Vol :21 N: 01/ 2026
PP: 369 - 380
ISSN: 1112-7015
EISSN: 2602-5973

Mohammed Ibn Abi Shanab al-Jazairi and His Scholarly Contributions

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Published: 31/03/2026	Accepted: 06/02/2026	Received: 19/11/2025

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ABSTRACT:

Mohammed Ibn Abi Shanab was an Algerian scholar and the first in modern times to earn a doctoral degree. Educated in schools established by French colonial authorities, he drew upon Western sciences, methods, and research approaches to shape his own scholarly path. This equipped him with the tools of scientific inquiry, enabling him to engage with other cultures, serve Algerian heritage, and correct Western—particularly French—misconceptions about Algerian identity and the rich Arab tradition. This article examines Ibn Abi Shanab's authorial efforts, through which he sought to revive the Arab literary, scientific, and intellectual heritage by translating selected works into French. In less than twenty years, he produced significant studies on Arabic, Maghrebi, and Algerian subjects and translated portions of these studies and poetic collections into French, employing a precise academic method that facilitated French cultural engagement with Algerian heritage.

Keywords: Mohammed Ibn Abi Shanab; Authorship; Comparative Studies; Translation; Etymology

1. INTRODUCTION

Amid the intense cultural and ideological conflict, and under the overwhelming shadow of colonial domination that marked the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—a period that sought to obscure and distort Algerian and Arab identity—the name of *al-ʿAllāma* Muḥammad ibn Abī Shanab emerged as one of the prominent figures who marshaled his intellectual strength to defend that identity. He worked to restore the active presence of Arab and Islamic heritage within the scholarly arena and to build bridges of engagement with other cultures, allowing them to converge within the broader sphere of knowledge and learning.

In a relatively brief span of his life, this distinguished scholar succeeded in establishing himself both domestically and internationally. He presented the fruit of rigorous intellectual effort that left a positive impression—even among those who questioned the significance of Arab thought or sought to diminish its value. His contributions constituted a rich and diverse corpus that spanned multiple fields and bore his clear imprint upon them. His legacy remained a vital source of inspiration for

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subsequent generations of scholars and seekers of knowledge (Rahmani, 2016, p. 53).

- Who, then, was Abū Shanab?
- And what were his principal contributions to authorship and classification?

2. Introduction to Ibn Abi Shannab

2.1 His Life and Lineage

Muhammad ibn al-‘Arabi ibn Muhammad Abi Shannab was a distinguished scholar and researcher in the field of literature. He was born on Tuesday, 20 Rajab 1286 AH (October 26, 1869 CE) in Fahs, near the city of Médéa, in a region known today as Aïn al-Dhahab (Nweihid, 1970, p. 179). From an early age, he demonstrated remarkable intellectual brilliance, displaying both a profound mastery of the knowledge and culture of his time and a strong attachment to his authentic heritage and identity.

His early education followed the traditional system in his hometown of Médéa, after which he entered a French school and, at a young age, obtained a teaching diploma from the Bouzaréah Normal School in the French language. He was the first Arab to earn a doctoral degree, an achievement that qualified him to be appointed in 1924 as a professor in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Algiers (Helaïli, p. 07).

Ibn Abi Shannab had memorized the Qur’an and possessed a native-like command of French, alongside a proficient knowledge of Persian, Hebrew, Italian, Turkish, and Spanish, among other languages. His scholarly reputation extended beyond Algeria: he was elected a member of the Arab Scientific Academy in Damascus in 1920 and later a member of the Colonial Scientific Society in Paris in 1924.

He represented Algeria at several international congresses, including the Congress of Orientalists in Rabat (1928) and another in Oxford, where he enjoyed a high standing among Orientalists. His intellectual prominence was widely recognized by scholars and literary figures of his time. He maintained correspondence with many eminent personalities, such as Ignaty Krachkovsky and Ahmad Taymur Pasha (Nweihid, 1970, p. 170).

On November 15, 1903, at the age of thirty-four, he married the daughter of Shaykh Qaddur ibn Muhammad ibn Mustafa, the imam of the Great Mosque. The couple had five sons and four daughters, among whom was Dr. Sa‘d ibn Shannab, who continued his father’s path of scholarship and learning (Omar, 2018, p. 74).

Throughout his life, Ibn Shanab devoted himself to study, teaching, research, and writing until his death on 26 Sha‘bān 1347 AH (5 February 1929), following a struggle with an illness that physicians were unable to cure. He was laid to rest in the Sidi ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Tha‘alibi Cemetery in Algiers (Om Hani, 2016, p. 54).

Ibn Shanab grew up within the educational institutions established by the French colonial administration, which aimed to obliterate Algerian, Arab, and Islamic identity and culture, and to produce generations alienated from their heritage and imbued with Western thought. However, owing to his keen intellect and sound judgment, this scholar safeguarded himself through a profound grounding in authentic Arab culture, which he had imbibed since childhood. At the same time, he

drew inspiration from the West by adopting their sciences, methods, and research techniques, thereby constructing his own distinct intellectual path. This synthesis equipped him with the tools of scholarly inquiry that enabled him to engage with foreign cultures, serve Algerian heritage (Om Hani, 2016, p. 54), and rectify Western—particularly French—misconceptions about Algerian identity and the broader Arab intellectual tradition.

Ibn Shanab assumed three principal missions:

- Reviving the rich Arab literary, scientific, and intellectual heritage.
- Translating selected works from this heritage into French.
- Facilitating reciprocal cultural exchange through translation between the Algerian and French peoples.

Indeed, Ibn Shanab succeeded in realizing these aims. Within a period of no more than twenty years, he produced a significant body of scholarly works on Arab, Maghrebi, and Algerian studies. During the same period, he translated a number of these studies and poetic anthologies into French, employing a rigorous academic methodology that enabled French readers to engage meaningfully with Algeria's rich cultural and literary legacy (Teroch, p. 03).

2.2 His Character and Morality

Ibn Abī Shanab was renowned for his profound humility, refined manners, and preference for solitude and silence except when speech served a purpose. He was known for his kindness and his ever-pleasant smile toward those he met. He preferred to manage his own affairs personally and, despite his many professional responsibilities, never neglected his duties toward his family. He was deeply attached to his traditional Algerian attire and steadfastly preserved local customs and traditions, as well as his commitment to speaking the Arabic language.

A scholar well-versed in academic works of various languages and historical periods, he earned the nickname *"the Ibn al-Nadīm of his time."* Though he was a frequent smoker and lived a simple life reminiscent of his forefathers—sharing the humble lifestyle of rural farmers—his simplicity never extended to his scholarly work or his reading habits. He would sit alone in his study on a tall, round-backed chair with armrests, before a modern-style desk, writing with a contemporary quill. Despite being exposed to the alluring aspects of Western civilization, he remained unaffected by its superficial charms and material enticements.

He was a devout man, diligent in performing his prayers, and did not rest until nightfall (Zemam, 2007, pp. 23-24). Through his knowledge, humility, and cultural dedication, he established himself as a servant and advocate of the Arab heritage, gaining recognition not only from his peers but even from those who opposed him. In acknowledgment of his scholarship and contributions, the French government awarded him the Order of the Legion of Honour in 1922 (Teroch, p. 5).

3. His Works and Scholarly Contributions

Ibn Abī Shanab occupies a prominent and distinct position in the history of Algerian intellectual and cultural life. A study of his biography, scholarly formation, and intellectual legacy reveals him as a pioneer of a nascent modern culture characterized by linguistic and cultural plurality, exceptional

intellect, prudence, and self-assurance. These qualities were clearly manifested in his extensive and diverse body of work—spanning authorship, critical editing, and translation—across disciplines such as linguistics, literature, translation studies, lexicography, and history.

He produced more than forty books, contributed sixty-four articles to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, and published seventy-five studies, most of them in French. His writings appeared in journals such as *La Revue Africaine* and *Al-Shihāb*.

His intellectual curiosity drove him to explore a wide array of topics and to advance ideas unprecedented in his field (Om Hani, 2016, p. 55).

Ibn Abī Shanab did not prioritize rhetorical ornamentation or stylistic flourish. He once stated:

"Acquire knowledge—it should not concern you whether it comes in an eloquent style or otherwise. What matters is that you understand what I intend to convey. Do not be deceived by the embellishment of words or their ornamentation, for language is but a tool for comprehension and communication (Omar, 2018, p. 77)."

His prose was characterized by precision and directness, completely devoid of affectation, ambiguity, or unnecessary allusion. He avoided embellishment and verbosity, favoring concision and clarity for the sake of benefit. Some scholars attributed this stylistic simplicity to his greater command of the French language compared to Arabic. Nonetheless, his writing remained a model of lucid scholarship, distinguished by intellectual rigor, humility, and devotion to the advancement of Arab and Islamic heritage (Om Hani, 2016, p. 55).

3.1 His Works and Their Predominantly Heritage-Oriented Dimension (Helaïli, pp. 11-20)

Ibn Abi Shannab's scholarly contributions are characterized by a deep engagement with the Arab-Islamic intellectual and linguistic heritage, combining rigorous philological research with comparative analysis. Among his most notable works are the following:

- ***Survey of Arabic Works Published by Muslims between 1322–1323 AH / 1904–1905 CE***

In this study, Ibn Abi Shannab presented a comprehensive review of Arabic publications issued across the Arab world during the years 1904–1905. He noted certain limitations regarding works published in India, Persia, and Turkey, due to delays in their arrival to Algeria. The survey classified publications according to five geographical regions: Cairo, Beirut, Tunis, Algiers, and Fez. His methodology involved listing each book's title in Arabic script, followed by the author's name in Latin letters, along with the number of volumes and pages, following the conventions of contemporary bibliographic practice.

- ***Islamic Pedagogical Reflections: The Education and Upbringing of Children***

In this article, Ibn Abi Shannab highlighted the pioneering role of Muslim scholars in producing works on child education and moral upbringing. Drawing upon Qur'anic verses to support his arguments, he translated a manuscript entitled *"Conclusion on the Discipline, Upbringing, and Education of Children and What Pertains Thereto"*—a treatise by Imam al-Ghazālī—into French, emphasizing the enduring pedagogical insights of Islamic thought.

- ***Ibn Musayyib: From Tlemcen to Mecca in the 18th Century***

This study features Ibn Abi Shannab's translation and detailed commentary of a 120-verse Arabic poem into French. The poem celebrates the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the virtues of the righteous, and embodies the literary genre of travel poetry (riḥla), reflecting both devotional and cultural dimensions of 18th-century Tlemcenite scholarship.

- ***The Origin of the Term "Chachia" (Traditional Cap)***

In this linguistic study, Ibn Abi Shannab combined Muslim and Orientalist sources to trace the etymology and semantic development of the term *chachia*, illustrating his commitment to a comparative and interdisciplinary method aimed at achieving accurate philological conclusions.

- ***Summary of Two Manuscripts Concerning the Nobles of the Tamslouht Zāwiya***

This research analyzes two manuscripts:

- The first, by an anonymous author, discusses the genealogy of the Sharifian lineage of the Banū Amghar.
- The second, by Abū al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad ibn Salīm ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Shuʿayb al-Shīʿī al-Harawī, examines the life of Sīdī Abū Yaʿzā, a revered Moroccan Sufi figure.
- *A Poem Dedicated to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him)*

In this piece, Ibn Abi Shannab translated a poem by Umm Hānī praising the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), reflecting his literary sensitivity and his dedication to preserving classical Arabic devotional poetry through translation.

- ***Notes on the Use and Origin of the Word "Tilīs"***

At the beginning of this article, Ibn Abi Shannab observes that Arabic lexicons record the word only in the form *tilīsa* (تليسة) on the morphological pattern *fiʿīla* (فعيلة), similar to *sakīna* (سكينة). Citing numerous linguistic sources, he explores the semantic range of the term in both Arabic and Western references, investigates its historical emergence, and questions its linguistic origin—whether Arabic or foreign. After a detailed comparative analysis, he concludes that the term has Greek-Byzantine roots.

- ***A List of Abbreviations Used by Arab Authors***

This work presents a catalogue of over one hundred abbreviations employed by classical Arab writers in disciplines such as grammar, jurisprudence, hadith, philosophy, history, and biography. Each abbreviation is listed first, followed by the full Arabic term it represents, along with a French translation and explanatory notes. This study serves as an important reference tool for scholars of Arabic manuscripts and philology.

- The Number Three among the Arabs: In his research, Ibn Shanab concluded that the number three holds a distinctive position in Arab and Islamic culture. He referred to various works that have discussed this symbolic and cultural significance.
- *Tuhfat al-Adab fī Mīzān Ashʿār al-ʿArab* (The Gift of Literature: On the Scale of Arabic Poetry):

This is a critical work devoted to the study of Arabic poetic meters, analyzing and comparing poems through the principles of prosody (‘arūḍ) and rhyme (qāfiya) in order to distinguish between sound and flawed verse. The book, consisting of 167 pages, opens with a preface in which Ibn Shanab introduces the purpose of the work.

In the following eight pages, he discusses the fundamental terminology of Arabic prosody under subheadings such as *On Prosody, On Poetry, On the Qasīda (Ode), On the Structure of the Verse, and On Syllables and Feet*. He then devotes over ten pages to the study of metrical feet (tafā‘īl) and the various types of modifications and alterations (zihāfāt and ‘ilal) that occur within them.

The remaining chapters are dedicated to the sixteen metrical patterns (al-buḥūr) established by al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī, combining theoretical explanation with practical examples. Each meter concludes with a set of applied illustrations.

In the preface to the book, Ibn Shanab writes:

“To proceed: this is a concise treatise that I have composed on the science of prosody and rhyme, limiting myself to what is essential and sufficient, rich in benefit, and avoiding superfluous detail. I have made it a gift for beginners... For the sake of clarity and usefulness, I have employed a simple style, deliberate repetition, and numerous examples, for these are the surest means to facilitate comprehension, attain precision, and enhance understanding. I have entitled it *Tuhfat al-Adab fī Mīzān Ash‘ār al-‘Arab* (Cheneb, 1945, p. 03).”

3.2 Works Written in Arabic (Om Hani, 2016, p. 56)

- *Riḥlat al-Wartilānī* (The Journey of al-Wartilānī) – Algiers, 1908.
- *Sharḥ wa Naẓm Muthallathāt Quṭrub* (Commentary and Versification of Quṭrub’s Triads) – Algiers, 1907.
- *Fihrisat al-Kutub al-Makhṭūṭa fī Khizānat al-Jāmi‘ al-A‘ẓam* (Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Library of the Great Mosque) – 1909.
- *Abū Dulāmah wa-Shi‘ruhu* (Abu Dulamah and His Poetry) – Doctoral Dissertation, 1922.

3.3 Works Written in French

- *Recueil des Proverbes Populaires en Algérie et au Maghreb* (Collection of Popular Proverbs in Algeria and the Maghreb) – Three volumes, Paris, 1905–1907.
- *Les Biographies des Savants d’Afrique* (Classes of Scholars of Africa) – Two volumes, Paris, 1915 and 1920.
- *Les Mots Turcs et Persans Restés dans le Dialecte Algérien* (Turkish and Persian Words Preserved in the Algerian Dialect) – Algiers, 1922.

3.4 Edited Works

Ibn Abī Shanab made remarkable contributions to the editing and preservation of Algerian and Islamic heritage in general. As Abū al-Qāsim Saʿd Allāh described him, he was *“a man who put his knowledge and scholarly ability to good use in researching and shedding light on the works of past*

Algerian, Arab, and Muslim scholars. He possessed a sound understanding of the principles of scholarly criticism and published classical works with humility and dignity (Saadallah, 1998, pp. 172–186)."

Among the key works that Ibn Abī Shanab critically edited are:

- Al-Bustān fī Dhikr al-Awliyāʾ wa-l-ʿUlamāʾ bi-Tilmisan by Ibn Maryam al-Tilimsānī (1908).
- Al-Mumtiʿ fī Sharḥ al-Muqniʿ by Abū Saʿīd al-Suwaysī (Algeria, 1908).
- ʿUnwān al-Dirāya fīman ʿUrifa min ʿUlamāʾ al-Miʾa al-Sābiʿa fī Bijāya by al-Ghubrīnī (1910).
- Sharḥ Dīwān ʿUrwa ibn al-Ward by Ibn al-Sikkīt (1926).

3.5 Ibn Abī Shanab and Translation

Ibn Abī Shanab selectively chose works to translate into Arabic, particularly those of significant artistic and cultural value from the ancient Western heritage, as well as texts that had been distorted by certain Orientalists. His translation method was characterized by precision and balance—he rendered every word into French, often adding explanations or elaborations when necessary, while abbreviating certain recurring terms through symbols.

Notable examples of his translation work include (Teroch, p. 09):

- The Journey from Tlemcen to Mecca (*al-Riḥla min Tilmisan ilā Makka*) by the popular Tlemcenian poet Ibn al-Maslayb. Ibn Abī Shanab critically edited and translated the text into French with exceptional skill, publishing it in the *Revue Africaine Française* in 1900 (issues 44, 261, and 282). In his introduction, he noted that Algerian vernacular poetry was abundant, though only works from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have survived. These poems cover themes such as love, elegy, description, narratives of past and contemporary events, praise, and satire. However, manuscript copyists tended to preserve only the religiously themed poems (Nouiwat, p. 28).
- He described Ibn al-Masayib as one of Algeria's most eminent poets, credited with composing 304 poems on both worldly and religious themes (Nouiwat, p. 28).
- His French translation of al-Ghazālī's treatise *Risāla fī Riyāḍat al-Awlād wa-Tarbiyatihim* (On the Discipline and Education of Children), published in the *Revue Africaine* in 1901 (pp. 101–110).
- A translation of the *Dīwān* of al-Ḥuṭayʾa, accompanied by an introductory essay.
- A translation of *Matn Shudhūr al-Dhahab fī al-Naḥw* by Ibn Hishām al-Anṣārī.
- A translation of *al-Taysīr wa-l-Tashīl fī Dhikr mā Aghfalahu al-Shaykh Khalīl min Aḥkām al-Magāriba* by Shaykh Abū ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Fāsī.

It has been reported by several scholars that Ibn Abī Shanab produced many other translations that are now lost. Some of these were delivered as lectures to university students, while others were presented at Orientalist congresses in which he actively participated (Om Hani, 2016, pp. 58-59).

4. Ibn Abī Shanab and Comparative Studies

4.1 Literary Studies

Ibn Abī Shanab entered the field of comparative studies through his deep interest in languages, their acquisition, and his exploration of the hidden dimensions of diverse cultures. His seminal work, *"The Islamic Origins of the Divine Comedy,"* published in *La Revue Africaine* in 1919, stands as a prime example of his contributions to comparative literary research. In this study, he examined the possible influences of Islamic eschatological narratives on Dante's *Divine Comedy*, presenting an early and pioneering model of cross-cultural literary analysis that combined philological precision with cultural insight (Om Hani, 2016, p. 57).

4.2 Linguistic Studies

Ibn Abī Shanab's comparative linguistic research focused primarily on the Algerian vernacular (*ʿāmmiyya*). His doctoral thesis, titled *"Turkish and Persian Words Remaining in the Algerian Dialect,"* was the second dissertation required for the attainment of a doctoral degree at the time, as the academic regulations then stipulated the submission of two separate works in successive stages. The thesis was publicly defended in Algiers and constitutes one of the earliest systematic studies of linguistic borrowing in North African Arabic.

In the introduction, Ibn Abī Shanab classified and quantified the Persian and Turkish loanwords in Algerian dialects as follows:

- 72 words related to *military affairs*
- 31 words associated with *naval terminology*
- 39 words connected to *food and cuisine*
- 59 words pertaining to *funerary practices and household items*
- 55 words concerning *clothing*
- 65 words referring to *merchandise and trade*
- 313 words covering *various other meanings and uses*

He also noted that many Algerian families bore surnames of Turkish origin, such as Boursali, Ghāzī, Briski, Qarāwzān, Bouchnāq, Kouloughli, Karāzī, Bechtarjī, Ṣābounjī, Qalāyjī, and Bouqlī, among others. Yet, he observed that many Algerians were unaware of the Ottoman or Persian roots of numerous words and family names in their daily life (Boucheiba, 2022, p. 635).

Ibn Shannab considered it essential to compile such words into a concise lexicon (al-Sattar),[2]

[2] The term *taʾthīl* (التأثيل) in Arabic linguistics denotes the origin and foundation of a thing—that is, anything possessing an ancient or established root is described as *muʾaththal* (مؤثّل). Technically, however, *taʾthīl* refers to the branch of linguistic study concerned with tracing the historical origin of words: it investigates their earliest known forms, the phonetic and semantic changes they have undergone over time, and their relationships within the linguistic family to which they belong. In essence, it is the study of the etymology and historical development of vocabulary—what is commonly known in Western linguistics as *etymology*.

which he produced in accordance with the general principles of dictionary-making and following the methodologies of etymological lexicography established by Orientalist scholars.

The entries of the dictionary were arranged alphabetically, from *alif* (ا) to *yāʾ* (ي), and the work comprised 88 pages. The explanations were provided in French, which made the dictionary somewhat resemble bilingual lexicons. However, it was in fact a specialized dictionary, devoted to a selected group of words believed to be of Persian or Turkish origin, as well as other terms that have persisted in Algerian vernacular usage, particularly in the cities of Algiers, Constantine, and Médéa (Boucheiba, 2022, p. 635).

In compiling his dictionary, Ibn Abī Shannab relied on twenty sources, most of which were dictionaries and etymological studies closely related to the subject of his work. All of these sources were written in foreign languages. Among them were the following (Boucheiba, 2022, p. 635):

- *Supplement to the Turkish Dictionaries* by Barbier de Meynard, published in Paris between 1885 and 1887.
- *Practical Arabic–French Dictionary* by Boissière, published in Paris in 1850.
- *Etymological Dictionary of Words of Oriental Origin* by Marcel Devic.
- *Arabic Proverbs in Algeria and Morocco* by Muḥammad Ibn Abī Shannab, published in Paris between 1905 and 1907.
- *Turkish–French Dictionary* by Bianchi and Kieffer, published in Paris in 1850.
- *Some Remarks on Boissière and William Marçais's Practical Arabic–French Dictionary*, published in the Proceedings of the Orientalist Congress held in Algiers in 1905.

Examples of Entries in Ibn Abī Shannab's Dictionary

Among the words that constituted the lexical material of his dictionary are:

- دوزان (Dūzān), p. 42 — meaning *equipment* or *gear*.
- ديدان (Dīdān), with a silent *yāʾ*, p. 43 — meaning *good health* or *vigorous youth*.
- زردة (Zarda), p. 46 — referring to a *dish made of rice and saffron*.
- شالبي (Shālabi), with an open *lām*, p. 51 — meaning *a sweetened lemon-flavored drink*.

Furthermore, Ibn Abī Shannab included compound words formed by combining an Arabic root with the Turkish suffix *-ji* (ـجي), denoting profession or occupation. Examples include:

- شمامجي (Shammāmjī), p. 53 — meaning *tobacco seller or maker*.
- قطرانجي (Qaṭrānjī), p. 70 — meaning *tar maker*.
- باش جراح (Bāsh Jarrāḥ) — meaning *chief surgeon*.
- باش عدل (Bāsh ʿAdl), p. 17 — meaning *court official* or *chief judicial clerk* (Boucheiba, 2022, p. 635).

4.4 Sociolinguistic Dimension

Through his socio-psychological study entitled *"Arabic Proverbs Common in Algeria and Morocco,"* Ibn Shannab sought to demonstrate the cultural unity of the Maghreb countries. He published the first volume in French in Paris in 1905, containing 926 proverbs arranged alphabetically from A to Z, in 302 pages. In it, he compared popular proverbs with literary ones and provided commentary on them, drawing linguistic and literary conclusions. The second volume was printed in Paris in 1906, comprising 308 pages (Teroch, p. 19).

5. Ibn Abī Shanab and His Poetic Output

Ibn Abī Shanab composed both melḥūn poetry (vernacular verse) and classical rhymed poetry. He wrote numerous poems about Algeria, in praise of his hometown, al-Midyah, and on a variety of other themes. His poetry often reflects his intellectual inclinations and his call for the pursuit of knowledge. In one of his poems, he urges his peers to seek learning (Laroussi, 1983, p. 45; Wikipedia Contributors, n.d.):

"Awake, my kinsmen, to the dawn that rises upon the heights,
Strive diligently to acquire knowledge and insight.
For scholars and learning have departed from among you,
And none remain but the aged and the heedless.
The fields of knowledge lie deserted, desolation has taken root,
And the raven of ignorance now truly croaks upon the hilltops.
Alas for us! No seeker of knowledge, no teacher remains,
No reciter of poetry, nor teller of pleasant tales."

In another poem, he praises Algeria:

"Come, my friend, let us journey toward Algiers,
My state has grown constrained, and longing holds me still.
There, a gazelle enchants with her bewitching eyes,
Among blossoms of narcissus and roses in full bloom."

And in praise of his birthplace, al-Midyah, he writes:

"Al-Midyah surpasses all towns in virtue,
With its wholesome air and temperate breeze.
It is none other than a garden adorned,
With delicious fruit and the sweetest of waters."

These poems reveal Ibn Abī Shanab's deep emotional attachment to his homeland, his pride in Algerian nature and culture, and his dedication to the moral and intellectual awakening of his people.

6. Critiques of Ibn Abī Shanab's Works

The works of Ibn Abī Shannab have not received sufficient study, critique, or review, which may be explained by the fact that his writings remain largely unknown to specialized scholars. His book on Italian words in Algerian colloquial Arabic is still in manuscript form and has not yet been published, while his dictionary of Persian and Turkish words preserved in the Algerian dialect was

printed in an old and poor-quality edition. Moreover, as it was written in French, it still requires translation into Arabic, and thus has not been studied to date.

Among the criticisms directed at his work is the observation that it lacks phonetic and morphological data to trace the transformation of words from Turkish into Arabic or from Persian into Arabic. Furthermore, the sources he relied upon were primarily French references, and he did not consult authentic Persian or Turkish sources, which represents a methodological shortcoming. He also occasionally erred in attributing words to their original roots, sometimes confusing Greek and Arabic derivations, and often expressed uncertainty, as in his remark that *a word "might be of Arabic origin"*—for example, in the case of the word ṭabla (طبلة), p. 58, and others (Boucheiba, 2022, p. 631).

As for his extensive work on editing *al-Riḥla al-Warthilāniyya*, it was indeed a monumental scholarly effort; however, it contained numerous gaps he could not fill, many corrupted phrases, and missing passages in some manuscript copies, while in others the same passages appeared but in different order or locations, raising doubts about their authenticity and whether they truly belonged to the original author (Filali, pp. 51–52).

7. CONCLUSION

Ibn Abī Shanab distinguished himself through the vastness of his knowledge, the breadth of his erudition, and his tireless dedication to the service of human culture as a whole. His work reflects a unique, multifaceted intellect capable of harmonizing the traditional with the modern (Om Hani, 2016, p. 62), and the classical with the contemporary. His foremost concern was to defend national and Arab identity, to restore their image, and to elevate their standing—both of which had been obscured during a dark era marked by colonial domination and cultural alienation. He succeeded in embodying these ideals within the pages of his works—volumes upon which history itself has inscribed his name in letters of gold.

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