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Pens in Algerian History through the Writings of Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani and Abu al-Qasim Saadallah

A Study of Content and Methodology

[1] Belkacem Aiachi *
University of 20 August 1955 Skikda (Algeria)

ABSTRACT: The present research examines aspects of the historical and intellectual legacy produced by several Algerian scholars and cultural personalities, through an examination of a selection of their scholarly works that enriched the Algerian and Arab intellectual heritage, particularly distinguished academic studies devoted to Algerian history , These works emerged within a broader effort to defend Algeria's sovereignty and to challenge colonial discourses that attempted to erase the country's national identity and misrepresent its history . Among the works that this study focuses on are those of Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani and Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, through a presentation of their writings on the history of Algeria and a study of their content and methodology.

Keywords: Algerian historians, historical school, historical production, Algerian history, content and methodology.

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Introduction

The present condition of Algerian historiography demands that scholars confront the issue of heritage by critically examining existing studies, academic research, and university theses within the domain of Algerian history, In this regard, numerous scholars have reassessed historical developments and reaffirmed the credibility of the national historical narrative.

The objective of this study is to highlight the contributions of Algerian scholars to the field of history, examining their works in terms of thematic focus and methodological rigor. We have chosen to examine two distinguished personalities in the realms of thought, cultural, and historical scholarship, who represent the pinnacle of the Algerian historical tradition: Sheikh Historian Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani and Sheikh Historian Abu al-Qasim Saadallah. by reviewing their work in the service of Algerian history and their contribution to defending Algeria and its sovereignty against all colonialist thought,and their attempt to break with tradition and move away from repetition, given that European writers, especially French ones, were the ones who laid the groundwork for writing the history of Algeria during the modern period, at a time when there was a lack of material available to Algerian writers.

An analysis of Algeria's modern historical period indicates that it is characterized by both methodological challenges and a limited availability of historical material. The further we go back in history towards the Middle Ages, the easier it is to understand the past clearly and distinctly, as there is a scientific framework and a wealth of historical material available. However, the closer we get to the Ottoman era, the less important the historical materials that aid every historian become, although the features of this period are now becoming clearer as historians and researchers gain access to significant archival material.

A key question arises regarding the manner in which Algerian historical writing confronted French colonialist reporting on Algerian historical matters, and how Algerian historians approached these issues differently in terms of both content and method. This issue is examined through the scholarship of Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani and Abu al-Qasim Saadallah.

It is important, before addressing this issue, to to highlight the efforts undertaken by a group of historians to establish a national school of history, aimed at countering French colonial narratives.

1. Establishing an Algerian historical school:

To speak of writing the history of Algeria is to speak of the memory of a nation rooted in history and continued through successive generations. After the colonial period, Algerian historians began to write the history of Algeria, with some insisting on the need to establish a national school of history with its own characteristics and approach to dealing with historical events in general[1] .

The term "Algerian historical school" is a term with national significance that refers to the efforts of researchers who were united by the idea of defending the Algerian identity and sovereignty during the French colonial era. Now, in the era of independence, they are united by the idea of getting rid of the colonial interpretation of our history by rewriting it in an objective manner.

There are reservations about this term. When Sheikh Abu al-Qasim Saadallah was asked, "Is there really an Algerian historical school with specific features, known characteristics, and clear foundations and objectives?", he replied: Perhaps the stage we are at can be described as a stage of reactions to the French historical school, and reactions do not establish an Algerian historical school. It is more like a dialogue between the two sides (they say, and we say). The same opinion was expressed by the professor and historian Nasser Eddine Saïdoun[2]

The idea of establishing an Algerian historical school cannot be precisely defined, and this is due to the national historical experience that is deeply rooted in history, as the attention to historical writing in our country began in the early Middle Ages and continues to this day.[3]

At the beginning of the second decade of the 20th century, nearly a century after the French occupation of Algeria and its attempts to erase Algerian identity and national character and eliminate resistance to the nation, an authentic elite emerged that sought to revive the foundations of the nation, rewrite its history, and rid it of the impurities and fallacies that had become attached to it.[4] Although its first building block appeared during the French occupation with the figure of Hamdan Khoja[5] , author of the book Al-Mir'a (The Mirror)[6] , he was able to write his book Al-Mir'a in a short period of time and with a modern approach that reflects the extent of the development of Algerian historical awareness.[7] . In it, he exposed the crimes of colonialism in Algeria, as he was a witness to what Algeria was like before and during the occupation. [8]

Algerian schools faced a major challenge in dealing with the consequences of French policy in all areas and the claims of colonial schools. National schools worked to affirm the national identity of Algeria and Algerians based on their intellectual heritage and historical legacy through their various writings[9] .

Historians of the National Historical School adopted the slogan: "Liberating minds comes before liberating countries"[10] . They worked to clarify the rich history of the Algerian people without neglecting any stage of Algeria's history. A group of historians and scholars took up this cause, including: Sheikh Mubarak al-Mili[11] , Sheikh Ibn Maryam al-Tilmisani[12] , and Sheikh al-Hafnawi[13] . Their goal was to clarify many historical facts for Algerians based on a history full of glories and a mindset filled with liberationist thought[14] .

The establishment and development of an Algerian historical school is subject to the perceptions of historians in determining the most effective ways to achieve this. Here, we focus on academic writings

and their contribution to addressing and analyzing events, with a perspective that differs completely from the French school, which deliberately engaged in systematic deception in writing about the history of Algeria[15] .

In the context of the Algerian historical school, many historians have emerged who, through their writings, have sought to preserve heritage, legacy, and memory in a way that serves history first and science second. Among the historians who achieved the launch of the national historical school are: Tawfiq al-Madani, Saadallah, Yahya Bouaziz – Abdel Rahman Al-Jilali, Muhammad Al-Arabi Al-Zubairi – Mustafa al-Ashraf, Jamal Qanan, and Nasir al-Din Saïdoni. The authors of these works sought to counter French writings characterized by a colonial ideology aimed at undermining Algerian national identity[16] . Their position on the question of sovereignty and the existence of the Algerian entity before 1830 was historically consistent[17] .

This is what we will address in this study, which focuses on two figures who were interested in studying the history of Algeria. The first figure is represented by the historian Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani, who is considered one of the first historians to have contributed to the dissemination of Algerian history both domestically and internationally, and one of the founders of the nationalist Algerian school of history.

The second figure we will focus on in this study, who contributed to laying the foundations for an Algerian historical school after decades in which the French colonists distorted Algerian history, is Aboulkacem Saadallah. Thanks to his pen and determination, Saadallah fought to revive the nation's history and left behind dozens of books and publications in various fields of knowledge[18] .

In this context, we will discuss the historical and intellectual output of historians, reviewing various works and publications that address Algerian history in terms of content and methodology.

2. The historical and intellectual output of the two historians:

1-A descriptive study of the work of Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani:

Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani is considered one of the figures who gave a strong impetus to the Algerian and Maghreb historical school. He lived through all stages, from the national movement to the revolution and post-independence, working during a very critical period in Algerian history[19] .

1-1 / Brief overview of the life of Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani:

The historian Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani was born in 1899 in Tunisia to two Algerian families who had emigrated to Tunisia. His father was Algerian, "Mohammed al-Madani," and his mother was Algerian, "Aisha Bouiraz."[20] His family was well-educated and knowledgeable. His mother, Aisha, was the first to teach him the Arabic alphabet by teaching him the Holy Quran and Hadith so that he would be raised in the noble traditions of Islam [21]

. His mother was keen to teach him the suras of the Quran and some of the hadiths of the Prophet, all of which contributed to building his character and good manners.His father also worked hard to raise him in the best way possible, and Al-Madani benefited greatly from his advice and guidance. His grandfather's house also contributed to shaping his personality. Since his family was known for being revolutionary and rejecting colonialism, the family was his first school, which made him a revolutionary rebel.[22]

He initially received his education at the private Quranic school, where he learned Arabic alongside religious sciences, mathematics, arithmetic, chemistry, and natural sciences.[23] In 1913, he completed his studies at the Quranic school, graduating with a broad knowledge of various sciences taught by different professors and sheikhs. Then, in the same year, he moved on to receive his secondary education at the Khaldoni Institute under the tutelage of Professor Hussein Hosni Abdel Wahab, from whom he

learned wisdom, eloquence, and history. [24]

Due to his rebellion against colonialism and his opposition to it, he was imprisoned at the age of sixteen, where he remained strong-willed and steadfast in his principles. He was released in November 1918.In the field of political activity, Al-Madani joined the Free Constitutional Party in 1920 and, together with his colleagues in the party, founded several newspapers, including Al-Umma, Al-Ittihad, Al-Asr Al-Jadid, and others. [25]

After his journalistic and propaganda activities grew, the French authorities exiled him to Algeria in 1925. After settling there, he sought to raise Algerian national awareness through lectures, speeches, various publications, history books, and participation in political initiatives.[26]

Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani is considered one of the figures who distinguished themselves with their national spirit, and his pen was eloquent in defending his homeland and his belonging to it. Among the issues he paid attention to and considered to be a fundamental pillar was the issue of identity, as the existence of a nation and the proof of its entity are based on certain elements, characteristics, and features, the most important of which are the Islamic religion, the Arabic language, cultural affiliation, and national culture. In Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani's thinking, nationalism is the common ground that brings all Algerians together under one roof, free from conflict or hatred.[27]

Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani worked to affirm the identity of the Algerian people since ancient times, when he wrote the book "Algeria" in 1931,in response to the French centenary celebrations of the occupation of Algeria, challenging France's colonial policy and opposing its false and distorted presentation of Algerian history, especially since France sought through these celebrations to promote the idea that Algeria did not exist before the arrival of the French and that the Algerian people had no foundations.[28]

1-2/ <u>The historical and intellectual output of Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani:</u>

He has several great works and rich compositions in the field of history, especially the Ottoman period of Algerian history, the most important of which are:

- The book The Three Hundred Years of War between Spain and Algeria (1492-1792) was first published in 1965 and reprinted in 1976[29] Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani explains his choice of subject matter, stating that it relates firstly to the birth of the true Algerian state for the first time in our history, and secondly because the Algerian state emerged as a result of the colonial crusade.

In his book The Three Hundred Years' War, Madani recounts events, mentioning their causes and drawing conclusions, taking into account the chronological sequence that, in this approach, is considered the axis around which historical events revolve[30].

[31]Al-Madani sees himself here as an expert on a historical epic that lasted three centuries between Algeria and Spain. From the title of the book, it is clear that its subject matter is military, diplomatic, and political, as he mentions the reasons that led him to write this work.

As for the content of this book, it is based on an introduction and preface in which he discusses the most important historical events that paved the way for war, beginning with geographical discoveries. He divides the subject into nineteen chapters. beginning with the Spanish invasion and the emergence of the figure of Kheireddine, followed by the rise of Hassan ibn Kheireddine and the independence of the modern Algerian state. It also covers the period after the 16th century, which was marked by the confinement of Spanish control to Oran, European interference in Algerian affairs, military events, and their impact on Algerian poets. He then goes on to discuss the Spanish occupation of the city of Oran and the Great Port under the title of the Second Spanish Crusade, highlighting the

most important events and their effects. The author mentions the victories achieved by the Algerian army against the Spanish invasion of the city of Algiers, and concludes his topic with the historical event that took place in February 1792 as the best ending[32].

- His writing method:

In this book, he relied on an analytical approach. The author knows that history is presentation, analysis, and judgment, so he studied documents and records to extract facts from them, as well as from texts and the surrounding political, social, and environmental circumstances. In this research, he also devoted a section to critiquing and analyzing the most important sources he relied on.

The sources he relied on are relatively diverse local and foreign sources. Tawfiq al-Madani worked hard to select texts and documents related to the subject of his book, despite the scarcity of foreign sources. Methodologically, he relied on attributing the news to its narrators and did not present the reader with the references he relied on, i.e., he followed the method of marginalization, but he often mentions his references and resorts to the principle of citation.

He used a number of Arabic sources that he relied on in his book The Three Hundred Years War: The History of the Pashas and Scholars of Algeria by Hussein Rajab Shaush, son of the Mufti, and his book Al-Haj Ahmad al-Sharif al-Zahar, Captain of the Ashraf, and the books of Abu Ras Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Nasiri al-Masri. which includes news about events in Oran and Andalusia between Muslims and infidels, and the book Al-Hulal al-Sundisiya[33].

However, most of the foreign sources and references are French and relate to the history of Algeria before the French occupation, in addition to articles published in French periodicals, including the African magazine and the works of Charles André Julien.[34]

The book The Three Hundred Years' War between Spain and Algeria will remain the standard work in its field for some time to come, as the author has used important documents, organized them in an accessible manner, and combined the spirit of a historian searching for the truth with that of a nationalist politician confident that he has found it. We can also mention other books written by Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani, the most important of which are:

- The book by Othman Pasha, A Summary of the History of the Turks in Algeria[35] : This book was published in 1938 but reprinted in 1986. It discusses the longest reign and rule, and is considered the third service provided by historian Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani to Algeria after the Association of Scholars and the book Algeria. The specific aim of this book was to respond to the accusations and lies that France came as a liberator and that if it had not intervened, none of its men or resources would have remained in Algeria. He published the biography of Muhammad Uthman Pasha, in addition to what the great French orientalist Fonter de Barade wrote about him and his reign, and what was written about that reign in the official register of the State of Algeria from its inception to its destruction[36].

Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani says, "My conscience is now at ease and I am reassured, for I have exposed to the Algerian people the ugliest images of the occupation. Were it not for the limited space, I would have mentioned hundreds more, but this was enough to silence the voices that brayed like donkeys about the cruelty of the Turks."[37].

- Memoirs of Ahmed al-Sharif al-Zahar (Captain of the Ashraf of Algeria)[38] Tawfiq al-Madani mentions that these memoirs are divided into two parts, the first of which begins with the Ottoman era and may have been lost. while the second part begins in 1768 and ends with the French occupation. The only copy of this part was found in the possession of Sheikh Mahmoud al-Sharif, grandson of al-Zahar, and is on the verge of being lost. There is also a third part that begins with the occupation, is referred to in a few lines at the end of the second part of the memoirs.[39].

[40]As for the book Algeria[41] , the historical aspect is minimal, as Ibn Shnib does not cover even a quarter of the book. The historical aspect refers to the mention of past countries and their civilizations, the role of Algerians throughout history, and the highlighting of the tribes that settled in Algeria, including Berbers and Arabs. The Ottoman period is covered in a single chapter from pages 32 to 56.

The political aspect of the book is evident in Madani's reliance on certain French opinions that speak fairly of the locals. Ibn Shnib mentions that Madani relied on French texts and documents, most notably Maurice Viollet's book (Will Algeria Live?), and the book also includes statistics referenced from French documents. Al-Madani's book on Algeria is very similar to Hamdan Khoja's book Al-Mir'at (The Mirror), and Al-Madani's French culture helped him learn about the history of Algeria as written by French pens[42] Therefore, we can say that Sheikh Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani is the undisputed historian of the Ottoman Empire and is considered a reliable reference for uncovering the truth about matters related to the Ottoman period.[43]

He is also considered a source on Ottoman history due to the collection of illustrated documents he brought from the section known as "Khat Hamayun" in the archives of the Prime Minister's Office in Istanbul, which are now preserved with their original numbers in the Center for Historical Studies in Algiers. There are 3,300 documents, most of which cover the Ottoman era in Algeria.

Through his book Defense of the Algerian Nation, Ahmed al-Madani sought to raise the slogans of national identity (Islam is our religion, Arabic is our language, and Algeria is our homeland). He also contributed to the crystallization of some concepts with a national dimension that were absent or absent from the minds of Algerians, such as: The land of Algeria – the homeland – the Algerian nation – the people, relying on a national perspective and religious sentiment in his book Algeria[44] .

His book Carthage in Four Eras is unique in its kind. It was printed in Tunis in 1921[45], and we have relied on the 1986 edition. As for his motives for writing this book, it came in response to the wishes of some leaders of the reform movement, in addition to filling a gap in the ancient history of North Africa in general, given the scarcity of Arabic-language writings on this subject. The book contains various comments on the events that took place during those eras, as noted by Dr. Rabah Lounissi, who said: "We note in the book an attempt by its author to read the French colonial present through the eyes of the past, and we find that he has great sympathy for the Carthaginians, who resemble the Arab conquerors in that they brought the Berbers out of oppression and into the light... As for the Romans, they resemble French colonialism, as the Berbers under Roman rule did not own an inch of land.

He wrote a book entitled Muslims in Sicily and Southern Italy, which was published in the early 1940s. It took Al-Madani a whole year of isolation, research, and editing to complete.It was a book for the Arab world in general, covering its history and geography. It dealt with the Islamic conquests in Sicily, which Al-Madani considered more African than European. The book was well received by Algerians, Tunisians, and Moroccans, and was reviewed and praised in newspapers and magazines.[46]

In addition, he has a book that recounts his life experiences, which we mentioned earlier, called The Life of Struggle (Memoirs) in three parts. We have relied on the first and second parts of the 2009 edition, which is considered one of his most important works. In it, the author presents an account of his life and experiences as a witness to his era, written in an engaging style with clear ideas. It includes a considerable number of historical documents.[47] He has another book entitled This is Algeria, in which he introduces Algeria to the world and the Arab world, focusing on colonial arrogance. The book was published by Maktabat Al-Nahda Al-Masriya.[48]

He has also published several articles closely related to the study of this period in numerous magazines, including, but not limited to:

A dialogue on the book 80 Years of Ottoman Algeria [49]and The Algerian State Defends Its Independence within the Ottoman Empire [50]. He also published a research paper entitled A Severe Crisis between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire over the Issue of Piracy[51].

He also published an article on Ottoman documents from Algerian history, which played a major role in shedding light on some hidden aspects of Ottoman Algerian history. [52]

Through this clear picture, he speaks freely in his research without prejudice or bias. In addition, Madani adheres to the traditional method of narrating events.

We can therefore say that Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani is considered the mayor of researchers and historians in Algeria and a pioneer in writing national history, as his works were a direct response to French colonialist theories that attempted to obliterate the features of Algerian cultural identity.

In order to continue the legacy of Algerian historians, another figure emerged who was no less important than Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani, namely the historian and researcher Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, who was credited with studying the modern and contemporary periods of Algerian history in an academic and scientific manner.He is considered one of the most prominent writers on the Ottoman era and the period of French occupation after Tawfiq al-Madani.

3. A descriptive study of Abu al-Qasim Saadallah's work:

Among the luminaries of the Algerian nation who sought to promote the history of their country is the historian Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, who is considered a pioneer of the historical, literary, and intellectual school in Algeria.

3-1/ A brief overview of Saadallah's life:

He was born in Qamar, Wadi Souf, in 1930. His family worked in agriculture. He traveled to Tunisia to complete his studies at the Zaytouna Mosque, where he learned the fundamentals of Islam and Arabic literature[53] . Saadallah grew up with an education that set him apart from his peers in his class. He was a writer, poet, historian, and researcher who drew on various documents, letters, and manuscripts. His pen never left his right hand on all his travels. He also visited places of worship, zawiyas, archives, libraries, and museums. He was nicknamed the Sheikh of Historians[54]. He was a memorizer of the Qur'an and obtained several certificates, including the Ahliya and the Baccalaureate. He was appointed as a teacher by the Association of Muslim Scholars and was also active in the Cairo branch of the General Union of Algerian Muslim Students.

Saadallah translated many historical documents recorded by French military personnel and travelers. He was known as the Sheikh of Algerian Historians due to his numerous historical writings. Saadallah had a penchant for literature and wrote literary articles in the press. He also left his mark on poetry. He also contributed to the defense of Algeria, making no distinction between issues related to his homeland, Algeria, and issues related to his Arab-Islamic homeland[55] .

Saadallah specialized in writing and translation and was an assistant professor of history at the University of Wisconsin in the United States. He then returned to Algeria and became vice dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Algiers from 1968 to 1972, then professor and head of the history department. [56]

His writings were characterized by seriousness, rigor, and meticulous methods in the field of historical research, through his research into sources rich in heritage, literature, and thought, and his verification of the manuscripts of Algerian scholars[57] . Saadallah is considered a model of the nationalist fighter and contributor to the writing of his country's history. He is a researcher with a keen insight and broad perspective in diagnosing the history of Algeria through the stages of French occupation[58] .

We often find him quoting what supporters of the colonial school wrote in his articles on Algerian history, discussing their intentions and then revealing their secrets. In an article on the French approach, he follows the evolution of this writing among French military personnel and academic historians, but criticizes some of them objectively.[59]

Saadallah devoted his literature, both poetry and prose, to serving the causes of his homeland and introducing its great men. He said, "Algeria is, above all, an integral part of the Arab homeland, and this homeland believes in a glorious civilization that Algeria itself has contributed to defending and supporting." In his analysis of Algerian history, he linked it to the circle of Arab-Islamic civilization.[60] .

Abu al-Qasim Saadallah made a statement in which he expressed pride in his cultural identity with a historical approach linked to the present, saying: This culture was Arab and Islamic, shared by Algerians from the east to the west and from the north to the south of the country. This important culture, said to be advanced or degenerate, is our past, and it is from it that we derive our identity and our reality today."[61] .

3[62]-2/The historical and intellectual output of Abu al-Qasim Saadallah:

The historian Abu al-Qasim Saadallah has several distinguished academic works and publications focusing on the study of Algerian history. He specialized in cultural history and the history of the Algerian national movement. Among the works that distinguished the historian's research in the field of history, we mention:

- The book Cultural History of Algeria[63], which is the fruit of a quarter-century of effort. Two editions of this book were published in Algeria in 1981 and 1985 in two parts, while the third edition was published in 1998 in Beirut.

The first two parts are devoted to the Ottoman period, from the 10th to the beginning of the 13th century AH, corresponding from the 11th to the 14th centuries AD.م 16 toم 19 .

The first part deals with the theoretical aspects of cultural history, referring to the dynamics of education and culture in Algerian society during the period under study, and is divided into six chapters.

The first chapter of the first part is devoted to the ninth century AH (15th century AD), considering it an important stage in the development of the culture inherited from the Ottoman era.

The second chapter deals with various intellectual influences and trends and is divided into six sections that address the relations between Algerians and Ottomans, as well as Algerian society, in a study of the factors that influenced the social, cultural, and economic life of Algerians during the Ottoman era. in addition to the role of cities and religious and literary life. This chapter also addresses maritime jihad, the sense of shared destiny, and the various revolts that took place against the Ottomans.

Under the heading of cultural institutions, the third chapter examines waqfs (endowments), mosques, zawiyas (religious schools), schools, higher education institutions, and finally libraries.[64]

The fourth chapter deals with education and educators, introducing us to education policy and methods, as well as the approved curricula.

The study also addressed the topic of scholars in the fifth chapter, highlighting their status during the Ottoman era and their various functions.

The last chapter is devoted to the Almoravids and Sufi orders[65], noting the Ottomans' attitude towards Sufis and giving us a picture of the state of Sufism during the Ottoman era. It then discusses the Almoravids and the most important Sufi orders, limiting this discussion to a group of Almoravids and

Sufis[66].

The second part is devoted to the study of cultural production in the fields of Islamic law, logic, Sufism, literature, history, medicine, mathematics, and the like.

- His approach to writing:

In this book, he adopted an analytical approach, believing that the researcher's task is not to collect material and cram it into a book without opinion or scrutinyor arrangement, but rather requires the study, analysis, and explanation of phenomena. In his study of historical production, the author classifies and evaluates, then discusses the authors' opinions and positions and corrects some errors. Thus, the material in this book is not a rigid mass of historical events or a statistical abstraction of various historical productions[67].

[68]He relied on a number of sources, the most important of which are Ibn Maimun's Al-Tuhfat al-Marbiyya [and] Ibn Sahnun's Al-Thaghr al-Jamani.He also referred to some sources in foreign translations, such as Ibn Askar's Doha al-Nasher and Al-Qadri's Nashir al-Mathani.

What is noticeable about Abu al-Qasim Saad Allah in this book is that he did not include a list of sources and references at the end of the book, which included various documents, archives, rare printed books, circulating books, articles, and newspapers. According to him, this is due to several reasons:

1- The sources for each chapter are mentioned in his comments, so anyone interested in a particular topic can refer to the comments on that chapter in the book.

2- He was keen to refer his work to the references he relied on and even to mention the numbers of manuscripts and documents to make it easier for researchers to refer back to them.

3- The book itself is a study of sources, especially the second part of

4- He also believes that if he had cited all the sources he referred to, the book would have been much longer [(69)].

As for the documents, he relied on them in the first part, in addition to the other sources mentioned in the comments, and he used these documents to study the following issues: religious institutions, clergy, the origins of scholarly families, the status of minorities, and the status of cities.

He also focused in this book on the methodological aspect in the form of notes, stating that when referring to a manuscript source, we mention its location, number, description, and supplements. In the case of sources that were manuscripts and then published, such as Al-Thaghr al-Jamani and Al-Tuhfa al-Marziya, the absolute reference means the printed version, otherwise the term manuscript is used. is mentioned in relation to it.

He also rarely wrote the names of foreign authors in Latin, referring to the pronunciation of the author's language of origin, for example, Schiller and not Schaler. In the index of names, he adopted the universal alphabetical order, dispensing with "Ibn" and "Abu."

In the introduction to this book, the researcher refers to the dark aspects of this era for Algerians, in addition to its bright aspects. He also presents a picture of the cultural situation in Algeria during this period and raises several questions that serve the nature of the subject, such as the extent to which it is accurate to describe the Ottoman era as one of cultural decline. On the other hand, he addresses an issue that many researchers interested in Ottoman history continue to debate to this day, which is mainly focused on understanding why Algerians coexisted with the new Ottoman regime in its early stages without revolting against it and declaring independence, even though the reasons for its presence had disappeared with the departure of the[70].

As for his book Research and Opinions on the History of Algeria, which was published in four parts, some of which were printed in Algeria and others in the Levant, it covered topics related to national history in modern and contemporary times. Some of these topics are lengthy and in-depth, while others are short and do not constitute an opinion in a book or conclusions from a document.

Abu al-Qasim Saadallah also worked on editing some books and manuscripts, the most important of which is Europe and Algeria by John Wolfe. This book is dedicated to studying the Ottoman period from 1500 to 1830 and consists of 16 chapters, beginning with the Turkish conquest of Algeria. The second chapter deals with the character of Kheireddine in his campaigns against Charles V.

The study also touches on the government of the Algerian Eyalet and its general situation, in addition to the historical stages it went through, with a focus on the 17th and 18th centuries, leading up to the end of Ottoman rule after the first French military expedition. The researcher has published several studies and articles in numerous magazines, including: The French Approach to Writing the History of Algeria[71] .

Military and commercial activity in the 18th century[72] , Abdelrazak Ben Hammadouche Al-Jazaïri and his journey[73] , Algerian Mufti Ibn Al-Anabi and his book Al-Sa'i Al-Mahmoud fi Nizam Al-Jund[74] , The Court of Medea Register at the End of Ottoman Rule[75] , From the News of Shaban Pasha Dai of Algeria 1695[76] .

This is part of the historical legacy of a researcher passionate about researching Algeria's cultural heritage. He is a researcher so passionate that he is fascinated by researching the literary and scientific works of Algerian scholars throughout the ages.

Conclusions

The present research attempts to respond to a number of organically linked inquiries concerning the subject at hand , undertaking a critical analysis of the writings of Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani and Abu al-Qasim Saadallah in terms of their content and underlying methodology. We have concluded with the following results:

- while the primary aim of historical scholarship is to represent reality and events in an objective and impartial manner , the writings of Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani and Abu al-Qasim Saadallah articulated a distinctly national project, characterized by intellectual independence and freedom from bias or external dependence . Their historical works emerged as a critical reaction to the narratives advanced by the French colonial school, which consciously sought to misinterpret Algeria’s past and obscure the depth of its civilizational heritage.
- These two figures played a major role in preserving and reviving national memory through their academic writings, not to mention their efforts in laying the foundations of the national historical school and rewriting national history.
- The works of Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani stand out for their methodological rigor and thematic focus on national identity and safeguarding Arab-Islamic heritage. Al-Madani’s writings were primarily centered on challenging colonial claims and illuminating the history of Algeria across different historical periods. His approach was characterized by a synthesis of analytical reasoning and historical narration, grounded in the use of primary documents and firsthand memoirs.

With regard to Abu al-Qasim Saadallah’s scholarship, his contributions, both in content and methodological approach, were primarily directed toward documenting intellectual and literary life, most comprehensively articulated in his book The Cultural History of Algeria, as well as on the growth of national consciousness among Algerians in his book The Algerian National Movement.His methodology is based on criticism and comparison of sources, avoiding preconceptions and scrutinizing events.

By re-examining historical narratives and expanding the scope of inquiry, Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani and Abu al-Qasim Saadallah helped to overcome notable gaps within the field of Algerian historiography.

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