

Libraries in the M'zab Valley region during the Ottoman era.

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Received: 08/2024

Accepted: 10/2024

Published: 11/2024

Abstract:

This study aims to cover an important aspect of the scientific and cultural heritage that shaped the scientific movement in the Mzab Valley region during the Ottoman era, which was represented by the great spread of libraries and treasure troves, which reflects the true interest of the Mzab community in science and reading and appreciation of the efforts of their scholars.

Through this research paper, we will attempt to identify the most important libraries and treasuries located in the Wadi Mizab region during the study period, and focus on their importance in preserving the contributions and achievements of scholars at that time.

We conclude that the libraries and treasuries in the Mizab area have an important role in stimulating the scientific movement until they have become a scientific institution and an important cultural center that attracts science students and scholars.

Keywords: Libraries, vaults; Valley Mizab; the Ottoman era; scholars.

1. Introduction

Libraries around the world have been known since their inception as places for preserving scientific books, intellectual classifications, and manuscripts, with the purpose of presenting them to readers and enthusiasts for their benefit. Ancient civilizations have shown great interest in these institutions and have given them great importance. Indeed, history has witnessed a competition among kings,

emperors, and sultans in building libraries and book repositories, whose names have remained immortalized to this day.

Among the peoples who were concerned with these libraries and repositories, we find the Mizābī society, which we will attempt to explore through this study to understand the intellectual and cultural sciences it was interested in, as well as the most important libraries and repositories that preserved the achievements of scholars in the intellectual and cultural realm during the Ottoman era.

2. The Valley of M'zab and the Evolution of Scientific Movement:

2.1. Location of the Valley of M'zab:

The area of the M'zab Valley is astronomically located between latitudes $^{\circ}32$ and $^{\circ}33$ 20' North, and longitudes $2^{\circ} 50'$ and $4^{\circ} 50'$ East¹. Geographically, the region lies in the heart of northern Algerian desert, approximately 600 km south of the capital city of Algiers. It is bordered to the north by the Bouzbeir Valley, to the west by the Zerzoum Valley, and to the east by Zelfana and El Qarara. To the south, it is bounded by the M'tilili Valley².

2.2. The Evolution of Scientific Movement in the Modern Era in the Valley of M'zab: The region of M'zab witnessed a significant intellectual and cultural revival from the beginning of the sixteenth century AD, especially after the widespread adoption of the celibacy system, which oversaw education, provided opportunities for learners to obtain their rights, and assisted students in institutes and universities³.

The educational movement in the Valley of M'zab dates back to previous centuries, where scholars of the region took the responsibility and laid the foundations for this movement. They produced a generation of educated individuals who believed in reform and education, earning them much respect and admiration. Hence, we find a vast and diverse collection of libraries and repositories preserving the works of the region's scholars, containing valuable books and manuscripts enriched with profound intellectual and spiritual sciences⁴.

These libraries also played a significant role in the intellectual and ethical formation of their patrons, based on the principles of preserving books and returning them

¹ World Atlas, National Educational Institute, Algeria, p. 16

² Nasser Belhadj, "Water in the Oases of the Desert," *Al-Wahat Journal for Research and Studies*, Issue 15, Ghardaia, 2011, p. 29.

³ Asmaoui, "Al-Azabah," Vol. 2, Ibid, p. 667.

⁴ Mouamar Chaouchou, "Free Education in the Mizab Valley During the French Occupation (Its Foundations, Manifestations, and Effects)," *Al-Abar Journal of Historical and Archaeological Studies in North Africa*, Vol. 06, Issue 01, University of Hassiba Ben Bouali, Chlef, January 31, 2023, p. 317.

after use⁵. In fact, Arabs and Muslims have traditions in dealing with books, as exemplified by Al-Jahiz in his verses⁶:

O borrower of my book, be pleased with it as you
would be pleased with yourself.

You do not see what you have shown to be a favor, and
you see what you have taken as a debt

3. Libraries in the M'zab Valley during the Ottoman Era:

- **Al-Fadl clan Library:**

The initial establishment of this library dates back to the late 12th century AH / 18th century CE, and the early 13th century AH / 19th century CE. The founder of this scholarly institution, namely the library, was Sheikh "Musa bin Omar bin Ya'qub,"⁷ who lived in the latter half of the 12th century AH / 18th century CE. In his will, he emphasized the preservation of the entirety of the library's collection and not to separate it. His son, "Umar," was tasked with transcribing the endowment text and recording it on the first page of the Book of Anthologies. The library contains over thirty handwritten books by him.

The son, "Umar bin Musa," assumed the management of the library and dedicated all his efforts to its preservation. He also added a set of new books by copying and acquiring several of them from different places. His son, Ibrahim, aided him in this endeavor by acquiring valuable copies for his father during his travels and purchases.

After him, his son "Muhammad bin Umar bin Musa" took over the library's management, showing great care and ensuring its preservation. He personally wrote a document listing the book titles during his tenure. Later, his son "Umar bin Muhammad bin Musa" became the last guardian of the manuscript treasury before it was transferred to the tribal house after his death in the year 1362 AH / 1943 CE⁸.

- **Al-Khaled clan Library (Sheikh Muhammad bin Isa Azbar's Library) (d. 1206 AH / 1872):**

The library possesses valuable books brought by Sheikh Muhammad bin Isa Azbar from Oman. Hence, it is considered the largest comprehensive library

⁵ Rahayli, Mohammed, "Libraries in Islamic Civilization: Their Types, Organization, Role, and Contribution to the Development and Civilization of the Islamic Arab World and Their Influence on Christian Western Libraries," *Al-Mu'yar Journal*, Vol. 26, Issue 3, University of Prince Abdelkader for Islamic Sciences, Constantine, April 15, 2022, p. 1261.

⁶ Soufi, Abdel Latif, "Glimpses from the History of Books and Libraries," Talaas Publishing and Translation House, Damascus, 1987, p. 62.

⁷ Youssef Bakir Al-Haj Saeed, "The Town of Bani Yarqan Through Civil Society," Al-Afaaq Printing Press, Ghardaia, Algeria, 2013, p. 79.

⁸ Manuscript Index of the Al-Fasal Cabinet, Bani Yasjun, Ghardaia, Algeria, February 1996, pages: n/a.

containing Omani and Eastern manuscripts in the Maghreb region in general. The average age of the copies in the library dates back to the 18th century AH/18th century CE. The oldest manuscript, apparently, is "Subugh al-Na'am," copied in the year 900 AH / 1494 CE⁹. It is noteworthy that the library belongs to the Al-Khaled bin Yazjan tribe, as it was under the management of the descendants of Sheikh Muhammad bin Eid Azbar, and later placed under the control of the Al-Khaled tribe¹⁰.

- **The Al-Yaddar clan Library (Bin Yazjan):**

The average age of the library exceeds two centuries (i.e., predating the second decade of the 18th century AH / 18th century AD). Among the prominent scribes of the library are: Abu Zaid bin Muhammad bin Ziyān (d. 841 AH / 1437 CE), Ali bin Salim bin Bayan ¹¹(d. 1115 AH / 1703 CE), Ibrahim bin Sulaiman bin Haj Ibrahim al-Mus'abi (d. 1142 AH / 1729 CE), Ibrahim bin Buhun (d. 1296 AH / 1878 CE), and Ali Nasib al-Kafi (d. 1315 AH / 1897 CE). Presently, the library encompasses 594 titles¹².

- **Sheikh Yusuf bin Hamu bin Adwan Al-Yasjani's Library "Abu Ya'qub" (1252 AH / 1836 CE):**

He had a treasury, which he dedicated in the path of God. Some of his books were returned to Sheikh Omar bin Sulaiman and also to the paternal uncle of the pole Atfaysh, Sheikh Omar bin Al-Hajj Saeed, with a reference to the dedication. Eventually, the custody of the library was transferred to the pole Atfaysh through a document written by the pole himself, along with the grandson of Sheikh Yusuf bin Hamu, named Ahmad bin Dad Adwan bin Al-Hajj Yusuf, dated 1301 AH / 1883 CE. The text of the document states: "I confirm to our uncle Ahmad bin Al-Hajj Yusuf Atfaysh all the books of his grandfather Al-Hajj Yusuf bin Ham... in the handwriting of his mentioned grandfather, whether authored by him or by others, which were held by his mentioned grandfather, or found in his treasury after his death, or found in the

⁹ Heritage Association, Manuscript Index of the Al-Khaled Al-Qarara Library, Algeria, March 1997, pages: M11, M12.

¹⁰ Same, page 8.

¹¹ Ali ibn Salim ibn Bayan (1045-1120 AH/1635-1708 CE): He was one of the literati, poets, and scribes of the island of Djerba. He was also an author and creative calligrapher, and his handwriting can be found in the cabinets of Djerba and other places. He studied at Al-Azhar University and also received knowledge from Sheikh Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Umar ibn Abu Sina Al-Mahshi. He dedicated himself to compiling his annotations, then compiled annotations from three scholars on the book "Sharh al-Jahalat." His works include "Questions," "Fatwas," "A Letter in which some incidents of Djerba are recorded," and others. See: Abu Al-Yaqzan, "Appendix of Biographies," Vol. 1, pp. 34-35. Group of Authors, Encyclopedia of Ibadi Figures, Vol. 3, pp. 611-612.

¹² Heritage Association, Manuscript Index of the Al-Baddar Library, Ghardaia, Algeria, February 1994, pages: Y,K.

possession of anyone else, taken from his treasury after his death. All of this is now in the possession of our uncle Ahmad bin Al-Hajj Yusuf Atfaysh..."¹³.

- **Sheikh Said bin Ali Al-Jarbi's Library:**

Popularly known as "Um Said" (d. 927 AH / 1521 CE), this is a personal library. His meticulous care for it was evident in his collection of numerous valuable books, making it one of the earliest initiatives in establishing treasuries in the Wadi Mezab region¹⁴. Consequently, it stands as one of the oldest treasuries in the same location, serving as a reference for Sheikh Ammi Said and others¹⁵. Notably, the library contains many handwritten books¹⁶, and the current number of manuscripts in the treasury is 725. The oldest manuscript in the treasury dates back to the year 697 AH / 1297 CE, containing a collection of forty Hadiths (the first title under it is number 29 in the index)¹⁷.

- **The Library of Dar Al-Talameedh in Ghardaia¹⁸:**

It was established by Sheikh Said bin Ali Al-Jarbi when he arrived from the island of Djerba to settle in Wadi Mezab. In this regard, Sheikh Abu Al-Yaqtan stated: "... The Sheikh left many treasures of books under the custody of Dar Al-Talameedh in Ghardaia, with his handwriting in the endowment document. Its benefit was general and its goodness comprehensive for all successive generations of scholars in Ghardaia..."¹⁹.

What we add to this treasury is the existence of a historical text indicating books endowed to Dar Al-Talameedh in Ghardaia, dating back to the second half of the 11th century AH / 17th century CE. This text was written by Sheikh Abu Al-Qasim bin Yahya Al-Ghardaawi (d. 1102 AH / 1690 CE), affirming the diversity of sources of this book treasury. It began with endowments, then included contributions from some of the old scholars of Ghardaia, as happened with

¹³ It is worth mentioning that there are several book titles in the library of Al-Qutb "Mohammed ibn Youssef Atfesh" that belong to the cabinet of Sheikh Youssef ibn Hamouine Adoun. See: Same, pp. 73-79.

¹⁴ Sheikh Ami Saeed Foundation, Index of Manuscripts of the Public Cabinet Ghardaia, October 2002, page: J.

¹⁵ Al-Qutb Library, Index of Manuscripts of the Cabinet of Sheikh Mohammed ibn Youssef Atfesh, Bani Yasjun, Ghardaia, July 2013, p. 60.

Sheikh Ami Saeed Foundation, Index of Manuscripts of the Public Cabinet, Ibid, page: J.

¹⁶ Same, pages: T, Y.

¹⁷ There was an ancient beginning in the Grand Mosque of Ghardaia, in the form of a spacious rectangular hall, with dimensions reaching approximately 7 meters by 4 meters. Its upper part had a ceiling constructed from palm tree trunks, and books were displayed on shelves along the walls. See: Sheikh Ami Said Foundation, Index of Manuscripts in the Students' House Cabinet (Erwan) at the Grand Mosque of Ghardaia, Introduction to the Index, April 2009, page: N.

¹⁸ Bashir bin Musa Al-Haj Musa, "Insight into the Manuscripts of the Public Cabinet of Sheikh Ami Said Foundation in Ghardaia," Al-Manhaj Journal, Issue 2, Sheikh Abi Ishaq Atfesh Association, Ghardaia, Algeria, February 2013, p. 250.

¹⁹ Ibrahim Abu Al-Yaqzan, Appendix to the Biography of Al-Shamakhi, Vol. 1, Ibid, p. 6.

Sheikh Um Said. Furthermore, the copying process was carried out by a group of students and scholars of Dar Al-Talameedh across historical periods, followed by their endowment to the treasury²⁰.

The total number of manuscript titles in the index is 1193 manuscripts. The oldest manuscript is represented by a copy of the Diwan of the Elders (5th century AH / 11th century CE), indexed as number 271, and located in the treasury as number 150²¹.

- **The Library of Belhadj bin Kassi Al-Qarari (1718-1827 CE):**

The library of Sheikh Belhadj bin Kassi is considered one of the important treasuries in the Wadi Mezab region. It is the richest library in Qarara and the oldest of all. Its establishment coincides with the founding history of the town. Notably, it was frequented by a group of scholars and elders. On the other hand, numerous books from it were received by the Qutb's library, all of which passed through Sheikh Omar bin Sulaiman Nouh²², except one, which was in Sheikh Belhadj's handwriting alone²³.

Additionally, there were other libraries and treasuries in the Wadi Mezab region, including the treasury of Sheikh Al-Hajj Sulaiman bin Isa bin Sulaiman (d. 1283 AH / 1866 CE), the treasury of Al-Hajj Ahmad bin Yusuf bin Dawood bin Saeed (who, according to tradition, died during the fourth decade of the 13th century AH / 19th century CE)²⁴, the treasury of Sheikh Abu Zakariya Yahya Al-Afdali (d. 1202 AH / 1788 CE), and the treasury of the jurist Musa bin Omar bin Ya'qub (d. around 1208 AH / 1794 CE)²⁵.

- **The Library of Sheikh "Bab bin Younes":**

It is considered among the famous libraries in the Ghardaia Palace. Ten books were sent to the library of the pole "Ahmed Atfaysh," the most prominent of which is the book "Aodhah Al-Masalik Ila Alfiah Ibn Malik," symbolized in the pole's library as: Um - 10/1. It is written in Maghrebi script. Inside the cover, we find the words of the pole "Mohammed Atfaysh" in his handwriting stating: "This is a book for Sheikh Bab Al-Ghardaoui." Among other book titles mentioned are: "Explanation of Shawaahid Adab Al-Kateb" symbolized as: A8, "Explanation of Sahih Al-Bukhari" symbolized as: D7, "Explanation of

²⁰ Sheikh Ami Said Foundation, Index of Manuscripts in the "Students' House" Cabinet, Ibid, pages: A-Q.

²¹ Same, p: Z.

²² Sheikh Omar bin Suleiman Nuh married a woman named "Aisha," who was virtuous and knowledgeable about women's issues. She gifted her inherited book cabinet to Sheikh Atfesh, whom she married. See: Group of Authors, Encyclopedia of Ibadi Figures, Morocco Section, Vol. 3, p. 643.

²³ Al-Qutb Library, Index of Manuscripts in the Cabinet of "Mohammed bin Yusuf Atfesh," Ibid, pp. 85-86.

²⁴ Mustafa bin Al-Haj Bakir Hamouda, "Library of Sheikh Abi Abdullah Al-Hajj," Al-Manhaj Journal, Issue 1, Ibid, pp. 207-208.

²⁵ Youssef bin Bakir Al-Haj Saeed, "The Town of Bani Yasjun", Ibid, pp. 70-71.

Mukhtasar Al-Harawi fi As-Sarf" symbolized as: N1, and other titles²⁶. As for his treasury, it is noted in the encyclopedia of the Ibadi scholars as follows: "He left behind a rich library of valuable manuscripts, still preserved within the library of Sheikh Babakr bin Al-Hajj Masoud Al-Ghardaoui."

4. The Cabinets of Wadi Mezab During the Ottoman Era

• Al-Hajj Mohammed bin Saeed Al-Mus'abi Al-Yasjani Cabinet (d. 960 AH / 1552 CE):

Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Asad bin Abdullah Al-Aghbari Al-Nahli, also known as Al-Nahly Al-Omani, praised him in a poem honoring the elders of the Maghreb region. He concluded his poetry by mentioning the palace of Bani Yazjan in the land of Wadi Mezab, saying:

*"In Bani Yazjan, safeguarded is his side**Mohammed bin Saeed, a sea of their knowledge. They are the trusted, noble governors**Pilgrims to the House of God, creators of harmony.²⁷"*

It found many books attributed to him, copied during the 10th century AH / 16th century CE in Mezab, as well as in the island of Djerba during his study there. Additionally, there is a collection of other manuscripts of books that were copied for him²⁸. The significance of this closet is evident in its containing valuable works, such as a compilation comprising the "Explanation of Ra'iyat Abi Nasr" and "Clarification of the Actions of Worshipers" by Abu al-Abbas Ahmed ibn Muhammad ibn Bakr, copied by Babbin Bechah bin Mohammed Al-Warjalani, who wrote: "A copy for Sheikh Al-Mu'ayyad, the exemplar of his time, Abu Abdullah, (the visitor) to the House of God, the Hajj Mohammed bin Saeed, may God make him happy in this world and a martyr in the Hereafter." Then, there is the manuscript "Muntaha Al-Sawl wal-Amal fi Ilmi Al-Usul wal-Jadal" by Abu Amr Othman ibn Abi Bakr ibn Younes. Sheikh Mohammed bin Saeed wrote on the second page: "Property from the possessions of Hajj Mohammed bin Saeed, may God bless his days and elevate his status in both worlds." The same practice was repeated with the manuscripts of "Al-Kashaf An Haqaiq Al-Tanzil" and "Explanation of Takhrij Al-Miftah: Al-Matul."²⁹ His keenness on valuable Ibadi books embodies his endeavor to

²⁶ Same: pp 61-62.

²⁷ Mustafa bin Al-Haj Bakir Hamouda, "Library of Sheikh Abi Abdullah Al-Hajj Muhammad bin Saeed," Al-Manhaj Journal, Issue 1, Abi Ishaq Ibrahim Atfesh Association, Ghardaia, November 2011, p. 206.

²⁸ Bashir bin Musa Al-Haj Musa, "Insight into the Manuscripts of the Public Cabinet...," Al-Manhaj Journal, Issue 2, Ibid, p. 251.

²⁹ Mustafa bin Al-Haj Bakir, "Library of Sheikh Abi Abdullah Al-Hajj Muhammad...," Al-Manhaj Journal, Issue 1, Ibid, pp. 206-207.

empower scholars and learners with their benefits, such as those in the fields of interpretation, rhetoric, grammar, morphology, and others³⁰.

- **Sheikh Ahmed bin Musa Cabinet, also known as Sheikh Al-Maigr:**

This cabinet is located in the town of Al-Atf (in the year 970 AH/1562 CE). Mention of it was made by Sheikh Abu Al-Yaqzan regarding his cabinet, he said: "... He left a cabinet filled with precious books in all fields of knowledge, unfortunately it fell victim to deterioration..."³¹.

- **Sheikh Abdullah bin Isa Al-Yazjani Al-Mus'abi Cabinet (1118 AH/1706 CE):**

He left behind a valuable cabinet, and in the library of Al-Qutb "Al-Muhammad Atfesh" there are at least ten books, most of them Eastern books. The oldest of these books is a copy of "Al-Kashaf" dated 711 AH/1311 CE. It is noteworthy, based on some traditions in his books, that this Sheikh dedicated his cabinet for the sake of God, as indicated in some of his writings: "Belongs to Abdullah bin Isa Al-Mus'abi and dedicated for the sake of God." Additionally, a portion of this cabinet was returned to Sheikh "Ibrahim bin Bahman"³².

- **Sheikh Al-Haj Dawood's Cabinet (12th century AH/18th century CE):**

He owned a cabinet of books, most of which were directed towards the cabinet of Sheikh "Bab bin Yunus," then to the cabinet of Judge "Al-Haj Babakr bin Mas'ud Al-Gardawi"³³, and the library "Al-Qutb" contains two books with declarations of ownership for this cabinet³⁴.

- **Sheikh Ibrahim bin Bahman Al-Thamini Al-Yasjani Cabinet (1232 AH/1817 CE):**

He left behind a cabinet of books, inherited by his relatives first, then by all students - if their lineage disappeared. It seems that it returned after his death to his grandson "Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Bahman," as indicated in his book "Fara'id Al-Qalaid" and other books. Numerous possessions and dedications belonging to the cabinet of "Ibrahim bin Bahman" are found in the library of Al-Qutb³⁵.

- **Sheikh Sulaiman bin Sheikh Omar Al-Maliki's cabinet (13th century AH):**

³⁰ Mustafa bin Al-Haj Bakir, Lecture on Sheikh Abu Abdullah Al-Hajj Muhammad bin Saeed, delivered at the University of Ghardaia on the occasion of a cultural event in Constantine, April 2018, p. 9.

³¹ Abu Al-Yaqzan, Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 27.

³² Al-Qutb Library, Index of Manuscripts in the Cabinet of Sheikh Al-Allama "Mohammed bin Yusuf Atfesh," Ibid, pp. 70-71.

³³ Sheikh Ali Saeed Foundation, Index of Manuscripts in the Cabinet of Sheikh Qadi Abi Bakr bin Mas'ud Al-Ghardaoui, Ghardaia, Algeria, August 2007, pages: 6-65-68-70-79-82-83-86-87-88.

³⁴ Al-Qutb Library, Index of Manuscripts in the Cabinet of Sheikh "Mohammed bin Yusuf Atfesh," Ibid, p. 61.

³⁵ Ibid, pp. 80-83.

Sheikh Muhammad Atfesh Al-Qutb mentioned the cabinet of Sheikh Sulaiman bin Sheikh Omar, stating in the introduction he wrote in the summary of "The Science of Calligraphy": "Through the grace of Allah, I had in my possession a grammar book by Al-Suyuti, so I desired to explain the knowledge of calligraphy within it. It came from the cabinet of Sheikh Sulaiman bin Sheikh Omar from the people of Malakash, descendants of the honorable children of Abu Omar and Ibn Isa, distinct from Sheikh Sulaiman who requested me to arrange pieces from Moses bin Amer. Furthermore, there are several book titles in the library of Al-Qutb derived from the cabinet of Sheikh Sulaiman bin Sheikh Omar³⁶."

• **The cabinet of Sheikh Muhammad ibn Idris and his two jurist sons, Saleh and Sulaiman:**

Sheikh Muhammad bin Sulaiman ibn Idris Al-Yasjani (died: 1313 AH/1895 CE) is considered the primary founder of the cabinet. He laid the foundation by copying books either by himself during his lifetime or through his possession of books acquired through purchase, copying, or gifts from those who shared his values of righteousness and kindness. It's worth noting that Sheikh Muhammad bin Sulaiman also instructed to keep the cabinet locked for those who seek to benefit from its books for the purpose of earning reward.

The cabinet's operation continued after its founder's death through his sons Sulaiman (1863-1942 CE) and Saleh (1856-1936 CE). The family agreed to divide the library between them, each responsible for preserving the books allocated to them. Sheikh Sulaiman bin Muhammad enriched the cabinet by copying several books and collections after his father's death. He added conditions to the restrictions, stating that they should remain in the possession of his male descendants and should not be lent to anyone who might risk damaging or destroying them. In a copy of "Al-Mujaz" by Abu Ammar Al-Kafy Al-Warajalani, after writing the statement regarding restriction for the sake of Allah for reading and benefiting, the following was written on the second page: "And the offspring of the honorable Sheikh Muhammad bin Sulaiman bin Saleh have precedence over others if they need it, and it should not be lent except to those feared to not corrupt it³⁷."

• **The Cabinet of Sheikh Al-Qadi Abi Bakr bin Mas'ud Al-Gardawi, known as Sheikh Al-Hajjib Abkar (died: 1325 AH/1907 CE):**

Sheikh Abi Bakr bin Mas'ud's role was prominent in teaching, issuing religious edicts, educating students, and raising awareness for societal reform. Additionally, he

³⁶ Ibid, pp. 63-64.

³⁷ Sheikh "Ami Said" Foundation, Index of Manuscripts in the Cabinet of Sheikh Mohammed bin Suleiman ibn Idrissou Al-Yasjani, Ghardaia, Algeria, January 2015, pages: w ,z.

established a rich and valuable library, particularly in fields related to Ibadi thought and history, as well as various sciences.

The social status of Sheikh Abi Bakr bin Mas'ud played a significant role in establishing the cabinet. He was blessed with wealth and utilized it for the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge through scientific expeditions and collecting books by various means. Sheikh Al-Hajjib Abkar managed to obtain endowed books through the generosity of some philanthropic scholars, including donations from Al-Hajj Saleh Awaliah. Thus, Sheikh Bakr acquired an important library that provided great services to researchers in the Mizab Valley³⁸.

Currently, the total number of manuscripts in the cabinet is 334, with the oldest being "Al-Mustasfa fi Usul al-Fiqh" by Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali (died: 505 AH/1111 CE), copied by Ali bin Abi Al-Qasim Nasr ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmed Al-Anzi in 552 AH/1157 CE. It bears the index number 50 in the catalog and number Babakr 09 in the cabinet³⁹.

Conclusion

From this study, we can draw the following conclusions:

- The Mizab Valley is rich in various types of valuable books and manuscripts, most of which are found in specific families and inherited by their descendants.
- Owners of cabinets and libraries exhibit utmost care and diligence in preserving this cultural heritage, considering it a source of pride and honor.
- Most of the prominent figures and scholars of the Mizab Valley left behind private libraries enriched with significant collections of valuable books, reflecting their intellectual, cultural interests, and scientific inclinations, providing researchers and enthusiasts with a diverse array of sources and references.

³⁸ Sheikh "Ami Said" Foundation, Index of Manuscripts in the Cabinet of Sheikh Qadi Abu Bakr bin Mas'ud Al-Ghardaoui, Ghardaia, Algeria, August 2007, pages: D ,H.

³⁹ Ibid, page: k.