



## **The Role of Scholarly Elites in Shaping Scholarly Communication between Algeria and Sub-Saharan Africa: A Study of the Experience of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Karim al-Maghili and Ahmad Baba al-Timbukti**

**HEROUINI Salah**

Hasiba Ben Bouali University of Chlef, Algeria.

Email: [S.herouini96@univ-chlef.dz](mailto:S.herouini96@univ-chlef.dz)

**DJEBRIT Moussa**

Region University of Ghardaia, Algeria.

Email: [Djebritmoussa738@gmail.com](mailto:Djebritmoussa738@gmail.com)

### **Abstract:**

This work aims to research the scientific links between Algeria and sub-Saharan Africa through two great scientists who had a role in scholarly communication between the two shores of the Sahara Desert, and the contribution of each of Muhammad bin Abdul Karim Al-Maghili and Ahmed Baba Al-Tanbukti in that.

Al-Maghili contributed his knowledge and religious reformism to the scientific journey to Tawat and the region south of the Sahara, his meeting with its princes and sultans and their influence through the correspondence between them and his writings in that, and the spread of his religious and political methodology and work and the promotion of it. Al-Tanbukti is considered one of the greatest scholars in sub-Saharan Africa in terms of knowledge and writings, with his contribution to spreading and preserving the Maliki school of thought, his influence on Algerian scholars, introducing them to his writings, and his reliance on their books in his writings.

**keywords:** Scientific connections, Algeria, Sub-Saharan Africa, Muhammad Abdul Karim al-Maghili, Ahmed Baba al-Tanbukti.

**Résumé :**

Cet ouvrage a pour objectif d'étudier les liens scientifiques entre l'Algérie et l'Afrique subsaharienne à travers deux grands savants qui ont joué un rôle dans les échanges savants entre les deux rives du désert du Sahara, ainsi que la contribution respective de Muhammad bin Abdul Karim Al-Maghili et d'Ahmed Baba Al-Tanbukti à cet égard.

Al-Maghili a apporté ses connaissances et son réformisme religieux au parcours scientifique vers Tawat et la région au sud du Sahara, à ses rencontres avec les princes et les sultans de cette région, ainsi qu'à l'influence qu'il a exercée à travers la correspondance qu'il a entretenue avec eux et ses écrits à ce sujet, sans oublier la diffusion et la promotion de sa méthodologie et de son œuvre religieuses et politiques.

Al-Tanbukti est considéré comme l'un des plus grands savants d'Afrique subsaharienne en termes de savoir et d'écrits, grâce à sa contribution à la diffusion et à la préservation de l'école de pensée malikite, à son influence sur les savants algériens, à la découverte de ses écrits par ces derniers, et à son recours à leurs ouvrages dans ses propres écrits.

**Mots-clés :** Liens scientifiques, Algérie, Afrique subsaharienne, Muhammad Abdul Karim al-Maghili, Ahmed Baba al-Tanbukti.



## Introduction

The Central Maghreb (Algeria) witnessed profound scholarly connections with Sub-Saharan African countries, which were significantly bolstered by Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī and Aḥmad Bābā al-Timbuktī across various scientific and intellectual fields. These connections spread across different regions, reaching Sub-Saharan Africa, thereby generating a scholarly and civilizational interaction between the two shores of the Sahara Desert.

Prominent among the scholars who contributed to this intellectual exchange was ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī (963–1036 AH/ 1556–1627 CE). His thought reached various Islamic regions; he studied under numerous shaykhs and produced disciples who carried and disseminated his knowledge. Through his intellectual output – the reputation of which spanned the horizons of Africa due to the religious and political weight of his writings – he forged scholarly ties with the kings of the Islamic Songhay Empire during the Askiya era, as well as the kings of Kano in Nigeria, manifested in political and religious correspondence with these rulers.

Similarly, in the Islamic Songhay State of Timbuktu, scholars emerged such as Aḥmad Bābā al-Timbuktī (d. 963 AH / 1036 CE)\*. He was renowned for his manuscripts in various sciences, and his family was widely recognized for its erudite scholars. He authored works in the genres of biography and prosopography (al-siyar wa-al-tarājim), introducing Algerian scholars and their writings by relying on sources authored by them and cataloging their works.

**Research Problem:**

What are the scholarly connections between Algeria and Sub-Saharan Africa, and what role did Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī and Aḥmad Bābā al-Timbuktī play in strengthening them

?

**Research Hypotheses:**

- Algeria and Sub-Saharan Africa share scholarly connections that formed a mutual civilizational interaction between the two shores of the Sahara Desert.
- Both ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī and Aḥmad Bābā al-Timbuktī are considered among the most important pillars of scholarly communication between the two regions.
- The movement of writing, scholarly biographical dictionaries, and the correspondence between rulers and scholars constitute the foundations of these scholarly ties.

**Research Objectives:**

- To introduce Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī and highlight his role in the scholarly interaction between Algeria and Sub-Saharan Africa.
- To introduce Aḥmad Bābā al-Timbuktī and highlight his role in the scholarly interaction between Sub-Saharan Africa and Algeria.
- To examine the scholarly ties between the two shores of the Sahara Desert and the extent of their mutual influence and reciprocal impact.



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

## **Research Methodology:**

The adopted research methodology involves introducing both Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī and Aḥmad Bābā al-Timbuktī, and highlighting their roles in the scholarly communication between Algeria and Sub-Saharan Africa. This is achieved by examining al-Maghīlī's intellectual output found in the correspondence he received from African rulers and sultans, as well as Aḥmad Bābā al-Timbuktī's biographical works on Algerian scholars, which relied heavily on Algerian sources for compilation and translation. This methodology is grounded in referring back to the primary sources these figures originally drew upon.

### **1. Introducing Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī:**

During the Zayyanid era in the 10th century AH / 16th century CE, the Central Maghreb (Algeria) witnessed the emergence of several scholars who shone prominently among the region's intelligentsia through their intellectual thought, scholarly heritage, and cultural achievements, which reached various horizons and extended beyond the borders of Algeria.

#### **1.1. His Name and Birth:**

Numerous biographical and prosopographical works have profiled him. Ibn Maryam al-Tilimsānī introduced him by stating: "The seal of the meticulous scholars, the imam, the erudite scholar, the profound verifier, the highly intelligent, the exemplary, the righteous, the Sunni, the restorer (al-jabr), one of the world's most brilliant minds and uniquely distinguished scholars who were endowed with vastness in knowledge, preeminence, and religious lineage, famously

known for his love for the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, and his hatred for the enemies of the religion"<sup>1</sup>.

Al-Timbuktī mentioned him as: "Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm Muḥammad al-Maghīlī al-Tilimsānī, the seal of the meticulous scholars, the imam, the erudite scholar, the profoundly intelligent, the exemplary, the righteous, the Sunni, one of the brilliant minds endowed with vast understanding and preeminence, deeply rooted in the love of the Sunnah and the hatred for the enemies of the religion"<sup>2</sup>.

Ibn Maryam adds another text in his biography, quoting Imam al-Sanūsī: "... From the servant of Allah the Exalted, Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Sanūsī, to the beloved brother who upholds what has been obliterated in [this] corrupt time concerning the obligation of enjoining good and forbidding evil, to the one who undertakes it – especially at this time – a banner over mankind characterized by scholarly prowess, Islamic zeal, and a heart populated with the glad tidings of faith, the master Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī. May Allah the Exalted preserve his life, bless his religion and worldly affairs, and seal for us, for him, and for all Muslims with happiness and forgiveness without trial on the day we meet Him..."<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Abū ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Sharīf al-Malīṭī al-Madyūnī al-Tilimsānī Ibn Maryam, **Al-Bustān fī Dhikr al-Awliyā’ wa-al-‘Ulamā’ bi-Tilimsān**, ed. Muḥammad b. Abī Shanab (Algiers: Al-Tha‘ālibiyya Press, 1336 AH / 1908 CE), p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Aḥmad Bābā al-Timbuktī (963–1036 AH), **Nayl al-Ibtihāj bi-Taṭrīz al-Dībāj**, superv. and intro. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd ‘Abd Allāh al-Harāma, vols. 1-2, 1st ed. (Tripoli, Libya: Kulliyat al-Da‘wa al-Islāmiyya Publications, 1398 AH / 1989 CE), p. 576.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Maryam al-Tilimsānī, *op. cit.*, pp. 253-254.



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

His name is mentioned at the beginning of his book and his correspondence with Prince Askiya: "...These are the answers of the Shaykh, the Imam, the reviver of the religion (Muḥyī al-Dīn), Abū ‘Abd Allāh Sīdī Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī, then al-Tilimsānī..."<sup>4</sup>. Here, reference is made to the "practicing scholar, the erudite, the master editor, possessor of consecutively reported miracles and abundant truths, Sīdī Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī al-Tilimsānī. He was born and raised in Tlemcen, then, after memorizing the Qur'an, journeyed to Bejaia where he excelled in the sciences..."<sup>5</sup>.

According to Ibn al-Qāḍī, he is "Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī, Abū ‘Abd Allāh, the righteous man, died in the year 820"<sup>6</sup>. Muḥammad al-Ḥafnāwī referred to him as "Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad al-Maghīlī al-Tilimsānī al-Tuwātī... He traveled to Tuat and died there in the year 909... He, may Allah have mercy upon him, was bold in action, courageous, brave-hearted, eloquent in speech, a

---

<sup>4</sup> Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī, **As’ilat al-Asqiyā’ wa-Ajwibat al-Maghīlī**, intro. and ed. ‘Abd al-Qādir Zabādiyya (Algiers: Al-Sharika al-Waṭaniyya Publishing, 1974), p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Majdhūb al-Fāsī, **Tadhkirat al-Muḥsinīn bi-Wafayāt al-A’yān wa-Ḥawādith al-Sinīn (Mawsū’at A’lām al-Maghrib)**, coord. and ed. Muḥammad Ḥajjī, vol. 2 (700-1000 AH), 1st ed. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1417 AH / 1996 CE), p. 816.

<sup>6</sup> Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Miknāsī Ibn al-Qāḍī (960-1025 AH), **Dhayl Wafayāt al-A’yān al-Musammā Durrat al-Ḥijāl fi Asmā’ al-Rijāl**, ed. Muḥammad al-Aḥmadī Abū al-Nūr, vol. 2, 1st ed. (Egypt: Al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya Press, 1391 AH / 1971 CE), p. 285.

lover of the Sunnah, skilled in dialectics, deeply perceptive, and a meticulous verifier..."<sup>7</sup>.

He named himself at the beginning of his book *Miṣbāḥ al-Arwāḥ*: "...This is a book from the servant of Allah the Exalted, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad al-Maghīlī al-Tilimsānī, may Allah be gentle with him..."<sup>8</sup>. In *Nashr al-Mathānī*, he is "Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Tuwātī, resident of Touggourt"<sup>9</sup>. In *Dawḥat al-Nāshir*: "The Shaykh, the jurist (faqīh), the preeminent and unique leader, Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī, was among the greatest of scholars and the most virtuous of the pious. He was exceptionally steadfast in enjoining good and forbidding evil..."<sup>10</sup>.

---

<sup>7</sup> Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad b. al-Shaykh b. Abī al-Qāsim al-Dīsī b. Sīdī Ibrāhīm al-Ghūl al-Ḥafnāwī, *Kitāb Ta‘rif al-Khalaf bi-Rijāl al-Salaf* (Algiers: Pierre Fontana al-Sharqiyya Press, 1324 AH / 1906 CE), pp. 166, 168. See also al-‘Abbās b. Ibrāhīm al-Samlālī, *Al-I‘lām bi-Man Ḥalla Marrākush wa-Aghmāt min al-A‘lām*, rev. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. Manṣūr, vol. 5, 2nd ed. (Rabat, Morocco: Al-Maṭba‘a al-Malakiyya, 1413 AH / 1993 CE), p. 106.

<sup>8</sup> Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Tilimsānī al-Jazā‘irī al-Maghīlī (d. 909 AH), *Risālatān fī Ahl al-Dhimma: Al-Risāla al-Ūlā, Miṣbāḥ al-Arwāḥ fī Uṣūl al-Falāḥ*, study and ed. ‘Abd al-Majīd al-Khayālī, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1421 AH / 2001 CE), p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> Muḥammad b. al-Tayyib al-Qādirī, *Nashr al-Mathānī li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Ḥādī ‘Ashar wa-al-Thānī*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥajjī and Aḥmad al-Tawfiq, vol. 2, 1st ed. (Rabat, Morocco: Maktabat al-Ṭālib, 1402 AH / 1982 CE), p. 370.

<sup>10</sup> Muḥammad b. ‘Askar al-Ḥasanī al-Shafshāwanī, *Dawḥat al-Nāshir li-Maḥāsin Man Kāna bi-al-Maghrib min Mashā‘ikh al-Qarn al-‘Āshir*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥajjī, 2nd ed. (Rabat, Morocco: Dār al-Maghrib Offset, 1397 AH / 1977 CE), p. 130.



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

As for his lineage, he is Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad b. ‘Umar b. Makhlūf b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan b. Yaḥyā b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Qawī b. al-‘Abbās b. ‘Aṭīyya b. Mannād b. al-Sarrī b. Qays b. Qays b. Ghālib b. Abī Bakr b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Idrīs b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Kāmil b. al-Ḥasan al-Muthannā al-Sibt b. Fāṭima, daughter of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him.<sup>11</sup>

## 1.2. His Teachers (Shuyūkh):

Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī studied under numerous shaykhs in Zayyanid Tlemcen, its neighboring centers of knowledge and learning, and even those who visited from other regions.

He acquired knowledge from Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Tha‘ālibī, Shaykh Yaḥyā b. Yadir, and others. A dispute arose between him and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī regarding the science of logic<sup>12</sup>. He corresponded with scholars from Fez, Tunis, and Tlemcen. Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Tanasī wrote extensively on this subject, and Imam al-Sanūsī concurred with him regarding the issue of the Jews of Tuat. Among those who responded to this issue were al-Raṣṣā‘, the Mufti of Tunis; Abū al-Mahdī al-Māwāsī, the Mufti of Fez; Ibn Zakrī, the Mufti of Tlemcen; the judge Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā b. Abī al-Barakāt al-‘Ammārī; and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Sab‘, both from Tlemcen.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Ḥājj Aḥmad Nūr al-Dīn, "The Reformist and Proselytizing Methodology of Imam al-Maghīlī through the Letters He Sent to Kings, Princes, and Scholars" (Master's thesis in Islamic Sharia, University of Hajj Lakhdar, Batna, Algeria, 1431–1432 AH / 2010–2011 CE), p. 26.

<sup>12</sup> Ibn Maryam al-Tilimsānī, op. cit., p. 256.

<sup>13</sup> Al-Timbuktī, Nayl al-Ibtihāj, pp. 576-577.

Thus, he grew up in Tlemcen, where he memorized the Qur'an under its shaykhs. He then traveled to Bejaia, mastering the sciences under Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Waghlīsī. Upon reaching the pinnacle of knowledge, he relocated to Tuat—which was then a prominent abode of Islam and learning—settled there, and had children, before traveling alongside Shaykh Sīdī Aḥmad al-Farīmī.<sup>14</sup>

He was a student of Imam ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Thaʿālibī, from whom he acquired knowledge of Hadith (prophetic traditions), Tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis), Qur'anic sciences, and Tasawwuf (Sufism). Recognizing his high stature, al-Thaʿālibī drew him close and gave him his daughter Zaynab in marriage, which underscores the esteemed position al-Maghīlī held in the eyes of Shaykh al-Thaʿālibī<sup>15</sup>. He also engaged in correspondence with ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿAṣnūnī, the judge of Tuat, concerning the issue of the Jews. Additionally, drawing from his teachers, he authored a wondrous two-quire book that he sent to Imam al-Sanūsī and Shaykh Ibn Ghāzī, both of whom praised and commended it. Furthermore, he engaged in academic discussions with Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām and Khalīl regarding the commentary on buyūʿ al-ājāl (deferred payment sales) by Ibn al-Ḥājjib.<sup>16</sup>

Al-Timbuktī praised his knowledge, stating: "... He, may Allah have mercy upon him, was bold in action, courageous, brave-hearted, eloquent in speech, a lover of the Sunnah, skilled in dialectics, deeply perceptive, and a meticulous verifier..."<sup>17</sup>. Consequently, we find that he studied under the most renowned scholars of his era, traveled to Bejaia in

---

<sup>14</sup> Al-Majdhūb al-Fāsī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 816.

<sup>15</sup> Ḥājj Aḥmad Nūr al-Dīn, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Maryam, op. cit., pp. 253, 255.

<sup>17</sup> Al-Timbuktī, Nayl al-Ibtihāj, p. 577.



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

pursuit of knowledge, and corresponded with al-Suyūṭī in the Islamic East (al-Mashriq), in addition to the scholars of the Western Sudan. This is vividly reflected in his travels and scholarly correspondence with its princes and sultans.

### 1.3. His Students:

Several students studied under al-Maghīlī in Tlemcen and the regions he visited, such as Bejaia, Tuat, and extending to Sub-Saharan Africa. A group of scholars acquired knowledge from him, including the jurist Ayyad Aḥmad, Shaykh al-ʿĀqib al-Anṣamanī, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Fījījī, and others.<sup>18</sup>

### 1.4. His Scholarly Heritage:

Al-Maghīlī authored numerous works mentioned in his biographical accounts. These include a didactic poem (manẓūma) praising the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and condemning the Jews and their supporters (pertaining specifically to the Jewish issue). He also wrote a treatise to the Sultan of Kano on the affairs of the sultanate, urging him to follow Islamic law (Sharīʿa), enjoin good, and forbid evil. For Sultan Askiya al-Ḥājj Muḥammad, he authored a work addressing several questions posed to him.

### 1.5. His other works include:

Al-Badr al-Munīr fī ʿUlūm al-Tafsīr (The Illuminating Full Moon in the Sciences of Exegesis); a one-page exegesis of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah; Miṣbāḥ al-Arwāḥ fī Uṣūl al-Falāḥ (The Lantern of Souls in the Foundations of Success), a remarkable

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibn Maryam, op. cit., p. 256.

two-quire treatise that he sent to Imam al-Sanūsī and Shaykh Ibn Ghāzī, both of whom praised and commended it; a highly condensed integrated commentary on Mukhtaṣar Khalīl titled Mughnī al-Nabīl, reaching the chapter on the apportionment of time among wives; and a marginal gloss (ḥāshiya) on it titled Iklīl Mughnī al-Nabīl, of which the author [of the biographical source] noted having seen a fragment at the end of the section on tayammum, and another fragment on commercial transactions (buyūʿ) titled Miftāḥ al-Kunūz (The Key to Treasures). It is also reported that he commented on three-quarters of the Mukhtaṣar.

Furthermore, he authored *Īdāḥ al-Sabīl fī Buyūʿ ʿĀjāl Khalīl*; a commentary on *Buyūʿ al-ʿĀjāl* by Ibn al-Ḥājib, engaging in discussions with Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām and Khalīl; a compilation on prohibitions (*al-Manhiyyāt*); an abridgment of *Talkhīṣ al-Miftāḥ* along with a commentary on it; *Miftāḥ al-Nazar fī ʿIlm al-Ḥadīth* (The Key to Reflection in the Science of Hadith), featuring discussions with al-Nawawī on his *Taqrīb*; a commentary on al-Khūnajī's *Jumal* in logic and an introduction to it; a didactic poem on logic titled *Minaḥ al-Wahhāb* along with three commentaries on it (which the biographical source's author notes his own father comprehensively annotated); *Tanbīh al-Ghāfilīn ʿan Makr al-Mulabbisīn bi-Daʿwā Maqāmāt al-ʿĀrifīn* (Alerting the Heedless to the Deception of Those Feigning the Stations of the Gnostics); a commentary on the prologue of the *Mukhtaṣar*; an introductory text on the Arabic language; an index (*fahrasa*) of his transmitted narrations; the book *Al-Faṭḥ al-Mubīn*; his aforementioned responses to the Sultan; and several poetic odes (*qaṣāʿid*), including an "M-rhymed" ode (*Mīmiyya*) composed in the meter and rhyme scheme of *Al-*



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

Burda, in praise of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), among others.<sup>19</sup>

He engaged in correspondence with Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī concerning the science of logic. Included in what he wrote to al-Suyūṭī was his saying (the researcher notes):

سمعت بأمر ما سمعت بمثله وكل حديث حكمه حكم الأصل  
أيمكن أن المرء في العلم حجة وينهي عن الفرقان في بعض قوله

"I heard of a matter the likes of which I have never heard,  
And every narrative is judged by the ruling of its origin.

Is it possible that a man is an authority in knowledge,  
Yet forbids the Criterion (the Qur'an) in some of what he says?"

These were among verses that the source omitted. Al-Suyūṭī replied to him, saying:

حمدت إله العرش شكرا لفضله وأهدي صلاة للنبي وأهله  
عجيب لنظم ما سمعت بمثله أتاني عن حبر أقر بنيله

"I praised the God of the Throne in gratitude for His grace,  
And I send blessings upon the Prophet and his family.

Wondrous is a poem the likes of which I have never heard,  
Which reached me from a learned sage whose nobility I acknowledge"<sup>20</sup>.

## 2. The Scholarly Connections of Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī with Sub-Saharan Africa:

Imam al-Maghīlī is considered one of the most prominent scholars who forged close scholarly connections during his travels and journeys throughout the Sub-Saharan region. This was manifested through his interactions with its princes and inhabitants, their mutual correspondence, the resulting

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 254-256.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Timbuktī, *Nayl al-Ibtihāj*, pp. 578-579.

writings movement, and the profound impact his methodological approach had on Islamic intellectual movements in the region.

### **2.1. The Scholarly Journey to Tuat and Sub-Saharan Africa:**

His scholarly journey southward began in the Tuat region. "A dispute occurred between him and a group of people, the cause of which was his uprising against the Jews of Tuat, whom he subjected to humiliation and degradation; indeed, he confronted them, fought them, and demolished their synagogues. In this matter, he was opposed by 'Abd Allāh al-'Aṣnūnī, the judge of Tuat, and scholars from Fez, Tunis, and Tlemcen during that era corresponded with him regarding it... When al-Tanaṣī's response arrived, accompanied by al-Sanūṣī's discourse directed to Tuat, he commanded his followers, who took up arms and headed toward those synagogues, fully prepared for battle. He ordered them to kill anyone who defended the structures, and thus they demolished them without any resistance. He then proclaimed, 'Whoever kills a Jew shall receive seven mithqāls from me.' Several events unfolded as a result, and he composed a didactic poem (manẓūma) concerning this incident..."<sup>21</sup>.

He subsequently entered the land of Aïr (Ahar), followed by the land of Takedda, where he met its ruler, taught its populace, and brought them great benefit. He then traveled to Kano and Katsina within the Bilād al-Sūdān (Lands of the Blacks), meeting the ruler of Kano, from whom he also benefited. There, he authored a treatise on the affairs of the sultanate, urging the ruler to follow the Sharī'a, enjoin good,

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibn Maryam, op. cit., pp. 553-554.



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

and forbid evil, effectively establishing for them the rulings and foundations of Islamic law. Following this, he journeyed to the land of Takrur, arriving in the city of Gao (Kāgho), where he met its sultan, Saski (Askiya) Muḥammad al-Ḥājj. He maintained his methodology of enjoining good, authoring a work for the sultan in which he answered several questions. While there, news reached him of his son's murder in Tuat at the hands of the Jews, which deeply distressed him. He demanded that the sultan arrest the people of Tuat who were present in Gao at the time; they were apprehended, but our master Abū al-Maḥāsin Maḥmūd b. 'Umar objected, as those individuals had committed no crime. Consequently, al-Maghīlī retracted his demand, ordered their release, and returned to Tuat, where he eventually passed away..."<sup>22</sup>.

## **2.2. Scientific and Political Correspondence with Princes and Sultans of Sub-Saharan Africa:**

The correspondence conducted by Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī during his journey in the Western Sudan represents one of the most significant manifestations of civilizational communication, reflecting the immense prestige he held among them. He received and replied to numerous letters, which took form in the treatises he authored addressing their legal queries (fatwas) and questions, particularly concerning matters of governance and rulership.

---

<sup>22</sup> Al-Timbuktī, *Nayl al-Ibtihāj*, p. 577.

## **Al-Maghīlī's Letter to the Emir of Kano on the Affairs of the Emirate:**

This is considered a vital political treatise, mentioned by al-Timbuktī in his work: "...He met the ruler of Kano, benefited from him, and wrote him a treatise on the affairs of the sultanate, urging him to adhere to the Shari‘a, enjoin good, and forbid evil, and established for him the rulings and foundations of Islamic law..."<sup>23</sup>.

The treatise is also known by the title *Tāj al-Dīn fīmā yajib ‘alā al-Mulūk wa-al-Salāṭīn* (The Crown of Religion Concerning the Obligations of Kings and Sultans). It begins: "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, Sovereign of the Day of Recompense... To proceed: May Allah guide you to piety and protect you from the incitements of desire, for the emirate is a vicegerency (khilāfa) from Allah and a deputyship (niyāba) on behalf of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. How great is its virtue, and how heavy is its burden... I will remind you of this in a concise summary across eight chapters, and Allah is the Guide to what is correct." It concludes: "...O Allah, forgive us, our parents, and all Muslim men and women, and believing men and women, the living among them and the dead..."<sup>24</sup>.

Mabrūk Muqaddam edited and published this manuscript in his book, titling it *Fīmā Yajib ‘alā al-Amīr min Ḥusn al-Niyya li-al-Imāra* (On the Emir's Obligation of Good Intention

---

<sup>23</sup> Al-Timbuktī, *Nayl al-Ibtihāj*, p. 577.

<sup>24</sup> Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Tilimsānī al-Maghīlī (d. 909 AH), **Tāj al-Dīn fīmā Yajib ‘alā al-Mulūk wa-al-Salāṭīn**, ed. Muḥammad Khayr Ramaḍān Yūsuf, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1415 AH / 1994 CE), pp. 16, 60.



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

for Leadership). Its contents were structured into eight chapters:

- Chapter One: On the emir's obligation of good intention.
- Chapter Two: On the emir's obligation of proper appearance and demeanor.
- Chapter Three: On the emir's obligation to organize his kingdom.
- Chapter Four: On the emir's obligation to exercise caution in residence and travel.
- Chapter Five: On the emir's obligation to investigate affairs.
- Chapter Six: On the rulers' obligation to exercise justice in judgments.
- Chapter Seven: On the collection of wealth from lawful sources.
- Chapter Eight: On the expenditures of the wealth of Allah<sup>25</sup>.

### **The Questions of Askiya and the Answers of al-Maghilī:**

This treatise was referenced by al-Timbuktī, a native of the region: "...He then traveled to the land of Takrur, arriving in the city of Gao, where he met its sultan, Sasaki Muḥammad al-

---

<sup>25</sup> Mabrūk Muqaddam, **Imam Muhammad b. Abd al-Karim al-Maghili al-Tilimsani and His Role in Establishing the Islamic Emirate in West Africa during the 9th AH / 15th CE Century** (Algiers: Dar al-Gharb Publishing, 2006), pp. 77-128. See also Muḥammad Farqānī, "Al-Maghili's Letter to the Sultan of Kano 'Taj al-Din fima Yajib ala al-Muluk wa-al-Salatin', Authored by Imam Muhammad b. Abd al-Karim al-Maghili al-Tilimsani (d. 903 AH / 1503 CE)," **Usur Journal** (Oran, Algeria), Issues 8-9-10-11 (2006–2007), pp. 187-208.

Ḥājj. He maintained his method of enjoining good and authored a work for him in which he answered several questions..."<sup>26</sup>.

The beginning of his book states: "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. May Allah bless the noble Prophet, our master Muḥammad, his family, and his companions, and grant them peace. These are the answers of the Shaykh, the reviver of the religion, Abū 'Abd Allāh Sīdī Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī, then al-Tilimsānī, directed to the Emir Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, titled Askiya... You have asked me about certain matters... and I ask you to satisfy my thirst by structuring the answers to these questions with elaboration, and providing whatever advice is facilitated for you." He concluded his book saying: "Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and there is no power nor strength except through Allah, the Most High, the Supreme"<sup>27</sup>.

This exchange comprised seven questions from Askiya and seven corresponding answers from al-Maghīlī:

- **First Question:** Concerns the Qur'an reciters in the Songhay Empire who were non-Arabs ('Ajam) and possessed very little understanding of Arabic, to the point that they did not grasp the intents of the scholars or the placements of mispronunciation and definition. Among them were judges and exegetes who spoke about the religion of Allah.
- **Second Question:** Relates to the Emir's inquiry about the state of these lands and their people, who claim

---

<sup>26</sup> Al-Timbuktī, Nayl al-Ibtihāj, p. 577.

<sup>27</sup> Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī, As'ilat al-Asqiyā' wa-Ajwibat al-Maghīlī, pp. 21-70.



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

Islam and profess to be Muslims, yet their actions bear no relation to Islam, alongside an explanation of the anti-Islamic actions undertaken by Sunni 'Alī in his kingdom.

- **Third Question:** Concerns the legal ruling on the wealth left behind by Sunni 'Alī and his entourage—wealth they had confiscated—and the return of a portion of it to those who claimed to be free Muslims<sup>28</sup>.
- **Fourth Question:** Deals primarily with interstate and inter-ruler relations, mutual cooperation to eradicate injustice and corruption, mutual assistance in reconciliation and reform, and his inquiry regarding Sultan Sunni 'Alī's extra-legal actions.
- **Fifth and Sixth Questions:** Ask a critical question regarding land tax (Kharāj) and alms (Zakāt), and his position as Emir of the Muslims toward that oppressive elite faction whose bellies and pockets were filled with what Allah had forbidden.
- **Seventh Question:** This question served as a summary and key to all their previous dialogue, returning to the issue of polytheism (shirk), false beliefs, and greed among the elite<sup>29</sup>.

### 2.3. The Influence of al-Maghīlī's Thought on Sub-Saharan African Scholars:

---

<sup>28</sup> Ḥājj Aḥmad Nūr al-Dīn, op. cit., pp. 154-156.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 156-159.

Through his thought and preaching in the region, al-Maghīlī served as a radiating beacon for many scholars, such as Shaykh ‘Uthmān b. Fūdī (Usuman Dan Fodio) al-Qādirī al-Fulānī (1754–1817 CE). Dan Fodio left behind a vast corpus of literature, including the book *Uṣūl al-‘Adl* (The Foundations of Justice), which encapsulated the principles of justice intended for his son Muḥammad Bello and his brother ‘Abdullāh b. Fūdī after the division of the kingdom between them and his transition to full-time preaching and teaching in 1813 CE. This work contained extensive guidance and advice, relying on the ten foundations of justice as outlined by al-Ghazālī, in addition to what he extracted from al-Maghīlī's works and his letter to the Sultan of Kano, Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb Rumfa, which addressed eight specific matters<sup>30</sup>.

Furthermore, Dan Fodio's influence by al-Maghīlī extended into the genre of "Mirrors for Princes" (al-Adab al-Sulṭānī). In his book *Ḥiṣn al-Afhām min Juyūsh al-Awhām*, Dan Fodio cited several of al-Maghīlī's fatwas, stating: "...And our Shaykh Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī al-Tilimsānī was asked...". Additionally, Dan Fodio's biographical entry for al-Maghīlī was sourced from al-Timbuktī, reflecting his high standing and value.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Mubārak Ja‘farī, "Shaykh Uthman b. Fudi al-Qadiri (1754–1818 CE) and His Influence by the Reformist Thought of al-Maghili through the Manuscript 'Usul al-Adl li-Wulat al-Umur wa-Ahl al-Fadl'," **Usur Al-Jadida Journal** (Oran, Algeria), Issues 16-17, Winter-Spring (April) (1436 AH / 2014–2015 CE), pp. 245-259.

<sup>31</sup> Muḥammad Fathā and Nūr al-Dīn Sha‘bānī, "Manifestations of Uthman b. Fudi's Influence by Muhammad b. Abd al-Karim al-Maghili (Mirror for Princes as a Model)," **Al-Tarikhyya Al-Jazairiyya Journal** (M'Sila, Algeria), Vol. 5, Issue 1 (2021), pp. 351-352.



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

This influence is visibly pronounced in the fields of governance and emirate affairs, particularly concerning the admonition of kings, the manner of addressing them, the subjects' obligation to assist their emir – concepts prevalent in the Questions of Askiya and Answers of al-Maghīlī – and the principles of justice directed at rulers and people of virtue.<sup>32</sup>

Indeed, Dan Fodio and Africans in general were profoundly influenced by al-Maghīlī, especially since Dan Fodio was a follower of the Qadiriyya Sufi order, which al-Maghīlī was the first to introduce to the Western Sudan. It was subsequently transmitted by his student, Shaykh ʿUmar al-Shaykh b. Aḥmad al-Bakkāy (d. 960 AH / 1553 CE), thereby embedding the Shaykh in the relationship with his disciples and his chain of spiritual transmission (silsila). The jurisprudential and political opinions of Dan Fodio, his son, and his brother are fundamentally built upon al-Maghīlī's thought, which is glaringly evident in the works they authored and the issues they tackled<sup>33</sup>.

### 3. Introducing Aḥmad Bābā al-Timbuktī:

Al-Timbuktī is recognized as one of the most famous scholars of Sub-Saharan Africa due to his esteemed scholarly standing, the renown of his erudite family, his extensive bibliography, his scholarly journeys, and the vast attestations found in the biographical sources that chronicled his life.

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 351, 353.

<sup>33</sup> Mubārak Jaʿfarī, op. cit., pp. 253-254.

### 3.1. His Name and Birth:

The author introduced himself in his book *Kifāyat al-Muḥtāj*, stating: "The compiler of this volume is Aḥmad b. Aḥmad b. 'Umar b. Muḥammad Aqīt b. 'Umar b. 'Alī b. Yaḥyā al-Ṣanhājī al-Māsīnī, known as Bābā... My birth was on the night of Sunday, the twenty-first of Dhu al-Hijjah, at the close of the year nine hundred and sixty-three, as I found written in the handwriting of my father, may Allah the Exalted have mercy upon him. I am now approaching fifty years of age; may Allah make the outcome good."<sup>34</sup>

The author of *Faṭḥ al-Shakūr* refers to him as: "Sīdī Aḥmad Bābā, the jurist, son of al-Ḥājī Aḥmad, son of al-Ḥājī Aḥmad, son of 'Umar, son of Muḥammad Aqīt, son of 'Umar, son of 'Alī, son of Yaḥyā, son of Gudāla, son of Bakkī, son of Nīq, son of Laff, son of Yaḥyā, son of Tasht, son of Tanaffur, son of Jibrāy, son of Akanbar, son of Anaṣ, son of Abū Bakr, son of 'Umar al-Ṣanhājī al-Māsīnī, may Allah the Exalted have mercy upon them. His birth was on the night of Sunday, the twenty-first of the sacred month of Dhu al-Hijjah in the year nine hundred and sixty-three, and he passed away, may Allah the Exalted have mercy upon him, on the mid-morning of Thursday, the sixth of Sha'ban in the year one thousand and thirty-six, may Allah have mercy upon him."<sup>35</sup>

According to al-Sa'dī: "The jurist, the erudite scholar, the singularity of his age and the unique figure of his time,

---

<sup>34</sup> Aḥmad Bābā al-Timbuktī, *Kifāyat al-Muḥtāj li-Ma'rifat Man Laysa fī al-Dībāj*, study and ed. Muḥammad Muṭī', vol. 2 (Kingdom of Morocco: Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, 1421 AH / 2000 CE), pp. 281-285.

<sup>35</sup> Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ṭālib Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq al-Burtulī al-Walātī, *Faṭḥ al-Shakūr fī Ma'rifat A'yān 'Ulamā' al-Takrūr*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Kattānī and Muḥammad Ḥajjī, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1408 AH / 1981 CE), pp. 31-37.



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

brilliant in every branch of knowledge, Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad Bābā b. the jurist Aḥmad b. al-Ḥājj Aḥmad b. ‘Umar b. Muḥammad Aqīt. The name 'Muḥammad' is inscribed physically by birth on his right wrist in a white line."<sup>36</sup>.

When [Sultan] al-Manṣūr conquered the Sudanic kingdoms in the year 999 AH, he arrested the heroic imam, the erudite scholar, the banner of luminaries, Abū al-‘Abbās Sīdī Aḥmad b. Aḥmad Bābā, along with his household. They were transported in iron shackles to Marrakesh alongside their women, while their wealth, treasures, and books were looted. He used to say, "I have the fewest books of my entire clan," yet sixteen hundred of his volumes were looted. Their arrest took place at the end of Muharram in the year one thousand and two (1002 AH), and they arrived in Marrakesh in Ramadan of the following year. They remained with their families under detention (thuqāf) until the ordeal was lifted from them. They were released on Sunday, the twenty-first of Ramadan in the year one thousand and four (1004 AH), bringing joy to the hearts of the believers.<sup>37</sup>

Al-Timbuktī himself noted: "...He was then tested, along with a group of his household, by being detained in their homeland in Muharram of the year one thousand and two at the hands of Maḥmūd Zarqūn when he seized control of their lands, bringing them as captives in chains... The hearts of the

---

<sup>36</sup> Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Imrān b. ‘Āmir al-Sa‘dī, **Tārīkh al-Sūdān** (Paris: L'École des Langues Orientales de Paris, 1981), p. 35.

<sup>37</sup> Muḥammad al-Ṣaghīr al-Ifrānī, **Nuzhat al-Ḥādī bi-Akḥbār Mulūk al-Qarn al-Ḥādī**, intro. and ed. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Shādhilī, 1st ed. (Casablanca, Morocco: Al-Najāh al-Jadīda Press, 1419 AH / 1998 CE), p. 171.

believers rejoiced at [their eventual release]; may Allah make it an expiation for their sins"<sup>38</sup>.

### **3.2. His Teachers:**

Al-Timbuktī acquired knowledge primarily from his family, pointing to this by stating: "The first of our ancestors to serve knowledge, to my knowledge, was my maternal great-grandfather, the jurist Maḥmūd Andagh Muḥammad, my grandfather's maternal grandfather. He assumed the judiciary in Timbuktu in the mid-ninth century. Then came my great-grandfather, who was a jurist, an erudite scholar, and a righteous man who studied under the righteous jurist and judge Mu'addib Muḥammad al-Kābarī. Following him were his three sons: my grandfather Aḥmad, and his brothers Maḥmūd and 'Abd Allāh. Knowledge subsequently spread among their descendants, coupled with leadership, and a group of them assumed the judiciary inclusively. I grew up in this environment, memorizing some of the foundational texts (ummahāt). I studied grammar under my uncle, Abū Bakr, the righteous man, while I studied exegesis (tafsīr), Hadith, jurisprudence (fiqh), legal theory (uṣūl), Arabic language, rhetoric (bayān), Sufism (tasawwuf), and other disciplines under our Shaykh, the erudite Muḥammad Baghayogho. I stayed in his company for years, reading under his guidance. I acquired Hadith transmission and logic from my father through dictation (samā'an), and I read Al-Risāla and the Maqāmāt of al-Ḥarīrī to gain deeper jurisprudential understanding under others. I became famous among the

---

<sup>38</sup> Al-Timbuktī, *Kifāyat al-Muḥtāj*, Vol. 2, p. 283.



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

students for my skill and tireless dedication to the pursuit of knowledge.<sup>39</sup>

He strove intensely in the early stages of his education until he surpassed all his contemporaries; no one could rival him in knowledge except his own teachers, who testified to his mastery. His fame spread across the Maghreb, his reputation expanded, and the scholars of major cities deferred to him in issuing legal verdicts (fatwas). He stood firmly with the truth, even if it came from the lowest of people, and never compromised it out of flattery, not even for princes and sultans.<sup>40</sup>

Al-Sa'dī adds: "...The jurist, the erudite scholar, the singularity of his age and the unique figure of his time, brilliant in every branch of knowledge... He strove and exerted himself in his early life in the service of knowledge until he excelled over all his contemporaries and vastly surpassed them..."<sup>41</sup>.

Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Marrākushī the Litterateur stated in his *Fahrāsa* (index): "Our brother Aḥmad Bābā was a man of profound knowledge, deep understanding, perfect and refined perception. He was an excellent author, possessing a complete mastery of sciences: jurisprudence, Hadith, Arabic, the two foundations (Uṣūl al-Dīn and Uṣūl al-Fiqh), and history. He was brilliantly adept at grasping people's intents, persistently devoted to writing and reading, and naturally gifted in writings... He transmitted to me the Hadith of Mercy with the chain of primacy (al-

---

<sup>39</sup> Al-Timbuktī, *Kifāyat al-Muḥtāj*, Vol. 2, pp. 281-282.

<sup>40</sup> Al-Burtulī al-Walātī, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>41</sup> Al-Sa'dī, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

musalsal bi-al-awwaliyya) from his father through his chain, as well as the Hadith of the Handshake (muṣāfaḥa), also from his father. I heard Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim from him in his exact wording, missing only a small portion. I read to him parts of Al-Shifā', the 'Ishrīniyyāt of al-Fāzāzī and Ibn al-Muḥīb's pentastich (takhmīs) on it, portions of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Sunan al-Tirmidhī, and Al-Muwaṭṭa'. I heard the entirety of al-'Irāqī's Alfiyyat al-Ḥadīth from him for deep understanding, save for a few verses, the beginnings of Mukhtaṣar Khalīl, portions of al-Ubī's commentary on Muslim, among others. He granted me a license (ijāza). I engaged in academic discussions with him regarding transmission chains (asānīd), biographical evaluation (rijāl), and history. He was a true vessel of knowledge—may Allah protect his soul—and he handed me the Maliki unbroken chain (al-musalsal bi-al-Mālikiyya) through his transmission...<sup>42</sup>.

He studied under his father, Aḥmad b. Aḥmad b. 'Umar b. Muḥammad Aqīt b. 'Umar b. 'Alī b. Yaḥyā (991–992 AH), mentioning him: "I attended numerous sessions with him, and he granted me a license for all that he is authorized to transmit and all that is transmitted from him. Through his recitation, I heard the Ṣaḥīḥayn, Al-Muwaṭṭa', and Al-Shifā' ..."<sup>43</sup>.

He adds regarding al-'Āqīb b. Maḥmūd b. 'Umar b. Muḥammad b. Aqīt b. 'Umar b. 'Alī b. Yaḥyā al-Ṣanhājī, the judge of Timbuktu (913–991 AH): "...He also granted me a license and wrote it for me in his own hand..."<sup>44</sup>.

He took knowledge from his shaykh, Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. Abī Bakr al-Wankarī al-Timbuktī (930–1002 AH),

---

<sup>42</sup> Al-Timbuktī, Kifāyat al-Muḥtāj, Vol. 2, pp. 283-284.

<sup>43</sup> Al-Timbuktī, Kifāyat al-Muḥtāj, Vol. 1, pp. 138-139.

<sup>44</sup> Al-Timbuktī, Kifāyat al-Muḥtāj, Vol. 1, p. 378.



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

famously known as Baghayogho, stating in his text: "...Our Shaykh and our blessing, the versatile erudite jurist, the righteous, the devout worshipper, the ascetic... I came to him one day asking for grammar books; he searched his library and gave me everything he could find on the subject... I stayed with him for over twenty years. I completed Mukhtaṣar Khalīl under him through my reading and the reading of others about eight times. I completed Al-Muwaṭṭa' under him through reading for comprehension, and Tashīl of Ibn Mālik through critical study and verification over a period using its author's commentary. I read Talkhīṣ al-Miftāḥ using al-Sa'd's abridgment twice or more, al-Sanūsī's Ṣughrā and his commentary on Al-Jazariyya, Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh's Ḥikam with Zarrūq's commentary, Abū al-Muqri's didactic poem, Al-Hāshimiyya in astronomy and al-Tājūrī's introduction to it, al-Maghīlī's rajaz poem in logic, and Al-Khazrajiyya in prosody with al-Sharīf al-Sabtī's commentary. I read much of Ibn 'Aṣim's Tuḥfat al-Ḥukkām along with his son's commentary on it – all through my own reading. I critically read the entirety of Ibn al-Ḥājj's secondary branches (furū') under him, and attended his classes on Al-Tawḍīḥ, missing only the sections from deposits (wadī'a) to judgments (aqḍiya). I also read much of al-Bājjī's Muntaqā, Al-Mudawwana with Abū al-Ḥasan al-Zarwīlī's commentary, and 'Iyād's Shifā'. I read nearly half of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī to him and heard it through his reading, as well as the entirety of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, turns from Ibn al-Ḥājj's Madkhal, and lessons from Al-Risāla, Al-Alfiyya, and others. I presented Qur'anic exegesis to him up to the middle of Surat al-A'raf. I heard the entirety of al-Wansharīsī's Jāmi' al-Mi'yār – a massive volume – dictated by him, alongside other sections. I

extensively debated complex issues with him and consulted him on major matters. In sum, he is my shaykh and master; no one benefited me as much as he did and through his books, may Allah the Exalted have mercy upon him and reward him with Paradise. He granted me a written license for all that he was permitted to transmit. I showed him some of my authored works, which delighted him, and he wrote commendations on them for me in his handwriting. In fact, he even transcribed some of my research notes and I heard him transmitting some of them in his lectures out of his fairness, humility, and acceptance of truth wherever it manifested. He was with us on the day the catastrophe befell us, which was the last time I saw him..."<sup>45</sup>.

### 3.3. His Students:

Numerous students studied under al-Timbuktī throughout his time in Marrakesh, especially after his ordeal, where scholars and shaykhs from all regions sought him out to partake of his knowledge.

He notes in his work: "...When we emerged from the ordeal, I was asked to teach. After initial reluctance, I sat in the Shurafā' Mosque in Marrakesh—one of its most prestigious mosques—teaching Mukhtaṣar Khalīl through critical reading, verification, transmission, and contextualization. I also taught Ibn Mālik's Tashīl and al-'Irāqī's Alfiyya, which was completed under me ten times. I taught Ibn 'Āṣim's Tuḥfat al-Ḥukkām, al-Subkī's Jam' al-Jawāmi', Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh's Ḥikam, and al-Suyūṭī's Al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaghīr, read multiple times for deep comprehension. The

---

<sup>45</sup> Al-Timbuktī, *Kifāyat al-Muḥtāj*, Vol. 2, pp. 237, 240. See also al-Burtulī al-Walātī, *op. cit.*, p. 32.



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

Ṣaḥīḥayn were heard from me and recited to me repeatedly, along with their abridgments, as well as Al-Shifā', Al-Muwaṭṭa', al-Suyūṭī's Al-Mu'jizāt al-Kubrā, Shamā'il al-Tirmidhī, Abū al-Rabī' al-Kalā'ī's Al-Iktifā', and others. Crowds and leading scholars flocked to me and remained devoted to my circles... I issued fatwas there, verbally and in writing, to the extent that legal questions were rarely directed to anyone but me. I was nominated for the official judiciary position multiple times, but I fervently prayed to Allah the Exalted to divert it from me. My name became famous across the lands, from the farthest reaches of Sus to Bejaia, Algiers, and beyond... all this despite my modest acquisition and knowledge..."<sup>46</sup>.

This is a clear and explicit text regarding the scholars he taught, the texts he relied upon, the position he assumed – particularly in issuing fatwas – and the widespread reach of his reputation across all horizons.

Al-Sa'dī notes about him: "...None could rival him in knowledge except his own shaykhs, who testified to his erudition. His fame spread throughout the Maghreb, his reputation expanded, and the scholars of major cities deferred to his fatwas..."<sup>47</sup>.

Al-Walātī similarly records: "...His trustworthy companion, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Īsī al-Marrākushī, stated in his Fāhṣa: Our brother Aḥmad Bābā was a man of profound knowledge, deep understanding, perfect and refined perception... He said: He transmitted to me the Hadith of Mercy with the chain of primacy from his

---

<sup>46</sup> Al-Timbuktī, Kifāyat al-Muḥtāj, Vol. 2, pp. 284-285.

<sup>47</sup> Al-Sa'dī, op. cit., p. 35.

father through his chain, and the Hadith of the Handshake, also from his father. I heard most of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim from him in his exact wording, missing only a small portion. I read Al-Shifā' to him, the 'Ishrīniyyāt of al-Fāzāzī and Ibn Muḥīb's pentastich on it, portions of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Sunan al-Tirmidhī, and Al-Muwaṭṭa'. I heard al-'Irāqī's Alfiyyat al-Ḥadīth from him for deep understanding, save for a few verses, the beginnings of Mukhtaṣar Khalīl, portions of al-Ubī on Muslim, among others. He granted me a license. I engaged in academic discussions with him regarding transmission chains, biographical evaluation, and history. He was a vessel of knowledge, may Allah the Exalted have mercy upon him, and he handed me the Maliki unbroken chain. End quote..."<sup>48</sup>.

He adds: "...And concerning him, al-Ḥājj Aḥmad b. al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Fahdī b. Abī Fahdī al-Tuwātī, then al-Marrākushī, may Allah the Exalted have mercy upon him, stated: When Allah the Exalted blessed me to meet the scholar of the world and its teacher, the bearer of the banner of prophetic traditions and their elucidator, the elevator of the banner of Imam Malik's school and its foremost figure, the erudite scholar... Abū al-'Abbās Sīdī Aḥmad Bābā—may Allah the Exalted make his days a cause for goodness and open the doors of sciences through him—I received from him what Allah facilitated for me with acceptance, and found it to be the utmost connection. I remained faithfully at his blessed door for nights, days, months, and years, drinking deeply from his Zamzam to my full satisfaction. With him, I was like one who eats but is never satiated. I read to him, may Allah the Exalted have mercy upon him, the Great Qur'an using the

---

<sup>48</sup> Al-Burtulī al-Walātī, op. cit., p. 33.



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

Tafsīr al-Jalālayn of al-Maḥallī and al-Suyūṭī, twice over two years, an exhaustive reading of verification, comprehension, and meticulous analysis.

Then [I read] Al-Muwaṭṭa' of Imam Malik, then al-Bukhārī and Muslim, followed by al-Qurṭubī's abridgment of them, then al-Suyūṭī's Al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaghīr multiple times, then Al-Shifā', al-Suyūṭī's Al-Khaṣā'is, Al-'Ulūm al-Fākhira, Al-Budūr al-Sāfira, then Alfiyyat al-Ḥadīth multiple times, alongside numerous lessons in jurisprudence from Khalīl, Al-Risāla, Tuḥfat al-Ḥukkām, and other books, as well as al-Kalā'ī and several of his own compilations, may Allah have mercy upon him, among other answers, annotations, works, research, and benefits that I acquired from him. He granted me an absolute, unrestricted license for all of this, may Allah the Exalted have mercy upon him. End quote...<sup>49</sup>.

Here, the sciences he taught to his students and the scholars he instructed are prominently displayed. He became a primary destination for scholars and seekers of knowledge, granting licenses to exceptional students who attained mastery, as evidenced by the text of al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Fahdī, who studied under him and was granted a license.

### 3.4. His Scholarly Heritage:

Al-Timbuktī authored works across various transmitted (naqlī) and rational ('aqlī) sciences, spanning independent books, commentaries, poetry, and prose. He references his own works, stating: "...I authored several books, such as my two-volume mixed and edited commentary on Mukhtaṣar Khalīl from the beginning of Zakāt to the middle of Marriage

---

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., pp. 33-34.

(Nikāh), marginal glosses on sections of it, Durar al-Wishāh bi-Fawā'id al-Nikāh – which is an abridgment of al-Suyūṭī's Al-Wishāh – a highly exquisite marginal gloss on the Mukhtaṣar titled Minan al-Jalīl (may Allah facilitate its completion), and others...<sup>50</sup>.

Al-Marrākushī stated in his index regarding al-Timbuktī's biography: "...An excellent author, possessing a complete mastery of sciences: jurisprudence, Hadith, Arabic, the two foundations, and history. He was brilliantly adept at grasping people's intents, persistently devoted to writing and reading, and naturally gifted in writings. He wrote highly beneficial, comprehensive works containing rational and transmitted research, which are numerous. These include his two-volume commentary on Mukhtaṣar Khalīl from Zakāt to the middle of Nikāh; Tanbīh al-Wāqif 'alā Taḥrīr Wa-Khuṣṣiṣat Niyyat al-Ḥālif in one quire; a commentary on the beginnings of the Alfiyya titled Al-Nukat al-Wafiyya bi-Sharḥ al-Alfiyya, and another titled Al-Nukat al-Zakiyya (neither of which were completed); Nayl al-Amal fī Tafḍīl al-Niyya 'alā al-'Amal (a commentary on the Hadith: 'The intention of the believer is more profound than his action'); another work on the same subject titled Ghāyat al-Amal fī Tafḍīl al-Niyya 'alā al-'Amal; Ghāyat al-Ijāda fī Musāwāt al-Fā'il li-al-Mubtada' fī Sharḥ al-Ifāda; Al-Taḥdīth wa-al-Ta'nīs fī al-Iḥtijāj bi-Ibn Idrīs (referring to his vocabulary usage in Arabic, in a few folios); Jalb al-Ni'ma wa-Daf' al-Niqma bi-Mujānabat al-Ḍalama Awlā Ulī al-Ḍalama in two quires; a four-quire commentary on al-Sanūsī's Ṣuḡhrā; a three-quire abridged biography of al-Sanūsī; Nayl al-Ibtihāj bi-al-Dhayl 'alā al-Dībāj; Al-Maṭlab wa-al-Ma'rab fī A'ḏam Asmā' al-Rabb

---

<sup>50</sup> Al-Timbuktī, Nayl al-Ibtihāj, Vol. 2, p. 282.



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

Ta'ālā in one quire; an arrangement of al-Wansharī's Jāmi' al-Mi'yār of which he wrote several quires; and he has [compiled] issues and questions on complex legal problems, some of which I have personally seen..."<sup>51</sup>.

#### **4. The Scholarly Connections of Aḥmad Bābā al-Timbuktī with the Central Maghreb (Algeria):**

Al-Timbuktī is considered one of the most prominent Sub-Saharan African scholars to have engaged with the Central Maghreb (Algeria), owing to his standing, his role in disseminating the Maliki school of jurisprudence (madhhab), his biographical profiling of its scholars in his works, and his reliance on the writings of Algerian scholars in his intellectual movement.

##### **4.1. Contribution to the Dissemination of the Maliki School of Jurisprudence:**

The Sub-Saharan African region adhered to the Maliki madhhab, facilitated by the widespread availability and teaching of Maliki jurisprudential works authored by its scholars. These included al-Sanūsī's *Ṣuḡhrā*, *Al-Qurṭubīyya*, the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*), *Al-Muwaṭṭa'* of Mālik b. Anas, *Al-Shifā'*, *Al-Risāla*, *Mukhtaṣar Khalīl*, *Al-Mudawwana*, and a marginal gloss (*ḥāshiya*) on *Khalīl*<sup>52</sup>.

Al-Timbuktī adds that people from both East and West enthusiastically embraced *Mukhtaṣar Khalīl*, as well as *Ibn al-Ḥājib*, *Al-Mudawwana*, *Al-Risāla*, and *Khalīl* itself. This

---

<sup>51</sup> Al-Timbuktī, *Nayl al-Ibtihāj*, Vol. 2, pp. 282-283.

<sup>52</sup> Al-Sa'dī, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

engagement was a hallmark of the study and trajectory of jurisprudence (fiqh), along with the book *Al-Tawdīh* and its commentaries. Consequently, commentaries and annotations on *Mukhtaṣar Khalīl* multiplied. [He states:] "...And Allah the Exalted facilitated for me the composition of a commentary on it, in which I gathered the essence of the discourse of those commentators I examined – who numbered more than ten... I read his *Mukhtaṣar* repeatedly, completing it through my own reading and the reading of others – a reading of critical inquiry, verification, and editing – under the preeminent scholar of his time, our Shaykh, the jurist Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd Baghayogho, his father, and the scholars of his era..."<sup>53</sup>.

Indicative of al-Timbuktī's role in spreading the Maliki madhhab are the works he authored and the Maliki texts he used for teaching. Regarding this, he noted: "...I acquired Hadith transmission from my father through dictation (samā'an) and I read *Al-Risāla* and the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī... I authored several books, such as my commentary on *Mukhtaṣar Khalīl* from the beginning of *Zakāt* to the middle of *Marriage (Nikāh)*, a marginal gloss on the *Mukhtaṣar*, a commentary on al-Sanūsī's *Ṣughrā*, and an arrangement of al-Wansharīsī's *Jāmi' al-Mi'yār*..." He taught Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim in its exact wording, *Al-Shifā'*, the *ʿIshrīniyyāt* of al-Fāzāzī and Ibn Muḥīb's pentastich (takhmīs) on it, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, *Al-Muwaṭṭa'*, al-ʿIrāqī's *Alfiyyat al-Ḥadīth*... Ibn Mālik's *Tashīl*, Ibn ʿĀṣim's *Tuḥfat al-Ḥukkām*, al-Subkī's *Jam' al-Jawāmi'*, Ibn ʿAṭā' Allāh's *Ḥikam*, al-Suyūṭī's *Al-Jāmi' al-*

---

<sup>53</sup> Al-Timbuktī, *Nayl al-Ibtihāj*, pp. 171-173.



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

Ṣaghīr, the Ṣaḥīḥayn, Shamā' il al-Tirmidhī, and Abū al-Rabī' al-Kalā'ī's Al-Iktifā' ..."<sup>54</sup>.

## 4.2. Biographical Profiling of the Scholars of the Central Maghreb (Algeria):

Among his works in biography and prosopography (al-siyar wa-al-tarājim) are Nayl al-Ibtihāj and Kifāyat al-Muḥtāj. In these works, he compiled biographical entries for numerous scholars from various regions, including many from Algeria. The following are illustrative, though not exhaustive, examples:

- Aḥmad b. Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. al-Khaṭīb b. Qunfudh al-Qusanṭīnī: "Abū al-'Abbās, famous as Ibn al-Khaṭīb and Ibn Qunfudh, the imam, the versatile erudite scholar, the traveler, the virtuous judge, the blessed traditionist (muḥaddith), and the author. His birth was around the year seven hundred and forty, and he passed away in the year eight hundred and ten"<sup>55</sup>.

- Aḥmad b. Aḥmad b. Aḥmad al-Ghubrīnī Abū al-Qāsim al-Tūnusī: "Its jurist and mufti, who acquired knowledge from Ibn 'Abd al-Salām and his cohort, and assumed the office of issuing fatwas (futyā) in Tunis. He is the son of the author of 'Unwān al-Dirāya and the judge of Bejaia. He passed away after the year seven hundred and seventy..."<sup>56</sup>.

- Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Waḥīd b. 'Alī al-Wansharīsī: "The erudite scholar, the bearer of the madhhab's banner at the turn of the ninth century. He acquired knowledge from the shaykhs of the town of

---

<sup>54</sup> Al-Timbuktī, Kifāyat al-Muḥtāj, Vol. 2, pp. 282-284.

<sup>55</sup> Al-Timbuktī, Nayl al-Ibtihāj, pp. 109-110.

<sup>56</sup> Al-Timbuktī, Nayl al-Ibtihāj, p. 104.

Tlemcen... He is the author of the books *Al-Mi'yār* and *Fatāwā Ifriqiyyā wa-Tilimsān*. He passed away in the year nine hundred and fourteen...<sup>57</sup>.

- Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-Masīlī: "The shaykh, the jurist, the judge, the scholar, the devout worshipper, the imam, Abū 'Alī, who was called 'the lesser Abū Ḥāmid' (al-Ghazālī). He combined knowledge, action, and piety, and authored excellent compilations. He passed away in Bejaia and was buried there"<sup>58</sup>.

- Ibrāhīm b. Qāsim b. Sa'īd b. Muḥammad al-'Uqbānī al-Tilimsānī: "The Chief Judge (Qāḍī al-Jamā'a) there, Abū Sālim (808–880 AH), the erudite, the memorizer (ḥāfiẓ), the son of the Shaykh of Islam and the mufti of the nation Abū al-Faḍl. He acquired knowledge from his father and others, attained mastery, excelled, and issued fatwas. He died in the year eight hundred and eighty, having been born in the year eight"<sup>59</sup>.

- Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Zakrī al-Mānawī al-Tilimsānī (d. 899 AH): "Its scholar and mufti, the polymath and Hadith transmitter (ḥāfiẓ), the master of legal theory (uṣūl) and substantive law (furū'), the exegete (mufassir), and an exceptional prose writer. He acquired knowledge from the two Abū al-Faḍls. He has several authored works and fatwas. He passed away in the year eight hundred and ninety-nine"<sup>60</sup>.

- Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad al-Maghīlī al-Tilimsānī: "Identified through his father, the seal of the meticulous scholars, the erudite scholar, the profound thinker, the exemplary, the righteous, the Sunni. One of the most brilliant and foremost minds in understanding and

---

<sup>57</sup> Al-Timbuktī, *Nayl al-Ibtihāj*, pp. 135-136.

<sup>58</sup> Al-Timbuktī, *Nayl al-Ibtihāj*, pp. 155-157.

<sup>59</sup> Al-Timbuktī, *Kifāyat al-Muḥtāj*, Vol. 1, p. 172.

<sup>60</sup> Al-Timbuktī, *Kifāyat al-Muḥtāj*, Vol. 1, p. 125.



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

strong perception. He traveled to Tuat and entered the lands of the Sudan. He has numerous letters and works"<sup>61</sup>. His biography has already been presented.

Therefore, al-Timbuktī's sources are considered among the most important biographical and prosopographical books that profiled many scholars and cataloged their works. Even other sources specific to the Islamic Maghreb can be found drawing their information from al-Timbuktī, owing to the abundance and detail of his data.

### **4.3. Reliance on the Works of the Scholars of the Central Maghreb:**

Al-Timbuktī authored several works whose origins primarily trace back to scholars from the Central Maghreb, rewriting them in a similar vein, whether as abridgments or commentaries on foundational texts or their secondary branches. He mentioned regarding this: "...A four-quire commentary on al-Sanūsī's *Ṣughrā*, a three-quire abridged biography of al-Sanūsī, and an arrangement of al-Wansharīsī's *Jāmi' al-Mi'yār*, of which he wrote several quires..."<sup>62</sup>. These are among the works he authored. Moreover, among the texts he studied under his shaykh, Muḥammad Baghayogho, was al-Maghīlī's *rajaz* poem in logic<sup>63</sup>.

Furthermore, his sources in *Al-Kifāya* included: "...I have selected the core of this abridgment from books such as al-Shādhilī's *Al-Tashawwuf fī Rijāl al-Taṣawwuf*... the *Mashyakha* of al-Maqqarī and its benefits, the *History of Ibn*

---

<sup>61</sup> Al-Timbuktī, *Kifāyat al-Muḥtāj*, Vol. 2, pp. 213-214.

<sup>62</sup> Al-Timbuktī, *Kifāyat al-Muḥtāj*, Vol. 2, p. 283.

<sup>63</sup> Al-Burtulī al-Walātī, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

Khaldūn... the transmitted narrations of Imam Ibn Marzūq the Grandson, the Riḥla (Travelogue) of Ibn Qunfudh al-Qusanṭīnī and his obituary chronicles (Uns al-Faqīr wa-‘Izz al-Ḥaqīr and Kitāb al-Wafayāt)... some of the insights of Aḥmad al-Wansharīsī and the obituaries attributed to him, sections of Ibn Ṣā‘id al-Tilimsānī's Al-Najm al-Thāqīb, and al-Mallālī's compilation on the virtues of al-Sanūsī (Al-La’ālī al-Sundusiyya fī al-Faḍā’il al-Sanūsiyya)"<sup>64</sup>.

It is observable that he relied on a significant array of sources, spanning history, travelogues, Sufism, and even biographical works such as obituaries and literary texts. Here, we have only highlighted the sources originating from the Central Maghreb, although he provided an extensive list of the works upon which he relied.

## Conclusion

The Central Maghreb (Algeria) experienced profound scholarly connections with Sub-Saharan African countries, which were fortified by both Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī and Aḥmad Bābā al-Timbuktī across various intellectual and cognitive fields. Through this study, we conclude the following:

- Imam Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī al-Tilimsānī al-Tuwātī is considered one of the most prominent scholars of the Central Maghreb during the Zayyanid state, from its capital Tlemcen down to Tuat in the Algerian south.

---

<sup>64</sup> Al-Timbuktī, Kifāyat al-Muḥtāj, Vol. 2, pp. 285-286.



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

- Al-Maghīlī studied under the scholars of his era in the Central Maghreb, acquiring extensive knowledge from their teachings, and drawing from their works. This endowed him with a scholarly provision that carried him to the horizons of Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Numerous students studied under al-Maghīlī, and others visited him from various regions due to the scholarly prestige he had attained. He distinguished himself through the works he authored across various branches and departments of science and knowledge.
- Al-Maghīlī's scholarly journey to Tuat, and from there to Sub-Saharan Africa, where he met its sultans and kings, is considered one of the most important journeys that connected the two regions scholarly through cultural exchange.
- Among the scholarly connections established by al-Maghīlī during his journey were the correspondence and inquisitorial exchanges that took place between him and the region's kings. They consulted him on matters of governance and politics, leading him to author several works that demonstrated the extent of his standing in the region, even among the sultans who corresponded with him.
- Africans were profoundly influenced by al-Maghīlī's thought, which became their methodology, their argumentative framework, and their guide in the religious calls (da'awāt) and reform movements they launched across various regions of Africa, such as the movement of 'Uthmān b. Fūdī (Dan Fodio).
- Al-Timbuktī is distinguished by his scholarly stature, rooted in his belonging to the most famous scholarly

family, "Āl Aqīt" (the Aqīt family). He received his education from his family members, the scholars of his country, and even in Marrakesh during his imprisonment following the trials he faced, including his exile to Marrakesh and the confiscation of his library.

- Seekers of knowledge from various regions, east and south, sought out al-Timbuktī during his residency in Marrakesh and after his return to Timbuktu, studying under him across a variety of sciences and disciplines.
- He left behind numerous works in religious and literary sciences, which he authored in his own handwriting and used for teaching. Some were derived from other works, which he then annotated and abridged, as he pointed out at the end of his book *Kifāyat al-Muḥtāj*.
- He contributed to the dissemination of the Maliki madhhab in the regions of Sub-Saharan Africa—especially since this madhhab was the prevalent one in the region—by teaching the foundational Maliki texts of the East and West, and even through his authorial activities in this field.
- Al-Timbuktī's works, particularly the books *Nayl al-Ibtihāj* and *Kifāyat al-Muḥtāj*, contained significant biographical entries for the scholars of the Central Maghreb (Algeria) across all its regions. These entries provided comprehensive biographies of the scholars, their shaykhs, their students, and even their authored works. Consequently, many subsequent biographical works relied on his compilations.
- In his writings, he relied heavily on the works of Central Maghrebi scholars, whether by commenting



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

on them or abridging them, to the extent that they became a crucial source for his information. He indicated this when cataloging his own works or listing the sources for his book *Al-Kifāya*.

- Indeed, the study of scholarly connections between Algeria and Sub-Saharan Africa is epitomized by the intellectual and civilizational communication facilitated by these scholars across the two shores of the Sahara. This was achieved through the contributions of both al-Maghīlī and al-Timbuktī to this communication, their mutual influence with Arab-Islamic culture during their scholarly journeys, their authored works, and their influential movements aimed at spreading Islam.
- The prospects remain open for studying the scholarly communication between the two regions through:
  - Re-collecting the manuscript heritage of Imam Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī, especially concerning his correspondence with the kings and princes of Sub-Saharan Africa, and critically editing and publishing them as a collected volume of treatises in a single work.
  - Critically editing and publishing the works of Aḥmad Bābā al-Timbuktī pertaining to Algerian scholars—specifically the titles he authored regarding figures like al-Sanūsī—to understand his contributions in these works, and to study his methodology, his sources, and the content of his analyses.
  - The importance of conducting a comparative study between the two regions regarding the writings movement, scholarly prosopography, and reformist

activities. This would explore what the Central Maghreb (Algeria) provided to Sub-Saharan Africa and vice versa, thereby clarifying the extent of the reciprocal influence and impact between them.

## Sources and References:

### Sources:

1. Al-Burtulī al-Walātī, Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṭālib Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq. *Faṭḥ al-Shakūr fī Ma‘rifat A‘yān ‘Ulamā’ al-Takrūr*. Edited by Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Kattānī and Muḥammad Ḥajjī. 1st ed. Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1408 AH / 1981 CE.
2. Al-Ḥafnāwī, Abū al-Qāsīm Muḥammad b. al-Shaykh b. Abī al-Qāsīm al-Dīsī b. Sīdī Ibrāhīm al-Ghūl. *Kitāb Ta‘rīf al-Khalaf bi-Rijāl al-Salaf*. Algiers: Pierre Fontana al-Sharqiyya Press, 1324 AH / 1906 CE.
3. Al-Ifrānī, Muḥammad al-Ṣaghīr. *Nuzhat al-Ḥādī bi-Akḥbār Mulūk al-Qarn al-Ḥādī*. Introduced and edited by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Shādhilī. 1st ed. Casablanca, Morocco: Al-Najāḥ al-Jadīda Press, 1419 AH / 1998 CE.
4. Al-Maghīlī, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Tilimsānī (d. 909 AH). *Tāj al-Dīn fīmā Yajib ‘alā al-Mulūk wa-al-Salāṭīn*. Edited by Muḥammad Khayr Ramaḍān Yūsuf. 1st ed. Beirut, Lebanon: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1415 AH / 1994 CE.
5. Al-Maghīlī, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Tilimsānī al-Jazā‘irī (d. 909 AH). *Risālatān fī Ahl al-Dhimma: Al-Risāla al-Ūlā, Miṣbāḥ al-Arwāḥ fī Uṣūl al-Falāḥ*. Study



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

- and edited by ‘Abd al-Majīd al-Khayālī. 1st ed. Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1421 AH / 2001 CE.
6. Al-Maghīlī, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm. *As’ilat al-Asqiyā’ wa-Ajwibat al-Maghīlī*. Introduced and edited by ‘Abd al-Qādir Zabādiyya. Algiers: Al-Sharika al-Waṭaniyya Publishing, 1974.
  7. Al-Majdhūb al-Fāsī, ‘Abd al-Karīm. *Tadhkirat al-Muḥsinīn bi-Wafayāt al-‘A’yān wa-Ḥawādith al-Sinīn (Mawsū‘at A’lām al-Maghrib)*. Coordinated and edited by Muḥammad Ḥajjī. Vol. 2 (700-1000 AH). 1st ed. Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1417 AH / 1996 CE.
  8. Al-Qādirī, Muḥammad b. al-Ṭayyib. *Nashr al-Mathānī li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Ḥādī ‘Ashar wa-al-Thānī*. Edited by Muḥammad Ḥajjī and Aḥmad al-Tawfīq. Vol. 2. 1st ed. Rabat, Morocco: Maktabat al-Ṭālib, 1402 AH / 1982 CE.
  9. Al-Sa’dī, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Imrān b. ‘Āmir. *Tārīkh al-Sūdān*. Paris: L’École des Langues Orientales de Paris, 1981.
  10. Al-Samlālī, al-‘Abbās b. Ibrāhīm. *Al-I’lām bi-Man Ḥalla Marrākush wa-Aghmāt min al-A’lām*. Reviewed by ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. Manṣūr. Vol. 5. 2nd ed. Rabat, Morocco: Al-Maṭba‘a al-Malakiyya, 1413 AH / 1993 CE.
  11. Al-Shafshāwanī, Muḥammad b. ‘Askar al-Ḥasanī. *Dawḥat al-Nāshir li-Maḥāsin Man Kāna bi-al-Maghrib min Mashā’ikh al-Qarn al-‘Āshir*. Edited by Muḥammad Ḥajjī. 2nd ed. Rabat, Morocco: Dār al-Maghrib Offset, 1397 AH / 1977 CE.
  12. Al-Timbuktī, Aḥmad Bābā (963–1036 AH). *Nayl al-Ibtihāj bi-Taṭrīz al-Dībāj*. Supervised and introduced by ‘Abd al-Ḥamid ‘Abd Allāh al-Harāma. Vols. 1-2. 1st ed.

- Tripoli, Libya: Kulliyat al-Da‘wa al-Islāmiyya Publications, 1398 AH / 1989 CE.
13. Al-Timbuktī, Aḥmad Bābā. *Kifāyat al-Muḥtāj li-Ma‘rifat Man Laysa fī al-Dībāj*. Study and edited by Muḥammad Muṭī‘. Vol. 2. Kingdom of Morocco: Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, 1421 AH / 2000 CE.
  14. Ibn al-Qāḍī, Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Miknāsī (960–1025 AH). *Dhayl Wafayāt al-A‘yān al-Musammā Durrat al-Ḥijāl fī Asmā’ al-Rijāl*. Edited by Muḥammad al-Aḥmadī Abū al-Nūr. Vol. 2. 1st ed. Egypt: Al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya Press, 1391 AH / 1971 CE.
  15. Ibn Maryam, Abū ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Sharīf al-Malīti al-Madyūnī al-Tilimsānī. *Al-Bustān fī Dhikr al-Awliyā’ wa-al-‘Ulamā’ bi-Tilimsān*. Edited by Muḥammad b. Abī Shanab. Algiers: Al-Tha‘ālibiyya Press, 1336 AH / 1908 CE.

## References:

1. Farqānī, Muḥammad. "Al-Maghili's Letter to the Sultan of Kano 'Taj al-Din fima Yajib ala al-Muluk wa-al-Salatin', Authored by Imam Muhammad b. Abd al-Karim al-Maghili al-Tilimsani (d. 903 AH / 1503 CE)." *Usur Journal* (Oran, Algeria), Issues 8-9-10-11, 2006–2007.
2. Fatḥa, Muḥammad, and Nūr al-Dīn Sha‘bānī. "Manifestations of Uthman b. Fudi's Influence by Muhammad b. Abd al-Karim al-Maghili (Mirror for Princes as a Model)." *Al-Tarikhyya Al-Jazairiyya Journal* (M'Sila, Algeria), Vol. 5, Issue 1, 2021.
3. Ja‘farī, Mubārak. "Shaykh Uthman b. Fudi al-Qadiri (1754–1818 CE) and His Influence by the Reformist



Received: 20/12/2025 Accepted: 17/03/2026 Published: 19/06/2026

- Thought of al-Maghili through the Manuscript 'Usul al-Adl li-Wulat al-Umur wa-Ahl al-Fadl.'" *Usur Al-Jadida Journal* (Oran, Algeria), Issues 16-17, Winter-Spring (April), 1436 AH / 2014-2015 CE.
4. Muqaddam, Mabruk. *Imam Muhammad b. Abd al-Karim al-Maghili al-Tilimsani and His Role in Establishing the Islamic Emirate in West Africa during the 9th AH / 15th CE Century*. Algiers: Dar al-Gharb Publishing, 2006.
  5. Nūr al-Dīn, Ḥājj Aḥmad. **The Reformist and Proselytizing Methodology of Imam al-Maghili through the Letters He Sent to Kings, Princes, and Scholars**. Master's thesis in Islamic Sharia. Batna, Algeria: University of Hajj Lakhdar, 1431-1432 AH / 2010-2011 CE.