

Investigating the Comprehensive Legacy of Ibn Sanad: Unraveling the Dimensions of
Arab Historiography

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Abstract

This thesis examines the book “Mattali' al-sa'ud fi tayyib akbar al-vali Dawud” written in 19th century by an Arab historian Uthman Ibn Sanad as means to explores the historical significance of the book and the historiography of the region. In 1816 Ibn Sanad left Basra to travel to Baghdad, and in the same year, Dawud Pasha overthrew Saeed Pasha to take his place as Baghdad's governor to the Ottoman Empire. Dawud Pasha wanted to entrust Ibn Sanad with his legacy, partly because he was convinced that, as an intellectual himself, his work as a politician would only have become known by a historian. Ibn Sanad, however, used Dawud Pasha to write about the region's leaving Dawud Pasha with a fifth of the documentation period with only ten years. Although Ibn Sanad chose the year 1774 as the starting date of his book reflecting on the year Dawud was born, there was no mention of Dawud within these years only within the ten years of his rule that the author witnessed from 1816 until 1826. Instead, the book starts with the people of Basra suffering from the hegemonic power of Persians. Within these 52 years, Ibn Sanad wrote primarily about the political situation in the region with the people as his main concern, not about a single ruler. Questions that are the main concern of this thesis are: Why does thinking of Ibn Sanad as a historian tell us about his work and the world of scholarship in which he lived? What do his methodologies and styles of narration tell us? Why is it significant that these are long-standing features of history writing? More importantly, why is it significant for his time? This book analysis offers insights into Ibn Sanad's use of a historical narrative to discuss events, motives, style, and themes: scholarly significance and its enduring legacy as an Arab historian in the 19-18th century. This thesis attempts to develop a more holistic picture of Ibn Sanad's impact on Arab history and its progression over time by thoroughly evaluating his multifaceted contributions, Ibn Sanad's literary attempt reflects a purposeful intention to create a biography of an individual that transcends mere individualism and serves as a powerful lens through which to explore the greater historical context of a specific era and geographical region. Rather than perceiving this as a coincidental occurrence within his work, it is critical to understand Ibn Sanad's narrative method as intentional. He brilliantly conveys a moment of societal upheaval through his careful representation of Dawud Pasha's life and times, using the individual's experiences as a vivid and compelling focal point for grasping the subtleties of the historical age. In essence, Ibn Sanad's work is a testament to biography's potential as a medium for portraying the varied dynamics of a certain time and place. By going extensively into Dawud's life, he reveals not only the individual's personal experiences and aspirations, but also the larger socio-political and cultural context. This biographical method, far from being coincidental, highlights Ibn Sanad's conscious decision to use Dawud Pasha's life story as a vehicle for addressing the greater historical context.

Keywords:

Ibn Sanad; Dawud Pasha; Hawli; saj'; Nabati:

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Introduction

Arab historiography in the nineteenth and eighteenth-century represents an extension of the historical school of Islam, especially in the formation of historians, who were mostly religious scholars, judges and writers. When studying the methods of written historical sources in the Arabian region, it is important to become familiar with the development of historiography and the tendencies of historians and narrators, their motives, methods, and resources. The aim is to expand on the study of historiography of the region and period. We need to understand stories by referring to their sources, to distinguish between what the historian said and the sources he cites, and between what was written before and what the historian adds and reports, in order to analyze and criticize the “chain of transmission.” Although this applies to the history of Islam in its early sources, this approach can also be applied to the sources of nineteenth and eighteenth-century history, especially since Arab historians who were influenced by the style of Islamic heritage in writing in terms of the approach to encounter history and its inherent tendencies in historiography, in addition to presenting historical material. The Arab region maintained a tradition of historical narration that adhered to certain orthodox principles for an extended period, including the nineteenth century. This tradition emphasized the close connection between historical accounts and religious legitimacy, preserving the religious character or genre in historical writing.

Historical writings of the nineteenth and eighteenth-century sparked out of events that influenced by the new political and sectarian doctrine of new formation in the region, especially since many doctrinal and political streams were on the rise, the Sharifs in the Hijaz, the Saudi state and the movement of Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdulwahhab in Najd, the Ibadhi imam in Oman, the Zaidi imam and the Alawites in Yemen, and the Ottomans who are trying to expand their influence and

establish their presence in the region, and the British are making a similar attempt.¹ Considering the various political influences represented by the multitude of local political forces, sectarian streams and foreign political forces. That is why we are not surprised when we read about the great interest of historians follows of this era in these subjects. There is a clear connection with the influence of political conditions, sectarian streams and tribalism on shaping the historiography and the extent to which these influences are reflected as a main theme. The prevailing political, social and intellectual conditions influenced Iraqi historians in their historiography due to sectarian and political overlaps in Iraq and the instability of the Ottoman rule. Omani historians were influenced by the Ibadi Imamate, while Najd historians were influenced by Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdulwahhab and the invitations of the Saudi State, such as Ibn Ghannam, Ibn La'boun, and Ibn Bishr and others. These historians are products of their societies, and the interests of their society unwittingly force them to write in a certain framework or a genre, which requires them to focus on a certain issue to solve or to focus on a certain movement and to ensure its legacy.

The historical production of Arab historians in the nineteenth and eighteenth century in Iraq and Najd reflects their motives for writing history, most of which came as political motives, some of which were mostly based on official request. In contrast, others were subjective, in addition to

¹ From different Muslim countries, Mecca and Medina represented an important center of presence for scholars from different countries. Many Najd scholars moved between Al-Hasa Hijaz and Iraq, Levantine, Cairo, and sometimes Istanbul. Cultural interest varied proportionately between the cities of religious studies and history, with Hijaz scholars interested in jurisprudence, its origins and branches, and hadith and its sciences. And Iraq, especially Basra, Baghdad and Mosul, in different directions of religious studies and history. On the contrary, Omani and Al-Salmi highlighted the lack of interest of Omanis in written history, as they were interested in religious studies and political events, and Yemeni scholars focused on biographies and genealogies. Najd scholars were mostly interested in the Hanbali school of thought and jurisprudence based on the bell of the new movement and the history of the Saudi state. The appearance of the call of Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdulwahhab in Najd in the second half of the eighteenth century clearly influenced the activity of historiography, resulting in the publication of many books, most of which were written by followers of the movement.

social motives (to show lineage)² and cultural motifs that emphasize the role of scholars and the use of biographies. This production had various sources that historians relied on, are written sources represented in books, letters, and correspondence of earlier historians that some historians had access to and relied on oral sources.³

Through this thesis, Ibn Sanad's corpus is thoroughly analyzed, transcending the conventional confines of his documented contributions to sectarian wars. By delving into Arab historiography, this study aims to discern the lingering orthodoxy within the Arab intellectual landscape.

Furthermore, it will traverse the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, elucidating Ibn Sanad's pivotal role as a transformative force within Arab historiography during this dynamic era.

Notably, this study will examine Ibn Sanad's fundamental writings, examining their topics, methodology, and contributions to historical knowledge. It will also examine Ibn Sanad's distinct style of writing and poetry, providing insights into the larger intellectual milieu in which he operated. Furthermore, the relevance of oral traditions in Ibn Sanad's scholarship will be highlighted, shining light on his crucial role in conserving and transferring historical information through this medium. This thesis attempts to develop a more holistic picture of Ibn Sanad's impact on Arab history and its progression over time by thoroughly evaluating his multifaceted contributions, Ibn Sanad's literary attempt reflects a purposeful intention to create a biography of an individual that transcends mere individualism and serves as a powerful lens through which to explore the greater historical context of a specific era and geographical region. Rather than

² Ibn La'boun in the introduction to his book known as (The History of Ibn La'boun) indicated that he wanted to record the lineage of the family of Mudlej in response to his cousin's request.

³ Some historians noted the inability of the people of their country to record news and considered it a great deficiency, such as Ibn Bishr in Najd, who expressed his dissatisfaction because the people of Najd were not very interested in written history. In their country and when they wrote their history, he criticized the way earlier historians treated the news of their country because they took the narration of the events as a method of writing and did it briefly without analysis or explanation. "And I know that the people of Najd and their scholars, olden and modern, did not care about the history of their time and their lands, nor who built them, nor what happened in them, nor what happened beside them nor what went to them."

perceiving this as a coincidental occurrence within his work, it is critical to understand Ibn Sanad's narrative method as intentional. He brilliantly conveys a moment of societal upheaval through his careful representation of Dawud Pasha's life and times, using the individual's experiences as a vivid and compelling focal point for grasping the subtleties of the historical age. In essence, Ibn Sanad's work is a testament to biography's potential as a medium for portraying the varied dynamics of a certain time and place. By going extensively into Dawud's life, he reveals not only the individual's personal experiences and aspirations, but also the larger socio-political and cultural context. This biographical method, far from being coincidental, highlights Ibn Sanad's conscious decision to use Dawud Pasha's life story as a vehicle for addressing the greater historical context.

Uthman bin Sanad or Ibn Sanad is unique historian of that period who wrote a biography titled: *Mattali' al-sa'ud fi tayyib akbar al-vali Dawud* by an official request from an Ottoman governor, Dawud Pasha. Ibn Sanad did not simply, however, write a biography about Dawud Pasha, instead he wrote a regional history within the biography. The production of history that Ibn Sanad is unique yet similar to contemporary historians, this thesis aim is to shed light on the historiography of the Arabic historians during the nineteenth and eighteenth century by examining Ibn Sanad book *Mattali' al-sa'ud fi tayyib akbar al-vali Dawud*. Ibn Sanad is regarded as one of the best scholars of his day and was taught by several prominent scholars in many different locations. His scholarly progress and achievements may be influenced by the surroundings and circumstances in which it gives an insight into a group of scholars of his era which Ibn Sanad himself, is a product of this scholarship circle. The environment that Ibn Sanad lived in, which includes elements such as political circumstances, educational system, cultural background, and social standards, influences his intellectual goals as a historian. The political

interconnection with writing history remains as the main motives across the region as it was centuries before.

Ibn Sanad was a writer of a ruler who enjoyed prestige and patronage, he used Dawud Pasha the regional ruler of Mamluk Iraq as a narrative device to expand on writing history of the region. His use of Hawli and Saj' in his style of writing history clearly shows a real connection between his historical era of writing and the Islamic writing style, especially the Abbasid and Mamluks of Egypt. He resembles the long-standing orthodoxy in the production of history but remain unique and marks an eventual transition in a period that was crucial to two conflicting sides the Ottoman and the Saudi State.

This period enveloped Sheikh Ibn Abdulwahhab's emergence and the subsequent transformation of the region. The era witnessed profound socio-religious shifts and the rise and fall of the first Saudi State amidst clashes with the Ottoman Empire. The pivotal role played by historians such as Ibn Ghannam, Ibn Bishr, and especially Ibn Sanad, who not only chronicled events but also engaged deeply with the socio-political fabric of the region. Ibn Sanad, renowned for his vast network of scholarly relations and meticulous methods, adopted a blend of oral, written, and testimonial sources. While early Islamic historians emphasized "chains of transmission" to authenticate events, modern Gulf historians appear to approach oral testimonies with similar reverence. The transparency and methodologies of these historians, shedding light on their invaluable contributions to preserving the Arabian Peninsula's and Iraq rich history.

Ibn Sanad's contributions to historical literature remain relatively underappreciated and insufficiently explored, particularly within Western scholarly circles, with a few notable exceptions. Ibn Sanad frequently references various sources to document events that unfolded in the region. One such exception is the work of Hala Fattah, who incorporated Ibn Sanad's

references into her book, “The Politics of Regional Trade in Iraq Aarabia, and the Gulf 1745-1900.”

Hala Fattah's work stands as a commendable effort in interpreting Ibn Sanad's historical contributions, particularly from a religious and sectarian perspective. Her analysis delves into the profound effects of the Abdulwahhab movement on the socio-political and economic dynamics of the region. Fattah's examination highlights the intricate interplay between religious ideologies, historical events, and their far-reaching consequences on the societal fabric, political landscape, and economic activities within the region. Fattah's approach underscores the importance of considering not only the historical narratives themselves but also their broader implications for understanding the multifaceted aspects of the historical context in which they emerged. By shedding light on the religious and ideological dimensions of Ibn Sanad's work, Fattah's interpretation offers valuable insights into the complex interrelationships between religious movements and their socio-political ramifications. However, these citations predominantly revolved around topics such as the rise of the Wahhabi movement, Fattah resorted to categorizing Ibn Sanad within the context of Naqshabad Sufism, albeit with some ambiguity in his stance. Furthermore, this categorization ultimately diminished the significance of Ibn Sanad's works, relegating them to being merely instrumental within the sectarian landscape. Regrettably, a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of Ibn Sanad's body of work remains largely absent from most scholarly endeavors, one key reason is the broader historiographical landscape and scholarly agendas of various periods may have influenced the level of attention paid to Ibn Sanad's works. Some epochs and intellectual movements may have placed a greater emphasis on specific elements of Islamic history or theology, resulting in the neglect of scholars such as Ibn Sanad, whose contributions transcend numerous domains. Additionally, it is important to

recognize that Ibn Sanad's writings encompass a far broader spectrum than merely documenting the Abdulwahhab movement. They represent a significant facet of this historian's multifaceted contributions to historical scholarship.

Arab Historiography

The importance of looking into the convoluted history of Arab history-writing stems from its position as a bridge between pre-Islamic Arab society's oral traditions and the written records that would come to define the rich historical legacy of the Arab world. Understanding the growth of Arab historiography is critical for understanding how the shift from oral storytelling to written accounts influenced how history was chronicled, understood, and passed down through generations. This historical detour helps us to appreciate the critical role that Arab historians had in conserving and codifying their society's collective memory, ultimately contributing to the establishment of a distinct Arab historical consciousness and raise a question on how Arab historians deal with the place of the individual and the broader historical landscape.

Before the advent of Islam, the Arab society thrived on a rich tradition of oral narration. Within this society, each tribe held a distinct and valuable oral heritage, which they shared with neighboring tribes. These oral traditions encompassed a wide range of historical information, including details about lineages, epic battles, and the art of poetry. It was through the efforts of Arab historians that much of this historical knowledge was preserved and eventually formed the foundational nucleus of Arab history.

Abdulaziz Al-Douri, a prominent scholar, emphasized the enduring significance of this pre-Islamic period. He eloquently stated, "The pre-Islamic period was not left behind." This assertion underscores the profound impact of this era on Arab culture and history. Despite the eventual

emergence of written literature, the oral tradition remained deeply ingrained in Arab society. This oral culture, with its tales of heroic deeds, intricate genealogies, and poetic expressions, played a crucial role in shaping the Arab worldview. The continued fascination with days gone by and the persistence of genealogical interests were directly influenced by this oral tradition. It allowed for the perpetuation of storytelling styles that often-prioritized narrative flair over strict historical accuracy. As a result, Arab history maintained a unique character, one that celebrated the art of storytelling and the transmission of cultural heritage through oral means.⁴

The emergence of Islam and Islamic history marked a profound transformation in the way history was perceived, recorded, and interpreted. It was a paradigm shift that encompassed various facets, from the material and subjects it covered to the underlying philosophy and method of historical inquiry. This transformative experience was initiated as part of a religious call and message, and it eventually evolved into a grand political project that found expression through the establishment of a state and the pursuit of political ambitions deeply rooted in Islamic principles.

One of the fundamental pillars of Islamic history was its connection to the Qur'an and the Sunnah (the practices and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH). These sacred sources provided the framework within which historical events and narratives were understood. The Qur'an served as a foundational text, offering guidance on ethical principles, governance, and the importance of preserving historical memory.⁵ The Sunnah, through its accounts of the Prophet's life and actions, provided a practical model for Muslims to follow in various aspects of life,

⁴ Tarif Khalidi explained that these methods remain alive. Storytelling still dominates the oral tradition in the Gulf region. Khalidi, T. (2004). *Arabic historical thought in the classical period*. Cambridge University Press. P15

⁵ Tarif Khalidi mentioned that this religious text not only inspired the historical writing but also controlled it. Khalidi, T. (2004). *Arabic historical thought in the classical period*. Cambridge University Press. P16

including historical documentation and interpretation. Additionally, Islamic historical thought was profoundly shaped by cultural interactions with ancient cultures. As Islam spread and encountered diverse cultures and traditions, it absorbed and adapted various elements of these cultures into its historical perspective. This fusion of ideas and practices contributed to the rich tapestry of Islamic historiography. Perhaps one of the most significant shifts in Islamic history was the transformation of the concept of the tribe into the broader notion of the “Umma” or the Islamic nation. This shift was not merely a semantic change but a profound alteration in the way society and history were conceptualized. The concept of the Umma emphasized a sense of unity and belonging among Muslims, transcending tribal affiliations. This collective identity became a central theme in Islamic historical narratives, fostering a sense of community and shared destiny among believers.

The emergence of Islam and the subsequent expansion of the Islamic empire brought about a profound shift in the perception of the Arab people regarding their place in the world and the importance of historical record-keeping. The advent of the concept of the state in the Islamic world created a strong theological and political demand for the creation of a complete historical record. This historical record served to legitimize the fledgling state structure, as well as to support and reinforce the newly constituted judicial and financial institutions. The requirement for documentation was critical for the state's proper functioning and for guiding the Muslim community's actions. Shakir Mustafa tells us that introduction of the Hijri calendar, genealogical interests, tribal competition, literary and historical curiosity, cultural diversity, competitiveness in knowledge production, and the widespread use of paper all influenced the development of historical documentation within Islamic civilization. These forces combined to form a vibrant and robust historical record-keeping tradition that continues to deepen our understanding of

Islamic history and culture.⁶

Al-Douri's division of the emergence of the foundations of Islamic historical formation provides unique insights into the early history of Islamic historiography. This separation can be characterized by two separate intellectual streams that shaped the emerging Islamic historical tradition. One of the most important aspects of this division was the establishment of a religious school in Medina. This school was primarily interested in religious sciences, interpretation (Tafsir), and hadith (Prophetic traditions). Medina was significant in Islamic history because it was the place where the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) formed the first Muslim community, and it remained a center for religious research following his death. Scholars in this school were concerned with preserving and explaining Islam's religious teachings and traditions. They gathered and conveyed hadith with great care, assessing their value and relevance for Muslim life. This religious school was critical in preserving Islam's spiritual and doctrinal components. In contrast to the religious school in Medina, there was a parallel intellectual tradition that focused on genealogy and the social conditions of the Arab tribes. This school was heavily entrenched in pre-Islamic Arabian history, emphasizing tribal identification, lineage, and social conventions. Scholars in this stream were interested in tracking the genealogies of Arab tribes and studying the social structures and rituals that formed Arabian society. This method attempted to situate the birth of Islam within the larger culture environment of the Arabian Peninsula.⁷⁸ This shift however, extended beyond religious material, encompassing a broader

⁶ Muşţafá, S. (1979). *Al-Tārīkh al-‘arabī wa-al-Mu‘arrikhūn: Dirāsah fī taṭawwur ‘ilm al-Tārīkh wa-ma‘rifat rijālih fī al-Islām*. Dār al-‘Ilm lil-Malāyīn. p59-60

⁷ Dūrī, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Conrad, L. I., & Donner, F. M. (1983). *The rise of historical writing among the Arabs*. Princeton University Press. P18

⁸ Al-Tabari was a notable individual who successfully incorporated parts of both the religious and tribal schools into his historical works. Al-Tabari was a well-known Islamic scholar and historian who lived in the ninth and tenth century. His massive work, “*Tarikh al-Tabari*” (The History of al-Tabari), exemplifies his all-encompassing approach to Islamic historiography. Al-Tabari integrated religious and historical narratives in this work, providing a comprehensive account of Islamic history. The incorporation of religious and tribal themes in al-Tabari's historical

understanding of history, culture, and governance in the context of the Islamic civilization's expansion. This doesn't imply that historical thought completely disregarded a materialistic historical viewpoint regarding events. However, it's important to recognize that this perspective remained a relatively minor aspect compared to the broader historical discourse. Many Muslim philosophers, including figures like Al-Biruni, held a different stance on this matter, emphasizing the material historical aspects of events. While the Sufism aspect that effect the Islamic world made an opposite this encounter. It's worth delving deeper into the relationship between these contrasting viewpoints within the context of Islamic historical scholarship.⁹

There exists a notable disparity or limitation within the historical perspective that heavily relies on hadith and a chain of transmission. This approach tends to concentrate historical attention within what Al-Khalidi characterizes as an intellectual framework (Dooms). To illustrate, the chain of transmission for pre-Islamic history and ancient civilizations encounters disruptions, rendering this method less effective. The Islamic emphasis on verifying the authenticity of events often results in the overlooking of significant historical developments. Similarly, delving into the histories of other cultures presents comparable challenges, ultimately leading to a partitioning of time between these overlapping intellectual frameworks. This intersection of Adab and history¹⁰, shaped by the Islamic context, subsequently unveils new avenues of exploration, particularly in light of the political and social dimensions of Islamic reality.¹¹

writings shows the complexity and diversity of early Islamic historiography. His work, which later historians used as a foundational source, illustrates the confluence of religious and societal components in the construction of Islamic historical tradition.

⁹ Morrissey, F. (2023). A short history of Islamic thought. P130

¹⁰ Ibn al-Muqaffa' as an example

¹¹ The Shu'ubiyya tensions in the translation's movement

Arab history writing in later centuries continued to evolve and adapt to changing intellectual, political landscapes. The discipline did not expand much in its political scope and did not integrate new methodologies after Ibn Khaldun historiographical tradition. However, the coming centuries would have similar aspects in the genre of writing that restricts sometimes from developing yet remain unique in its own times.

Ibn Khaldun's approach to history was founded on a particular vision. He highlighted the importance of separating historical inquiry from religious and political influences, advocating for a critical approach based on scrutiny, appropriate attribution, and the use of readily available data.¹² This approach was motivated by a desire for truth in historical narratives, a truth that evolved because of knowledge accumulation and the interaction of older cultures with the rich social contributions and questions of the Islamic world, as witnessed by Ibn Khaldun himself. Ibn Khaldun astutely identified a systematic shortcoming in the application of the hadith method for historical critique and the extraction of accurate information by historians. His discerning analysis led him to the conclusion that relying solely on this method was insufficient. In response to this limitation, he introduced a vital component to historical inquiry—the foundation of rational proof and empirical knowledge. This addition served as a fundamental criterion for distinguishing between the possible and the impossible in historical accounts.

In spite of Ibn Khaldun's remarkable contributions, which introduced innovative approaches to historical thought, the Islamic world of his time was grappling with a complex political landscape marked by corruption, innovation, and hardship. The prevailing cultural milieu of that era, strongly influenced by Sufism, cast a distinctive character upon the era. Despite the passage of time and changing circumstances, the discourse surrounding history remained anchored to

¹² Ibn Khaldun, A. (n.d.). *Ibn Khaldun* (Beirut). Dār Ihya' al-Tath al-Arabi. P38

certain enduring principles, a characteristic that persists to this day. Ibn Khaldun, as a product of his era, bore the imprints of his time, and some of these influences were indelible.

While historians raised some concerns during the Mamluk era, the historical community as a whole did not fully embrace his novel viewpoint. Notably, historian Al-Sakhawi saw history as a conduit for the study of hadith, with the goal of reestablishing the link between religion and history. On the other hand, the dominant approach to Hawli history centred mostly around local lives, largely following the methodologies of authors such as Al-Tabari. As a result, despite its early significance, Ibn Khaldun's pioneering approach had only a limited influence inside the Islamic historical tradition.¹³

As biographical literature evolved, whether in the form of concise biographical sketches organized by generation, status, or geographical origin, or in more extensive accounts such as biographies of the Prophet (PBUH) and notable Muslims from later periods, it underwent significant methodological influences from Hadith, Adab (literary etiquette), and historical writing. Additionally, it experienced a shift in perspective attributed to the evolving role of the ulama (Islamic scholars). Furthermore, the popularity of this genre waxed and waned over time, with certain periods characterized by intense focus and others marked by relative neglect.¹⁴

During phases of political-focused historiography, particularly under the Mamluks, the genre experienced a renewed surge of interest and activity, signifying a fresh era of heightened attention and productivity.¹⁵

The continuance of what Al-Khalidi rightly named the “political dome” remained a dominating

¹³ Kawtharani, W. (1970, January 1). Memory from the perspective of the historian. Tabayyun. <https://tabayyun.dohainstitute.org/en/issue033/Pages/art01.aspx>

¹⁴ Khalidi, T. (2004). Arabic historical thought in the classical period. Cambridge University Press. P209

¹⁵ Ibid

focus for researchers, reflecting the prevalent sociological and political scene during his time and for subsequent periods. Al-Khalidi's description of the "political dome" alluded to the enduring importance of political issues as a primary concern for scholars. This field of study, which was entwined with the social fabric of the time he lived in, had a significant impact on subsequent epochs as well. The term "political dome" refers to a metaphorical construct that encompasses all political dynamics, power structures, and government, symbolizing the all-encompassing nature of political issues.

In later century, Ottoman bibliographer Katib Çelebi expressed a growing concern regarding the Muslim world's apparent reluctance to embrace the secular knowledge and advancements emerging from Europe. In his work, "The Balance of Truth," Çelebi poignantly conveyed the idea that both natural science and religious science are like two essential wings, and for meaningful progress to occur, these two wings must work in tandem, just as a bird needs both wings to soar.¹⁶

Ibn Sanad lived during a period of severe political and sectarian strife. Despite Ibn Khaldun's support for the separation of religion and politics in historical narratives, as well as his acknowledgment that the stages of civilization are in perpetual flux, his ideas were not widely accepted by current historical schools of thought. He correctly emphasized the complex interplay of psychological, environmental, and economic aspects in the evolution of civilizations.

However, because Ibn Sanad was primarily a religious scholar, he, like many historians of his time and those who came before him, struggled to reconcile the intertwined relationship between religion and the state, which was deeply rooted in Islamic perspectives that relied on the authority of sacred fixed texts. As a result, avoiding a pervasive connection between religious

¹⁶ Morrissey, F. (2023). A short history of Islamic thought. P163

ideology and state government became difficult in the historical writing. Most historians during this period felt forced to imbue their writings with a quasi-religious mission, attempting to influence and improve the current political reality. This was especially important during a period of significant social and political turmoil, when the need for reform was critical. As a result, historical works were frequently used as a channel for religiously motivated efforts to heal a broken political environment.

Ibn Sanad lived at a time when religious and political forces were inextricably linked. The Islamic world was defined by complex interactions between religious ideology, governance, and political power. Ibn Sanad's writings reveal his struggle to negotiate this perilous terrain, where historical truths frequently had to coexist with religious tales and political goals. We can better understand the restrictions and motivations that may have influenced Ibn Sanad's work by looking into the history of how religious and political forces changed historical writing. This contextual awareness enables us to detect the extent to which these pressures shaped his writings and how he negotiated them. Over the years, the Arab world's historical environment saw enormous changes. By tracking the evolution of historical procedures, we can see how Ibn Sanad's approach to historiography was impacted by his predecessors' evolving approaches and scholarly practices. Understanding Ibn Sanad's methods and techniques offers context for evaluating the depth and clarity of his historical narratives. For example, the transition from oral to written traditions, as well as the development of critical perspectives such as those espoused by Ibn Khaldun, all contributed to the changing form of historical writing. Recognizing these transitions allows us to better understand the problems and innovations that influenced Ibn Sanad's historical narratives. Ibn Sanad's writings were not created in a vacuum; they were products of their time as well as the larger socio-cultural context. A thorough investigation of

Arab history writing reveals the cultural, intellectual, and social currents that affected Ibn Sanad and his colleagues. It permits us to analyze the current intellectual tendencies, societal standards, and cultural values that may have influenced his historical perspectives. The long-lasting influence of Sufism on Islamic thought and the social fabric of the time, for example, could have influenced how Ibn Sanad interpreted some historical issues. We obtain a more nuanced view of his decisions and priorities as a historian by locating his work within this context.

Situating Ibn Sanad in an Age of Upheaval

The historical landscape in the eighteenth-century Arab world was marked by a complex interplay of political, social, and ecological factors. Historians like Ibn Sanad played a pivotal role in shaping the narrative of this era, offering unique perspectives on the region's history. Ibn Sanad's approach to history, which combined political and intellectual history. While others focused on broader changes in the religious landscape like Ibn La'boun, Hussain Ibn Ghannam and Uthman Ibn Bishr, Ibn Sanad anchored his narratives in the figure of Dawud, highlighting the significance of individual biographies as windows into society at large, which set him apart from his contemporaries.

The eighteenth-century historiography in the region can be divided into general history and local history, biographies, genealogy. The eighteenth-century historians of the region did not differ much from those of earlier historians who recorded history according to these trends. Organizing history in this way and identifies the vision and starting points from which, they wrote their history and the scope of their history influence rely on longstanding Muslim historians. It should be noted here that general history in that period can be represented in Najd by historian Muhammed Ibn La'boun, Following the Al-Asfahani method in which "histories begun with the

birth of humanity or with a new political succession,” Ibn La’boun started his book with human creation since the descent of Adam to the earth and the prophets after him, then he devoted a section of the book to talk about the Arab tribes and their lineages, before talking about the situation in Najd.

In Najd, most historians of recorded local histories specific to their region, such as: Hussain Ibn Ghannam and Uthman Ibn Bishr. They tried to reveal the history of their cities, which was influenced by their regional attachment and by the Islamic school of history as part of their religious and cultural formation. While Ibn Sanad focused more on biography mixing political and intellectual history into one. Ibn Sanad remained unique not only because his style was different but also among the Najdi historians, many who supported and hold many aspirations for the new movement, Ibn Sanad expressed his support of the Ottomans and his critique of the Najdian movement which was clear in his book. He represents the other side of the narrative within a political declining empire and a new rising Najdian state.

Many of these writers were born in unstable political environments, making the concerns for stability the central theme of their writings. Ibn Sanad focused on a wider geographic boundary, especially in South of Iraq and Najd, and his work could be used as a reference to the region geography.¹⁷ Ibn Sanad resembles Al-La’boun more than Ibn Bishr because Ibn La’boun did not limit himself to one geographical area, as also Al-Nabhani wrote about the history of Bahrain and southern Iraq in detail.¹⁸

Ibn Ghannam devoted a section of his book to highlighting the positive effects of the movement of Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdulwahhab to Najd, and provided a clear picture of the social,

¹⁷ The book mentioned in detail different Iraqi towns that are rarely mentioned in other books.

¹⁸ Potter, L. G. (2014). *The Persian Gulf in modern times: People, ports, and history*. Palgrave Macmillan. Fahad Bishara P53

political and religious conditions that prevailed before the dawn of the era. The history of Najd and events at that era is linked to the invitation of the sheikh and the Saudi state diverted the author from mentioning news from outside. Ibn Bishr criticized the methodology used by the early Scholars of Najd. He discussed the time prior to the rise of influential (shaikhs), noting that some of the older intellectuals in Najd had engaged in historical narration and territory demarcation, but their efforts fell short of achieving the requisite criteria, while aspiring for a new age both politically and religiously. “Knowing the impact of the people of Najd and the change in their beliefs before the birth of this movement ... I decided to leave it and not start this book with it, because the next years are what the book was written for, so it deserves more priority. Because of the grace of it, and because it is one of the blessed years for the people of Najd.”¹⁹

Ibn Sanad's historical significance can be comprehended through his multifaceted connections in both the Ottoman State and regional interests, particularly in the Gulf and eastern Arabia. His profound concern revolved around the symbiotic relationship between state patronage of the religious establishment and the pivotal role of ulama in state affairs.²⁰ As a representative scholar of his era, Ibn Sanad exhibited several characteristic traits: he sought to counter the ideas propagated by the Najdi movement to prevent potential confusion among the majority, he was eager to safeguard state ideology from subversive influences, and he was dedicated to unearthing what he deemed to be the heretical aspects of “false” Islam.²¹ The emergence and growth of the Najdi movement sparked intense religious debates within the regional historiography of the time,

¹⁹ Uthmān Ibn Bishr (1873). ‘Unwān al-Majd fī tārikh najd’’. V1/P31

²⁰ Fattah, H. (1997). The politics of regional trade in Iraq, Arabia, and the Gulf: 1745-1900. State Univ. of New York Press. P44-45

²¹ Fattah, H. (1997). The politics of regional trade in Iraq, Arabia, and the Gulf: 1745-1900. State Univ. of New York Press. P45

pitting historians from Najd against their counterparts in Iraq and eastern Arabia, each holding sharply contrasting viewpoints. This ideological clash not only added depth to the historical discourse but also triggered a reorientation in the political-economic landscape of the region. Hala Fattah's analysis, notably her exploration of the monopoly of transit and agriculture, underscores the transformative impact of the Saudi state's successes. It highlights how these achievements reshaped the region's political and economic dynamics, leading to significant shifts in trade patterns and agricultural practices. His work, as illuminated by Hala Fattah, provides valuable insights into the profound changes and debates that shaped the region's trajectory.

Ibn Sanad is wrongly labeled a historian of the Saudi State who wrote about the rise and fall of the first Saudi State (also in being labeled as an Iraqi historian as he is claimed by both).²² As the Saudi forces dominated the Najd region during the early nineteenth century, The disputes between the Saudi State and Ottoman empires are among the political, social, and religious occurrences covered in depth, as he witnessed the Egyptian forces that clashed with ended the first Saudi State. Nevertheless, the work of Ibn Sanad is important because it offers an invaluable historical account of the early years of the First Saudi State, a time when the Saud family rose to prominence and established their dominance in the Arabian Peninsula.

Ibn Bishr, Ibn Ghannam and Ibn Sanad could not escape the sectarian currents of the region, which took political forms, from the Saudi-Ibn Abdulwahhab or the Ottoman pact²³, all these

²² Fattah, H. (1997). *The politics of regional trade in Iraq, Arabia, and the Gulf: 1745-1900*. State Univ. of New York Press. P44

²³ Ibn Sanad wrote biographies about the Ottoman rulers Mahmoud II, Abdulahamid I, and Sulaiman III, filled with poetic praisings. He mentioned one of the poems about Abdulahamid I that he has swords that are powerful like stars falling upon the infidels/ وله سلطانا تهاوى سيوفه تهاوي شهب فوق عادية الكفر/ Ibn Sanad's view of the Saudi position is not much different from the view of the Ottoman state, so that Ibn Sanad often uses certain terms that agree with the textual concept of the Ottoman state's position. Ibn Sanad doesn't hide his biases in writing a historical narrative, he makes it clear to which side is he on, indicates a broad unwillingness to separate "narrative" and "history." In his writings, Ibn Sanad remained loyal to the Ottoman Empire, and his history was linked to the state or the political entity by mentioning the actions of the rulers, ensuring the survival of their reputation, the continuity of the state itself, and support for the political state of stability.

historians looked at the past (the archive) in a very similar orthodox manner, hence they are directing the cultural movement to the same specific destination. The Saudi-Ibn Abdulwahhab underscored the importance of tribal and ethnic communal identities. This newfound emphasis prompted intellectuals to delve into historical and, over time, proto-ethnographic writings concerning Arab tribes. This intellectual shift aimed to explore and understand these communal identities in greater depth and detail. The movement introduced and popularized a polemical vocabulary that revolved around notions of exclusion and inclusion. This linguistic transformation was instrumental in shaping the discourse around communal boundaries and affiliations. It also triggered a critical reassessment of the role of the ulama, the religious scholars, within the political order. This reevaluation questioned their influence and position in the evolving political landscape. Southern and central Iraq experienced a profound shift in its religious map. The region transitioned from a diverse array of religious outlooks and discourses to intense ideological contests driven by religious ideologies. This transformation disrupted the delicate equilibrium that had once existed among the region's various religious communities.

We have to read Ibn Sanad's writings against the backdrop of large-scale changes in the region that these historians lived and witnessed. In his attempt to write a global history of the modern period, Christopher Bayly argues that the 1780s to the 1830s was a period of "catastrophic" political change brought on by the disjuncture in the economic system.²⁴ Islamic Empires experienced a period of severe ecological, fiscal and military crises that led to the emergence of "Asian Mercantilism." Asian Mercantilism was characterized by the strengthening of regional economies dominated by monopolistic practices of a mercantile and bureaucratic elite; the emergence of tribal and military regional power holders; the assertion of regional identities; and

²⁴ Bayly, C. A. (2016). *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780-1830*. Routledge. Ch6

the rise of reformist and regional (in the case of India, communal) movements of renewal. The period saw the formation among networks of scholars and merchants in Western and South Asia of modern forms of identity – what Bayly describes as local patriotisms – bolstered by the intensification of networks of communication within and across regions. The centralizing reforms of the nineteenth century, whether carried out by foreign imperial powers or indigenous imperial elites, built on developments in all of these spheres of human activity.²⁵ In the early 1800s, the Ottoman Empire's legitimacy in the heartland of Sunni Islam, particularly in Mecca and Medina, was under threat. This growing awareness of shifting political dynamics in the region became apparent to the Ottomans and their British allies. A crucial moment occurred when the local ruler of Mecca and Medina was approached regarding support for the Ottomans and the British against the French in Egypt. However, the ruler's economic ties with Egypt posed a dilemma, making it challenging for him to back the Ottoman Sultan in opposing the French.

The Napoleonic occupation of Egypt in 1798 and the subsequent global uncertainties set in motion a significant transformation in the status of Baghdad. It evolved into a strategically vital region for various players, including the East India Company (EIC), the French, and the Ottomans. This shift marked the beginning of an era characterized by modern imperial discourse and control, with both European and Ottoman powers seeking to exert influence in the area. Sultan Mahmud II dispatched Halet Efendi, a senior minister and former Ottoman ambassador to Paris, to Baghdad with the aim of restoring order. However, upon his arrival, supporters of the local governor, who Halet Efendi suspected of having sympathies with the Wahhabi movement, prevented him from entering the city. Faced with this resistance, Halet Efendi's mission turned

²⁵ Hanssen, J., & Weiss, M. (2020). *Arabic thought beyond the liberal age: Towards an intellectual history of the nahda*. Cambridge University Press. P103

into a fiasco, and he resorted to covert methods to eliminate the governor and replace him with his own protege. Ibn Sanad accused Halet Efendi of various deceitful actions, and documented with some satisfaction his execution by Sultan Mahmud II, which occurred in the aftermath of the Greek revolt three decades later.²⁶

The Ottoman eighteenth century was a time of unusual opportunity, both economic and political. It was a time of fiscal and political devolution from the center, Istanbul, to the provinces. This devolution resulted in two crucial novelties: semi-independent rule and (almost) private ownership of land. As such, the eighteenth century could be legitimately seen as a new order, a time of social flux, in which political and social power was redistributed and led to the formation of new provincial households.²⁷ However, between 1687 and 1702, the predictable regional and seasonal changes in the Euphrates River's behavior were disrupted by significant ecological disturbances. This period saw a remarkable event in which a substantial section of the river, spanning roughly 100 miles, abruptly shifted from its established course to a new one. This sudden relocation, referred to as avulsion in geological and hydrological terms, had far-reaching consequences on both the environment and politics of Iraq.²⁸ It posed a serious threat to the stability of the Ottoman Empire in the eastern region, endangering established centers of authority and allowing lesser tribes to temporarily rise in prominence. The consequences were dire, with the loss of thousands of lives and the abandonment and decay of numerous settlements.²⁹ In the late nineteenth century, conflicts over pasturelands in the eastern provinces

²⁶ Ibn Sanad, (1826) "Mattali' al-sa'ud fi tayyib akbar al-vali Dawud." 190-193

²⁷ Sajdi, D. (2015). *The barber of Damascus: Nouveau literacy in the eighteenth-century Ottoman levant*. Stanford University Press. P8

²⁸ Husain, F. H. (2016). Changes in the Euphrates River: Ecology and politics in a rural Ottoman periphery, 1687–1702. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 47(1), 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1162/jinh_a_00939

²⁹ Ibid

of the Ottoman Empire highlighted the significant impact of environmental stress on socio-political and economic conditions for both humans and animals. A powerful pastoralist community monopolized rain-fed pastures, pushing other groups to settle in more marginal lands with scarce resources.³⁰ This resulted in malnourished herds and vulnerability to harsh winter conditions, leading to a high livestock mortality rate during the exceptionally cold winter.³¹ Rather than assisting the affected pastoralists, the state exploited the situation, using these conflicts to exploit limited natural resources during times of environmental hardship.

Dina Rizk Khoury mentioned that this historical time not only as an attempt on our part to locate and name periods of social, economic and political change, but also as an articulation by a given epoch's intellectuals of a sense of rupture, of the development of new forms of political sociability.³² Rather than writing the eighteenth century as one of incremental change and the nineteenth century as one of accelerated modernization, Khoury would like to propose that we look at the period between roughly the 1780s and 1820s on its own terms as a period marked by rupture and crisis.³³ The political discussions among a group of scholars and local leaders in Baghdad in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries presented a break with the past because they set the parameters of the political discourse among local intellectuals and state bureaucrats for the next century.³⁴ “More importantly, they marked a shift, a new way of framing,

³⁰ Pehlivan, Z. (2020). El Niño and the nomads: Global climate, local environment, and the crisis of pastoralism in late Ottoman Kurdistan. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 63(3), 316–356. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685209-12341513>

³¹ Pehlivan, Z. (2020). El Niño and the nomads: Global climate, local environment, and the crisis of pastoralism in late Ottoman Kurdistan. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 63(3), 316–356. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685209-12341513>

³² Khoury, D. R. (2009). *State and provincial society in the Ottoman Empire: Mosul, 1540-1834*. Cambridge University Press. P13

³³ Hanssen, J., & Weiss, M. (2020). *Arabic thought beyond the liberal age: Towards an intellectual history of the nahda*. Cambridge University Press. P102

³⁴ Ibid

politics at several levels: thanks to the initial military and political successes of the Wahhabis, they involved wide sections of society in a discussion of toleration exemplified in debates over who was a true Muslim and the importance of consensus of the community; they highlighted sectarian difference; and they led to a reexamination by sections of the literate elite of the role of the ulama in society as they raised issues of the nature and role of pedagogy and preaching (da‘wa) in maintaining or challenging social order. The locus of inspiration for these polemics was the early Muslim community. The political debates between Wahhabis and the Khalidiyya–Naqshabandiyya (Ibn Sanad associated with, yet no part of them)³⁵, were integrated in the Debating Political Community in the Age of Reform factional politics of Baghdad’s population in complex and fluid ways that bespoke the confusion of the time: a period during which imperial reform agendas and European interests were compounded by a severe ecological and economic crisis.”³⁶

Tarif Khalidi stated a minor class change in early Islamic times that influenced the historiography of 18-19 centuries “We see the age, of course, largely through the eyes of the turbaned and industrious 'ulama' but have little or no opportunity to see it through the eyes either of the military class or the immensely popular Sufi orders.”³⁷ Tarif Khaldi noticed that from even the late 14th century the Arab history production did not shift much from its early stages. Although Khaldi acknowledged the chronicle of Ibn Al-Dawadari (1335 AD) stands apart from other histories of the period in its lack of literary ostentation, its spontaneous, often comic,

³⁵ Dr. Emad Rau‘f was more accurate than Fattah in pointing to which sect Ibn Sanad belongs, although it is easy to assume Ibn Sanad was a Sufi because he intertwined with them and wrote a book about Khalid Naqshabandi, yet Ra‘uf explained that Ibn Sanad himself said that he had “barrier” between him a Sufism and where he criticized one of the essences of the Khalidiyya–Naqshabandiyya Tarkah.

³⁶ Ibid P103

³⁷ Khalidi, T. (2004). Arabic historical thought in the classical period. Cambridge University Press. P188

narrative tone, its relish for prodigies, dreams, omens and marvelous coincidences, it's almost colloquial style and its unaffected reflections on history and the exercise of power.³⁸ Where other ulama- produced annals end each year with obituaries of men of their own kind in most cases, Ibn al-Dawadari is oddly silent on the lives of scholars. Instead, we are in the company of the Mamluk military elite, as they march to battle or converse amongst themselves. This is anti-history, one of the earliest in a genre of popular historiography which in later centuries saw chronicles produced by barbers, farmers, minor state officials and other 'outsiders to a discipline normally seen to be the preserve of cultivated scholars.³⁹ Dana Sajdi captured this phenomenon of the fading religious status of the historian of a pre-Nahda era. "The Arabic chronicle was historically bound up by the authority of Muslim scholars in their perpetual effort to bolster the Islamic political order. What is unusual about the phenomenon of nouveau literacy is the fact that so many people of so many differing backgrounds found in the chronicle an opportunity to write, and by insert themselves into history. It represents authorship by people who were not accustomed to the subjects of scholarly history, and who did not habitually represent themselves in historiography. This is, then, a new kind of literacy."⁴⁰ These authors come from backgrounds that are not either socioeconomically, such as the barber, the farmers, the soldiers, and the judicial court scribe; or religiously and culturally, such as the priest, the Samaritan scribe, and the Shi'is. However, as we shall see, none of them were either entirely poor or powerless. Indeed, some of them managed to acquire riches and/or high positions. The phenomenon of eighteenth-century non-ulama chronicles is precisely about social mobility.⁴¹ It was no coincidence that Ibn

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Sajdi, D. (2015). *The barber of Damascus: Nouveau literacy in the eighteenth-century Ottoman levant*. Stanford University Press. P205

⁴¹ Ibid P8

Sanad, as a historian, was anointed “the last of the virtuous Basrians” by many.

Ibn Sanad and Dawud

Uthman bin Sanad bin Muhammad bin Ahmed bin Rashid bin Hamad bin Nasser bin Rashid Al-Rubai Al-Anzi Al-Waeli.⁴²⁴³ Adnan Salim Al-Rumi tells us about his upbringing in Failaka; “A moral upbringing concerning memorizing the Quran inserting the ethical principles from it, just as the people of the Arabian Peninsula grow up in religious scholarly surroundings. From the early stages of his life, he showed a sharp intellect, wonderful memory, an ascendancy that flows with fertile, learning the basic principles of reading, arithmetic, and grammar rules.”⁴⁴ However, the island of Failaka was limited for intellectual scholarship due to its geographic location. His father, Sanad, moved to Al-Hasa, probably with considerable tribal migration back to the heart of the Arabian Peninsula during the late 1770s.

The political events in Arabian Peninsula shaped Ibn Sanad's life. Al-Hasa rulers from Bani Khalid faced an early struggle with Ibn Saud and Muhammad Ibn Abdulwahhab's religious movement.⁴⁵ Bani Khalid wanted to end the Shaikh influence in the region, while Ibn Saud saw

⁴² P20 علماء الكويت وأعلامها خلال ثلاثة قرون, عدنان سالم الرومي

⁴³ His father, Sanad bin Muhammad, immigrated from the town of Huraymila in Najd, following events in his town in 1755 A.D., to Failaka (Island in Kuwait) for trade. Uthman was born in 1767 A.D. Growing up in Failaka studying in early age the Maliki school of thought as most of the Gulf region at the time followed that Islamic school of thought.

⁴⁴ Ibid P22

⁴⁵ The vital role of Al-Saud's expansion in the region of Najd, which these battles were the main reason for the migration of tribes to Iraq like Shammar's, and reaching Najf and Basra was one of the regional reports Ibn Sanad was concerned about. Ibn Sanad himself is a Maliki Sunni Usuli scholar, like the Abdulwahhab movement, I highly disagree with Fattah assessment that he was a Sufi, Dr. Emad Rau'f was more accurate where he explained how is Ibn Sanad relate to Salafism. Ibn Sanad uses the exact mechanism in jurisdictions where authority is established. However, his past political memory with that movement made his analyzation overly aggressive, as Ibn Sanad himself was a victim of the movement. The political events in Arabian Peninsula shaped Ibn Sanad's life. Al-Hasa rulers from Bani Khalid faced an early struggle with Ibn Saud and Muhammad Ibn Abdulwahhab's religious

an opportunity to host Ibn Abdulwahhab and spread his religious views.⁴⁶ This conflict resulted in a few raids in the region of Al-Hasa, which made many, including Ibn Sanad teacher Muhammad Ibn Fayrouz Al-Tamimi⁴⁷, move elsewhere to find security.⁴⁸ Ibn Sanad's arrival to Al-Basra was in 1789 A.D.⁴⁹ He was heavily affected by the new Najdi movement, but Ibn Sanad who only less critical of the Abdulawhhab movement claim to divine guidance than his mentor.⁵⁰ Ibn Sanad matured intellectually while staying in Basra, and no wonder that he became known as Al-Basri relating his name to the city of Basra, where his fame became very noticeable. Undoubtedly, the cultural life in this city was suitable for Ibn Sanad and satisfied his ambition, as he quickly coexisted with the conditions in Basra and the presence of the Najdian circle. Sooner, he entered Sulaymaniyah school and was taught by Muhammad Ibn Fayrouz, expanding his knowledge of Islamic jurisdiction. Ibn Sanad quickly claimed the ladder to be part of the ulama circle. He can now participate in the production and consumption of certain genres falls broadly within the purview of specific this social groups, whereby these groups address their concerns and desires in the appropriate discursive space and simultaneously use the genre as a means for self-presentation and/or preservation. More significantly, it was scholarly. And it was intensely bound up with the authority of the preservers of Islamic knowledge.⁵¹

movement. This conflict resulted in a few raids in the region of Al-Hasa. Ibn Sanad did not hide his emotions in his writings of history. He was unequivocal about what he hated and what he liked.

⁴⁶ Uthmān Ibn Bishr (1873). 'Unwān al-Majd fī tārikh najd'. V1/P40

⁴⁷ Hala Fattah mentioned that he was one of the most renowned Shaikh's of Najd who had fled to Basra, who was invited to meet with the leading "Wahhabi" Ulama of Dariyya to discuss matters of theology and politics but refuse, quoting Surah Al-Kafirun from the Quran which indicated Takfer, as a result he was threatened with death. Fattah, H. (1997). The politics of regional trade in Iraq, Arabia, and the Gulf: 1745-1900. P44

⁴⁸ Fattah, H. (1997). The politics of regional trade in Iraq, Arabia, and the Gulf: 1745-1900. State Univ. of New York Press. P44

⁴⁹ Ibn Sanad, "Asfa Al-Mawarid min Silsal Ahwal Al-Imam Khalid." P102

⁵⁰ Fattah, H. (1997). The politics of regional trade in Iraq, Arabia, and the Gulf: 1745-1900. State Univ. of New York Press. P44

⁵¹ Sajdi, D. (2015). The barber of Damascus: Nouveau literacy in the eighteenth-century Ottoman levant. Stanford University Press. P6

For historians of the region, history writing comes with different yet very similar motives, and the living environment clearly influenced their orientations in writing history. These motives were intertwined and were political, social, religious, and cultural motives.⁵² The political line had two directions. History was written either because of the initiative of the historian to talk about a movement whose principles he believes in, or at the official request of a historian to write of a ruler who enjoys prestige and patronage with him.

The Najdi historian Hussain Ibn Ghannam could represent the former, which as he was not only a student in the hands of Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdulwahhab. The writings of Ibn Ghannam are considered by some as one of the most important sources for the history of Saudi Arabia in its first period, and he wrote his book (*Rawdhat al-afkar wal-afham*) in two parts; The first volume contained the biography of Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdulwahhab and several of his letters and replies, while the second volume covered the history of the first Saudi State from its establishment to 1797. Ibn Ghannam referred to the motive that prompted him to write a history of the “Wahhabi movement” and its events and circumstances, saying: I wanted to record when its light shone and spread in most countries.⁵³ Ibn Ghannam saw the benefit of the movement and believed that this movement will change the political and religious situation in Najd to healthier situation. Ibn Sanad represent the second soft of historian, and the nature of the relationship between the author and the governor was clear in his book and the awards and gifts he received and the position he enjoyed suggest that the author wrote his book at the request of the governor. Ibn Sanad stated: “I promised him that I would produce a book containing his description of the

⁵² Different from many orientalist who visited the region, Ibn Sanad did not give significant attention in his historical writing to matters that revolved around economics or life traditions, aspects of agriculture production, or the environment. Ibn Sanad followed the traditional focus of many scholars of his time, which put political interest above others, like Ibn Ghannam, Ibn Bishir, and Ibn La'boun.

⁵³ Ibn Ghannām, H. . (1994). *Tārīkh najd. Dār al-Shurūq*. P5

glorified achievements.”⁵⁴ Ibn Sanad mentioned the importance and necessity of writing news for the prominent people, considering it one of the honors and legacies that should be recorded. When Ibn Sanad left Basra to travel to Baghdad, marking his last destination. The situation in Baghdad was intense politically. He witnessed the early stages of coup when Dawud Pasha, supported by the Ottoman imperial edict, overthrew Saeed Pasha. Successfully Dawud Pasha, with a group of Mamaliks, managed to set a new legacy as an Ottoman governor in Baghdad. Further, he safeguarded his position for an extended period compared with the previous governors. He quickly gained popularity due to his ability to secure the political circumstances and his interest in the scholars of Baghdad. He worked on developing various facilities and establishing the first printing press in the Arabic language in Baghdad.⁵⁵ Dawud Pasha ruled for 15 years until he died in 1831. Dawud Pasha wanted to entrust Ibn Sanad with his legacy, partly because he was convinced that, as an intellectual, his work would only have become known to a historian. When Dawud Pasha became a governor, Ibn Sanad took the advantage and praised the new Pasha with fascinating poetry.⁵⁶ Ibn Sanad mentioned that Dawud Pasha supported him financially.⁵⁷ This indicates that Dawud Pasha noticed Ibn Sanad's intellectual and linguistic Arabic abilities. That he chose Ibn Sanad over any other scholar in Baghdad illustrates the prominent position Ibn Sanad held compared with his peers. Ibn Sanad, on the other hand, linked himself with the political power of Dawud Pasha. Hoping that the new Pasha would transform the region as a strong political entity that would lead to significant intellectual progression. The aspirations of Dawud and Ibn Sanad made the two individuals close from the start.

In the early stage of 1818, Ibn Sanad promised to write a biographical book about the Pasha. He

⁵⁴ Ibn Sanad, (1826) “Mattali’ al-sa’ud fi tayyib akbar al-vali Dawud.” P16

⁵⁵ Wardī, ‘Alī. (1991). Lamḥāt iğtimā’iyyah min tārīḥ al-‘Irāq al-ḥadīth. Kūfān lil-Našr. P256

⁵⁶ Ibn Sanad, “Asfa Al-Mawarid min Silsal Ahwal Al-Imam Khalid.” P105

⁵⁷ Ibid P103

finished the book after eight years, a few months before his death and it called “Mattali’ al-sa’ud fi tayyib akbar al-vali Dawud.” Ibn Sanad and Ibn Ghannam remain like most historians of time loyal to the political motive from a religious standing point that preserves the unity of the collective of the Ummah and the Islamic tradition by supporting the Ottoman or Ibn Abdulwahhab narrative.

Ibn Sanad gained prestige, resources, and political support during these eight years. However, Dawud Pasha suspected that what Ibn Sanad was collecting of materials was irrelevant to Dawud. On one of the Ibn Sanad visits to Zubara/Qatar in 1825, Dawud Pasha rushed Ibn Sanad to finish the book. After the drafts of the book were completed, he apparently stopped following the writing, and Judge Al-Haidari often met with him, asking him to complete the book and insisting that it be finished.⁵⁸ He mentioned “The eyes longed for the dawn of happiness in the news of the most experienced minister, and the greatest of them is Dawud, ... my thoughts are scattered by the jewels of his praise, and my pens it is within the limits of the papers ...so I stay for a day or two, without having to rest.”⁵⁹

Ibn Sanad was able to finish it in less than a year. He mentioned his promise in his introduction, and because he could predict that health was unstable, he rushed to write it. He said: “ان اخلاف /الميعاد ليس من شيم الأجواد/ breaking a promise is not a manner of reliable character.”⁶⁰ However, he mentioned that he was suffering from depression/لكن للفوارح توانيت/. Ibn Sanad praised the Pasha generosity “with his generosity, he built me a spacious house.”⁶¹ The governor's gifts to the author were not limited to the house, but included other advantages, which Ibn Sanad described:

⁵⁸ Ibn Sanad, (1826) “Mattali’ al-sa’ud fi tayyib akbar al-vali Dawud.” P18

⁵⁹ Ibn Sanad, (1826) “Mattali’ al-sa’ud fi tayyib akbar al-vali Dawud.” P27

⁶⁰ Ibid P19

⁶¹ Ibid

“And I arrived at the house finding other rewards.”⁶² Ibn Sanad did not find a way to express his admiration for this governor, except for writing a history that immortalizes his mention, “and I immortalized him with this book.”⁶³ But Ibn Sanad writing shows otherwise that his aim was not the Pasha himself. One of the reasons that Ibn Sanad fell into depression was his promise to the Pasha was not really fulfilled even after writing the book.

Ibn Sanad transformed his book from a biography to a history of Iraq and Najd within time limit of the birth of Dawud as a starting point of the book. It turned out to be about six hundred pages, and the book was left unfinished because the author died in 1826 and Dawud Pasha’s reign lasted until the end of 1830.

The structure of the book does not reflect its assumed purpose. Ibn Sanad works represent about fifty-two years of the region's history, collecting many documents during the eight years of research that Dawud supported—leaving Dawud Pasha with a fifth of the documentation period with only ten years. Although Ibn Sanad chose the year 1774 as the starting date of his book reflecting on the year Dawud was born. As Al-Asfahani said histories begun with the birth of humanity or with a new political succession.⁶⁴ Ibn Sanad tried to find a mediate to combine the two. However, there was no mention of Dawud within these years only within the ten years of his rule. Instead, the book starts with the people of Basra suffering from the hegemonic power of Persians, which surrounded the city walls.⁶⁵ Within these years of documentation, Ibn Sanad wrote primarily concerning about the People, not about a single ruler.

The book did not base the structure upon the different governors of Baghdad, although Ibn Sanad

⁶² Ibid P24

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Al-Aghani, Ed. M . A. F. Ibrahim et al. Cairo, 1970 (356/967)

⁶⁵ Ibn Sanad, (1826) “Mattali’ al-sa’ud fi tayyib akbar al-vali Dawud P35

focused on eleventh rulers before Dawud Pasha.⁶⁶ Not limit himself to the prominent political elite, nor that he restricts himself from accounting a specific place like many other historians. Patterns of urbanization began to shift in the early eighteenth century to the Western quarter of the city, until then a sparsely populated area.⁶⁷ The Karkh quarter⁶⁸ attracted a number of landowning merchant families who claimed tribal and sometimes sharifian descent from the mid-Euphrates region. Families with names like Suwaidi, Rawi, Juburi, Ubaidal-Shawi and Ghunaim all claimed tribal Arab origins. In the case of the Ubaid al-Shawis and the Ghunaims, they represented the urbanized extended lineages of powerful tribes that they continued to lead and utilize in their bid for influence in the city.⁶⁹ He illustrated the nature between the government and the Ottoman imperial presence dealing with these families. He portrayed Ottoman's position with the local rulers, such as the Al-Jalil family in Mousal northern of Iraq, or the government's relation with the scholars, especially his dear friend Al-Shawi, who lost a political position regarding aspects of “Wahhabi” symphyses.⁷⁰

He collected to convey the migration situation between Najd and Iraq, such as the migration of the Shammar tribe led by Mutliq Al-Jarba.⁷¹ He was heavily associated with his writing about tribal leaders⁷², especially those seeking independence from foreign powers (mostly Persians),

⁶⁶ Ibn Sanad mentioned these rules mostly in in negative perspective, but he did not build the structure of the book about them.

⁶⁷ Hanssen, J., & Weiss, M. (2020). Arabic thought beyond the liberal age: Towards an intellectual history of the nahda. Cambridge University Press. P109

⁶⁸ the Karkh quarter that often translated into anti-Ottoman rhetoric camp. 109

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Ibn Sanad draw a special respect upon many tribal leaders such as Al-Shawi naming him the Amir of Himyar, whowing this narrative of tribal identification.

⁷¹ Ibn Sanad chose Mutliq in the context of the Shammar migration and for its clash with the first wave of the Abdulwahhab movement.

⁷² Ibn Sanad wrote about the history of Iraq, especially its south and Najd, because Ibn Sanad considered within the circle of the Najdi cultured and his relations in Basra was mostly with Najdi scholars as well, and his special interest in the notables of the tribes and his personal relations with Abdulwahhab movement made him a historian of both these regions.

such as Al-Sa'doun, leaders of Al-Muntifiq.⁷³ He started his book by mentioning their effort to defend Basra against the expansion of Karim Khan in the region. He critically observed the role of the eleventh rulers during these changes.

He began his book with Basra when Karim Khan, founder of the Zand dynasty, surrounded the city walls with what he considered to be the Doom of Islam/قبة الإسلام. Referring to Karim Khan forces as Rawafidh/روافض or “those who refuse.”⁷⁴ Ibn Sanad vividly recounted the devastating sacking of Karbala by the "Wahhabis" in his writings. However, he abruptly interrupted his narrative to launch into a passionate condemnation of Shi'i practices. It's worth noting that while he held strong negative sentiments towards the Saudi State, his animosity towards Shi'ism was even more pronounced. Ibn Sanad saw that history revolves around religion aspirations. Like many Muslim historians, Ibn Sanad began his work on history by containing politics around religion as the primary motives, while this combination never disappeared from the Arabic historiography after the seventh century. This interpretation holds that history, rather than being the chronicle of kings and battles, is the ongoing confrontation between supporters of truth and opponents of deception. Given that religion is made by the group of believers Ummah (the Collective) who support the prophets in every era, not the leader or politician, this consideration meant two things: first, that history is continuous and cannot end, as Fukuyama assumed, and second, that the idea of unilateral heroism (the Individual) is doomed. Ibn Sanad and many others like him find it difficult to escape this narrative. The type of genre that many Arab historians follow restricted them from taking the individual aspect. Interest in local history has

⁷³ Ibn Sanad started his book with the clash with Persians and dedicated a chapter Shammar battle against them, and the corruption that was caused by A'jam Muhammed.

⁷⁴ Historically, the Sunnis used this derogatory word to refer to Shiites who did not recognize the legitimacy of the early caliphate established by Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman. The phrase was used to refer to the Shiites' militancy.

always arisen as an expression of group feeling or the collective, and the societies of the Islamic world have expressed a close bond that binds people to their apparent place of residence.

Ibn Sanad Writing Style and Poetry

Ibn Sanad approach to writing history takes a middle route in comparison to his contemporary historians⁷⁵, where the most biographic methodology pursued two schools of writing first, the documenting for the people of that era, which is an old Islamic style focused primarily on many different people, not usually figures of political rank; and second, a school that wrote biographies of prominent scholars where analysis of their writings and further explaining their works, and talking about their source of knowledge is this school's primary focus. In that regard, Ibn Sanad wanted to depict Dawud Pasha as a prominent politician and a wise scholar. Ibn Sanad's primary concern in the book and what led to most of his writing was the political situation in the region, predominantly the Iraqi situation, which was suffering from instability. He focused on the ministers from Omar to Saeed⁷⁶, it covered years before the reign of Dawud Pasha and ten years during his mandate. Thus, Ibn Sanad's book is a history of Iraq through the ruler's own biography. It is a reconciliation between the art of writing a biography and the art of chronicling the events of the years. Ibn Sanad's writings could be read as a political history book of the region; however, due to his intention to take this medium method referring to the prominent scholars of the age, which Dawud Pasha associated with and managed to study with many

⁷⁵ Ibn Sanad, (1826) "Mattali' al-sa'ud fi tayyib akbar al-vali Dawud P3

⁷⁶ The government of Omar Pasha in the year 1188 AH/1774 AD, the government of Amin Pasha Al-Jalili in 1189 AH/1775 AD, Mustafa Pasha in 1190 AH/1776 AD, and Abdi Pasha in the same previous year, and the government of Abdullah Pasha in 1190 AH/1776 AD – 1192AH/1778 AD, Hasan Pasha in the year 1192 AH/1778 – 1194 AH/1780 AD, and the government of Suleiman Al-Kabir Pasha in 1194 AH/1780 AD – 1217 AH/1802 and the government of Hafiz Paha 1217 AH/1802 AD – 1222 AH/ 1807 Suleiman Al-Saghir Pasha 1222 AH/1807 – 1225 AH/1810 AD Abdullah Pasha Al-Kurdi in 1225 AH/ 1810 AD – 1228 AH/1813 AD, and Saeed Pasha in 1228 AH/1813 AD -1231 AH/1816 AD and Dawud Pasha in the year 1232 AH/1816 AD – 1242 AH/ 1826 AD.

scholars. The book started with political history but ended with intellectual history. Ibn Sanad introduces formal and literary features into the text that we have not seen in the historiography and introduces new subjects and unfamiliar “heroes” like members the Arab tribes of that era (most of them fought against the Saudi State). One of the key objectives for the Ottomans was to limit the power of local rulers in Iraq. This was essential to ensure that these regional leaders did not align themselves with the Najdian movement or other external powers, which could further weaken Ottoman control and influence.

Ibn Bishr’s history of Najd, for example, is organized into two broad parts: one that frames the narrative around the rise and death of Muhammad Ibn Abdulwahhab, and the other around the rise of Faisal Ibn Turki.⁷⁷ While Ibn Sanad made the book begin and end with the birth and death of Dawud Pasha, however the rulers in both cases (Dawud or Ibn Saud) to both historians are not the subjects of the narratives themselves, but rather devices around which the authors organize their histories in the midst in this catastrophic political change. Where this organizational logic comes from is unclear: while it seems likely that there would be Islamic historiographical influences that inform these works, far more research would need to be done to confirm this.⁷⁸ Another possibility is that the organization replicates the structure of an oral transmission of history in which personalities that the listener can easily identify form the backbone, offering clear markers for the narration of historical events and processes.⁷⁹ Ibn Bishr considered history as the best tool to record the deeds and achievements of the Saudi rulers, and he said about it: “Then my soul is still eager to know their records, conditions, armies and battles, because they

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Potter, L. G. (2014). *The Persian Gulf in modern times: People, ports, and history*. Palgrave Macmillan. Fahad Bishara P54

⁷⁹ Ibid

are kings who had the virtues of men.”⁸⁰

Ibn Sanad structured the book in the Hawli structure of writing history. Hawli history is the history arranged over the years. The Hawli style allowed the historian to eliminate the specific character of historiography that centers around the leader. The oldest author within the Islamic tradition have encountered history is such style is Tabari's History. Historians who follow this style intends to list the various incidents in the year in the order of their occurrence, and usually opens each event with the phrase “and in that year.” It is concerned purely by its nature with the abstract facts written in contemporary sources. It is rare to find later textbooks that can challenge, expand or improve these facts. However, Ibn Sanad did not consistently follow the Hawli structure. There are a few exceptions where he focused on the place and people rather than the time.⁸¹

Ibn Sanad's writing style adheres to the Saj'⁸² rhymed speaking technique. In writing, this technique peaked in appeal during the Abbasid era. In their letters, the Barmakids advocated using these techniques. Historians after Jirjis Ibn Al-Amid followed this method in writing. Ibn Sanad used one of the types of Saj' called Al-Mutaraf, which follows a rhythmic pattern where each sentence has a matching last letter without caring about matching verb forms together like in the Al-Murassa' type of Saj'. He said, describing the horrors of internal struggle that occurred in Baghdad by A'jm Muhammad: وأهل الصلاح يودون الفرار ولكن لا مفر, يدعون الى المسالمة ويأبأها كل ذي

⁸⁰ Uthman Ibn Bishr “Unwān al-Majd fī tārikh najd” (1795 M-1873). V1/P27. (Like Ibn Sanad, Ibn Bishr observe history in ethical manner.)

⁸¹ Ibn Sanad ignored some of the years like 1119-1192 H, also he dedicated most of the last pieces of the book and prominent scholars.

⁸² Saj' means in Arabic cooing of a dove, this sound has been given a linguistic term. Because of similarities between the non-metrical, rhymed prose is used for speeches with strong emotions.

أشر/The most piety of people seeks refuge, but there is not any refuge, they seek for peace, and the pact of evil have no poise.⁸³

Ibn Sanad's association with poetry reflects his Bedouin identity on the one hand, and on the other hand, the status of poetry in society is strong, with deep attachment since the beginning of Arab history. Therefore, it was easy for Ibn Sanad to create many connections through poetry, including Dawud Pasha himself, who in return provided support to Ibn Sanad. This cultural environment clearly depends, and perhaps others as well at that time of the era, on oral culture which is tied to his use of oral sources in his history as one of the book's distinguishing features. The book is dominated by poetry, praised of Dawud Pasha and some prominent people of his time, and Ibn Sanad did not forget to express his opposing or supporting point of view in his poetry. Significantly almost half of the book came as poetry that praised, complained and slandered. Yet this remained rare that poetry is written that extensively regarding historical record, which can be put into collection of poetry or Diwan. The use of poetry to explain and period the political events of rulers is the oldest Arab use of recording the events of its time and includes the close connection of poetry and oral history in the general culture. In his introduction, he mentioned that his writing style would follow a poetic form as he said he is fancier to the world of poetry. He began by praising the prophet Muhammad PBUH⁸⁴, then praising himself and explaining his intentions. Ibn Sanad understood the power of poetry within the Arab societies, as it was the Repository of the Arabs (Diwan al-Arab).⁸⁵ Arab societies before Islam used to link poetry with history, aspirations, and values, as it is crucial within an oral

⁸³ Ibn Sanad, (1826) "Mattali' al-sa'ud fi tayyib akbar al-vali Dawud P87

⁸⁴ Ibid P1

⁸⁵ Ibn Qutaiba mentioned that poetry is the essence of the Arab knowledge it is the archive of days and its highest wisdom. It is a pure abstract for human experience, and a source for dividing various knowledge.

culture such as the Arabs to memorize long poetry. He observed his history with very long poetry alongside the events. There is no page in the book without a reference to poetry. Ibn Sanad followed the traditional old Qasidah structure with semi-stitch, following the 16 meters (seas), with a stander of rhyme.⁸⁶ He noted in the introduction: “If I followed the path of poetry, you would find me following the path of the Arabs and the Bedouins/ اذا خضت يوماً في النسيب وجدنتني / أحادي بنظمي مذهب العرب والبدو”⁸⁷ Ibn Sanad Bedioun's background reflects his writings and his concerns. He sometimes mixed what is known as Nabati poetry, or the people/Bedouin style, with the stranded academic poetry.

Ibn Sanad's strong foundation in linguistics and grammar can be attributed to the extensive books he studied under the tutelage of Al-Bayushi. The *Alfiya*, a foundational text in Arabic grammar, was among the first books he memorized after the Quran. This laid the groundwork for his linguistic abilities and understanding of the Arabic language's intricacies. His linguistic ability comes at a young age in Al-Hasa, Uthman learned from prominent religious scholars such as Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Fayrouz, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Bayushi Al-Kurdi⁸⁸ who specialized in Arabic linguistics and Grammar. Al-Bayushi played a significant role in Ibn Sanad's early scholarly development. He focused on Ibn Sanad's linguistic skills as he assigned him major Grammar books. Ibn Sanad mentioned several of these books in *Sabayik Al-‘Asjad*, such as *Alfiyya* of Ibn Malik.⁸⁹ The *Alfiya* was one of the first books to be memorized by students in religious schools after the Qur'an. Also, one of the most widely read books in *Şarf*, *Tasrif Al-Izzi*, is distinctive in that field because the science of *Şarf* is as crucial as that of *Nahw*. *Nahw* deals with the changes in the word endings, whereas *Şarf* deals with the remaining

⁸⁶ Arud of Al-Khalil Al-Farahidi

⁸⁷ Ibn Sanad, (1826) “Mattali’ al-sa’ud fi tayyib akbar al-vali Dawud P2

⁸⁸ Considered to be the “Sibawayh of his era.”

⁸⁹ A thirteenth century rhymed book of Arabic Grammar written by Ibn Malik Al-Ta’i

structure of the word, i.e., what comes before the ending. Al-Bayushi invested in Ibn Sanad and assigned him with his books on linguistics research *Kifayat Al-Ma'ani*. Further, Al-Bayushi influence on Ibn Sanad did not limit to linguistics studies. Al-Bayushi introduced Ibn Sanad to *Sarf*, the science of morphology. While *Nahw* focuses on changes in word endings, *Sarf* deals with the remaining structure of words, including what comes before the ending. Ibn Sanad's exposure to *Tasrif Al-'Izzi*, a widely read book in *Sarf*, allowed him to delve deeply into this linguistic field.

Al-Bayushi's book on Islamic jurisdiction, *Hadikah Al-Sarai'r*, a 554-page book, was one of the early encounters of Ibn Sanad's jurisdictions methodology. Al-Bayushi's unusual scholarly method with Ibn Sanad shows that he was his favorite student due to what Ibn Sanad showed in his ability to encounter many difficult books (known as *Al-Jadah* books) at such an early age during his stay in *Al-Hasa*. His influence prevails over the educational level shaping Ibn Sanad's soul and character. Beyond linguistics, Al-Bayushi's influence extended to Islamic jurisprudence, this exposure to jurisprudential matters equipped Ibn Sanad with the knowledge necessary to understand the legal aspects of historical events.

Ibn Sanad's scholarly journey was profoundly shaped by the scholars who mentored him, with Sheikh Abdullah Al-Bayushi Al-Kurdi playing a central role. Through a rigorous education in linguistics, grammar, *Sarf*, and Islamic jurisprudence, Ibn Sanad acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to become a historian who could engage with complex historical texts and events. His ability to merge linguistic expertise, legal understanding, and historical interpretation reflects the enduring impact of his scholarly mentors, particularly Al-Bayushi, on his development as a historian. His linguistic prowess, refined through diligent training, gave Ibn Sanad a considerable advantage over his contemporaries. Language proficiency was not an

isolated skill; it was a potent instrument that he expertly exploited in both his poetry and his approach to writing history. His linguistic ability enabled him to compose rhymes that resonated with eloquence and precision in his lyrical undertakings, demonstrating a mastery of language that captivated his audience. However, Ibn Sanad's linguistic abilities were not limited to his poetic endeavors. It was also important in his historical writings. His knowledge of the language allowed him to navigate and analyze complex historical writings and events with ease. Ibn Sanad was able to connect profoundly with historical narratives and successfully explain their relevance by combining linguistic expertise, a solid understanding of Islamic jurisprudence, and his historical acumen.

Like other religious scholars, there is a general tendency to relate the political situation with the religious one, owing to the social status of those who can write historically, typically inside a specific social context. There has always been a connection between the Arabic text in writing history with the establishment of the Islamic state and its moral legitimacy, so there is a particular literary connection, such as the language, formulation, and conditions for producing history that preserved the religious character. Ibn Sanad is not fundamentally different from historians who lived in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries such as Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Iyas book (*Bada'a Al-Zohour*). Ibn Sanad followed an approach influenced in its core by the Abbasid style, whether by writing history or poetry, as a legacy carried mainly by the scholars who taught Ibn Sanad the basics of the language and were, most of the time, scholars of religion. During the eighteenth century, a greater tension among legal schools and the vacuum now increasingly filled by a growing sense of mission among the scholarly class were among the more visible causes of resurgence in biographical literature.

Franz Rosenthal's insights shed light on the distinctive nature of events in Arab history. Unlike

Western historical narratives, Arab historical accounts often lack a strict sequential or interconnected structure. Instead, they frequently transition from one event to another without explicit links, and poetry plays a significant role in this storytelling tradition. This approach results in continuous narratives, often featuring dialogues among the participants, which, interestingly, discourages the author from inserting commentary or expressing critical opinions within the text. One intriguing observation by Rosenthal pertains to the subtle intersections between philosophy and religion in some historical writings.⁹⁰ He highlights Al-Mutahhar Al-Makdisi, where an evident theoretical exploration of knowledge and reason can be discerned. This philosophical perspective seeks to examine the universe and its historical development. Rosenthal's cautionary note about the scarcity of individuals who might further this philosophical approach to history underscores its uniqueness.

It's worth noting that while there are clear disparities between early Islamic historians and their modern Gulf counterparts, Ibn Sanad's work, constrained by the orthodoxy of his genre, maintained a distinctive quality. What set Ibn Sanad apart was his exceptional linguistic prowess, which enabled him to infuse his historical narratives with abundant yet gracefully composed poetry. This distinctive approach to historical writing adds richness and complexity to his accounts of the past.

Ibn Sanad's style of writing and his poetry within this text reflect a unique combination of historical narrative, linguistic excellence and a deep connection with Arab cultural traditions. Using the Hawli structure in his historical writing, Ibn Sanad can move away from the strict focus on leaders and instead emphasizes a wider view of history that encompasses people and places. His use of the Saj' rhymed speaking technique (in particular, the Al'Mutaraf style) adds a

⁹⁰ Rosenthal, F. (1968). *A History of Muslim historiography*. Brill. P161

poetics and rhythm to his prose, reflecting the cultural importance of poetry in Arab society. He uses poetry to express his opinions, praise figures such as Dawud Pasha and portray the political and social dynamic of his time.

Oral Tradition

Arab historians relied on three types of sources: written, oral and observational. Among the written sources there are also correspondences, which are important documents that shed light on the relations between the rulers and the local authorities of their lands, as well as on the relations between them and the other foreign powers in the region like the Ottomans, English and French. Poetry can also be added to written sources, as many historians have preferred to quote poetry from ancient or modern poets. Oral history is one of the primary sources that historians have relied on, and they have relied on it to record much of their news. Some of these accounts had a clear chain of transmission, while others had an unknown chain of transmission, as historians often used phrases such as “We were told, and the news came,” without crediting the narrator. Arab historian may refer to this reliable phrase to emphasize the event he is quoting or to absolve himself of the obligation to write it down. A historian can also say: “Those who were involved in the incident told us...” to confirm that he received the news from an eyewitness, ignoring the fact that what he wrote will one day be examined. Among historians, the most supportive of observations are cinematographers who express in their biographies how close they as they record the events they witnessed. Among them are the writers of Hawli whose purpose was to record their daily record what their contemporaries reported to them. The importance of the news they write depends on their performance in subsequent events and their ability to write what they see.

A fundamental rely on oral sources as the bedrock upon which the historical narrative is constructed. This reliance on oral tradition not only informs the content but also profoundly shapes the very structure of these texts. Like other historians of his era, Ibn Sanad relied on what individuals codified and conveyed. Ibn Sanad stated in his introduction that he used to rely on hearsay for news. Ibn Sanad followed a methodology similar to Ahl Al-Hadith in assessing the authenticity of historical events. By using expressions like “it was reported to me by trustworthy persons,” Ibn Sanad sought to establish a chain of transmission for historical information, which mirrored the credibility verification process commonly used in Islamic Hadith studies. Oral narration and hadiths are still essential for sharing information, news, and experiences between people, information, news, and knowledge sharing. This is clear from the extensive collection of “A'nanah” in Arab historians' writings. However, Ibn Sanad did not rely only on oral sources. Ibn Sanad tried by spending money to access some sources, particularly during the rule of Dawud Pasha. Ibn Sanad was able, through his relations, to teach several schools of Rahmaniya and Maghamisia. It seems that the relationship between the author and Dawud Pasha dates from before their meeting, because Hamad Al-Jasser notes that Dawud Pasha entrusted the author with the task of teaching in a school he founded in Baghdad, and Al-Jasser felt that his appointment to that made him to write this book.⁹¹ The nature of the oral tradition in collecting information implies travelling from place to place to gain it. Ibn Sanad's insistence on following notable scholars and perhaps his story with the Kurdish scholar Sibghat Allah Al-Ziyati when refused to teach Ibn Sanad, but when Ibn Sanad continued to follow him Al-Ziyati finally accepted his request. Another example is when he heard of the presence of Ibrahim Al-Jadid in the town of Al-Zubayr, he traveled toward Al-Zubayr and stayed with Al-Jadid for years to learn from his

⁹¹ Jāsir, Ḥamad. (2015). Mu'arrikhū najd min ahlihā. Markaz Ḥamad al-Jāsir al-Thaqāfi.V5/792

knowledge. Ibn Sanad showed a high ability to create a network of scholarship relations. When he went to perform Hajj in the Hijaz, he did stay in Hijaz to learn from the region's scholars for some time. Ibn Sanad was not limited to meetings but had many correspondences with the Levant. Ibn Sanad creates a different idea when he thinks of a historian who is scrolling through books to gain his knowledge from.

Ibn Sanad, however, has yet to mention the origins of these writings. Except for a few places in the text, the names of the oral narrators were not mentioned. Ibn Sanad left the circumstances surrounding the book's sources unclear, so the reader is left in the dark as to whether these sources were adequate to paint a detailed image of the scene. Unlike Ibn Bishr, for example, who is clear when it comes to identifying his sources. Describing the arduous task of historical research, he tells his readers that he could not find a reliable source for historical events until he read a series of historical manuscripts written by one Muhammad b. Ali b. Salloum Al-Fardhi, although he lamented that the author did not verify his narrative and was prone to exaggeration.⁹² Ibn Sanad based some of the material on his testimony and that of other eyewitnesses to the incident, but as is customary, he never mentions their names unless in exceptional circumstances, such as the instance of Muhammad Al-Sabouni, whom he regarded as a reliable source of information. He employs expressions like “it was reported to me by someone who saw it” and “it was reported to me by trustworthy persons” throughout the book. This is not surprising, because Ibn Sanad follows the methodology of Al-Hadith in the testimony chain or the chains of transmission, which is a developed method in assessing the authenticity of the event. “The chains of transmission involved in early Islamic histories were, of course, much shorter, it still reflected

⁹² Potter, L. G. (2014). *The Persian Gulf in modern times: People, ports, and history*. Palgrave Macmillan. Fahad Bishara P52

a desire among the historians to infuse their work with a degree of legitimacy that only a direct link to the event itself could furnish”, “because they were truly lived experiences of fully identified, flesh and blood individuals rather than the exploits of distant historical personalities.”⁹³ While the differences between early Islamic historians and modern Gulf historians are obvious, Gulf historians viewed oral sources in very much the same light.⁹⁴ His credibility rose in the Hadith since he took from the famous scholars Ali bin Muhammad Al-Suwaidi⁹⁵ and Zain Al-Abidin Al-Madani (Jamal-Al-Alayil).⁹⁶

Ibn Sanad looked at various official documents. He used them as sources, such as the campaign report of Ali Al-Katkhuda, the Saudi forces' commander during the military campaign from Iraq to Najd. He was quoted in writing regarding conversations with Saud bin Abdulaziz and several rare documents. Ibn Sanad relied on earlier historians when he wrote his works, with Abdulrahman Al-Suwaidi possibly being the most notable. However, he did not explicitly declare it in the book, despite not explicitly stating it in the book, was cited for authoring the history of the events in Baghdad and Basra, as opposed to the Turkish historian Rasul Al-Karkoukli. Al-Karkoukli who was a contemporary of Ibn Sanad, produced some volumes in Turkish, and may have crossed paths with him during a trip to Baghdad, but Ibn Sanad lambasted

⁹³ Potter, L. G. (2014). *The Persian Gulf in modern times: People, ports, and history*. Palgrave Macmillan. Fahad Bishara P50

⁹⁴ Ibid

⁹⁵ ‘Abdallah al-Suwaidi in the quarter of Khidr Elias in northern part of Karkh facing the river, and that of Suleiman Begal-Shawi. Almost all sources on this period single out Abdallah al-Suwaidi as the first to bring to the city the debates on the importance of critical hadith scholarship. His descendants continued to be among the most prominent of Baghdad’s scholarly families, his children and grand-children being the first to bring al-Zabidi’s ideas to Baghdad and to embrace Mawlana Khalid’s teachings. See *Arabic thought beyond the liberal age: Towards an intellectual history of the nahda*. Cambridge University Press. P109

⁹⁶ Ibn Sanad took a great compliment from Jamal-Al-Alayil, who said, “I am the intruder in that matter, so how can I mention my chain of transmission (Hadith Sanad) in front of Ibn Sanad?” In a very poetry style and humble manner, Jamal-Al-Alayil praised Ibn Sanad's ability to memorize the list of authorities who have transmitted a report (Hadith) of a statement, action, or approbation of Muhammad PBUH, which called in Arabic “Sanad” relating to his name. This does not imply that Ibn Sanad only used oral narrations occasionally.

this historian in several places in the book, without referring to the systematic reasons to refute the allegations.

He often cited phrases such as “it was told to me by reliable persons” as a way of establishing a chain for transmission of historical information. This approach reflects a deep connection with the traditions of the Islamic Hadith study, where the reliability of sources is of the utmost importance. Beyond hearsay, Ibn Sanad sought out first-hand accounts and second-hand testimonies to collect historical data. He traveled widely, established a network of learned people, and interacted with prominent scholars in order to access and verify historical data. By relying on oral tradition, Ibn Sanad was able to capture a much richer and more vivid narrative of historical events. One shortcoming of Ibn Sanad's work is the lack of explicit attribution to his sources, particularly oral narrators. While he cites the authenticity of his sources, he frequently does not reveal the identities of these narrators, casting doubt on some parts of their reliability. Ibn Sanad's historical approach is using Dawud Pasha as a core person to gain access to a diverse range of materials. However, it is important to note that by using humans as conduits for historical information, particularly through oral sources, he faces a challenge: the deep entanglement of the individual with the events they recount. This interconnectivity makes it impossible to separate the individual from the historical environment they describe, blurring the line between the individual and the event itself.

Despite this constraint, Ibn Sanad's dependence on oral tradition enriches and authenticates his historical narratives, bringing readers closer to the lived realities of the past. His approach is consistent with the larger tradition of Gulf historians who saw oral sources as critical to the preservation and transmission of historical knowledge. While Ibn Khaldun notices that the limitation of the traditional Hadith, Abdurahman Al-Ibrahim adds “The Hawli system is

frequently used in contemporary Gulf historical literature. What's troubling is that the supporters of this historical school don't grasp time and events from a historical, methodological, and possibly philosophical standpoint.”⁹⁷

Conclusion

Ibn Sanad's historical writings hold immense significance in shedding light on a tumultuous era marked by political upheaval and transformation. During this period, a series of complex and interrelated crises, spanning from the imperial to the local level, gripped the Ottoman province, particularly the city of Baghdad. These crises served as the crucible for intense and often contentious political discourse, with factions vying for power and reform agendas taking center stage. Three pivotal developments emerged as the most consequential during this era. Firstly, the rise and spread of Wahhabi doctrine and the establishment of a Wahhabi state posed a substantial challenge to the Ottoman Empire's legitimacy within the Sunni realm. This phenomenon overshadowed the ongoing ideological struggle with Persian Shi'ism, redirecting attention to the new ideological and military frontier that southern Iraq and Baghdad had become. Controlling this frontier was imperative not only to counter Shi'ism but also to quell internal challenges to the Ottoman state. Secondly, the Ottoman government-initiated efforts to reassert its control over the province, marking a significant aspect of the political landscape. These endeavors aimed to regain stability and authority in the face of growing turmoil. Lastly, the presence of European powers in the city further complicated the political dynamics. European involvement added an additional layer of complexity to the region's intricate political landscape, influencing and

⁹⁷ الكتابات التاريخية في الخليج: بين سردية الحدث ومنهجية العمل. Manshoor. (2021, May 17). <https://manshoor.com/politics-and-economics/writing-history-in-arabian-gulf/>

reshaping the course of events. Ibn Sanad's meticulous writings offer valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of these crises, documenting the transformation of Baghdad and its surroundings into a hotbed of political contention. His work unravels the intricate interplay between these crises, highlighting their impact on the Ottoman Empire's authority and the broader Sunni-Muslim space. In essence, Ibn Sanad's historical accounts provide a crucial window into a pivotal era of transformation and upheaval in the Middle East, offering a deeper understanding of the forces at play and their lasting repercussions.

An essential focus should be placed on identifying modern political and moral visions within the context of scholarly debates. These visions were not developed in isolation but rather emerged from within the vibrant urban milieu of intellectual exchange and discourse. It is imperative to reconsider the significance attributed to moments of historical rupture and crisis within the ideologies of these intellectual figures. These junctures, marked by upheaval and transformation, hold intrinsic value in understanding their worldviews. These intellectuals exhibited a profound and enduring engagement with the realm of rebellion and reform, a commitment that can be traced back to at least 1780. This extensive involvement in political dynamics merits closer scrutiny and recognition. My aim is to encourage a comprehensive reevaluation of 19-18th-century Arab historiography, urging scholars to reexamine the roles played by historical disruptions, the deep-rooted political engagements of intellectuals, and the intricate interplay between modern ideals and the rich tapestry of urban scholarly dialogues.

Ibn Sanad is regarded as one of the historians who contributed to these difficult times. His efforts remain within the classical framework, which preserved an ancient Islamic method in historical writings that did not see significant advancement. According to Abdurahman Al-Ibrahim, narrative in today's Arab mentality is frequently based on the Hawli system. In such and

such a year, such and such occurred, and in what city did that occur, and the most troubling aspect of my discussions with the followers of this historical school, the Gulf ones, is their lack of historical comprehension of time and event. I must put the paper's interest in the theory of the extension of the Islamic history of tradition and linking it to the theory of the fixed text with the disintegration of this rhythm after the era of Ibn Sanad, even at the level of language and poetry and the emancipation of the linguistic system. Reexamining on why Arab Historiography would suffer from deadlock as such will give us more space to reevaluate and dig into solutions. Franz Rosenthal's observations highlight the unique position of Ibn Khaldun in the realm of Arab historical scholarship. Unlike his predecessors who expanded the scope of Arab historical writing, Ibn Khaldun stands out as the first to harness this expansion to construct a novel theory relevant to the emerging field of social science. Interestingly, despite Ibn Khaldun's pivotal role and his recognition as the potential founder of sociology, the social sciences, including sociology itself, these later scholars and historians did not readily embrace his contributions. This lack of acknowledgment transcended geographical boundaries, affecting both Western and Islamic intellectual spheres. It's important to note that while Ibn Khaldun did have some followers in the pre-modern Islamic world, a distinct Khaldunian tradition related to urbanism or modern social sciences did not evolve.

When Sajidi analyze Al-Nahḍa, it's more beneficial to look at it not as an abrupt and radical shift, a moment that seemingly erased history and tradition. Instead, it's more enlightening to explore it as a phenomenon with a well-defined lineage. Rather than perceiving the advent of print as a sudden starting point that marginalized the traditional scholar (A'lim) and challenged their dominant position, we should consider it as a technology that both continued and disrupted existing patterns and practices. With the introduction of print, it brought about the fulfillment of

the practice of documenting events (chronicle), but this time, it was an entirely transformative form of documentation. Moreover, the advent of print had a profound impact on the dynamics of public interaction, particularly in terms of temporal and spatial dimensions. Unlike traditional chronicles, which operated at a slower pace, print media introduced the concept of achieving “one day best-seller” status through newspapers, a feat almost unimaginable for the older form. In addition, the reach of these newspapers was unprecedented; they could garner readership from distant corners of the world. The frenzy of print journalism during the Nahḍa-era effectively opened global channels of communication, allowing ideas and information to travel across borders and continents at a pace previously inconceivable. However, it's worth noting the intriguing fact that, despite this transformative technology, we don't see a surge in historians emerging from unexpected quarters. In this context, it's important to recognize that the established Islamic narrative of historical writing faced challenges from various directions. Paradoxically, even as these challenges arose, Ibn Sanad, often referred to as “the last of the virtuous Basrians,” undertook a significant historical endeavor. He authored the final work on Dawud Pasha, the last ruler of the Mamluk in Iraq. Notably, Dawud Pasha played a pivotal role by establishing the first-ever Arabic-language printing press in Baghdad. Ibn Sanad's historical work encapsulated a transitional period, marking the convergence of traditional historiography with the emerging influence of print technology. This confluence of historical writing and the advent of the printing press was a testament to the evolving landscape of knowledge dissemination and the transformation of historical narratives.

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