

The Books in My Life: A Memoir

Part 2

Tarif Khalidi

My journey of publication began at the American University of Beirut, which imposed on its professors a dictum imported from the United States – “publish or perish.” This made publication, especially in foreign journals, the most important standard for climbing the academic ladder toward full professorship. The motto became like a sword hovering over our necks. Academic research is undoubtedly necessary for teaching, but the basic characteristic of a good teacher is the ability to relay academic material to students in a way that awakens their minds and curiosity; regrettably, this was not taken into consideration for academic promotion. My dear friend Kamal Salibi once told me:

When I published my first article, which included a list of the greatest judges during the Mamluk period, in a French Orientalist journal, I was overwhelmed by euphoria and went about sending copies of the article to my relatives and friends. One of my friends told me: All you have done is transfer this information from one obscure location to another.

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A somewhat harsh judgement, but does it not apply to innumerable “academic” articles, in both the humanities and the sciences? Are not skillful and creative teachers at any university few and far between? If Socrates or Jesus himself taught at a university, they would have received the lowest standing among the professors – if the university would have kept them on at all – since they never published anything: “Dear Professor Socrates, We regret to inform you that the university’s administration has taken a decision to terminate

your services due to . . . with our best wishes for your academic future.”

One of my first published articles was “A Mosquito’s Wing: Al-Jahiz on the Progress of Knowledge.”¹ Several years later, I wrote a more comprehensive article, “The Concept of Progress in Classical Islam.”² I no longer remember the reason for this interest in the idea of progress. I may have been prompted by the books of Orientalists like Bernard Lewis and Gustave von Grunebaum, among others, who asserted definitively that no concept of progress or development existed within Arab thought, which in their view was essentially conservative, opposed to innovation, and sought wisdom only in the Qur’an. They emphasized the superiority of past generations, conveying the political message that Arabs and Muslims refuse enlightenment, preferring to wallow in a quagmire of backwardness, degeneration, and fatalism. These and other such notions of the “Arab mind” were popular among Orientalists of that time and, unfortunately, even filtered into the writings of some modern Arab “intellectuals.” These fatuous generalizations, though they have waned in the West, still thrive within Israeli Orientalism – the last bastion of Orientalism in the world today. In any case, my articles were not intended to “defend” the history of Arab thought, but only to push the boundaries of the issue and explore its facets. This journey of discovery is the one that motivated all of my subsequent research efforts, despite their various trajectories.

Because I focused my first article on al-Jahiz, I read almost all of his books and letters, concentrating on *Kitab al-Hayawan* (The Book of Animals), which stands at the apex of our intellectual works. It is not so much about animals as about human beings and nature in general, and one returns to it time and again, discovering with each reading new issues to explore. According to al-Jahiz, knowledge is achieved through experiences accumulated by an individual, which he or she then revisits more deeply in the mind. The mind of an infant is finite, but a mind challenged by experiences has no boundaries. Further: “It should be that our relationship to the generations that follow us is like that of our forefathers to us. That is, we are able to borrow from experience more than they have, as those after us will take more from experience than we have found.” Though the transmission of knowledge, according to al-Jahiz, has its failings, its situation within the past and future clearly indicate his belief in cumulative intellectual progress from one generation to the next.

I must also mention al-Jahiz’s intellectual milieu and reference the intellectual conversation taking place during his time, as I was, and remain, enamored of Michel Foucault’s *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.³ I only understood approximately one-tenth of Foucault’s book, but even this had a deep impact on my understanding of the history of thought. One of the main questions raised in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* remains fixed in my mind: What made this text possible? It is, on its surface, an innocent question. Yet it imposes upon the historian an obligation to search for a text’s relationship (in multiple dimensions) with the larger discourse within which it is situated. The historian thus comes to resemble the archaeologist who digs in various strata in any particular location, looking not only for what is common among the strata, but also what differentiates one stratum from another – or in the case of the historian, one discourse from another. I also found

in Foucault ideas in common with Ibn Khaldun, who emphasizes that people “adopt the qualities of their environment and company, even though they may be people of noble descent and ancestry.”⁴ That is, in the history of thought, one should avoid looking backward for origins and instead pay greater attention to the contemporaneous. Did I understand Foucault properly? Perhaps not, but a misreading or misunderstanding can often offer more benefit than a good one.

Geography and Biography

Just as al-Jahiz led me to al-Mas‘udi,⁵ al-Mas‘udi – with his deep interest in geography – led me to a number of Arab geographers. Three of the most distinguished and, in my view, most enjoyable to read are al-Muqaddasi al-Bishari, al-Sharif al-Idrisi, and Yaqut al-Hamawi. Al-Muqaddasi’s *Ahsan al-taqasim fi ma ‘rifat al-aqalim* (The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions) could have been written today; throughout this travelogue, he often discloses his innermost feelings and personal opinions in a humorous and, at times, self-deprecating style. He mentions, for example, that in the Islamic kingdoms he was addressed by a number of different names: Jerusalemite (al-Muqaddasi), Palestinian (an epithet worthy of emphasis), Egyptian, and Moroccan; Qur’an reciter, jurist, Sufi, imam, muezzin, and theologian; rider, messenger, stranger, worshipper, hermit, bookbinder, and merchant. The total number of appellations reaches thirty-six. It is like a tour of Abbasid identities, or a series of comic identities adopted as needed, in the manner of the character Abu al-Fath al-Iskandarani in the *Maqamat* of Badi‘ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani.

Al-Muqaddasi’s accounts combine statistical accuracy and literary spirit, providing vibrant depictions of cities – including Jerusalem, his birthplace, and other major Palestinian cities – and the countryside. He interweaves dialogues between him and people from the various regions he visited, giving his text a personal and vividly human touch. It is as if he is bringing the reader along with him on his travels, to see what he sees and hear what he hears. Al-Muqaddasi was particularly interested in definitions of the city, and of what we would now call “capital cities,” as well as the relationship between the city and the countryside, and so on, in order to abstract from his observations theoretical definitions for geographic terms.

As for al-Sharif al-Idrisi, his *Nuzhat al-mushtaq fi ikhtirak al-afaq* (Entertainment for He Who Longs to Travel the World) may be the most important medieval book on world geography. It is known as the Book of Roger after Roger II, king of Sicily, in whose court al-Idrisi served and to whom he dedicated the book. Roger was an enlightened king with great respect for Arabo-Islamic civilization, and during his reign Sicily attracted a number of Muslim scientists, poets, and architects. In 2000, I travelled to Sicily and visited the Palermo Cathedral, upon which is inscribed Surat al-Fatiha. I found this a moving example of coexistence and dialogue between Islam and Christianity, one I wish would be taken as an example in the present.

Al-Muqaddasi's book, despite its importance, is limited to the domains of Islam, whereas al-Idrisi traverses the seven regions of the ancient world, describing each in great detail, based either on his first-hand knowledge or information derived from merchants. Whereas many books of geography devote significant attention to the great wonders – as indications of the Creator's marvelous capabilities, meant to raise the reader's admiration of the divine, and perhaps as subjects of literary entertainment – al-Idrisi is discerning in selecting his material and does not include them. Rather, he moves like a traveler from one place to another, defining the spaces between them and describing the nature of each city and region, including the characteristics and conditions of their people – their bodies, clothing, and languages. He also details flora and fauna, mineral wealth, and prevalent industries and trade. This wealth of information attracted the attention of researchers from both the East and the West, who examined various aspects of al-Idrisi's account, from his descriptions of Scotland, Poland, and Finland, to those of Bulgaria, Italy, and Andalusia, his treatment of India, not to mention his valuable – and understudied, in my view – portrayal of the kingdoms of Africa, including Malabo Island.

Yaqt al-Hamawi, meanwhile, wrote his *Mu'jam al-buldan* (Lexicon of Countries) in an era when the lexicon became a prominent form in multiple fields. The proliferation of lexica may be attributable to the fact that the Arabo-Islamic sciences of the time – that is, the sixth and seventh centuries AH (twelfth and thirteenth centuries AD) – had reached one of their historical peaks, spurring impulses toward comprehensiveness, arrangement, classification, and correction. Perhaps most famous are the linguistic lexica, of which Ibn Mansur's *Lisan al-'Arab* is the crowning achievement. Each lexicon typically specified the need that it sought to address, followed by chapters arranged alphabetically. In the introduction to his masterwork, Yaqt mentions multiple fields that would benefit from a comprehensive and authoritative lexicon of geographic names: hadith and jurisprudence, biography, history, philosophy, medicine, astrology, literature, language, poetry, and so on. This is followed by a lengthy narration of the achievements in the field of geography, including the latest theories at the time of Yaqt's composition, such as those put forward by al-Biruni, Hamza al-Isfahani, and others, with a lengthy review of the accomplishments of the Persians and the Greeks.

Another of my early articles – originally a research paper for a PhD seminar, later revised and published – was on biographical dictionaries. When I return to some of these articles published four decades ago, I recall what one of my professors at the University of Chicago told me: be wary of publishing early, or what al-Jahiz calls “the unleavened view.” Am I truly satisfied today with the articles I published then? I find solace in al-Mutanabbi: “I was created one devoted, were I returned to youth / I would leave my old age tearful, with aching heart.”⁶ That was the extent of my knowledge in those days. There is nothing to be gained from the devoted one grieving; still, I always warn my students today about “unleavened views.”

As for biographical dictionaries, they should be acknowledged as being among the greatest inheritance of our Arab civilization. They record the histories of tens (perhaps hundreds) of thousands of people – private and public, men and women – giving

this civilization a human dimension of which there is no comparable source in other civilizations. The sheer quantity of individual biographies is like a vast showroom displaying images pulsing with life, almost cinematic, of Muslim men and women (as well as Christians, especially among the ruling class) in various times, places, and walks of life. Some document particular groups, such as the companions and followers of the Prophet or luminaries in particular fields,⁷ while others document notables in all fields.⁸ Others focus on particular cities, as al-Khatib al-Baghdadi's *History of Baghdad* or *The History of Damascus* by Ibn 'Asakir, or particular periods, like *al-Durar al-kamina* (The Hidden Pearls) of Ibn Hajr al-'Asqalani. There are also those with more unusual content, like al-Safadi's *Nakt al-himyan fi nukat al-'umyan* (Extracting Precious Anecdotes about the Blind) and *al-Shu'ur bi-l-'ur* (Perceptions of the One-Eyed).

These books are full of social data, which demand digital tools to decipher and classify. They offer much to the modern researcher examining, for example, the zeitgeist of a particular era, its prevailing virtues and defects, norms or discursive frameworks. However, the turn of the nineteenth century brought profound social and economic transformations in the Arab world, disrupting communication networks between scholars, and putting an end to biographical dictionaries. My hope is that such works experience a rebirth – especially having entered the age of global information networks, which will undoubtedly facilitate the collection of information about their subjects.

The War in Lebanon Raises Questions of Palestine

In 1975, war broke out in Lebanon, my second homeland, where I – like other Palestinians – had planted deep roots of affection, friendship, and memories. This war dragged me back to the harrowing present: How had we arrived at this disaster? My thoughts and sentiments returned to the calamity of Palestine and its history in the twentieth century, during which the beginnings of the Zionist project in the Arab world became apparent. How did Palestinians understand their history from the beginning of the century until the catastrophe of 1948? How do we assess the historiography of Palestine in the period before the rupture?

I found no specialized history other than Adnan Abu-Ghazaleh's *Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine* and a 1977 article by the Israeli Orientalist Yehoshua Porath, titled "Palestinian Historiography."⁹ Porath's article is characterized by generalizations about Arab historical writing, describing historiography in Palestine as lacking "maturity."¹⁰ Yet upon examination, historical writing in Palestine was pioneering within the Arab milieu because of its early awareness of European Orientalism, of which Zionism continues to be a central feature. Palestinian historical writing in the twentieth century can be traced back to two intellectuals of the nineteenth-century Nahda: Ruhi Khalidi and Bandali al-Jawzi. The Nahda had brought Arab intellectuals into closer contact with European issues, and of course with European colonial expansion, including the Zionist movement. The first critical analysis of Orientalism in the Arab world – analysis developed later in *The Arab*

Awakening by George Antonius and articulated fully in *Orientalism* by Edward Said – is to be found in the writings of these two Jerusalemites, namely Khalidi’s *al-Muqaddima fi al-mas’ala al-sharqiyya* (Introduction to the Eastern Question) and al-Jawzi’s *Min tarikh al-harakat al-fikriyya fi al-Islam* (A History of Intellectual Movements in Islam).¹¹ Khalidi and Najib Nassar, meanwhile, produced the first scholarly studies of Zionism and the acute dangers it posed to Palestine and the Arab world.¹²

By the time the British Mandate for Palestine – and its commitment to the Zionist project – was established, a new Palestinian generation began to understand this reality and to put it in its historical and legal perspective. The historians of this generation were prominent in fields of education, law, and the press. Men like ‘Arif al-‘Arif, Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi, As‘ad Mansur, Father A. S. Marmarji, and Ihsan al-Nimr wrote histories of Palestine and Zionism; Islam and the Arabs; Palestinian cities like Gaza, Jerusalem, and Nazareth; and the Palestinian countryside.¹³ Like a survey of the history and geography of the land of Palestine, they include valuable topographic and ethnographic information. They also preserve important historical documents, which thereby survived the systematic destruction and looting of texts and archives belonging to the Palestinian people.

Palestinians also wrote and published on Palestine’s cultural heritage. Although ethnographic studies do not fall directly under the category of historical writing, they hold deep historical significance with regard to understanding Palestinian rural and village life. In the writings of Tawfiq Canaan, Stephan Hanna Stephan, and ‘Umar al-Salih Barghuthi, for example, we can discern the voice of the cultural historian, documenting the deep roots of Palestinian society, whose entire culture Zionist propaganda sought to undermine.¹⁴

What galvanized Palestinian historical writing, beyond the burden of the Anglo-Zionist Mandate, was the Arab struggle for independence. Perhaps the most important historical record of this struggle, and within it the struggle for Palestine, is the memoir of Muhammad ‘Izzat Darwarza (discussed below).¹⁵ In *The Arab Awakening*, too, George Antonius chronicles the emergence and march of Arab nationalism, and successive colonial betrayals, while warning the Arabs of the explosion to come. Antonius concludes *The Arab Awakening*: “the logic of facts is inexorable. It shows that no room can be made in Palestine for a second nation except by dislodging or exterminating the nation in possession.”¹⁶ It is natural to find in this historical writing an inflamed tone, for it was written as though at the foot of a volcano, whose rising flames and spewing lava only intensified with time. It was necessary to draw the Arab world’s attention to the fact that this volcano threatened them as much as it did Palestine and its people.

The Idea of History among the Arabs

I spent the 1985–1986 academic year as a visiting scholar at my old university, Oxford, determined to embark on a comprehensive book on the concept of history and its writing among the Arabs, from the Qur’an to Ibn Khaldun. In my humble opinion, what had been written on this subject to that point, in both the East and the West, was lacking. Previous

studies were limited to individual historians¹⁷ or specific periods,¹⁸ presented a parade of historians (first came the historian so-and-so, followed by the historian so-and-so, and so on),¹⁹ or, the product of international conferences, collected articles on disparate historical topics.²⁰

Was there another way to comprehend this massive quantity of histories and historians? How should we classify them? Was it possible to group them into intellectual trends rather than reproducing lists of names, one following the other, like a caravan? My readings of Michel Foucault, Paul Veyne, Jacques Le Goff, Michel de Certeau, and Fernand Braudel were crucial in shaping my answer to this question, which came as a revelation one sunny day in Oxford. Perhaps the vaults of the colleges and churches in front of my window inspired my contemplation of the metaphorical vaults in which historians take refuge – the intellectual or ideological “domes” that encompass them. Historians, generally speaking, derive their theoretical analysis from proximate scholarship or the prevailing intellectual climate. Unlike other natural or social sciences, history is a discipline largely without technical terminology of its own. Historians in search of theory or methodology, therefore, often turn to adjacent disciplines. Thus, the structure of the domes under which historians work begins to take shape.

Having arrived at the concept of domes, what was now required was a description or designation of them. It was clear to me that most historians until the time of al-Tabari wrote under the dome of *hadith*, meaning that the horizons and methodologies of *hadith* determined form, function, and significance in that period. It also became clear that, chronologically, the next dome was that of *adab*, under which historians like al-Ya‘qubi and al-Mas‘udi wrote.²¹ Historians then proceeded to work under the dome of *hikma* (sound judgment or wisdom) and then finally under the dome of *siyasa* (governance or administration). These domes – which are naturally somewhat arbitrary – are not discrete, but are more like overlapping penumbrae; we may find historians who fall under more than one dome or we may find these domes themselves overlap temporally. Still, I found this classification was able to elicit a new debate on the subject and move away from previous categories.

The Dome of Hadith

I was drawn in particular to the introduction of the hadith collection of Muslim Ibn al-Hajjaj, in which he determines with precision the methodology of accepting conflicting hadith and establishing what we might call the consensus of scholars on fundamental matters, such as chains of transmission (*asnad*). Muslim believed that the number of hadith had reached its maximum and there was no need to accept hadith previously unknown to scholars. This led to the regulation of the total quantity of hadith and its gradual distinction from the genres of *akhbar* (annals) and *tarikh* (history), a distinction whose beginnings we see in the works of Ibn Ishaq, al-Waqidi, and Ibn Sa‘d. Al-Waqidi moved away from Ibn Ishaq, who put Muhammad’s prophecy in a larger prophetic context, and placed history on a new course toward precision and accuracy, contributing

toward its development as a specialized field of its own. Al-Waqidi's *Kitab al-Tarikh wa al-Mughazi* (Book of History and Campaigns) resembles an administrative historical record, chronicling the Prophet and his community in a clear political context, whose full significance is best understood in the context of the prevailing Abbasid discourse, which dominated knowledge production in that period. Ibn Sa'd built upon al-Waqidi's book, rejecting accounts that did not satisfy him, correcting details, and returning to written collections and archives to date incidents precisely and distinguish between history and popular memory.

Al-Tabari – who bequeathed to us not only a history whose value only seems to increase with time, but also a magnificent exegesis of the Qur'an that is like a complete record of the views and interpretations of scholars preceding him – is undoubtedly the dean of historians within the dome of hadith. Al-Tabari claimed that historical knowledge came only from “what has been transmitted to me by way of reports which I cite therein and traditions which I ascribe to their narrators, to the exclusion of what may be apprehended by rational argument or deduced by the human mind.”²² Scholars of theology (*kalam*) subjected the adherents of hadith (ahl al-hadith) of al-Tabari's time to serious attacks, which in particular criticized their methods of evaluating accounts (*akhbar*) and challenged their theory of transmission. Al-Tabari claimed that it was not possible to deduce *akhbar* by reason; rather, accounts were accepted based on only one factor – the reliability of those who recounted them. Al-Tabari's great virtue for the historian, therefore, was his fidelity, without exception, to including a precise chain of transmission for each account. Wading into the controversy over hadith and *akhbar*, generally speaking, there is in my view no stronger defense or more rigorous and substantive methodology of hadith than in al-Tabari's history.²³

The Domes of Adab and Hikma

This methodology did not, however, find favor with the generations of historians following al-Tabari. First, attribution (*asnad*), so foundational to hadith scholarship, was neither available nor appropriate for the histories of other nations, in which this generation began to take interest. Second, with the emergence of *adab* among Umayyad and Abbasid scholars, chains of transmission came to be seen as excessively long and ungainly, particularly as the basic substance of *adab* was the coherent narrative – narratives of moral significance, for entertainment, for sharpening of the mind, of ancient or contemporary poetry, none of which required attribution via chains of transmission. Third, *asnad* had no place within the emerging fields of philosophy, theology, and the natural sciences, all of which drew upon reason. Influenced by these factors, historical writing thus moved from the dome of hadith to the dome of *adab*.²⁴

Al-Jahiz, too, undoubtedly influenced the general stylistic transformation from compilation to composition. Put simply, the historian became an author in the modern sense – deleting and inserting, weighing and ordering, summarizing and elaborating, scrutinizing and avoiding, enumerating and linking, explaining and adjudicating – rather

than merely a collator of narratives. Thus, when we read al-Ya‘qubi, al-Mas‘udi, and al-Daynuri, among others, we emerge from the constricted corridors of al-Tabari to the vast open space of narrative history, guided and shaped by the individual historian. One cannot claim that al-Tabari’s history is a pleasurable read for the modern reader. But when we read al-Mas‘udi, for example, we find history laid out like a fine carpet, its various accounts and narratives like colored threads woven together into patterns.

The dome of *hikma*, which encompassed a number of prominent historians in the centuries that followed, was built upon philosophy, theology, and the natural sciences. We can perceive this dome’s shadow as early as al-Ya‘qubi, who systematically noted the “ascent” of each caliphate, writing, for example: “the sun was that day at twenty-six and twenty degrees and twenty minutes in Aquarius, and the moon was five degrees in Virgo, and Earth was four degrees in Capricorn, and Venus . . .” and so on. These ways of marking historical time were borrowed from astrology, seen in that period as determining prosperity, disaster, or other fates. The works of al-Mas‘udi and Mutahhar bin Tahir al-Maqdisi, for example, feature Mu‘tazili theology and natural sciences prominently in their evaluation and acceptance of narratives. Al-Mas‘udi, for example, lays out a logical method for evaluating the existence or nonexistence of fantastic beings such as the *nisnas* or the ‘*anqa*’.²⁵ First he states that accounts conflict: people in the east claim that these beings exist in the west, while those in the west say they exist in the east. He continues:

We have not been able to establish the existence of the *nisnas*, the ‘*anqa*’, and others of this kind of rare and unusual species by way of reason. This does not mean that it is beyond capability [meaning divine capability]. But we have established this because there did not exist an unimpeachable account [*al-khabar al-qati‘ li-l-‘udhr*] of the existence of this [kind of species] in the world. This is a field within the domain of what is possible and what is permissible . . . It is possible for these rarely-mentioned animal species . . . to be animal species that nature brought from potentiality into actuality [*min al-quwwa ila al-fi‘l*] imperfectly . . . so it remained an anomaly . . . seeking parts remote from the lands afforded the rest of the animal species . . . which nature made expertly, and devoid of resemblance and compatibility between them and other kinds of animals.²⁶

First, al-Mas‘udi uses theology to prove that creation of this kind is within divine capability; then, he employs the concept of the “unimpeachable account” to arrive at the Aristotelian theory of potentiality and actuality, using this for a possible interpretation of the existence of the *nisnas* or other such fantastic creatures.

Historians’ growing interest in the natural and rational sciences was matched by scientists’ and theologians’ increasing interest in the evaluation and analysis of historical evidence. The Mu‘tazili qadi ‘Abd al-Jabbar, for example, put forth detailed analysis of different kinds of evidence – for example, *khabar mutawatir* (an account handed down in uninterrupted sequence) and *khabar al-ahad* (an account attested only once)

– to distinguish between inherent truths and truths determined through inference. ‘Abd al-Jabbar’s student Abu Husayn al-Basri called for the examination of the conditions surrounding an account and its source. Moving from the realm of jurisprudence to the quotidian, he writes that it is possible that a particular source:

is generally averse to lying or that he is a messenger from a ruler ordering the army to proceed to its master, the ruler’s punishment being sufficient deterrence against lying . . . Another example would be for a man to be preoccupied in other affairs and then be asked suddenly about something where he responds at once, it being known that he had no time to devise an answer.²⁷

Al-Basri goes on to note that such circumstances do not prove the truth of an account, only determining what is likely. Such examples from daily life, naturally, resemble those a historian typically deals with.

The brilliant thinker Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi analyzed the problem of collusion in the fabrication of accounts and reached a method we might call independent verification:

If two or more people come forward, after we have ascertained that they never met or communicated secretly with one another and had no vested interest in, and no fear of what they report and each was then to report separately a long report which no two people can possibly concur in the imaginative fabrication thereof, and each was to mention his having witnessed or met a group who witnessed or reported from another group that they had witnessed this report, this would be a true report which anyone who heard it would doubtless be obliged to believe.²⁸

Perhaps the clearest example of a scholar writing within the dome of *hikma* is al-Biruni. In *al-Athar al-baqiyya ‘an al-qurun al-khaliyya* (Chronology of Ancient Nations), al-Biruni used the latest findings in astronomy and mathematics to bring order to chronologies produced by historians of various nations on the basis of their internal coherence. His masterful work on India, *Tahqiq ma lil-Hind min maqula ma ‘qula fi al-‘aql am mardhula* (An Examination of What Is Said of India, Whether Reasonable or Repudiated), meanwhile, debunked falsehoods about Indian religions, using Indian sources, in the manner of an impartial and scholarly comparative study of cultures.

The Dome of Siyasa

Lastly, we arrive at the dome of *siyasa*, in the era of the Seljuk, Zengid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk dynasties of the eleventh to sixteenth centuries. These dynasties built centralized states of a new type, mobilizing society in full, focusing it and militarizing it, with a particular religious ideology, whose primary engine was, more often than not, jihad

against enemies. The *Siyasatnameh* of the Seljuk minister Nizam al-Mulk is perhaps the most eloquent expression of this new sultanic state, and emblematic of its historical writing. The *Siyasatnameh* is like a kind of constitution that proposed how the sultan should properly order state affairs. It deals with the management of armies and feudal lords, the policing and regulation of money, the treatment of moral and religious issues, the definition of justice, the interests of all strata of society, and the sultan's responsibility with respect to God and religion.

These new states, which we might call totalitarian, produced discourses that prevailed throughout their civilization. This civilization (or *'umran*, in the language of Ibn Khaldun) is reflected not only in texts, but also in the arts, including monumental architecture that reflected the prestige of the state. We also see its impact in efforts by these sultanic states to control education and to create new "cadres" of state employees through schooling (as, for example, in the Nizamiyya of Baghdad). Likewise, these states sought to organize the schools of jurisprudence (*madhahab*), to integrate Sufi orders into society and mobilize them for its defense, and to exert the sultan's total control over feudal institutions (*iqta*). The turn toward totalitarianism was, in part, a reaction to two great dangers facing the Islamic world in this period: the Crusader threat, first in al-Andalus and then in the Levant; and later, the more significant and sustained Mongol threat from the east. Ibn al-Athir, for example, puts forward a profound strategic analysis of the convergence of these two threats and their pincer-like incursion, from the west and the east, on the Islamic realms.

These components strengthened the structures of social hierarchy, and heightened historians' sense that they were living in a profoundly meaningful era, no less significant than the past. For example, 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani opens his history with a description of the vaulted arches of Jerusalem restored by Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, writing:

We began with the history of [the conquest of Jerusalem] because it is common for histories to open with the creation of the first human beings or otherwise with a lineage of states . . . I have experienced a second hijra that attests to the first hijra [of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina] . . . This is the hijra of Islam to Holy Jerusalem, established by Sultan Salah al-Din . . . and on the whole it is better to construct history . . . and this hijra is the more permanent of the two.

These are very bold words!

This sense of the dawning of a new era coincided with the emergence of massive encyclopedic histories, that sought to be comprehensive in their coverage. These histories came to resemble the sultanic bureaucratic system of "sectoral surveys," keeping a detailed record of every incident, whether minor or major – what we now call "saturation coverage" in journalism. Among the most famous of these histories is *al-Suluk li-ma'rafat duwal al-muluk* (A Voyage of Knowledge of the States of Kings) by al-Maqrizi, in which history is divided into years, and events listed not only by month and day, but even by hour. This is accompanied by economic information such as the rise and fall of prices;

news of popular movements and exchanges of letters between rulers taken from the courtly registers; news of earthquakes and volcanoes, epidemics and plagues; and precise physical descriptions of leading figures, such as al-Malik al-Salih Ayyub, one of the last Ayyubid sultans before the rise of the Mamluks. Al-Maqrizi is joined under the dome of *siyasa* by others of similar style, including Ibn al-Jawzi, Ibn Wasil, Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzi, Abu Shama, and Ibn Taghribirdi.

Looking back at the divisions I proposed, now more than twenty years ago, in *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, I find some arbitrariness. However, I still think it useful to propose something similar that links historical writing to the social and intellectual environment in which it takes place. It is not enough to list the names of historians as a chain of transmission, an index, or a “catalogue,” where each successor receives the flag from his predecessor, the focus remaining on the influence of one on the next. The same method of “domes” may also be useful in thinking about litterateurs, philosophers, theologians, natural scientists, and others. In this regard, we may draw inspiration from Ibn Khaldun: “Man is the child of customs, not the child of his ancestors.”²⁹

Ibn Khaldun

Indeed, Ibn Khaldun, the imam of historians, is unavoidable. Having been discussed by so many scholars, in both East and West, what can possibly be said of Ibn Khaldun that has not already been said before? I am always puzzled by this position. Ibn Khaldun’s place in our intellectual history is like that of Karl Marx, for example, in Western thought. Precisely because of his status, each generation is inspired to find in his thought new interpretations and meanings. Italo Calvino wrote: “A classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say.”³⁰ This encourages one to make his or her own contribution, lowering a bucket even if many others have drawn from the same well. In my repeated attempts to convey the thought of Ibn Khaldun to students, I ultimately found some use in starting with the title of his historical work: *Kitab al-‘ibar wa diwan al-mubtada’ wa al-khabar fi ayyam al-‘Arab wa al-‘ajam wa al-barbar wa man ‘asaruhum min dhawi al-sultan al-akbar* (Book of Allusions and Register of the Subject and Predicate Regarding the Days of the Arabs, the Foreigners, and the Berbers, and Those of Their Contemporaries Who Possessed the Greatest Authority).³¹

Let us begin with *kitab al-‘ibar* (Book of Allusions), *‘ibar* meaning instructive examples from history or the past. This is a word frequently used in the Qur’an, accompanied by *uli al-absar* (for those who have eyes to see), meaning that the lesson is understood only by those who contemplate the events of history and derive their profound significance. The root of the word (*‘ayn-ba-ra*) is linked to crossing or moving from one bank to another, as across a river. If we combine the Qur’anic meaning with the literal meaning, we arrive at Ibn Khaldun’s intention, which is to draw a lesson from the past and to cross from the riverbank of historical events to that of their significance – from

the superficial manifestation of history to its core substance. For Ibn Khaldun, history as a series of events, without knowing their direction or meaning, is of no use except as entertainment. (And indeed, he viciously attacked historians he saw as mere storytellers.) To take history seriously requires going further (or crossing over) to explore the principles that determine its path.

Second, let us take the phrase *diwan al-mubtada' wa al-khabar* – Register of the Subject and Predicate. *Diwan* implies a comprehensive, encyclopedic register, a notion elaborated by the terms *mubtada'* and *khabar* – subject and predicate. Ibn Khaldun suggests that his book will be comprehensive and complete, just as the predicate completes the subject. History itself is only the subject and cannot be comprehended unless paired with its predicate. In Ibn Khaldun's view, this understanding required “numerous sources and much varied knowledge.”

It also requires a good speculative mind and thoroughness, which lead the historian to the truth and keep him from slips and errors. If he trusts historical information in its plain transmitted form and has no clear knowledge of the principles resulting from custom, the fundamental facts of politics, the nature of civilization, or the conditions governing human social organization, and if, furthermore, he does not evaluate remote or ancient material through comparison with near or contemporary material, he often cannot avoid stumbling and slipping and deviating from the path of truth.³²

Historians accepted events and stories as reported and “did not probe with the yardstick of philosophy, with the help of knowledge of the nature of things, or with the help of speculation and historical insight.”³³ Translating this into the present, this means that aspiring historians must first obtain advanced degrees in political science, economics, ecology, sociology, biology, philosophy (especially logic), theology, law and jurisprudence, comparative history, geography, and literature.

Ibn Khaldun called his new discipline, which he claimed to be unprecedented, the “science of human civilization” (*ilm al-'umran al-bashari*). In it, he turned the conceptual frame of medieval civilizations, both Eastern and Western, on its head. Previously, scholarly and religious texts had largely focused on the micro to explain the macro, centering individuals and their issues – the human spirit, destiny, the conduct of men toward God and toward each other, human obligations, good and evil, the meaning of heroism, love, and so on. Ibn Khaldun saw human civilization as the matter that required examination. To understand the individual, first we must understand his environment and society; we should expand our scope, not narrow it. Only once the broader framework becomes clear will the individual come into focus. Thus, the individual is the subject (*mubtada'*) and his environment is the predicate (*khabar*) that gives him his complete meaning. In contemporary terms, we might say that Ibn Khaldun emphasized nurture over nature – one's environment was more influential than one's lineage, heritage, or other such notions.

What, then, was Ibn Khaldun's understanding of this "environment"? Ibn Khaldun proposed two basic environments – the wild or untamed environment (*al-'umran al-wahshi*) and the settled environment (*al-'umran al-hadhari*). These lie outside of time, in the sense that their essence remains constant, even if they undergo some changes, slowly and according to certain laws. The relationship between them is, to a certain degree, dialectic. There is an element within the untamed environment that always yearns to become settled, if circumstances permit. However, "unsettled" people differ from those of the settled environment politically, economically, socially, and even psychologically. Returning to subject and predicate, we could say that the untamed society is the subject and settled society is the predicate; the former can exist in isolation from the latter, but its meaning and significance are only completed when it becomes settled.

Let us examine the third part of the title, *fi ayyam al-'Arab wa al-'ajam wa al-Barbar* – Regarding the Days of the Arabs, the Foreigners, and the Berbers. The term *ayyam al-'Arab* (the days of the Arabs) generally refers to the heritage of popular and poetic stories that fashioned for the pre-Islamic period what we might call an epic history of invasions and wars – reminiscent, at times, of Homer's Iliad. But this is not what Ibn Khaldun means here; rather, *ayyam* refers to momentous events experienced by these nations. The Arabs are his nation, which built the great Islamic empire, but whose political star has faded. Foreigners (*'ajam*) comprise all other nations living around the Mediterranean and to the East, or the totality of what Ibn Khaldun knew of the world. The Berbers are the people of North Africa, with whose history and dynasties Ibn Khaldun was deeply familiar. This part of the title thus indicates that Ibn Khaldun intended to apply the laws of his approach as widely as possible to the histories surrounding him.

The fourth part of the title is *wa man 'asarahum* – and Those of Their Contemporaries. Ibn Khaldun sees man as shaped not only by a particular environment but also by a particular period. In his attacks on earlier historians, Ibn Khaldun offers a number of reasons for why they introduced inaccurate material into their histories, including the rivalries of different *madhahab*, excessive trust in transmitters of accounts, ignorance of the significance of information, and attempts to ingratiate themselves with rulers for reward. But most important, in his view, is "ignorance of the nature of the various conditions arising in civilizations. Every event (or phenomenon) . . . must inevitably possess a nature peculiar to its essence as well as to the accidental conditions that may attach themselves to it."³⁴

Since transformations of human society determine the course of historical events, then it is these transformations – that is, events in the context of their era – that the historian must understand. We cannot understand history, therefore, as a sequence of individual events but rather as a series of contemporaneous periods, a horizontal rather than a vertical series. If we take two contemporaneous societies, is there not more that links them to each other than each to its history? For example (and this is, obviously, not Ibn Khaldun's example), do not Greece and Lebanon today share more with each other than present-day Greece with tenth-century Greece or present-day Lebanon with tenth-century Lebanon? Are not the different institutions, lifestyles, relations of production, and even

modes of thought in Lebanon today closer to those of contemporary Greece than to those of previous periods in its history? It seems that Ibn Khaldun recommends that we first understand that which belongs to the same period, in order to later distinguish what is possible from what is impossible in various accounts.

Here we reach the end of the title, *min dhawi al-sultan al-akbar* – Who Possessed the Greatest Authority. Many of the laws of Ibn Khaldun’s science of human society are closely linked to authority (*al-sultan*) – political, economic, military, social, demographic, ideological, tribal, or otherwise. Authority is most often manifested in states, and a strong and dominant state is one that wields the most suitable array of its components, the most important among them being social cohesion (*al-‘asabiyya*). Let us take, for example, an athlete at his or her peak. (This example may have pleased Ibn Khaldun, who often drew upon analogies from the life sciences to illuminate society.) This athlete is muscular; fleet of foot; of sharp sight, hearing, and mind; of strong heart and intestinal fortitude; focused; with quick reflexes; and all of these strengths are consistent and balanced. This is like the state at the height of its power.

Indeed, states also go through phases similar to the stages of youth, maturity, and decline. As the behavior of youth differs from that of adults and the elderly, the same applies to states. The state, like the athlete, is most dominant as it reaches maturity. In old age, states suffer from afflictions like fatigue, sluggishness, and loss of concentration and social cohesion, leading to excessive reliance on mercenaries, the hoarding of money, and monopolistic market practices, all of which signals the nearing end of the state.

Thus, historical events must be considered in context: is this event likely to have taken place in this phase? For Ibn Khaldun, the most prominent example of this law of civilizational cycles is the catastrophe that befell the Barmakids. Earlier historians had explained their fall by claiming that Ja‘far al-Baramki and al-‘Abbasa, sister of al-Rashid, fell in love contrary to al-Rashid’s wishes, inflaming the caliph’s rage and prompting him to order the Barmakids’ destruction. Ibn Khaldun, however, argued that such an explanation was incongruous with that particular phase of the Abbasid caliphate, then at the height of its power. A state at the height of its power, Ibn Khaldun claimed, does not permit the establishment of a state within a state, as the Barmakids had done. Further, by comparing a young state, a mature state, and an elderly state, we can arrive at a scientific measure to distinguish which historical accounts are true and which are false.

What, then, explains historical change? How does one era transition to another era? Ibn Khaldun put forward a number of laws – about 120 in all – to answer such questions. The most significant are the following: First, unsettled nations will conquer the settled ones, given the right circumstances, because social cohesion is stronger among the former than the latter. Second, the natural lifespan of states does not exceed three or four generations, or about one hundred years, as states in the elderly phase become vulnerable to attacks from enemies who possess greater social cohesion. Third, social cohesion can take a number of forms, but the strongest are those based on kinship and religion; further, religion cannot spread without strong social cohesion. Fourth, science, literature, and arts flourish in cities, but they do not differ essentially from other trades and industries.

The scholar, jurispudent, or philosopher is a craftsman just like a carpenter, blacksmith, baker, or the like, and subject, for example, to similar laws of supply and demand.

It is often said that Ibn Khaldun's history is not deserving of its famous introduction (*al-Muqaddima*), that he does not apply therein the laws that he sets forth and nothing distinguishes it from other histories written in the same period. I do not know how many of those who hold this view – common in particular among Orientalists – have read Ibn Khaldun's history carefully or accurately. Having examined the text, I find this assessment baseless and utterly false; it is replete with Khaldunian gifts, interpretations derived from the theories and laws that he developed for his science of human society.

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Endnotes

- 1 Tarif Khalidi, "A Mosquito's Wing: Al-Jahiz on the Progress of Knowledge," in *Arabic and Islamic Garland: Historical, Educational, and Literary Papers Presented to Abdul-Latif Tibawi*, ed. Riadh el-Droubie (London: Islamic Cultural Center, 1977), 141–46.
- 2 Tarif Khalidi, "The Concept of Progress in Classical Islam," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 40, no. 4 (Oct. 1981): 277–289.
- 3 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).
- 4 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn Muhammad Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, ed. N. J. Dawood (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 287.
- 5 See Tarif Khalidi, "The Books in My Life: A Memoir, Part 1," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 74 (Spring 2018): 63–78.
- 6 *Khuliqtu alufan law raja'tu ila al-sabba / la-faraqtu shaybi muwaja'a al-qalb bakiya*. From al-Mutanabbi's first panegyric to Kafur, "Kifa bika da'an" (It Is Disease Enough . . .).
- 7 The biographical dictionaries of Ibn Sa'd, who laid the foundations for later biographical dictionaries, are dedicated to the Prophet's companions and followers. Ibn Abi Usaybi'a's *'Uyun al-anba' fi tabaqat al-atibba'* (Historical Accounts of Physicians' Lives) is dedicated to physicians, while the focus of *Akhhbar al-'ulama'* (History of Learned Men) by al-Qifti is the learned: men of philosophy and the natural sciences.
- 8 See, for example, Ibn Khallikan's *Wafayat al-a'yan wa anba' abna' al-zaman* (Deaths of Eminent Men and History of the Sons of the Epoch) and al-Safadi's *Kitab al-wafi bi-al-wafayat* (The Complete Book of the Deceased).
- 9 Adnan Abu-Ghazaleh, *Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine during the British Mandate* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1973); Yehoshua Porath, "Palestinian Historiography," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 5 (Fall 1977): 95–104.
- 10 More recently, Zachary Foster's 2011 master's thesis at Georgetown University, "Arab Historiography in Mandatory Palestine, 1920–1948," argues that "not until the late 1920s and early 1930s did Palestine [as a locus of territorial identification] triumph over broader territorial identifications such as Syria and not until the mid–late 1930s and 1940s" – that is, during and after the Great Revolt – "did this territorial identification with Palestine emerge as a key source of loyalty for many of the region's inhabitants." The underlying political goals behind such studies are obvious. Zachary J. Foster, "Arab Historiography in Mandatory Palestine, 1920–1948" (MA thesis, Georgetown University, 2011), 2.
- 11 Ruhi Khalidi, *al-Muqaddima fi a-mas'ala al-sharqiyya mundhu nash'atiha al-uwla ila al-rub' al-thani min al-qarn al-thamin 'ashar*

- [An Introduction to the Eastern Question from Its First Formation to the Second Quarter of the Eighteenth Century] (Jerusalem: Matba'at madrasat al-iytam al-Islamiyya, n.d.); Bandali al-Jawzi, *Min tarikh al-harakat al-fikriyya fi al-Islam* [A History of Intellectual Movements in Islam] (Jerusalem: Matba'at Bayt al-Muqaddas, 1928).
- 12 Ruhi Khalidi's book on Zionism, *al-Siyunizm aw al-mas'ala al-sahiyuniyya* (Zionism, or the Zionist Question), includes a brilliant history of the Jews of Eastern Europe and the Ottoman Empire, as well as his personal impressions of Zionist activity in Istanbul at the time, defining Zionists as "Jews of the Hereafter" (*yahud al-ukhrawiyya*) in a reference to the end of the world. See Walid Khalidi, "Kitab al-Siyunizm aw al-mas'ala al-sahiyuniyya li-Muhammad Ruhi al-Khalidi al-mutawaffi sanat 1913" [*The Book of Zionism, or the Question of Zionism* by Muhammad Ruhi al-Khalidi, d. 1913], in *Dirasat Filastiniyya: majmu'at abhathin wudhi'at takrimiyan li-l-duktur Qustantin Zurayq* [Studia Palaestina: Studies in Honor of Dr. Constantine K. Zurayk], ed. Hisham Nashabe (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 1988), 37–81.
 - 13 See, for example: 'Arif al-'Arif, *Tarikh Gaza* [The History of Gaza] (Jerusalem: Matba'at dar al-iytam al-Islamiyya, 1943); Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi, *Ahl al-'ilm wa al-hukm fi rif Filastin* [Men of Learning and Governance in Rural Palestine] (Amman: Da'irat al-thaqafa wa al-funun, 1968); As'ad Mansur, *Tarikh al-Nasira: min aqdam azmaniha ila ayyamina al-hadira* [The History of Nazareth: From Its Ancient Period to Our Present Day] (Cairo: Matba'at al-hilal, 1923); A. S. Marmarji, *Buldaniyyat Filastin al-'Arabiyya* [The Palestinian Arab Village] (Beirut: Matba'at Jan Darak, 1948); and Ihsan al-Nimr, *Tarikh Jabal Nablus wa al-Balqa'* [The History of Mount Nablus and al-Balqa'] (Damascus: Matba'at Ibn Zaydun, 1938). Further Palestinian historians can be found in Ya'qub 'Awdat's *Min a'lam al-fikr wa al-adab fi Filastin* [Intellectual and Literary Notables in Palestine] (Amman: n.p., 1976), an important modern biographical dictionary that some friends are working to expand and reprint.
 - 14 See, for example, Tawfiq Canaan, Stephan Hanna Stephan, and Omar Barghuthi, *Studies in Palestinian Customs and Folklore* (Jerusalem: Palestine Oriental Society, 1922–1923). For more on Canaan and Barghuthi, see: Salim Tamari, *Mountain against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 93–112, 133–149. On Stephan, see: Sarah Irving, "'A Young Man of Promise': Finding a Place for Stephan Hanna Stephan in the History of Mandate Palestine," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 73 (Winter 2018): 42–61. See also works like: Husayn 'Ali Lubani, *Mu'jam al-hayawan fi al-turath al-sha'bi al-Filastini* [Lexicon of Animals in Palestinian Folklore] (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnan nashirun, 2009); and 'Arif al-'Arif, *al-Qada' bayna al-badu* [Justice among the Bedouin] (Jerusalem: Matba'at Bayt al-Muqaddas, 1933).
 - 15 Muhammad 'Izzat Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat Muhammad 'Izzat Darwaza, 1305 h.–1404 h./1887 m.–1984 m.: sijill hafil bi-masirat al-haraka al-'Arabiyya wa al-qadiya al-Filastiniyya khilala qarn min al-zaman* [The Memoirs of Muhammad 'Izzat Darwaza, 1305 AH–1404 AH /1887 AD–1984 AD: A Full Record of the Course of the Arab Movement and the Palestinian Issue throughout a Century] (Beirut: Dar al-gharb al-Islami, 1993).
 - 16 George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938), 412.
 - 17 See, for example, my work on al-Mas'udi or Muhsin Mahdi's study of Ibn Khaldun. See Khalidi, "The Books in My Life," part 1.
 - 18 Such as the great 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Duri's scholarship on the beginnings of Arab historical writing. 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Duri, *Bathth fi nash'at 'ilm al-tarikh 'inda al-'Arab* (Beirut: al-Matba'at al-Kathulikiyya, 1960), translated into English by Lawrence Conrad and published as *The Rise of History Writing among the Arabs* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).
 - 19 See, for example, Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 1952).
 - 20 See, for example, *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis and Peter Malcolm Holt (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).
 - 21 "In any European histories of Arabic literature the word *Adab* is translated as 'Belles-Lettres.' One could argue that the classical Greek 'Paideia' is a more accurate rendering of the term since *Adab*, like Paideia, refers to a process of moral and intellectual education designed to produce an *adib*, a gentleman-scholar, and is thus intimately concerned with the formation of both intellect and character. In its earliest days *Adab* meant education. With time it came to mean a *special* kind of education, a moral and intellectual curriculum aimed at a particular

- urban class and reflecting the needs and aspirations of that class.” Tarif Khalidi, *Arab Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 83.
- 22 Khalidi, *Arab Historical Thought*, 74.
- 23 Close behind it, I might add, would be *Ta’wil mukhtalif al-hadith* (The Interpretation of Conflicting Narrations) by Ibn Qutayba (d. 889 AD).
- 24 The use of *asnad* did not disappear overnight, of course, and we find it in books of *adab* such as *Kitab al-aghani* (The Book of Songs) by Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani, but its atrophy is evident in history books from the fourth century AH (tenth century AD).
- 25 The *nisnas* is a fabulous creature of the woods having one leg and one arm; the ‘*anqa*’ is a great mythological bird, sometimes associated with the phoenix or griffon.
- 26 Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali bin al-Husayn bin ‘Ali al-Mas‘udi, *Muruj al-dhahab wa ma‘adin al-jawhar* [The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems], sec. 1344. See also Khalidi, *Arab Historical Thought*, 134–35.
- 27 Abu al-Husayn al-Basri, *al-Mu‘tamad fi usul al-fiqh* [What Is Reliable in the Principles of Jurisprudence], vol. 2, 568–70, as quoted in Khalidi, *Arab Historical Thought*, 148–49.
- 28 Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi, *al-Ihkam fi usul al-ahkam* [Exactitude in the Principles of Judgement], vol. 1, 107–8, as quoted in Khalidi, *Arab Historical Thought*, 149–150.
- 29 Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, 300.
- 30 Italo Calvino, “Why Read the Classics?” *New York Review of Books*, 9 October 1986, online at www.nybooks.com/articles/198609/10//why-read-the-classics/ (accessed 12 June 2018).
- 31 The title of Ibn Khaldun’s work has been translated numerous ways. Here it is translated in the manner proposed by Waseem El-Rayes, who fully explains his choices and their significance in: Waseem El-Rayes, “The *Book of Allusions*: A New Translation of the Title to Ibn Khaldun’s *Kitab al-‘Ibar*,” *Religious Studies and Theology* 32, no. 2 (2013): 163–184.
- 32 Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, 11.
- 33 Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, 11.
- 34 Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, 36.