



Features of Emir Abdelkader's State in Colonel Scott's Memoirs: A Critical Historical Approach

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Abstract

This study examines the features of Emir Abdelkader's state as reflected in Colonel Scott's memoirs, an important foreign source on Algeria during the first half of the nineteenth century. It investigates the memoirs' representation of the state and its institutions. It assesses the extent to which they clarify the political project led by Emir Abdelkader in opposition to the French occupation. Using a historical-analytical method and a critical approach, the study situates the memoirs within their historical and intellectual contexts. The findings indicate that Emir Abdelkader was not merely a leader of armed resistance; he also established a nascent state with central political authority, territorial administration, a judicial apparatus, and a regular army supported by a local arms industry. The memoirs further reveal an economic and financial system based on taxation, trade, and resource utilization, as well as active social and cultural life and a prominent role for religion in state institutions and society. They also document foreign relations conducted through correspondence, treaties, and contacts with regional and international powers. The study concludes that Colonel Scott's memoirs are an important source for examining the state's political, administrative, military, economic, social, and diplomatic organization. They indicate that Emir Abdelkader's experience represented an early attempt to establish an Algerian state with clearly defined institutions and sovereign authority. Nevertheless, their scholarly value depends on a critical reading that accounts for the author's intellectual and cultural background.

Keywords: Emir Abdelkader, Algerian state, Colonel Scott, Algerian resistance, political organization, administration, judiciary, diplomacy

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The nineteenth century witnessed profound transformations in relations between Europe and the Islamic world, coinciding with intensified colonial expansion and the emergence of local resistance movements that sought to defend political sovereignty and preserve religious and cultural identity. Within this tense historical context, the Algerian experience under Emir



Abdelkader emerged as a notable attempt to establish a resistant political entity grounded in the use of religious authority to organize power and in the development of political and military structures capable of confronting the French colonial project. It therefore represents one of the most significant experiences of state formation in the nineteenth-century Maghreb.

This experience is particularly important when examined through contemporary European sources. Such sources did not merely record events; they also produced representations of Algerian society and its nascent state that reflected European political, cultural, and ideological perspectives. In this context, the memoirs of the British officer Colonel Scott constitute a historically valuable source because they combine direct observation of Emir Abdelkader's state with an analytical account of its political, administrative, military, and social organization. They also contain judgments and concepts that require critical examination.

Against this background, the study's central research question concerns how Colonel Scott's memoirs represent the features of Emir Abdelkader's state and the extent to which that representation reflects the political and institutional reality of the nascent state or, conversely, is shaped by a European perspective that may limit its objectivity and construct a particular image of the state. Hence, the study analyzes the memoirs through a critical historical approach, tracing their political, administrative, judicial, military, economic, social, cultural, and religious dimensions to elucidate the nature of Emir Abdelkader's political project and the mechanisms through which it was represented in European discourse.

This study employs a historical-analytical method based on deconstructing the source material and reconstructing it within its historical context, together with a source-critical method that assesses the objectivity of the historical text and examines the intellectual and ideological assumptions that shaped its narrative.

Within this framework, the study examines the political and institutional organization of Emir Abdelkader's state while identifying the limits of its representation in European discourse. The following sections analyze these dimensions in accordance with the adopted critical historical approach.

1. Documentary and Contextual Framework of the Source

Studying the features of Emir Abdelkader's state through Colonel Scott's memoirs requires identifying the source, the circumstances of its production, and its historical value. It is therefore necessary to establish the memoirs' documentary and contextual framework before analyzing their content. This study relies primarily on the memoirs of the British officer Colonel Scott, written during his residence in Emir Abdelkader's Zmala in 1841. The memoirs are among the foreign testimonies that documented the features of the emir's state during the resistance to the French occupation, drawing on firsthand experience and direct observation within its political and military milieu.

The book's introduction identifies Colonel Scott as a European officer who acquired military experience in Spain during the first half of the nineteenth century. He participated in the



Spanish Civil War alongside supporters of Queen Isabella II against the Carlist movement until the Convention of Vergara was signed in 1839. Political and health circumstances led him to leave military service before traveling to North Africa, where he joined Emir Abdelkader's Zmala after becoming interested in the Algerian resistance (Scott, 1842/1981).

The study uses the Arabic translation prepared by the Algerian historian Ismail al-Arabi, who produced numerous published works and manuscripts (Hakimi, 2012). Al-Arabi edited and translated the memoirs from English into Arabic, provided an introduction and commentary, clarified their historical contexts, and explained their terminology. The National Publishing and Distribution Company published the translation in Algiers in 1981. The memoirs possess considerable scholarly value because they draw on Scott's direct observations during his time in Emir Abdelkader's milieu, making them an eyewitness account of substantial documentary importance, particularly for examining the features of the emir's state during the resistance (Scott, 1842/1981).

2. Political Organization and Manifestations of Sovereignty

The political dimension occupies a prominent place among the features documented by Scott because it reflects the nature of the authority that Emir Abdelkader established and the mechanisms through which it operated within the nascent state. Scott's memoirs indicate that the emir built a centralized political authority capable of unifying diverse tribes and regions within a state that possessed recognizable structures of governance and sovereignty. This authority rested on religious and political foundations manifested in the emir's legitimacy, state symbols, and expressions of political independence, all of which reflected a comprehensive state-building project that extended beyond military resistance to the French occupation.

Political Legitimacy and the Establishment of Central Authority

Scott highlighted Emir Abdelkader's success in establishing a unified political authority in a territory characterized by fragmentation and tribal division. He succeeded in binding the tribes to a central authority founded on the pledge of allegiance, loyalty, and obedience. This authority rested on religious legitimacy derived from the emir's scholarly and religious standing, as well as on legitimacy arising from his leadership of the resistance, which granted him a prominent position among the population and the tribes incorporated into his state (Scott, 1842/1981). This legitimacy was formally manifested in his designation as Commander of the Faithful. This title combined political leadership and religious authority and reflected recognition of his sovereignty and supreme authority by the tribes and regions (Scott, 1842/1981).

Symbols of Sovereignty and Political Independence

Emir Abdelkader sought to consolidate the symbolic foundations of the state as central manifestations of political sovereignty. One of the most prominent of these symbols was the adoption of a distinctive state flag, which Scott associated with the Prophet's banner and Algerian independence. This symbol expressed the independence of the political entity established by the emir and its distinction from French colonial authority (Scott, 1842/1981).



These symbols reflect a political awareness of the importance of demonstrating the state's political identity and strengthening a sense of belonging to an independent authority possessing its own distinct character.

Manifestations of Political Sovereignty

Political sovereignty was not limited to symbols; it was also manifested in the state's exercise of powers characteristic of independent political entities. Most notably, Emir Abdelkader minted a state currency in silver and copper bearing his seal and the year of minting (Scott, 1842/1981). This measure reflects the state's sovereign authority and capacity to perform political functions directly. It also demonstrates the emir's effort to consolidate state institutions and affirm their independence in various spheres.

The Status of the State as an Organized Political Entity

Scott's testimony presents an image of a state possessing the foundations of political authority and enjoying a considerable degree of organization and stability. He described the emir as a ruler who exercised authority over an extensive territory and a diverse population and who administered the affairs of the state according to a clear political vision. The memoirs show that the state succeeded in asserting its domestic presence as a legitimate authority, enjoying the recognition and loyalty of its constituent groups. Therefore, Scott's memoirs provide important evidence that Emir Abdelkader's experience was not limited to leading a resistance movement but rather constituted a genuine political project aimed at establishing an independent Algerian state with clearly defined institutions, sovereignty, and central authority.

3. Administrative Structure and Mechanisms of Governance

Administrative organization was one of the fundamental components that enabled the state to transform political authority into operational institutions capable of administering its territory and population.

Establishment of the State's Administrative and Institutional Apparatus

Colonel Scott's memoirs reveal that Emir Abdelkader did not limit himself to establishing political and military authority but also sought to create an administrative and institutional apparatus capable of managing state affairs systematically. This was particularly evident in the city of Taqdemt, now a municipality in Tiaret Province, which constituted one of the state's most important administrative centers. It housed government offices, a courtroom, and several public facilities responsible for regulating public affairs. Scott observed administrative and judicial structures that performed their functions regularly, reflecting an effort to establish institutions extending beyond traditional tribal arrangements (Scott, 1842/1981).

Administrative Organization and Distribution of Responsibilities

Emir Abdelkader adopted a territorial administrative organization based on a system of khalifates, under which the state was divided into several major administrative units, including Tlemcen, Mascara, Miliana, Algiers, Constantine, and Taqdemt. To ensure the effectiveness of local administration, the emir relied on a network of khalifas, commanders, and aghas who



represented the central authority in various regions and were responsible for implementing decisions, overseeing security and tax collection, and administering the population's affairs. This organization helped connect the peripheral regions to the center and ensured the continuity of administrative operations throughout the state's territories. The emir employed a clearly defined administrative hierarchy that specified responsibilities and jurisdictions. The state's administrative apparatus was characterized by a clear hierarchy beginning with the khalifa, who served as the emir's representative in the province, followed by the agha, who supervised the auxiliary forces, and then the commander, who was responsible for administering the tribes and villages and overseeing their daily affairs. The emir also retained the authority to appoint senior officials and city governors, who took an oath before assuming office, reflecting an organized administrative system with clearly defined responsibilities and jurisdictions (Scott, 1842/1981).

The Zmala as a Model of Mobile Administration

In addition to the fixed territorial organization, the emir devised a flexible administrative arrangement embodied in the institution of the Zmala, one of the most prominent administrative innovations documented by Scott. It was not merely a mobile camp but also a mobile administrative capital that housed various government offices, the treasury, and storehouses for provisions and equipment. This organization enabled the central administration to continue operating despite wartime conditions and constant movement (Scott, 1842/1981), making the Zmala a distinctive model of mobile administration that combined civil, administrative, and military functions.

Administrative Oversight and Accountability of Officials

The effectiveness of any administrative apparatus depends on the existence of mechanisms of oversight and accountability. Emir Abdelkader was committed to supervising state officials and holding accountable those who were negligent or involved in corruption. One of the most notable examples Scott cited was the dismissal of the commander of Taqdemt after it was established that he had accepted a monetary bribe, reflecting the rigor of the emir's administration in enforcing the principle of accountability (Scott, 1842/1981). The emir also held regular sessions to receive complaints from the population and consider grievances submitted against officials and local governors, thereby ensuring oversight of the administrative apparatus's performance and preserving public confidence in state institutions (Scott, 1842/1981).

Financial Administration and Resource Management

As a complement to its administrative structure, the state organized the financial resources necessary to ensure the continuity of its institutions. It developed a financial system to provide the resources required to operate state institutions and finance the army and administration. State agencies collected zakat and other revenues from territories under their authority through a regulated system, thereby supporting the public treasury and ensuring the continued operation of state institutions (Scott, 1842/1981).



4. The Military Dimension and Organization of Warfare

Whereas administration organized state affairs in peacetime, preserving the state under French occupation required a military institution capable of defending it, as reflected in the military features documented by Scott. The military dimension occupied a central place in Emir Abdelkader's project because it was closely linked to the imperatives of defending the state and confronting French colonial expansion. Scott's memoirs indicate that the emir did not rely solely on traditional resistance but sought to establish an organized military institution combining discipline, planning, and the effective use of available human and material resources. This effort was evident in the organization of the army, mechanisms of military mobilization, combat strategies, and the development of military production necessary to sustain the resistance.

The Formation of a Regular Army and the Establishment of a Military Institution

Scott's memoirs indicate that Emir Abdelkader's state possessed the core of a regular army within the Zmala, distinguishing it from many contemporary resistance movements. Scott observed organized military formations subject to training and discipline, structured according to clearly defined ranks and a distinct chain of command. Military displays and parades were also held, reflecting a considerable degree of organization and discipline within the army's ranks (Scott, 1842/1981). This organization reflected an effort to establish a permanent military institution that moved beyond reliance on temporary tribal levies and sought to create a standing armed force capable of conducting defensive and offensive operations according to specific plans.

The Mobilization of the Tribes and Expansion of the Military Base

Emir Abdelkader relied on an extensive system of military mobilization that enabled him to draw on the workforce available throughout the state. The khalifas and commanders organized recruitment and mobilized fighters as needed, enabling the assembly of large numbers of men during periods of military confrontation (Scott, 1842/1981). The purpose of this system was not to abolish the tribal structure but to employ it within an organized military framework that served the state's objectives. It provided a significant reserve of workforce, enabling the emir to compensate for losses and continue the resistance despite the war's duration and multiple fronts.

Military Strategy and Mobile Warfare

Scott highlighted Emir Abdelkader's ability to adapt to the imbalance of power between his army and the French forces, which possessed numerical and material superiority. The emir therefore adopted a strategy based on mobile warfare and tactical flexibility rather than conventional confrontation. This strategy included rapid movement, hit-and-run tactics, redeployment, and the evacuation of certain positions when necessary to avoid attrition and preserve combat strength (Scott, 1842/1981). The emir's forces also relied on rapid surprise raids. They exploited their precise knowledge of the local terrain, which enabled them to disrupt the French forces and prolong the resistance despite the enemy's military superiority (Scott, 1842/1981).



Military Industry and the Provision of the Means of Combat

The emir's attention was not limited to organizing fighters and formulating military plans but extended to providing the means of combat and ensuring the continued supply of weapons and ammunition. Scott's memoirs indicate the existence of an arms manufactory in Taqdem among the state's principal facilities, demonstrating the emir's interest in developing local military production capabilities to reduce dependence on external sources (Scott, 1842/1981).

These findings demonstrate that the emir's state did not regard war merely as a battlefield confrontation but as an integrated system encompassing production, armament, and supply, all of which were essential to sustaining military operations under conditions of blockade and colonial pressure.

Military Discipline and Leadership Effectiveness

Scott's observations reveal a considerable degree of discipline within the emir's forces, reflected both in adherence to the chain of command and in the fighters' compliance with military orders. Emir Abdelkader's personal authority and leadership experience helped strengthen the army's cohesion and maintain its combat effectiveness over many years of conflict.

Scott's account indicates that military leadership was based not solely on individual courage but also on planning, organization, and the effective management of human and military resources. This enabled the state to preserve its combat capabilities despite the difficult circumstances it faced (Scott, 1842/1981). It is therefore evident that the military dimension of Emir Abdelkader's state was not confined to waging battles but encompassed the establishment of an organized army, the mobilization of human resources, the adoption of flexible combat strategies, and the development of a local military industry. These elements reflect an advanced level of military organization within the emir's state.

5. The Judicial System

Colonel Scott's memoirs reveal that the judiciary constituted one of the fundamental pillars of Emir Abdelkader's state. It was not merely a means of adjudicating disputes but also an instrument for regulating society, safeguarding public security, and consolidating state authority. Islamic law served as the judicial system's principal legal framework, while the central authority exercised clear oversight over the application and enforcement of rulings. Scott's account reflects the existence of a judicial apparatus that achieved a considerable degree of stability and security in the territories under the emir's authority.

The Legal Foundation and Judicial Organization

The judiciary in Emir Abdelkader's state relied on Islamic law as the primary source of legislation and dispute resolution. Scott's account indicates that the judicial function formed an essential part of the system of governance, with councils and courts established to adjudicate various cases and disputes, particularly in major urban centers such as Taqdem (Scott, 1842/1981). This organization indicates that Emir Abdelkader's state did not confine itself to



imposing military authority but sought to establish a judicial system that provided a legal framework for regulating relations within society and ensuring the regularity of transactions among individuals and groups.

The Emir as the Supreme Judicial Authority

The memoirs indicate that Emir Abdelkader represented the highest judicial authority in the state. He received petitions and complaints and personally examined many of the cases brought before him. He also held daily sessions to adjudicate grievances and disputes, which continued until the afternoon, reflecting his direct concern with administering justice and overseeing the affairs of his subjects (Scott, 1842/1981). The ruler's direct participation in judicial affairs strengthened the population's confidence in state institutions. It endowed the judiciary with considerable institutional legitimacy because its decisions were issued under the supervision of the country's highest authority.

The Judiciary Between Formal Institutions and Local Customs

Despite the existence of a central judicial authority, Scott's observations indicate the continued presence of certain forms of traditional arbitration within society. Some local disputes were occasionally resolved with the participation of notables or local leaders and within the framework of prevailing tribal customs. This situation reflects the transitional nature of the emir's state, which combined the formal judiciary based on Islamic law with certain customary practices deeply rooted in society. At the same time, ultimate authority remained vested in the state and its judicial institutions. The expeditious adjudication of cases and enforcement of judgments were also among the prominent features recorded by Scott. Proceedings were conducted directly and without protracted procedural complexity, thereby helping to reduce disputes and rendering the judiciary highly effective in addressing social and security-related problems (Scott, 1842/1981). This expediency was associated with the wartime conditions facing the state, which necessitated preserving public order and preventing disorder or disputes that could threaten social stability.

The Penal System and the Function of Deterrence

The judicial system in Emir Abdelkader's state was characterized by the severity of the penalties prescribed for certain serious offenses. Scott stated that theft was subject to severe punishment, as demonstrated in the case involving the theft of the treasury tent in Taqdemt (Scott, 1842/1981). Treason and assisting the enemy were likewise regarded as serious crimes warranting severe penalties that could extend to the amputation of limbs (Scott, 1842/1981). These punishments cannot be understood in isolation from the political and military circumstances confronting the state, in which maintaining internal security and the unity of the internal front constituted essential conditions for sustaining the resistance and confronting external pressures.



Legal Principles and Social Responsibility

The memoirs reveal several legal principles on which the judiciary relied in administering society's affairs. One of the most prominent was the principle of collective responsibility, under which a tribe was held accountable for crimes committed within its territory when the perpetrator could not be identified and apprehended (Scott, 1842/1981). Therefore, the state ensured the protection of caravans, merchants, and travelers and required regional leaders to uphold this obligation to prevent assaults or thefts within their jurisdictions. This reflects the state's commitment to protecting economic activity and securing routes of travel and commercial exchange.

The Judiciary, Public Security, and the Consolidation of State Authority

The judiciary in the emir's state was closely connected to maintaining public security and protecting social stability. The expeditious issuance of judgments and the strict enforcement of them contributed to curbing crime and strengthening the population's sense of security. Scott indicated that security had reached such a level that travelers could travel with money or other valuables without fear of theft or assault (Scott, 1842/1981). The judiciary was therefore not merely an institution for adjudicating disputes but one of the principal instruments on which the state relied to consolidate its authority, protect society, and ensure the stability of the territories under its control. This explains the central position it occupied within the institutional structure of Emir Abdelkader's state.

6. Social Structure and Daily Life

Colonel Scott's memoirs provide a rich portrayal of society under Emir Abdelkader's state. His observations were not limited to political and military institutions but extended to the population's daily life, social relations, and prevailing customs and traditions. These accounts reveal a diverse and cohesive society in which the state provided a degree of stability and security, thereby supporting social activity and the continuity of traditional ways of life amid war and resistance.

The Zmala as an Integrated Community

The Zmala was among the most prominent social models described by Scott. It was not merely the emir's mobile headquarters or a military camp but constituted an integrated community comprising various segments of the population and facilities necessary for daily life. Its population ranged from 60,000 to 70,000 inhabitants, and it contained dwellings, markets, shops, and various facilities (Scott, 1842/1981). This description reveals the state's capacity to organize large-scale communal life even under conditions of war and constant movement, reflecting a degree of social stability and spatial organization within this mobile setting.

Women and Their Status in Social Life

Scott's memoirs contain numerous references to women's place in society, both through descriptions of their clothing and jewelry and through the social roles they performed. He described women's adornments, garments, and heavy traditional jewelry and noted the use of



howdahs to transport women from affluent and notable families, indicating their social status (Scott, 1842/1981). Some accounts also highlight the role of women in the emir's household in receiving guests and observing the conventions of hospitality, as demonstrated by the emir's wife overseeing the provision of coffee and sweets to delegations and visitors (Scott, 1842/1981).

Social Values and Daily Customs

The memoirs reveal the strong presence of generosity and hospitality as social values in Algerian society during Emir Abdelkader's era. Scott recorded numerous forms of hospitality extended to guests, who were served traditional meals, particularly couscous, meat, and coffee, within a social system founded on honoring guests and demonstrating gracious hospitality (Scott, 1842/1981). These practices reflect the continuity of a traditional system of social values that constituted one of the principal elements of social cohesion and helped strengthen ties among individuals and groups.

Security and Social Stability

One aspect that attracted Scott's attention was the level of security prevailing in the territories under the emir's authority. He noted that travelers could travel with money and possessions without fear of assault or theft, indicating social stability and general confidence (Scott, 1842/1981). This situation encouraged mobility and commercial exchange and strengthened relations among the various regions, thereby positively affecting the population's daily life.

Manifestations of Daily Life

Scott's memoirs provide detailed accounts of the population's daily life, including patterns of settlement, clothing, transportation, and social interactions. He devoted attention to describing markets, artisans, and settlements and documented several practices associated with family life and relations among members of society. His memoirs therefore constitute an important source for understanding the social reality of Emir Abdelkader's state. They portray a relatively cohesive society characterized by social diversity, adherence to the values of solidarity and hospitality, and the ability to adapt to wartime conditions while maintaining the continuity of various aspects of daily life.

7. Economic and Financial Organization

Colonel Scott's memoirs reveal that the emir's state was not merely a political and military entity but also pursued an organized economic policy based on the exploitation of natural resources, the regulation of trade, resource management, and financial administration. This economic organization reflected a clear effort to build an economic base capable of sustaining the state and financing its institutions during war and in the face of French colonial rule.

The Financial System and Monetary Sovereignty

Emir Abdelkader's state exercised several sovereign economic powers, most notably the minting of its own silver and copper currency bearing the emir's seal and the year of minting.



This reflected the existence of an independent financial authority capable of regulating monetary circulation within its borders (Scott, 1842/1981). The Zmala played an important role in the state's financial system, as it housed the public treasury, the storehouses of the khalifas and state officials, the provincial treasuries, and other funds. It served as a center for collecting and distributing resources to support the military and administrative efforts (Scott, 1842/1981). The memoirs also indicate substantial economic potential that had not been fully exploited. Scott estimated that exporting commodities such as wool and wax would have generated considerable profits for the state treasury (Scott, 1842/1981).

The Exploitation of Natural Resources and the Establishment of an Industrial Base

The emir's state devoted attention to the natural resources available within its territories. Experts were brought in to inspect and analyze mineral ores, such as copper, lead, and silver, to utilize local resources in support of the state economy (Scott, 1842/1981). A manufactory was established in Taqdemt and designated for the production of weapons, including rifles and cannons, reflecting the emergence of a local military industry linked to the state's economic and military needs (Scott, 1842/1981). Certain regions were also renowned for producing strategic materials such as gunpowder, indicating local industrial activity associated with the demands of warfare and production (Scott, 1842/1981).

Domestic and Foreign Trade

Emir Abdelkader's state witnessed diverse commercial activity encompassing both domestic and foreign trade. Certain cities, such as Tlemcen, played a central role in commercial exchange networks. Tlemcen served as a transit point for goods arriving from the African interior, including gold and ivory from Timbuktu, which were exchanged for textiles from Fez and European products such as women's necklaces and knives (Scott, 1842/1981). The memoirs also indicate relatively broad commercial relations, including trade with Britain, reflecting a limited degree of economic openness despite the conditions of war and blockade (Scott, 1842/1981). To regulate this commercial activity, the state imposed customs duties on goods. It monopolized the importation of certain strategic materials, such as sulfur, iron, and gunpowder, to control essential resources for the economy and military security (Scott, 1842/1981).

The Taxation System and Fiscal Revenues

Emir Abdelkader's state relied primarily on zakat as a source of funding for the war effort and the administration of state affairs. The authorities also imposed financial penalties on certain tribes or groups that committed violations, providing an additional means of mobilizing resources. The memoirs document cases in which substantial financial indemnities were imposed on certain tribes as measures that were simultaneously punitive and fiscal, reflecting the interrelationship between the economic, political, and security dimensions (Scott, 1842/1981).

Agriculture and Resource Storage

The emir's state also devoted attention to the agricultural sector as the foundation of economic stability. It encouraged the development of agricultural production and the



improvement of livestock, including the crossbreeding of certain breeds, such as Cashmere goats (Scott, 1842/1981). A system of underground granaries was also adopted to store grain for extended periods, thereby securing food supplies for the population and the army during crises and blockades and ensuring the continuity of essential provisions (Scott, 1842/1981). It is therefore evident that the economic dimension of Emir Abdelkader's state was based on a multidimensional vision that combined the exploitation of natural resources, the regulation of trade, the development of industry, and the mobilization of financial resources to support the state's continuity under difficult political and military conditions.

8. Cultural and Educational Life

Colonel Scott's memoirs reveal that Emir Abdelkader's state was not merely a political and military entity but also supported a range of cultural and educational activities, primarily associated with religious institutions, the spread of traditional education, and forms of popular culture that reflected society's identity and values. This cultural dimension contributed to social cohesion and the transmission of religious and cultural knowledge.

Educational Institutions and the Role of Mosques

Mosques and schools served as the principal educational institutions, teaching the Qur'an and religious sciences and disseminating knowledge among the population. The Zmala contained mosques and schools that performed both educational and spiritual functions, reflecting the interrelationship among education, religion, and daily social life (Scott, 1842/1981).

The Cultural and Intellectual Character of Emir Abdelkader

Scott's memoirs portray Emir Abdelkader as an intellectually and culturally accomplished figure who combined political leadership, religious knowledge, and concern for public affairs. Scott described him as a defender of religion who was grounded in Islamic scholarship and noted his sound understanding of international power relations and his attention to events involving the major powers (Scott, 1842/1981).

Cultural Expressions and Social Rituals

Society under Emir Abdelkader's rule was characterized by popular cultural forms that reflected the population's religious and social identity. Religious occasions, such as the Prophet's Birthday, featured recitations praising the Prophet and chants expressing a spiritual and cultural attachment to the religious heritage (Scott, 1842/1981). Funeral ceremonies also included elegies and lamentations that reflected the social character of expressions of grief, alongside adherence to established religious and cultural customs in daily life (Scott, 1842/1981). Certain practices associated with sighting the crescent moon and determining religious seasons also appeared, combining basic astronomical knowledge with inherited religious traditions (Scott, 1842/1981).

Cultural Interaction and Openness to External Expertise

The memoirs indicate Emir Abdelkader's interest in foreign knowledge and expertise. He expressed a desire to recruit foreign experts to teach technical fields such as manufacturing and mechanics, reflecting an early awareness of the importance of scientific and technical



development (Scott, 1842/1981). The emir was also interested in hearing accounts from travelers and those returning from Europe, particularly regarding architectural and cultural features, such as theaters in palaces, reflecting intellectual curiosity and a desire to learn about the cultural experiences of other societies (Scott, 1842/1981). The cultural and educational dimension of Emir Abdelkader's state thus rested on a traditional religious foundation while displaying initial signs of limited openness to external expertise. This reflected a balance between preserving local cultural identity and benefiting from knowledge from the outside world.

9. The Religious Dimension

Colonel Scott's memoirs indicate that Islam constituted a fundamental pillar of the legitimacy of rule, the organization of public life, and the direction of social conduct in Emir Abdelkader's state. The religious dimension was intertwined with the political and judicial dimensions. The state was thus grounded in a comprehensive conception that linked authority and religious reference within a single framework and endowed the political project with a clear spiritual dimension.

Religious Legitimacy and the Authority of Resistance

The legitimacy of Emir Abdelkader's state was grounded in Islamic religious authority. He was invested with the title Commander of the Faithful as the leader entrusted with defending religion and protecting society from foreign invasion. This legitimacy was also based on presenting resistance to colonial forces as a religious duty and a means of mobilizing the population and unifying its ranks. It endowed the state with symbolic and moral strength, reinforcing tribal loyalty and consolidating the emir's authority (Scott, 1842/1981).

Islamic Legal Authority in Governance and the Judiciary

The emir's state relied on Islamic law as the legal foundation governing various aspects of public life. Judicial rulings were derived from Islamic legal principles and applied rigorously. This was reflected in a judicial system in which litigants took oaths before judges and certain punishments were implemented in accordance with what were understood to be the prescribed penalties of Islamic law, including deterrent punishments for theft and treason (Scott, 1842/1981).

The Religious Structure of Society and the Status of Marabouts

Society under the emir's state displayed a strong religious presence in daily life. Certain religious figures, such as marabouts, held a special place in the popular consciousness and were regarded with respect and veneration, while their blessings were sought (Scott, 1842/1981). Certain social groups defined by religious or genealogical status, such as the sharifs, also enjoyed symbolic privileges, including the wearing of the green turban, thereby reflecting the presence of religious symbols within the social hierarchy (Scott, 1842/1981).

Religious Institutions and Collective Rituals

Mosques and religious schools played a central role in disseminating Islamic education and instructing individuals, serving as centers of worship and learning in both cities and the



Zmala (Scott, 1842/1981). Collective religious rituals included celebrations of the Prophet's Birthday through recitations of praise and religious chants, as well as the observance of Ramadan through changes in daily life, including fasting, sighting the crescent moon, and organizing the rituals associated with the month (Scott, 1842/1981).

Dhimmi and Religious Coexistence

Emir Abdelkader's state maintained a legal framework regulating relations with non-Muslims under the dhimma system. Non-Muslims received protection in return for paying the jizya under Islamic law (Scott, 1842/1981). This arrangement reflects a religiously grounded system of social relations that recognized religious diversity within a defined legal framework guaranteed and enforced by the state. The religious dimension of Emir Abdelkader's state was therefore not merely spiritual but a structural component in the formation of state and society. It contributed to political legitimacy, judicial organization, the direction of social life, and the consolidation of a shared system of values within the state.

10. Diplomacy and Foreign Relations

Emir Abdelkader's efforts were not confined to domestic administration but also extended to foreign affairs, aimed at consolidating the state's position in its regional and international environment. Scott's memoirs reveal that the emir's political project was not limited to building an internally organized state; he also sought to situate the Algerian cause within an international framework through diverse forms of diplomatic activity. This orientation reflected an early awareness of the importance of foreign relations in supporting state legitimacy and strengthening its political position through diplomatic representation, official correspondence, regional alliances, and treaties as legal frameworks for relations with foreign powers.

Diplomatic Representation and Communication Missions

Emir Abdelkader relied on representatives and agents abroad to maintain political communication with foreign powers. Individuals were dispatched to perform quasi-diplomatic duties and facilitate communication with international actors. Manucchi, the son of the Italian consul in Bizerte, served as Emir Abdelkader's agent in Gibraltar and organized communication with the British, reflecting an attempt to establish indirect channels with European powers (Scott, 1842/1981). The memoirs also refer to political missions abroad, including attempts to negotiate with France, indicating that the emir's state engaged foreign powers through organized political mechanisms alongside military confrontation (Scott, 1842/1981).

International Correspondence

Official correspondence constituted one of the most important instruments of the state's diplomacy and foreign policy. Emir Abdelkader used it to establish a network of political contacts with multiple actors. He addressed letters to the Ottoman sultan and the grand vizier in Constantinople in an effort to obtain political support or recognition of his state's standing (Scott, 1842/1981). This correspondence also included other parties connected with the French



presence in Algeria, among them religious and political figures such as the Archbishop of Algiers, within the context of arranging peace, exchanging prisoners, and managing strained relations between the parties (Scott, 1842/1981). This extensive use of correspondence reflects an early awareness of the importance of written diplomacy for asserting political legitimacy and communicating with various centers of decision-making.

Treaties and the Legal Frameworks of Foreign Relations

Treaties were among the most prominent instruments of the state's diplomatic activity. They acknowledged the existence of an organized political authority led by Emir Abdelkader and defined relations between the parties and their respective spheres of influence and sovereignty. The Treaty of Tafna of 1837 was one of the most important agreements concluded between the emir and France (Scott, 1842/1981). French authorities subsequently repeatedly violated the agreement, prompting the emir to issue formal protests affirming his adherence to its provisions and rejecting any infringement. This response reflected an awareness of the nature of international obligations (Scott, 1842/1981).

Regional Relations With Neighboring States

The foreign relations of the emir's state naturally extended throughout the Maghreb, including Morocco. These relations involved the exchange of military support and resources, such as Arabian horses, in return for gifts or logistical assistance, reflecting a regional system of relations based on shared interests and political balances (Scott, 1842/1981).

The International Dimension and Emir Abdelkader's View of the International Order

The memoirs indicate that the emir possessed a perspective that extended beyond local and regional frameworks. He was interested in developments in international politics and the European balance of power, particularly those relating to the Eastern Question and conflicts among the major powers. He also articulated an early conception of the importance of international arbitration by calling for a conference or the establishment of an international body to consider the Algerian question, reflecting an awareness of the role of international law and diplomacy in resolving political disputes (Scott, 1842/1981).

11. Colonel Scott's View of Emir Abdelkader's State

After examining the various features of the state presented in the memoirs, it is necessary to consider the nature of Colonel Scott's perspective on this experience and the extent to which his intellectual and cultural background influenced it. Scott's memoirs reveal an ambivalent view of Emir Abdelkader and his state, combining admiration for his leadership and recognition of the legitimacy of his political project with a critical position bearing the imprint of European bias in its interpretation of Algerian society and institutions. The memoirs therefore combine genuine appreciation with a colonial perspective.

Admiration for the Emir's Leadership and Political Project

Scott expressed clear admiration for Emir Abdelkader, portraying him as intellectually enlightened and morally noble. He compared the emir's military and organizational abilities with



those of historical figures such as Napoleon and Muhammad Ali Pasha, thereby acknowledging his leadership abilities (Scott, 1842/1981). Scott also implicitly recognized the legitimacy of the emir's authority by acknowledging his title of Commander of the Faithful and the manifestations of sovereignty established within his state. This reflected a conviction that the emir led an organized political entity rather than merely a rebellion (Scott, 1842/1981).

Recognition of the Legitimacy of the Algerian Cause

In several passages, Scott tended to regard the Algerian resistance as a legitimate movement. He maintained that the emir's cause was more deserving of European support than the Greek cause and described it as a defense of Algerian independence and the rights of peoples (Scott, 1842/1981). He also expressed his conviction that the emir sought to establish a modern state founded on order and stability rather than merely exercising temporary military leadership (Scott, 1842/1981).

Political and Military Criticism of French Colonialism

Scott adopted a sharply critical position toward French policy in Algeria, characterizing some of its practices as brutally aggressive and comparing its methods of warfare to policies of extermination directed against Indigenous peoples in other colonial contexts (Scott, 1842/1981). He also criticized France's violation of treaties, particularly the Treaty of Tafna, regarding it as a clear breach of international obligations (Scott, 1842/1981).

European Bias in the Description of Society and Its Institutions

Despite his admiration for the emir, Scott's memoirs reflect certain manifestations of European bias. He interpreted the state's progress from a European perspective, linked it to the need to adopt the Western model, and described certain local traditions in condescending terms (Scott, 1842/1981). He also criticized certain religious and social practices, occasionally characterizing them as backward or irrational traditions, thereby revealing the influence of his European cultural background on his assessment of local realities (Scott, 1842/1981).

Criticism of Military and Administrative Organization

Scott recorded critical observations concerning certain aspects of military and administrative organization, including inadequate artillery equipment and limited technical competence in some units (Scott, 1842/1981). He also criticized the shortcomings of medical care and surgical services within the army (Scott, 1842/1981). In addition, he referred to certain instances of administrative corruption at the local level, such as bribery among some commanders, as well as difficulties in organizing irregular convoys (Scott, 1842/1981).

Criticism of Diplomacy and Political Relations

Scott also criticized the emir's diplomacy and political relations, noting that Emir Abdelkader sometimes placed excessive confidence in French commitments and treaties, which he regarded as a complicating factor in the political situation (Scott, 1842/1981). He further criticized the emir's reliance on interpreters whom he considered unreliable, arguing that this created diplomatic vulnerabilities (Scott, 1842/1981).



12. The Importance and Value of Colonel Scott's Memoirs

The scholarly value of Scott's memoirs and the limitations of their use in studying Emir Abdelkader's state require careful assessment. These memoirs are among the foreign sources of considerable documentary importance for the study of the emir's state and constitute historical testimony written from within the political and military context of a pivotal Algerian experience during the nineteenth century. Complex conditions and the interaction between resistance and French colonial expansion characterized this period. The importance of the memoirs lies not only in their descriptive account of events but also in their integrated analysis of the structure of Emir Abdelkader's state, including its political foundations, institutional operations, and domestic and foreign relations. They are therefore an important source for reconstructing the features of a nascent state-building project that sought to assert its existence in an unstable context.

The memoirs' scholarly value also lies in their status as a primary source rich in political, military, social, and economic information, which has given them a significant place in historical studies of the Algerian resistance and the emergence of modern political organizations in the Maghreb. Scott wrote as an eyewitness, relying on direct observation and detailed records of events, places, and individuals, thereby lending his account a measure of historical credibility. His approach combined descriptive narration with political analysis. It provided detailed information on military organization, leadership, and mobilization; administrative and judicial structures; and the economic and diplomatic dimensions that contributed to the institutional formation of Emir Abdelkader's state.

The memoirs also derive importance from Scott's proximity to decision-making circles within Emir Abdelkader's entourage. This position enabled him to observe details of state administration and the operation of its institutions, giving his testimony a firsthand character that extended beyond general external observation. His account also reveals Emir Abdelkader's ability to construct a coherent political project that encompassed not only military resistance but also administrative, fiscal, and judicial institutions, as well as organized diplomatic relations. This proximity enhances the memoirs' explanatory value for understanding the emir's state as a multidimensional exercise in sovereignty.

Nevertheless, this scholarly value does not eliminate the need for a critical reading because the text remains conditioned by the author's cultural and political background and his European perspective on Algerian realities. Despite his evident admiration for the emir's character and his organizational and military abilities, Scott's approach was, in many passages, influenced by Western military and political standards. This influence is reflected in his emphasis on organizational and military matters while giving less attention to certain social and cultural dimensions. Some descriptions are also impressionistic or comparative, requiring methodological caution so that they are not treated as definitive evidence.

Linguistic limitations and limited familiarity with local contexts may also have affected Scott's understanding of certain social and cultural phenomena, despite the considerable value of



his field observations. Nevertheless, the memoirs remain a fundamental document for studying Emir Abdelkader's state because they provide rich historical material for understanding the construction of authority, the organization of society, and institutional development within a complex anticolonial struggle.

Ultimately, the scholarly use of Colonel Scott's memoirs requires a comparative, critical reading that places them in dialogue with other local and foreign sources. Such an approach can overcome the limitations of an individual perspective and produce a more balanced and nuanced historical understanding of Emir Abdelkader's state in modern Algerian history.

Conclusion

The critical historical analysis conducted in this study demonstrates that Colonel Scott's memoirs constitute an important foreign source for understanding the features of Emir Abdelkader's state during the nineteenth-century resistance to the French occupation. The memoirs do more than record events; they provide detailed information about the state's political, administrative, economic, social, religious, and diplomatic structures, making them a fundamental document for examining this historical experience.

The analysis indicates that Scott's representation of Emir Abdelkader's state captured important aspects of its institutional and organizational reality, including the existence of a central authority and effective institutions that performed various state functions. Nevertheless, this representation was influenced in certain respects by the author's intellectual and cultural background.

Emir Abdelkader's state rested on clear political foundations embodied in a central authority supported by religious and political legitimacy. It established an effective administrative organization, a judicial apparatus grounded in Islamic law, and a military institution supported by local arms-production capabilities. The memoirs also reveal an economic and financial system based on taxation, trade, and the exploitation of natural resources, alongside active social and cultural life that strengthened social cohesion and state stability.

Emir Abdelkader's experience was therefore not merely a military resistance movement against the French occupation but an integrated political project that sought to establish an Algerian state with clearly defined institutions and sovereign authority. The forms of organization, administration, and foreign relations documented in Scott's memoirs support this conclusion.

The state's diplomatic activity through correspondence, treaties, and political communication also reflected an early awareness of the importance of international relations in consolidating state legitimacy and defending its interests in regional and international arenas.

The scholarly value of Colonel Scott's memoirs lies in their status as eyewitness testimony to part of this historical experience, recorded in detail, about state institutions and their operation. Nevertheless, the judgments and perceptions shaped by the author's intellectual and cultural frames of reference require a critical approach to the text.



The memoirs are important not only for the information they provide but also for the way they reveal European representations of Algerian society and its institutions during the nineteenth century. This feature gives them an additional epistemological dimension beyond their direct documentary value.

This study provides a basis for further research comparing Colonel Scott's memoirs with local and foreign sources contemporary with Emir Abdelkader's state. Such research could reconstruct a more comprehensive and balanced account of this historical experience and enrich scholarship on the history of the modern Algerian state.

Thus, Emir Abdelkader's state, as reflected in Colonel Scott's memoirs, represents a pioneering political and civilizational experience in modern Algerian history. It combined state-building with resistance and established an early model of political and institutional organization in opposition to the French occupation. It therefore remains a historical experience worthy of further study through contemporary historical and critical approaches.

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