

The Contributions of Historian Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem to the Establishment of the Foundations of the Algerian Historical School

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Abstract

Following independence, historical studies in Algeria witnessed the emergence of a distinguished group of researchers and historians specialising in ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary history. Among the most prominent scholars of the ancient history of the Maghreb was Dr Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem, who, despite his passing, left a rich scholarly legacy that helped reinterpret the region's ancient history beyond the French colonial perspective that had long dominated most of its subjects. The writings of the Western historical school, particularly its French branch, dominated Maghrebi history, employing a foreign language and perspectives sustained by the colonial system. This predominance persisted despite their rigorous scholarly methods and extensive research output, which benefited from the French authorities' active and material support for researchers in diverse fields, including archaeology, geography, linguistics, and anthropology, to link the history of France's colonies to its own and understand them in depth. By contrast, Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem sought to rewrite Algeria's ancient history in an Algerian idiom and from a national perspective, departing from colonial approaches that overlooked the indigenous population's contributions to civilisation.

Keywords: Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem, Algerian historical school, history of Algeria, ancient history of the Maghreb, colonial school

Introduction

Following independence, Algerian universities faced the challenge of establishing a national historical school independent of colonial domination in historiography, particularly in the ancient history of Algeria and the Maghreb, a field that French researchers had monopolised for decades.

In this context, the historian Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem emerged as one of the most important scholars in establishing an original Algerian research orientation grounded in criticism, an interdisciplinary approach, and the restoration of indigenous peoples' standing as historical



actors. Ghanem was a pillar of the Algerian historical school, not only through his publications but also through his educational and methodological role in training generations of researchers. This raises the following research questions: To what extent did the historian Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem help establish the foundations of the Algerian historical school? How successful was his project in developing an Algerian research model independent of colonial interpretations?

An Overview of Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem's Life and Publications

Birth and Education

Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem was born in 1937 in the village of Qalamamen in Oued Taga (Hannai, 2018, p. 368) and spent his childhood in Djemorah, in the province of Biskra. He memorised portions of the Holy Qur'an at the old mosque and acquired the rudiments of Arabic and Islamic jurisprudence before attending the French school. He also joined a Muslim Scout troop under the supervision of the Association of Algerian Muslim Ulama, where he strengthened his national values and principles. He participated in the War of Liberation by collecting revolutionary messages, then joined the fedayeen and took up arms immediately after the martyrdom of his elder brother, Hocine Ghanem (Omrane, 2019, p. 14).

He grew up in a conservative family with a national and revolutionary outlook and received his early education at a Qur'anic school, where he memorised the Holy Qur'an. Despite his young age, no more than 12, he participated in the War of Liberation, carrying messages to the mujahideen concealed in his clothes. He also contributed to several operations and battles to the extent permitted by his role at that early stage (Belarbi, 2019, p. 42).

At midday on 25 September 1956, he took part in a fedayeen operation led by Aissa Maafi, alongside Salah Ben Gouga and Laala Salah. They ambushed a colonial agent who had helped the French army eliminate many mujahideen in the region (Aich, 2020). Shortly after, he was arrested and imprisoned for three months on charges of leaving his town without prior permission from the colonial authorities.

In 1957, he joined the National Liberation Army in the Aurès Mountains, where he served for four years. The revolutionary leadership subsequently sent him to Tunisia, where he resumed his studies and obtained the Ahliyya certificate. In 1961, the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic sent him to Kuwait to complete his education, and he obtained the baccalaureate after three years of study (Omrane, 2019, p. 15). After independence, he moved to Egypt to study statistics and planning at Cairo University, then returned to Algeria before travelling to England (Yaich & Sellami, 2019, p. 48).

Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem studied history at the University of Algiers and, after graduating, taught at a secondary school in the city. At the same time, he continued his postgraduate studies and earned a qualification in advanced studies in 1974 after completing research under the supervision of the renowned historian Hisham al-Safadi. This enabled him to join the University of Algiers as a teaching assistant before receiving a scholarship to continue his studies in France in 1976 (Omrane, 2019, p. 15). He initially enrolled at the University of Aix-en-Provence, where he obtained a diploma in advanced studies in classical archaeology. He then moved to Paris to study ancient Semitic languages for his doctoral specialisation, as his chosen subject required the study of Semitic inscriptions and Punic archaeology. In Paris, he



also enrolled at the Practical School at the Sorbonne, where he spent three years. The Ministry of Higher Education's termination of his scholarship compelled him to return to Algeria in 1979 (Yaich & Sellami, 2019, p. 48).

Upon returning to Algeria, he resumed teaching at the central university. After a full year there, deteriorating health led him to transfer to the University of Constantine in 1980 (Omrane, 2019, p. 15), where he continued teaching for more than 35 years. Earlier, in 1981, he obtained a third-cycle doctorate under the supervision of Professor Mustapha al-Alfi, with a thesis entitled *The Phoenician-Punic Presence in the Western Mediterranean* (Yaich & Sellami, 2019, p. 48). He returned to Paris on a scholarship in 1996, where he defended a State Doctorate thesis, supervised by Professor Mohamed Hassine Fantar of the University of Tunis, entitled *The Punic Contribution to Civilisation in the Numidian Kingdom*. He divided the thesis into three parts devoted to theoretical aspects and the Punic inscriptions recovered during an archaeological excavation at the Punic temple in Constantine (Mesrahi, 2019, p. 17).

Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem distinguished himself through scholarly and research activities, as well as educational efforts teaching a range of modules on ancient Maghrebi history and historical research methods. He oversaw the journal *Al-Turath* in Batna, served on the editorial boards of several specialist journals, and participated in national and international academic conferences, notably in Tunis and Cairo, among other locations. His academic output spans a broad chronological range, from the Phoenician and Numidian presence to the Roman occupation (Omrane, 2019, p. 16).

He was later promoted to professor. He performed the Hajj pilgrimage to the Sacred House of God in 2004. He retired from the University of Constantine 2 in 2015, following the reorganisation of Mentouri University and the relocation of the Department of History to the new town of Ali Mendjeli. He died, may God have mercy on him, on 25 February 2018 after suffering from an incurable illness (Omrane, 2019, p. 16).

Publications

Professor Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem is recognised as one of the most distinguished scholars for his serious and rigorous contributions to Algeria's ancient history and, more broadly, the history of the Mediterranean region. A review of his scholarly career readily reveals the abundance and richness of his research and publications, which focused particularly on the ancient history of the Maghreb, the field he cherished and to which he devoted his academic efforts (Belarbi, 2019, p. 28).

Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem authored numerous historical works on ancient Algeria and the ancient Maghreb, reflecting the breadth of his knowledge and the depth of his historical learning. His publications include more than 20 books, along with numerous studies and articles on the ancient history of the Maghreb in general and Algeria in particular, presented at academic conferences and seminars within and outside Algeria. These works have become indispensable references for researchers and others interested in the region's history. He also left a tangible scholarly legacy through his bachelor's and master's students, who benefited from his direct supervision of their dissertations and theses and from his valuable observations

and guidance during their defences (Belarbi, 2019, p. 28). His most important works published locally include the following:

- *The Numidian Kingdom and Punic Civilisation.*
- *Prehistoric Sites and Civilisations in the Maghreb.*
- *Decorative Art and Punic Writing on the Stelae of Numidian Cirta.*
- *Traces of the Phoenician-Punic Presence in Algeria.*
- *Aspects of Civilisation and Heritage in Algeria's Ancient History.*
- *Early Features of Pagan Religious Thought in North Africa.*
- *Decorative Art and Punic Writing on the Stelae of Prehistoric Algeria. The Punic Stelae of Constantine Preserved in the Louvre Museum in France.*
- *Landmarks of Civilisation in Eastern Algeria*, co-authored with Dr Abdelmalek Slatnia.
- *Phoenician Expansion in the Western Mediterranean. The Heritage of the Biskra Region and the Aurès Borderlands: The Roman Period as a Case Study.*

Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem's Contributions to the Development of the Algerian Historical School

Establishing the Algerian Historical School

Writing Algeria's ancient history remained closely tied to the French colonial project even after independence. Most studies of this period were written in French and focused primarily on highlighting the supposed continuity between the Roman past and the modern French presence. This tendency was reinforced by the fact that most primary sources on Algeria's ancient history were written in Greek or Latin, restricting their use to a small group of Algerian researchers (El Bouzidi, 2024, p. 271).

Accounts of ancient history were often dominated by representations of Roman colonialism and the monuments of civilisation it left behind, without giving due attention to the Algerian people and their pivotal role in the development of civilisation, or considering the achievements of Numidian leaders in urban development and engineering, alongside their contributions to armed struggle and popular resistance. This was primarily attributable to the nature of the sources used to study this period. These were largely written by foreigners and carefully formulated to exclude anything that might help restore an awareness of dispossessed sovereignty or, at the very least, strengthen the confidence required to regain cultural independence (El Zoubiri, 2018, p. 34).

As a result, this approach obscured the achievements of local heroes and recast leaders who had left a clear mark on human history as bandits or chiefs of warring tribes of unequal strength. The contributions of the Libyans, the ancestors of the region's inhabitants, to resisting the Sea Peoples, who attempted to invade Egypt and destroy its civilisation approximately 5,000 years ago, were also ignored. Likewise, the significance of Tassili's cultural influence was overlooked, to the point that some colonial historians almost suggested that it was a product of the coloniser and his creativity (El Zoubiri, 2018, p. 34).

Fortunately, these sources were available in French translation, which facilitated their use in historical writing to some extent. Consequently, research focused on the archaeological sites most frequently mentioned in these sources or those that received attention and intervention



from foreign scientific missions. Despite this limited focus, such research helped establish an important body of scholarship that provided an initial foundation for studying Algeria's ancient history, given the almost complete absence of Arabic sources addressing this period (El Bouzidi, 2024, p. 271).

The Algerian historical school's true beginnings can be traced to the opening of the second decade of the 20th century. After almost a century of French occupation, accompanied by persistent attempts to erase national identity and distort the Algerian character, a dedicated intellectual elite emerged, seeking to revive the nation and consolidate its foundations by rewriting its history and foregrounding its heritage. At the time, interest in history provided an essential basis for raising social awareness and identifying the nation's constituent elements. This aim specifically guided the efforts of a group of conservative intellectuals (Bouakada, 2022, p. 670).

The academic historical school in Algeria gained real momentum after scholars from the Association of Algerian Muslim Ulama made substantial efforts to record national history. The academic foundations of this field were consolidated by a group of students whom the National Liberation Front had sent during the revolution to universities in the Arab East, including al-Zaytuna, Egyptian universities, and al-Azhar. In contrast, others studied at French universities. Upon returning home, they helped lay the foundations of academic history teaching, alongside Arab professors who came to Algeria and contributed to the education of its university generations. Among the most prominent figures were Abou el-Kacem Saadallah, Moussa Alaoua Lakbal, Mohamed El Bachir Cheniti, and Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem (Bouakada, 2022, p. 670).

This generation made an exceptional scholarly contribution by establishing the Institute of History, training generations of students specialising in history and archaeology, and consolidating rigorous research traditions in military, political, social, and cultural history. Among its most significant achievements was *Algeria Through History*, authored by leading figures of the national historical school and representing a milestone in Algerian historical writing. This work launched a series of studies tracing Algeria's history from prehistoric times and the emergence of the earliest humans through ancient and medieval history to the modern and contemporary periods. Published in 1984, 20 years after independence, it demonstrated that the national historical school had begun to take shape and develop through the efforts of the founding generation, which established its intellectual, methodological, and institutional foundations with a national and emancipatory orientation (Bouakada, 2022, p. 672).

The publication of this book and subsequent works opened the field to a generation of researchers trained by these pioneers, enabling them to investigate local history, national figures, and the history of sects, beliefs, and sciences. Pioneering studies emerged on Algerian tribes, urban centres, and prominent figures and symbols, such as Ahmed Bey, Emir Abdelkader, and Ibn Badis, alongside detailed studies of major centres of civilisation, including Tlemcen, Béjaïa, and Tiaret. Historical research also expanded to address political, social, and economic issues at local, regional, and international levels with seriousness and methodological rigour, particularly in the earliest history departments at the universities of Algiers, Constantine, and Oran (Bouakada, 2022, p. 672).

These departments later became research centres that nurtured a new generation of historians who left their mark on local history across different periods. They included Mohamed Ben Amira, Kouider Bechar, Bouazza Boudersaia, Youcef Menaceri, Mohamed El Hadi Harich, and Brahim Bechi, among many others who championed historical writing and helped establish specialist conferences and research centres. Among the most prominent were the Centre for Research on the National Movement and the Revolution of 1 November 1954, alongside the National Archives (Bouakada, 2022, p. 672).

Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem occupies a prominent position among the historians who made a substantive contribution to rewriting Algeria's ancient history and thereby consolidating the nation's historical and civilisational memory. He devoted much of his research to the history and civilisation of the ancient Maghreb, highlighting the depth and historical reach of Maghrebi civilisation and the diverse forms of knowledge and cultural achievement it produced. His interest in his country's history began early in his scholarly career. It remained a consistent feature of his work, which was characterised by originality, innovation, methodological depth, and the capacity to advance scholarship (Belarbi, 2019, p. 29).

His Role in Rewriting National History and Breaking With the Colonial School

Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem's work stood out for departing from the colonial historical narrative, which often promoted the idea that Algeria lacked a coherent national identity before French occupation (Ould Boussiafa, 2023, p. 595). Instead, he emphasised the rich historical consciousness of the precolonial period and the continuity of Algerian identity across different eras, challenging a colonial discourse that sought to justify occupation by denying indigenous peoples' capacity to shape their own history (Bouakada, 2022, p. 565). He also undertook the meticulous recovery and analysis of primary sources, including previously neglected Arabic manuscripts, to reconstruct a more authentic and complex historical narrative foregrounding Algeria's resilience and cultural distinctiveness (Goubaa, 2020, p. 111). His research further helped develop a distinctive Algerian historical school by advocating an interdisciplinary approach that integrated linguistic, archaeological, and social studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the nation's past (Gronemann, 2020, p. 189).

The historian Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem also helped move the Algerian historical school towards specialisation through his focus on the ancient history of the Maghreb. He published several works distinguished by scrutiny, analytical precision, and diligence in documenting historical information. This methodology enabled him to offer detailed explanations and analyses of issues in national and regional history, providing powerful tools for confronting colonial and Orientalist arguments. Such arguments approached the history of Algeria and the ancient Maghreb from a condescending and arbitrary perspective, serving political and colonial purposes more than scholarly ones. Regrettably, some local researchers have adopted these arguments in the name of scholarly inquiry, although their work often indirectly serves colonial objectives (Bouakada, 2022, pp. 673–674).

His Methodological Contributions to Rewriting Algeria's Ancient History

Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem's approach to historical writing was characterised by the close interrogation of diverse historical documents and texts to establish historical facts and substantiate them with evidence, drawing on inscriptions, written symbols, and field research (Houari, 2024, p. 290). His distinctiveness as a historian lay particularly in his careful selection of subjects and his precise approach to documenting and analysing events. His efforts extended beyond the critical review and evaluation of colonial writings on Algeria's ancient history to the systematic search for new sources and documents, their study, and their publication, particularly those concerning Algeria's political and military history, its administrative and economic institutions, and its intellectual and civilisational achievements (Belarbi, 2019, p. 37).

In writing Algeria's ancient history, Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem emphasised the need to reconsider how that history was written and called for rigorous research into its key features, alongside coordinating specialists' efforts and perspectives. He also took a critical stance toward modern historical writings on the region, arguing that they had not merely gathered and reformulated historical material but had stripped it of its identity and subjected it to theories and conclusions that often served colonial objectives. His project of rewriting Algeria's ancient history was therefore an attempt to move beyond conceptions entrenched in colonial writing and return to primary sources, archaeological remains, and inscriptions as essential elements in constructing more accurate historical knowledge. It also entailed a rigorous critical reading of historical sources that dismantled the colonial school's ideological frames of reference (Ghanem, 1983, pp. 161–162). In his view, this school had falsified events. It reduced Algeria's history to narrow anthropological approaches, depicting it as the history of warring tribes governed by geographical factors and ethnic and sectarian antagonisms (Belarbi, 2019, p. 35). According to him, this hindered the development of an awareness of national unity and historical cohesion across successive generations (Sidi Ali, 2010).

His writings followed the principles of the scholarly research method that characterised the Algerian historical school, with a clear commitment to precision and clarity. Throughout his research career, he paid particular attention to primary sources, gathering them from centres and libraries worldwide before subjecting them to analysis and criticism and using them to develop detailed historical interpretations. This reflected his conviction that scholarly publication was justified only when grounded in new material or an original interpretation (Belarbi, 2019, p. 28).

His work reveals a disciplined organisation of ideas and precise definitions of concepts, alongside concise scholarly language without sacrificing explanation where necessary. His measured narrative and analytical style also balanced his writing, enabling readers to follow historical events with ease and gradually understand their meanings and contexts (Belarbi, 2019, p. 28).

Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem also proposed a methodological conception intended to make Algeria's history coherent and interconnected. He maintained that this could be achieved only through the systematic use of different types of material and written sources relevant to each



historical period and to all the civilisations that succeeded one another on Algerian territory, within a precise chronological and analytical framework. He called for this conception to be incorporated into established study programmes, particularly humanities curricula at institutes and universities, to ensure that successive generations developed a firmly grounded historical consciousness (Belarbi, 2019, p. 35).

In his research, Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem drew extensively on a wide range of historical sources, introduced them to researchers, and highlighted their significance. However, he did not limit himself to the references to his subjects found in written sources. Instead, he adopted an integrated approach combining the analysis of source texts, the study of inscriptions and written symbols, and practical field research. This methodological feature is prominent in most of his writings in this field (Belarbi, 2019, p. 37).

Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem's historical writing was also distinguished by the richness of its source material and the depth of its treatment. His research was not confined to written historical sources but combined them with inscriptions, written symbols, and practical field research. In assessing his approach, some researchers noted that he addressed his subjects directly, targeting the core questions rather than getting absorbed in minor details and peripheral issues. As they put it, he "tackles his subject head-on, approaching it neither from its edges nor its peripheries, but going straight to its core and substance" (Belarbi, 2019, p. 37). This method enabled him to focus on matters of historical significance and reveal new aspects of Algeria's ancient history.

Through this methodological contribution, Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem ranks among the foremost national historians to have made substantial advances in historical writing within their fields of specialisation. He devoted considerable effort to interrogating historical documents and sources, both within and outside Algeria, to uncover facts that had remained confined to the archives. Collectively, these efforts served the project of rewriting Algerian national history, making him a national historian of the first rank (Belarbi, 2019, p. 35).

His Distinctive Contributions to the Algerian Historical School

Although Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem belonged to the generation within which the traditionally oriented Algerian historical school took shape, a school whose establishment involved prominent historians such as Mohamed El Bachir Cheniti and Abou el-Kacem Saadallah, his writings on Algeria's ancient history cannot be reduced to that methodological framework. A close examination of his work reveals a clear departure from the mere chronicle of political and military events towards an analysis of the deeper civilisational and cultural structures of Algerian society. Ghanem treated the historical event as a means of understanding the formation of identity and the emergence of the state and its institutions, rather than as an end in itself. This gave his work an analytical character grounded in investigating origins and placed him among the foremost scholars of ancient Maghrebi and Algerian history (Belarbi, 2019, p. 36).

Thus, the history Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem studied was less a history of individuals, ruling dynasties, and their leading figures than a history of state institutions, social structures, and cultural systems in their various manifestations. Within this perspective, the significance of historical events in his writings extends beyond the narrow temporal boundaries of political or



military history into a broader horizon encompassing civilisational and cultural time. Within this temporal framework, the constituent elements of Algerian society took shape and its identity developed throughout history (Belarbi, 2019, p. 37).

Another aspect of innovation in Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem's writings is his openness to new and varied subjects. He studied decorative art, Punic writing, celebrations, and religious traditions, earning considerable appreciation from researchers and scholars. He also maintained the highest standards of scholarly integrity in his treatment of events and historical developments, pursuing historical truth wherever he could find it and refuting numerous sceptical arguments and allegations directed at national history. To this end, he diligently interrogated diverse historical documents and texts, drawing on compelling and rare evidence that enabled him to establish a range of historical facts on rigorous scholarly foundations (Belarbi, 2019, p. 37).

Conclusion

This research paper has reached the following conclusions:

- Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem's biography demonstrates that he combined a national and revolutionary upbringing with advanced academic training. From childhood, he contributed to the Algerian War of Liberation. He participated directly in fedayeen and military activities before pursuing his scholarly career after independence in several Arab and European countries. This varied trajectory enabled him to develop a deep specialisation in the ancient history of the Maghreb and Phoenician-Punic studies, making him one of the most prominent professors and researchers in this field. He also helped consolidate university research through sustained teaching, academic supervision, and participation in journals and conferences, exemplifying a historian who combines national commitment with enduring scholarly contributions.
- The writing of Algeria's ancient history was long dominated by a colonial perspective that marginalised the Algerian people and their contributions to civilisation, entrenching a biased reading of the past that emphasised Roman-French continuity through tendentious foreign sources. This situation began to change in the early 20th century. It shifted further after independence with the emergence of a national Algerian historical school founded by a generation of historians committed to restoring the standing of national history and freeing it from methodological and epistemological domination. By establishing university institutions and producing major reference works, this generation consolidated rigorous research traditions. It enabled subsequent generations to broaden the scope of historical inquiry, particularly in ancient history. This helped recover national historical memory and lay the foundations of an independent Algerian historiography, of which Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem was a leading pioneer.
- Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem made a decisive contribution to dismantling colonial historical discourse on Algeria by highlighting the continuity of national identity and the depth of historical consciousness before the occupation, while adopting a critical scholarly method based on primary-source analysis and the expanded use of neglected



historical material. This enabled him to help move the Algerian historical school toward specialisation, particularly in the ancient history of the Maghreb, and to offer a rigorous scholarly interpretation that effectively confronted colonial and Orientalist arguments and laid the foundations for a more independent and methodologically rigorous national historical school.

- Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem's historical method rested on rigorous critical reading of sources and close interrogation of original documents, alongside expanding the historical evidence base by searching for new sources and integrating them with archaeological and field data. This precise scholarly method enabled him to dismantle the ideological frames of reference of colonial writings and reconstruct a coherent historical narrative highlighting the unity of Algerian society and the depth of its civilisational history. Ghanem thus made a substantial contribution to the project of rewriting Algeria's ancient history and established a model of rigorous academic historical writing with a national dimension, placing him among the most prominent Algerian historians in his field.
- Although Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem belonged chronologically to the founding generation of the traditional Algerian historical school, he transcended its methodological limits by adopting a profound analytical approach focused on civilisational and cultural structures and social institutions, rather than limiting himself to political or military narratives. This orientation renewed the writing of Algeria's ancient history by broadening the scope of research to encompass cultural, artistic, and religious systems and maintaining strict scholarly integrity in refuting sceptical arguments. Ghanem thereby helped establish a modern historical practice grounded in investigating origins, deepening understanding of the formation of Algerian identity and consolidating his position among the foremost pioneers of ancient Maghrebi studies.
- Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem's scholarly output coincided with a pivotal phase in the study of Algeria's ancient history. Through his research, he helped uncover neglected aspects of Algerian society's history, particularly its educational, social, and cultural dimensions. He presented numerous examples demonstrating that, from early periods, Algeria constituted a social entity conscious of its unity and civilisational distinctiveness. An examination of the essence of his scholarly project reveals that it was not confined to a particular period but constituted an integrated undertaking to write Algeria's history across its full chronological span.

➤ Mohamed-Seghir Ghanem's writings on Algeria's ancient history revealed many previously unknown educational, social, and cultural aspects of the Algerian people, providing extensive evidence that Algeria was a nation conscious of its unity and distinctiveness. Therefore, an examination of the essential nature of his scholarly project shows that it fundamentally centred on writing Algeria's history across its different chronological periods.

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