya al-Jaza'iriyya* (The Algerian National Movement), 3 vols. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1992)

national movement can be traced back to the first confrontation with the French occupier, after the Dey's government abandoned the Algerian people¹.

Saadallah sought to correct several historical errors concerning the origins of the Algerian national movement and its early positions toward French colonial policy. He did so by examining a range of factors that contributed to its emergence.² When asked about his interest in this field, he replied: "I never stopped following current events in the country, whether I was living in Algeria or abroad. There were reasons for this. From my student years, I was interested in literature, history, and journalism. Journalism and literature make a person live reality, interact with it, and respond to it. I believe that every citizen should feel personally concerned with what is happening in the country..."

C. Research and Views on the History of Algeria. This five-volume work contains 1,772 pages and appeared in a special 2009 edition published by Alam al-Maarifa. It presents a large amount of scholarly material and addresses diverse subjects. These include historical writing, Algerian scholars, travel literature, the national movement, the Algerian Revolution, the biography of Emir Abdelkader, and commercial relations between the Maghreb and Africa. It also includes other topics that are rarely treated in comparable works³.

D. Lectures on the Modern History of Algeria (The Beginning of the Occupation). Published by the National Publishing and Distribution Company in Algeria, this work examines the transitional period from Ottoman rule to French colonial rule.

Second: Critical Editing of Manuscripts

Although Saadallah was best known for his work in history and literature, he also made an important contribution to the critical editing of Algerian manuscripts. He repeatedly called for their publication regardless of differences in subject or perceived importance, because he regarded them as part of the national heritage. He edited several manuscripts related to modern Algerian history, including the following:

A. The Journey of Ibn Hammadush al-Jaza'iri: Lisan al-Maqal fi al-Naba' 'an al-Nasab wa-al-Hasab wa-al-Hal. This work by Abd al-Razzaq ibn Hammadush was published by Saadallah in 1983. It is a travel account containing important material on political, social, and cultural life in eighteenth-century Algeria and Morocco. The edition runs to 317 pages and draws on a range of sources. Saadallah presented it in two parts⁴.

¹ For further details, see Ezzeddine Zaidi, "Irhasat al-Haraka al-Wataniyya al-Jaza'iriyya min Khilal Kitabat Abu al-Qasim Saadallah" (Early Signs of the Algerian National Movement through the Writings of Abu al-Qasim Saadallah), *Al-Majalla al-Magharibiyya li-l-Dirasat al-Tarikhyya wa-al-Ijtima'iyya* 7, no. 2 (December 2016): 178

² Mohamed Belil, "Dawr Tayyar al-Nukhba al-Muthaqqafa fi al-Haraka al-Wataniyya al-Jaza'iriyya 1919-1939 min Khilal Kitabat Abu al-Qasim Saadallah" (The Role of the Intellectual Elite in the Algerian National Movement, 1919-1939, through the Writings of Abu al-Qasim Saadallah), *Al-Majalla al-Magharibiyya li-l-Dirasat al-Tarikhyya wa-al-Ijtima'iyya* 7, no. 2 (December 2016): 115

³ Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, *Abhath wa-Ara' fi Tarikh al-Jaza'ir* (Research and Views on the History of Algeria) (Algeria: Dar al-Basa'ir for Publishing and Distribution, 2007)

⁴ Abd al-Razzaq ibn Hammadush al-Jaza'iri, *Rihlat Ibn Hammadush al-Jaza'iri al-Musamma Lisan al-Maqal fi al-Naba' 'an al-Nasab wa-al-Hasab wa-al-Hal* (The Journey of Ibn Hammadush al-Jaza'iri), introduction, critical edition, and commentary by Abu al-Qasim Saadallah (Algiers: National Publishing and Distribution Company, 1983).

B. *Manshur al-Hidaya fi Kashf Hal Man Idda'a al-'Ilm wa-al-Wilaya*. Written by Abd al-Karim al-Fakkun and published by Saadallah in 1987, this work addresses Sufism in modern Algerian history as represented by Abd al-Karim al-Fakkun of Constantine¹.

C. *Tarikh al-'Adwani*. Saadallah's edition highlights the importance of this manuscript as a work of local history. It records the lives of tribes that settled in southeastern Algeria and southwestern Tunisia. It traces their Arab origins and their movement from the East to the Maghreb. The manuscript also describes their conflicts with Hafsids and Ottoman rulers. It documents the living conditions of local populations under adventurers arriving from cities such as Tripoli, Gafsa, Kairouan, Tozeur, Biskra, and Constantine. It also discusses marabouts and their roles, as well as the characteristics of rulers and their relations with foreign powers such as the Spanish. The manuscript is therefore a rich source that combines tribal, social, and political history².

D. *Risalat al-Gharib ila al-Habib*. Written by Ahmad Abu Usayda al-Bija'i, this work consists of a letter sent from the Hijaz to the author's friend Abu al-Fadl al-Mashdhali in Egypt³.

E. *Hikayat al-'Ushshaq fi al-Hubb wa-al-Ishtiyaq*. Written by Emir Mustafa ibn Ibrahim Pasha, this is a historical literary narrative about a romantic adventure involving a king's son and Zahrat al-Uns, the daughter of a merchant⁴.

Saadallah also edited shorter manuscript pieces. One example is a waqf document written by Ibn Marzuq al-Tilimsani for a resident of Tozeur in Tunisia. He published it as an article in the *Maghreb Historical Review* in issues 17 and 18 in January 1980. Saadallah introduced the document, described its script, author, and date, identified some of the individuals mentioned in it, and then reproduced the text as it appeared in the manuscript.

He also commented on the manuscript *Rayy al-Ghalil fi Akhbar Bani Abd al-Jalil min Salatin Bani Fazzan* by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Jalil al-Fazzani, a nineteenth-century author. Saadallah briefly described the manuscript, identified its location in the National Library of France, and called for a critical edition.

Third: Translation.

Saadallah had an exceptionally broad engagement with translation. In literature, he translated Thomas Campbell's letters on Algerian literature from English and published them in his *Studies in Modern Algerian Literature*. He also translated works in politics, history, and other fields, many of which

¹ Abd al-Karim al-Fakkun, *Manshur al-Hidaya fi Kashf Hal Man Idda'a al-'Ilm wa-al-Wilaya*, introduction, critical edition, and commentary by Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1987).

² Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Umar al-'Adwani, *Tarikh al-'Adwani* (The History of al-'Adwani), introduction, critical edition, and commentary by Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1996).

³ Ahmad Abu Usayda al-Bija'i, *Risalat al-Gharib ila al-Habib* (A Stranger's Letter to His Beloved), introduction, commentary, and summary by Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lebanon: Tarikh al-Gharb al-Islami, 1993).

⁴ Mubarak Djaafari, "Al-Turath al-Watani al-Makhtut wa-Ahammiyyatuhu fi al-Kitaba al-Tarikhiyya 'inda al-Duktur Abu al-Qasim Saadallah" (The National Manuscript Heritage and Its Importance in Historical Writing for Dr. Abu al-Qasim Saadallah), in *Proceedings of the International Conference Abu al-Qasim Saadallah as Historian and Thinker*, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Humanities, University of Echahid Hamma Lakhdar, El Oued, 13-14 December 2021, 299.

appeared in his various publications. His translations were generally connected either to the historical period in which he was working or to a specific publication or research project. They were therefore purposeful rather than accidental. Readers of his translations can also observe that he frequently modified titles after translation. These changes were made for different reasons and according to deliberate objectives. At times they reflected practical needs; at others they reflected his own interpretation. He altered some titles, shortened others, and retained only a few in their original form, often adding comments on the source text¹.

The following examples illustrate some of these translations:

A. John B. Wolf, *The Barbary Coast: Algiers under the Turks*. Saadallah translated the work under the Arabic title *Algeria and Europe, 1500-1830*. This title differs substantially from the original. Saadallah believed that the original framed Algeria as weak and dependent. In defense of his country and out of concern for its historical standing, he chose a title that suggested a more equal relationship and avoided language that might convey a negative image to Arabic readers².

B. His translation of Charles Henry Churchill's work:

The Life of Abdel Kader, Ex-Sultan of the Arabs of Algeria; Written from His Own Dictation, and Compiled from Other Authentic Sources. By Colonel Churchill.

Saadallah did not retain Churchill's full original title. He translated it simply as *The Life of Emir Abdelkader, by Charles Henry Churchill*. He thus reduced a long descriptive title to a short one. One possible reason is that the Arabic reader already knew Emir Abdelkader and did not need to be told that he was the sultan of the Arabs of Algeria. For that readership, he was already their emir and the leader of their resistance against the colonizer. Saadallah stated that he found particular enjoyment in the book, both as a reader and as a translator, because of the considerable experience involved in translating it³. The work also contributed significantly to the defense of Emir Abdelkader⁴.

C. Adrien Berbrugger's work:

Voyage au camp d'Abd-el-kader à Hamza, en Décembre 1837 et Janvier 1838 may be translated literally as *Journey to Abdelkader's Camp at Hamza in December 1837 and January 1838*. Saadallah rendered the title as *With Emir Abdelkader: The Journey of a French Delegation to Meet Emir Abdelkader in Bouira, 1837-1838*. In this case, he did not shorten the title. Instead, he reformulated it and added explanatory information that becomes clear only after reading the work. The revised title briefly identifies the journey, its location, and the people who undertook it. Because the book belongs to travel literature, Saadallah

¹ Ahmed Ben Noumane, *Abu al-Qasim Saadallah: Hayat wa-Athar, Shahadat wa-Mawaqif* (Abu al-Qasim Saadallah: Life and Works, Testimonies and Positions) (Algeria: Dar al-Nouman, 2017), 509.

² John B. Wolf, *Al-Jaza'ir wa-Urubba, 1500-1830* (Algeria and Europe, 1500-1830), translated and annotated by Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, special ed. (Algeria: Alam al-Ma'rifa, 2009).

³ Charles Henry Churchill, *Hayat al-Amir Abd al-Qadir* (The Life of Emir Abdelkader), translated by Abu al-Qasim Saadallah (Algeria: Alam al-Ma'rifa, 2011).

⁴ Hakim Ben Cheikh, "Al-Duktur Abu al-Qasim Saadallah Ra'id al-Madrassa al-Tarikhiyya al-Jaza'iriyya wa-Ba'ithuha" (Dr. Abu al-Qasim Saadallah: Pioneer and Reviver of the Algerian Historical School), *Al-Majalla al-Magharibiyya li-l-Dirasat al-Tarikhiyya* 7, no. 2 (December 2016): 69.

gave it particular attention. This is evident in his eleven-page introduction, where he explained the details of the journey, the reasons for translating it, and other relevant points in an elegant and engaging style¹. Saadallah's comments on translated works also appeared in newspaper articles. On 22-23 March 1987, he published an article in *Al-Sha'b* entitled "The American View of Algerian History." The English source carried a title rendered in the article as *Through Foreign Eyes: Western Attitudes toward North Africa*. Saadallah changed the title substantially. His approach reflected his view that translation should consider the Arab reader, and the Algerian reader in particular, especially when a source contained material that he believed was offensive to Algeria, even if this required moving away from the original title.

The main characteristics of Saadallah's approach to translation may be summarized as follows:

- Strong command of both the source and target languages.
- Careful linguistic formulation of the translated text.
- Subject-matter expertise in the field being translated.
- Careful selection of texts for translation.
- Respect for the general principles of translation.

Fourth: Studies of Prominent Cultural and Intellectual Figures. Saadallah also studied Algerian scholars who had made important intellectual and educational contributions. Among them were the following:

A. Ibn al-'Annabi. Saadallah published a book in 1990 on this pioneer of Islamic reform, who died in 1850. The study offers a detailed analytical account of the period, life, and works of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Mahmud ibn Muhammad ibn Husayn al-Jaza'iri, better known as Ibn al-'Annabi. He was the author of *al-Sa'y al-Mahmud fi Nizam al-Junud* and other important works. Saadallah also examined Ibn al-'Annabi's role in his own time and the continuing relevance of his ideas².

B. Muhammad al-'Id Al Khalifa. Saadallah prepared a study of the Algerian poet Muhammad al-'Id Al Khalifa in 1960 under the title *Pioneer of Modern Algerian Poetry: Muhammad al-'Id Al Khalifa*. The manuscript was later published in Cairo by Shaykh al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi after Saadallah traveled to the United States. The book, which extends to 240 pages, is devoted to the poet's work. Saadallah used a historical approach within a framework of critical concepts and analytical procedures. He also sought to maintain scholarly rigor and objectivity in discussion and analysis³.

C. Abd al-Karim al-Fakkun. In 1986, Saadallah published a study of the life and works of Abd al-Karim al-Fakkun, known as Shaykh al-Islam and associated with Salafi reform. Al-Fakkun lived in the seventeenth century, during a period described by the author as one of decline in the Islamic world and widening distance from a more dynamic Europe. The period was also marked, in Saadallah's account, by

¹ Meriem Khaldi, *Abu al-Qasim Saadallah: Hayatuhu wa-A'maluhu, 1930-2013* (Abu al-Qasim Saadallah: His Life and Works, 1930-2013), PhD diss., History of the National Movement and Liberation Revolution, Djillali Liabes University, Sidi Bel Abbes, 2017-2018, 294.

² Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, *Ra'id al-Tajdid al-Islami: Ibn al-'Annabi (A Pioneer of Islamic Reform: Ibn al-'Annabi)*, 2nd ed. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1990).

³ Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, *Ra'id al-Shi'r al-Jaza'iri fi al-'Asr al-Hadith: Muhammad al-'Id Al Khalifa (Pioneer of Modern Algerian Poetry: Muhammad al-'Id Al Khalifa)* (Algeria: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1961).

the spread of forms of Sufism he regarded as questionable, widespread illiteracy, and the rule of poorly educated political authorities. In this context, al-Fakkun emerged as a religious scholar who strongly advocated commanding right and forbidding wrong and devoted himself to that mission¹.

D. The Jurist and Man of Letters Muhammad al-Shadhili al-Qasantini. Published in 1984, this book studies the life of Shaykh Muhammad al-Shadhili al-Qasantini (1807-1877) through his correspondence and poetry. Saadallah discusses the scholar's period, life, travels in Europe, letters, positions on several issues, relationship with Emir Abdelkader, and poetic work².

E. The physician and traveler Abd al-Razzaq ibn Hammadush. Saadallah edited and published his travel account *Lisan al-Maqal* and also wrote a separate study entitled *A Treatise on the Celestial Sphere* by Ibn Hammadush. Abd al-Razzaq ibn Hammadush al-Jaza'iri is regarded as one of Algeria's major scholars. His work contributed to the development of knowledge in the sciences and arts. He represented a notable exception in his period. While many scholars of his time concentrated on transmission and imitation, Ibn Hammadush also studied medicine, geometry, and arithmetic. His numerous and varied writings reveal the distinctive place he occupied among the scholars of his age³.

F. Nur al-Din Abd al-Qadir as Teacher, Writer, and Translator (1890-1981). This short book of 97 pages is devoted to a modern scholar and intellectual who served the Arabic language and Islamic heritage in Algeria during French colonial rule. He spent his life as a teacher, translator, and writer. He was known as Abd al-Qadir al-Hamidi, or Nur al-Din Abd al-Qadir among his contemporaries. He lived in Algeria from 1890 to 1981, remained largely outside public life, and stayed away from the spotlight. As a result, relatively few Algerians became familiar with his work.

Fifth: Literature and Thought. Saadallah's works in this field include the following:

- Unrestrained Ideas (1988).
- Experiments in Travel Literature (1986).
- Studies in Modern Algerian Literature (1966).
- The Green Time.
- Saadallah's Poetry Collection (1985).
- On Cultural Debate (1993).
- A Green Palm Frond: Short Stories (1986).
- Difficult Questions (1988).
- Intellectual Starting Points (1982).
- Civilizational Concerns (1993).

¹ Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, *Shaykh al-Islam Da'iyat al-Salafiyya: Abd al-Karim al-Fakkun (Shaykh al-Islam and Advocate of Salafism: Abd al-Karim al-Fakkun)* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1986).

² Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, *Al-Qadi al-Adib: al-Shadhili al-Qasantini (The Jurist and Man of Letters: al-Shadhili al-Qasantini)*, 2nd ed. (Algeria: National Company, 1984).

³ For further details, see Ezzeddine Ben Seifi, "Manhaj Ibn Hammadush al-Jaza'iri fi 'Ulum al-Tibb wa-al-Saydala" (The Method of Ibn Hammadush al-Jaza'iri in Medicine and Pharmacy), *Majallat al-Nasiriyya li-l-Dirasat al-Ijtima'iyya wa-al-Tarikhiiyya* 11, no. 2 (December 2020): 49-66.

In addition, Saadallah published a very large number of studies and articles in several journals¹.

Conclusion

Saadallah's writings were generally characterized by an objective and scholarly approach. They relied on rigorous methods for reconstructing historical events and analyzing them critically. Through his extensive publications in authorship, critical editing, and translation, Abu al-Qasim Saadallah enriched contemporary Algerian historical and intellectual writing. He helped establish the foundations of academic historical method. He may therefore be regarded as one of the major builders of Algerian national historiography and one of its most important scholarly references.

Results

The main findings of the study, with particular emphasis on Saadallah's influence on Algerian national historiography, may be summarized as follows:

The writing of national history in Algeria developed beyond the work of Arabic-speaking reformists. Algerian historians also emerged from the nationalist political movement, including the Algerian People's Party, the Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties, and the National Liberation Front. From the 1940s and 1950s onward, some of these historians wrote in foreign languages, especially French. This helped Algerian history reach a wider audience both inside and outside the country. After independence, historical writing became increasingly systematic, methodical, and objective, particularly as higher education and research expanded.

A change in methods and research interests occurred approximately between 1962 and 1972. During this period, historical writing was influenced by socialist and left-wing ideological orientations, as well as by the political climate and development programs of the newly independent Algerian state.

The expansion of university education and the rising number of graduates contributed to the emergence of a new generation of historians. Some of them had received Western academic training in history and the humanities. The University of Algiers continued to follow French academic models until the university reforms of the early 1970s.

Abu al-Qasim Saadallah occupies a prominent place among Algerian historians and researchers. He memorized the Qur'an, studied at al-Zaytuna, continued his education in Cairo, and later moved to the United States. There he earned a doctorate in modern and contemporary history in English and developed expertise in authorship and translation. After returning to Algeria, he became a university professor and supervised dozens of graduate theses. His influence therefore extended beyond his own publications to the training of later generations of researchers.

He contributed to reconstructing national history through an approach that brought together:

- Scholarship and academic method.
- Care for heritage through the critical editing and publication of manuscripts.
- Translation as a means of connecting Algerian research with international scholarship.
- A broader conception of history that included culture, thought, the economy, and travel, rather than political events alone.

¹ El-Hadj Aifa, "Al-Sira al-Dhatiyya li-Shaykh al-Mu'arrikhin al-Jaza'iriyyin al-Duktur Abu al-Qasim Saadallah" (The Autobiographical Profile of Dr. Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, Dean of Algerian Historians), *Dirasat Tarikhiyya*, no. 1: 11-26.

His scholarly output can therefore be grouped into several major fields:

Historical Authorship

– He developed a broad project on the cultural history of Algeria. It was encyclopedic in scope, covered long historical periods, and addressed scholars, the arts, music, religion, and civilizational questions.

– He studied the major stages of the Algerian national movement through clear chronological divisions and a structured method of presentation.

– He produced diverse studies of modern Algerian history, including subjects that received little attention from other historians.

Through this work, he helped transform Algerian history into a more comprehensive field that connected politics, culture, and society.

Critical Editing and Publication of Manuscripts

Saadallah worked to publish heritage texts that could deepen understanding of modern Algerian history. He justified their publication on the grounds that they formed part of the national heritage. The manuscripts he addressed dealt with areas such as:

- Travel accounts.
- Sufism and intellectual movements.
- Local and tribal history.
- Correspondence and documentary sources.

This work strengthened the body of primary sources available to researchers. It also increased the credibility of historical narratives by reducing dependence on colonial accounts or selectively chosen sources.

Translation

Saadallah translated works in literature, politics, and history. His choices were usually deliberate rather than random. The main features of his translation practice included:

- A strong command of foreign languages.
- Attention to the form and meaning of titles in ways that served the intended readership.
- Deliberate changes when necessary, including deletion, abbreviation, title modification, and commentary.

He therefore used translation as a form of intellectual intervention and as a means of adapting foreign texts to Algerian and Arab readers while preserving their historical content.

Studies of Cultural Figures and Intellectual Trends

Saadallah combined historical research with cultural analysis by:

- Studying scholars, reformers, religious advocates, Sufis, and writers.
- Examining their influence during periods of decline and growing contact with Europe.
- Reviving the biographies of figures who had played important civilizational roles.

In this way, he widened the category of historical actors to include scholars, writers, travelers, and reformers, rather than politicians alone.

In conclusion, Saadallah's writings were distinguished by an academic method based on research, analysis, and documentary sources. His comprehensive approach presented Algerian history as:

- Cultural and civilizational.
- Documented through critical editing and heritage sources.
- Open to foreign languages without losing its national perspective.

Saadallah should therefore be regarded as one of the major builders of Algerian national historiography. He was also among the most important references in the development of a more scholarly and encyclopedic historical writing. His work enriched research through its strong documentary basis and helped make Algerian historical knowledge available to a wider readership.

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