

Reading the *Muqaddima*: The Paradox of the Sixth Prolegomenon and Orientalism

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Ibn Khaldun is an interesting case for the European history of ideas and beyond. A historian from the Islamic West, and highly acclaimed in the European West as a kind of precursor or one of the founding fathers¹ of the scientific discipline of sociology, his monumental history of the Berbers was mostly ignored. The “rediscovery” of Ibn Khaldun in 19th century Europe made (and makes) him an important figure in both *European* history and in the Arab world as an important author read in the West. As such, reading him as a sociologist *avant la lettre* makes him part of the history of science, an undisputed evolutionary process that saw its culmination in European science.

Although Ibn Khaldun, so we are told, is well-known today, his fame is based mainly on his *Muqaddimah*, and not on the other volumes of his history.² However, a European reading of the *Muqaddimah* means a partial reading, since parts of it are left out, and in particular those parts which break the evolutionary narrative on Ibn Khaldun. This claim is based mainly on the selectivity of the usual European reading of Ibn Khaldun, which shows a triple

1 Cf. Lara Ahmed Al-Hadeed, “The Methodology and Subject Matter in Sociology of the Founding Fathers of Ibn Khaldun and Auguste Comte: A Comparative Study.” *Open Science Journal* 5 (2020): 1–12 for this widespread framing.

2 One of the most interesting conceptual readings focussing on Ibn Khaldun as a historian is Aziz al-Azmeh, *Ibn Khaldūn* (London/New York: Routledge, 1990).

ignorance: 1) ignoring him being a historian, 2) ignoring that he was a scholar of the Maliki school of Islamic law, and 3) ignoring the complexity of Islam. An *Islamic* scholar like Ibn Khaldun can only be accepted in the West when he fits into European narratives, like the Arabo-Islamic mathematicians, astronomers, philosophers, or artists who were integrated into the overarching European narratives based on Orientalist preconceptions of Europeans being at the peak of scientific development.³

But Ibn Khaldun's analytical instruments were well honed in the Islamic culture of his time, including in the occult disciplines dealing with supernatural phenomena, and he presented these phenomena in the same way as the other, more quotidian ones. As is noted in an article on his work and the occult: "In fact, this part of Ibn Khaldun's writings is not well examined."⁴ We may assume that this is not a simple omission due to a lack of interest, but instead one motivated by the epistemological bias held by Orientalists and other writers adhering to this worldview.

Such approaches to the work of Ibn Khaldun, deeply influenced by European conceptualizations of it, are analysed by Muhammad 'Ābid al-Jābirī. In *al-Asabiyya wa'l-dawla* he confirms that Arab researchers followed the same line of thought and ignored the supernatural aspects of the *Muqaddimah*.⁵ He quotes Sāti' al-Husrī and others as claiming that the sixth prolegomenon is a digression from the other more "scientific" parts of the *Muqaddimah* dedicated to the study of societies. To such authors there seems to be two personalities, two Ibn Khalduns: the rational Ibn Khaldun and the irrational one.⁶

3 An interesting assessment of the Eurocentric and Orientalist reading of Ibn Khaldun is to be found in Róbert Simon, *Ibn Khaldūn: History as Science and the Patrimonial Empire* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiado, 2002) for a focus on Orientalists cf. Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Ibn Khaldūn in Modern Scholarship: A Study in Orientalism* (London: Third World Centre for Research and Publishing, 1981). Alatas sets Orientalist and Eurocentric readings against disciplinary ones, without acknowledging the Orientalist framing influencing the latter (Syed Farid Alatas, "Reading Ibn Khaldun in the Formative Period of Sociology." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 35 (2022): 302-311, <https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12377>).

4 Mushegh Asatrian, "Ibn Khaldūn on Magic and the Occult." *Iran and the Caucasus* 7 (2003): 73–123, 74.

5 For contemporary Moroccan readings of Ibn Khaldun cf. Francesca Forte, "Ibn Khaldūn in Contemporary Moroccan Thought," in *Contemporary Moroccan Thought: On Philosophy, Theology, Society, and Culture*, ed. by Mohammed Hashas (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2025): 308-328.

6 Muhammad 'Ābid al-Jābirī, *Fikr Ibn Khaldūn: al-'Asabiyya wa'l-dawla* (Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Wahda al-'Arabiyya, 6th Edition, 1994), 114.

Al-Jābirī shows that even in this “irrational” prolegomenon Ibn Khaldun applies a very rational method to analyse phenomena like soothsaying and magic. As he puts it: “We are convinced that the studies that analyse these questions in the *Muqaddimah* are not digressive studies, but an inseparable part of the Khaldunian civilizational pyramid.”⁷ Ibn Khaldun’s framework here is built on the thesis that a human being is not only a material body but also has a soul.⁸ “The sixth prolegomenon,” al-Jābirī stresses, “studies the possibility of the influence of the spiritual factors on individuals and societal groups.”⁹

The approach of al-Jābirī allows for an integration of so-called irrational aspects in the analysis of society in a Khaldunian way. We will return to this approach later. Now we have to turn to Orientalist approaches that form the backbone of the worldview al-Jābirī criticizes.

European Reception of Ibn Khaldun

Leaving aside the “discovery” of Ibn Khaldun¹⁰ in the 19th century by Auguste Comte, we will now turn to an overview of the early European reception of this author to situate our arguments.¹¹ Interestingly, this reception has been almost forgotten by the wider academic public due to the peripheral status of Oriental studies in European academic fields, especially if the subject at hand was (or is) not seen as “useful” for furthering colonial interests. If we refer to the less colonialist aspects of European Orientalism, we may follow Keim who talks about the importance of Ottoman translations and comments on the *Muqaddimah* that were at least partly accepted by early European commentators and translators.¹² The

7 al-Jābirī, *Fikr Ibn Khaldūn*, 115.

8 al-Jābirī, *Fikr Ibn Khaldūn*, 117.

9 al-Jābirī, *Fikr Ibn Khaldūn*, 117.

10 Which reminds us of other discoveries in Islamic medicine and other fields. The European mindset accepts only findings by Europeans, even if there are precursors of non-European origin.

11 We are leaving out the Ottoman reception of Ibn Khaldun (cf. below), which is still to be thoroughly researched.

12 See Wiebke Keim’s “Ibn Khaldun in early German-language sociological theory: A Historical Case of South-North Reception”, in *Revue d’Histoire des Sciences Humaines* 41 (2022): 31–61, <https://doi.org/10.4000/rhsh.7467>. Syed Farid Alatas also mentioned this tradition, as seen in *Applying Ibn Khaldūn: The Recovery of a Lost Tradition in Sociology* (London/New York: Routledge, 2014). For a more recent assessment, see Marinos Sariyannis’s

main entry points for Ibn Khaldun in European academic discourse were Paris and Vienna.

Paris established a framework for the reading of Ibn Khaldun that was dominated by French colonial interests during the colonization of the Maghreb. The renowned French Orientalist Sylvestre de Sacy (d. 1838) acquainted European readers with Ibn Khaldun after Napoleon's expedition to Egypt. The French Ministry of War commissioned a translation of the *Kitāb al-'Ibar* in order to better understand the Arab-Berber dynamics.¹³ Étienne Quatremère (d. 1857) was to translate the *Muqaddimah* after finishing his edition in 1857, but passed away before completing this task. William Mac Guckin de Slane (d. 1878), who was both a scholar and a military official, completed his translation. French engagement with the *Muqaddimah* and the history of Ibn Khaldun was thus deeply embedded in the process of colonial expansion.

In a slightly different way, several writers working in Vienna contributed to the knowledge of Ibn Khaldun. Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (d. 1856), an Austrian diplomat, Orientalist, and translator, first introduced Sylvestre de Sacy to the *Muqaddimah* in 1822, which the latter was rather unfamiliar with at that time.¹⁴ Hammer-Purgstall was inspired by the methodology of Ibn Khaldun in his study of the history of the Ottoman Empire, and in 1812 called him "an Arab Montesquieu" due to his theory of climates.¹⁵ In 1879

"Ottoman Ibn Khaldunism Revisited: The Pre-Tanzimat Reception of the Muqaddima, from Kinalizade to Şanizade", in *Political Thought and Practice in the Ottoman Empire (Halcyon Days in Crete IX)*, edited by Marinos Saryiannis (Heraklion/Athens: Crete University Press, 2019), 251–286. Understanding the reception of Ibn Khaldun in his time is essential, Cheddadi says, for a true understanding of early modern Islam and its role in modern times ("Quelles perspective pour les études khaldûniennes?" in Abdessalam Cheddadi, *Actualité d'Ibn Khaldûn: Conférences et entretiens* (Témara: Maison des Arts, des Sciences et des Lettres, 2006), 149–160, 160).

- 13 Cyrille Aillet, "Violence et pacification, genèse et mort de l'État. Deux relectures contemporaines d'Ibn Khaldûn." *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 139 (2016): 251–257, <https://doi.org/10.4000/remmm.8962>.
- 14 Walter Höflechner, *Joseph von Hammer-(Purgstall) 1774–1856: Ein Überblick* (Graz: ADE-VA, 2021), 19.
- 15 For this comparison cf. Warren E. Gates, "The Spread of Ibn Khaldûn's Ideas on Climate and Culture." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 1967, Vol. 28 (1967): 415–422 and Aytekin Demircioglu, "A Comparison of the Views of Ibn Khaldun and Montesquieu in Terms of the Effect of Climatic Conditions on Human Life." *The Anthropologist* 17 (2014): 725–733, <https://doi.org/10.31901/24566802.2014/17.03.04>.

Alfred von Kremer (d. 1889) published a long commentary on and summary of the *Muqaddimah*, referring to both the French translation by de Slane and the Arabic original. As for the sixth *muqaddima* that we are primarily interested in here, he stated that Ibn Khaldun pushed aside the “question of religion”,¹⁶ simply ignoring the complications that could have occurred with any consideration of his view on the supernatural, and thus tainted his more “useful” analysis. The Austrian early sociologist Ludwig Gumplowicz (d. 1909) built his highly original theory of state and race based on a reading of Ibn Khaldun as a theoretician of imperial power in the Maghreb of his time, in contrast to the French colonialist approach.¹⁷ However, due to his theoretical focus, Gumplowicz was not interested in the supernatural aspects of the *Muqaddimah*, and his approach was later taken up by Franz Oppenheimer (d. 1943).¹⁸

One of the first Europeans who defined Ibn Khaldun as a sociologist was Guglielmo Ferrero (d. 1942),¹⁹ who also referred to the work of Gumplowicz.²⁰ However, the sixth prolegomenon was of no interest to him. In a similar vein, the French founder of colonial sociology, René Maunier (d. 1951), focused on Ibn Khaldun as a sociologist *avant la lettre*, ignoring the supernatural aspects of his work.²¹ The modern Turkish writer, İsmail Hakkı İzmirli (d. 1946), sees

16 Alfred von Kremer, *Ibn Chaldun und seine Kulturgeschichte der islamischen Reiche* (Vienna: Karl Gerold's Sohn in Komm., 1879), 31.

17 Wiebke Keim, “Verflochtene Soziologien und imperial geprägte Geschichten – von Ibn Khaldun über Ludwig Gumplowicz bis Franz Oppenheimer,” in *Globale Soziologie: Vergessene Theorien, verflochtene Geschichten*, edited by Fabio Santos and Clara Ruvitoso (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2024): 47–81, 65. Marta Bucholc, in “Ludwik Gumplowicz (1897–1898), Ibn Khaldun: An Arab Sociologist of the 14th Century” (*Journal of Historical Sociology* 35 (2022): 330–332, <https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12378>), writes out of a secularist sentiment when she refers to Ibn Khaldun's religious language as “pious ‘arabesques’” (Marta Bucholc, Ludwik Gumplowicz, 321).

18 Wiebke Keim, *Verflochtene Soziologien*, 66–69 and Wiebke Keim, “Franz Oppenheimer (1926), Die soziologische Staatsidee. (Die Eroberung) [The Sociological Idea of the State (The Conquest)].” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 35 (2022): 341–248, <https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12384>.

19 An Italian historian, sociologist, journalist, and novelist.

20 Masturah Alatas, “Guglielmo Ferrero (1896), Ibn Kaldoun: an Arab Sociologist of the Fourteenth Century.” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 35 (2022): 312–319, <https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12376>.

21 Stéphane Dufoix, “René Maunier (1915), Les idées sociologiques d'un philosophe arabe/The sociological ideas of an Arab philosopher in the 14th century.” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 35 (2022): 333–340, <https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12381>.

Ibn Khaldun's references to Sufism, true dreams, spirits, etc., as "deviations" or "useless issues".²²

Muqaddimah – the Sixth Prolegomenon

The main source of irritation for these writers is the sixth *muqaddimah*,²³ and thus some further remarks on the context of this text may be pertinent for understanding the problem we are discussing here.²⁴ The third prefatory chapter, or prolegomenon, discusses the influence of the different climate zones, the influence of the air on the colour of the skin of human beings, and on other aspects of their condition. The fourth prolegomenon discusses the influence of the climate (air) on human character, and the fifth considers the differences in the abundance and scarcity of food, which affects the people living in a particular region. The sixth prolegomenon discusses the various types of beings that exist and their relation to supernatural perception.

The sixth chapter begins with a discussion of the signs of inspired human beings, with special reference to the Prophet Muhammad. It follows an excursus on prophetology in general, the human way of thinking and reflections on other beings, the human soul, soothsaying, dream visions (including dream words), diverse types of divination, kinds of supernatural perceptions, gazing into mirrors, augury, clairvoyance, the supernatural knowledge of the Sufis and saints (*awliya'*), geomancy, and the *za'irajah*.²⁵

The sixth prolegomenon covers several aspects of the supernatural, going beyond the theological and philosophical discussions so dear to European

22 Nurullah Ardiç, "İsmail Hakkı İzmirli (1932), Philosophical Currents in Islam: Ibn Khaldun (732--808)." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 35 (2022): 349–359, <https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12383>, both quotations. Nurullah Ardiç, İsmail Hakkı, 353.

23 I have to thank Peter Enz(-Harlass) for reminding me that the sixth prolegomenon is worth reading (cf. below).

24 In this section are referring to the headings of the prefatory discussions in Franz Rosenthal (transl.), *Ibn Khaldūn. The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958).

25 A kind of letter magic using a type of logical machine used for divinatory purposes that can be connected to the thought of Ramón Llull, a Catalanian thinker (cf. Slobodan Dan Paich, "Intangible Cargo / Elusive Itineraries. Traveling Intellectuals, Experts, Advisers and Artist at Byzantine, Ottoman and Renaissance Courts," in *People and Goods on the Move. Merchants, Networks and Communication Routes in the Medieval and early Modern Mediterranean*, edited by Özlem Çaykent and Luca Zavagno (Fisciano; ICSR Mediterranean Knowledge, 2016): 111–142, 129–130).

academic discourse on Islam. Moreover, the sociological and historical topics that concern so much of the *Muqaddimah* are almost ignored in this *muqaddima*, which, nevertheless, is an important part of the overall structure of the whole work.

The Sixth Prolegomenon and Orientalist Worldviews

Following al-Jābirī's remarks, we may now turn to modern Europeanized²⁶ authors who have discussed the *Muqaddimah*. These authors are deeply influenced by the Western traditions mentioned earlier, which also influenced modern Arabic discourse.

Allen Fromherz's²⁷ study talks about Ibn Khaldun's "obsession [...] with numerology, astrology, magic, and a whole cornucopia of seemingly strange and fantastic 'ologies'" that may irritate "modern readers".²⁸ Fromherz at least acknowledges the lack of research on these topics, but using a term like "obsession" hints at his firm roots in Orientalist discourses and an "enlightened", biased approach to his subject.

Robert Irwin²⁹ gives plenty of space to Sufis and occult literature, but his terminology is revealing. Talking about occult literature he says: "The literature of medieval Islamic occultism with which Ibn Khaldun was familiar constituted a disordered library, largely composed of forgeries, secretive coded texts, gibberish, ascriptions to imaginary ancestral authors, and with it all a great deal of attendant tedium."³⁰ Again, we meet a biased approach mixing Orientalist and somehow enlightened worldviews. Consequently, Irwin continues talking about pseudosciences, the scope of the *Muqaddima* becoming "baggier" including, among other things, "dreams, mystical experiences, the occult", which "are not strictly relevant for the understanding

26 Including some non-European authors.

27 Allen James Fromherz is an American historian specializing in the Middle East and the Mediterranean.

28 Allen James Fromherz, *Ibn Khaldun, Life and Times* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

29 Robert Graham Irwin was an Arabist, historian, and novelist. Among his works is one on the Alhambra.

30 Robert Irwin, *Ibn Khaldun: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 121.

of historical processes”.³¹ It is tempting to say Irwin is criticizing Ibn Khaldun for not being a professional historian in the 20th century. Nevertheless, Irwin tried to find reasonable arguments for Ibn Khaldun’s interest in the occult and magic: “But I believe that the chief reason Ibn Khaldun was so obsessed with sorcery was because it overlapped with divination and the power to know the future.”³²

Yves Lacoste³³ presents Ibn Khaldun as a scientist and says that “this is the source of his greatness.”³⁴ He talks about Ibn Khaldun’s “faith in rationalism”,³⁵ but also notes passages of the *Muqaddimah* that are “marked by mystical obscurantism”.³⁶ Generally speaking, Lacoste regards Ibn Khaldun as – at least partially – a religious scholar, “championing religious reaction”.³⁷ Lacoste constructs a dichotomy between rationalism and obscurantism, and thus dismisses the sixth prolegomenon (and other parts of the *Muqaddimah*) as irrelevant, asking: “How are we to explain the existence of such two different intellectual attitudes in the same book?”³⁸ Again, we note an attitude similar to that of other authors, as Ibn Khaldun’s mysticism and obscurantism are seen as a paradox similar to his status as one of the founding fathers of European ideas, and at the same time an Islamic scholar. This attitude is part of the general binary *West vs non-West*.

Although Lacoste acknowledges that Ibn Khaldun was not a modern thinker and criticizes those trying to modernize him, he is still steeped in the French rationalist belief. As such, Lacoste cannot accept Ibn Khaldun as a pious Muslim. He does not subscribe to the Orientalist critique of Ibn Khaldun’s spiritual views, but cannot overcome his own rationalist position.

Hamilton A.R. Gibb,³⁹ to bring an older voice into the conversation, states frankly that religion was an essential part of Ibn Khaldun’s worldview,

31 All quotations Irwin, *Ibn Khaldun*, 118.

32 Irwin, *Ibn Khaldun*, 128.

33 Yves Lacoste has been a French geographer born in Morocco.

34 Yves Lacoste, *Ibn Khaldun: The Birth of History and the Past of the Third World* (London: Verso, 1984). 183.

35 Lacoste, *Ibn Khaldun*, 182.

36 Lacoste, *Ibn Khaldun*, 181.

37 Lacoste, *Ibn Khaldun*, 182.

38 Lacoste, *Ibn Khaldun*, 183.

39 Hamilton Alexander Roskeen Gibb (d. 1971 CE) Islamicist, Arabist, and Historian.

although Gibb mentions neither Sufism nor occultism in this context.⁴⁰ His text is representative of those scholars who think that speaking about Islam is essential to understanding Muslims, a well-known Orientalist approach.

In a simplified manner, Ibn Khaldun and his *Muqaddimah* are often compared to modern authors and theories, as seen, for example, in an article by Christian Fuchs that attempts to identify elements of political economy in the text and compare Ibn Khaldun to Karl Marx.⁴¹ However, both religion and any supernatural elements in the *Muqaddimah* are ignored in this work, and Ibn Khaldun turns out to be little more than an exotic reference for a European author.⁴²

A younger Austrian scholar, Peter Enz, proposed a new reading of the *Muqaddimah*, and especially the sixth prolegomenon.⁴³ He rightly criticizes Western authors who are shocked by the sudden turn to the occult of this much-lauded critical rationalist. While giving a fair description and analysis of the sixth prolegomenon, as well as possible interpretations of the role of this *muqaddima*, Enz attempts to frame it in different ways. In particular, he explains the sixth *muqaddima* as an attempt by Ibn Khaldun to present his new science under the cover of the then dominant worldview, thus immunizing his new theory against critique by religious scholars. Enz thus tries to reconcile Ibn Khaldun's rationalist thinking with his religiously inspired thought, and does not accept the possibility that Ibn Khaldun himself did not see any contradiction between the two.

All translations of the *Muqaddimah*, abridged or not, include the sixth prolegomenon,⁴⁴ and thus the authors mentioned above who dismiss it can

40 H.A.R. Gibb, "The Islamic Background of Ibn Khaldūn's Political Theory." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* 7 (1933): 23-31.

41 In a very Eurocentric way the author is not aware that the *Ibn* in Ibn Khaldun is not a first name, and thus refers to "Khaldun", contemptuously ignoring the Arabic system of naming and forcing it into a European pattern.

42 Christian Fuchs, "Ibn Khaldūn and the Political Economy of Communication in the Age of Digital Capitalism." *Critical Sociology* 50 (2024): 707-725, <https://doi.org/10.1177/08969205231206488>. Christian Fuchs is a scholar of media studies.

43 Peter Enz, *Der Keim der Revolte: Militante Solidarität und religiöse Mission bei Ibn Khaldun* (Freiburg/München: Karl Alber, 2012).

44 For English language translation Rosenthal, *Ibn Khaldūn* is a standard reference, for German translations cf. Annemarie Schimmel, trans., *Ibn Chaldun: Ausgewählte Abschnitte aus der muqaddima* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1951) and Alma Giese, trans., *Ibn Khaldun. Die Muqaddimah: Betrachtungen zur Weltgeschichte* (München: C. H. Beck, 2011). Other translations in French, Turkish, etc. are not considered.

be seen as engaging in an act of discursive closure,⁴⁵ excluding non-Western worldviews. It is the discursive privilege given to Western rationality that produces this closure and constructs a “frozen identity”, a Eurocentric framing that is needed to make as homogeneous a worldview as possible.

There are many other authors who simply ignore the occult topics Ibn Khaldun presents in the sixth prolegomenon, focusing instead on the sociological, philosophical, political or even theological aspects of the *Muqaddimah*, without touching on the “problematic” ones. These approaches are not all to be considered as Orientalist, especially when applied by non-European authors. Nevertheless, the production of a non-Eurocentric analysis of the *Muqaddimah* is a task that is still to be accomplished. As Alatas states:

One of the most conspicuous features of Orientalism, a persistent feature that has survived for centuries, is the neglect of the theoretical authority of so-called Oriental thinkers. Although the critique of Orientalism and related problems such as Eurocentrism in the social sciences and humanities has been around since at least the latter part of the nineteenth century, the serious consideration of the thought of seminal non-Western thinkers as sources of theories and concepts that are applicable to historical and empirical data is largely absent. The task of studying alternatives to Orientalist constructions is the logical result of the critique of Orientalism but has, with a few exceptions, not been undertaken.⁴⁶

If we turn to non-Orientalist approaches to the sixth prolegomenon, we may find more appropriate ones. Abdesselam Cheddadi writes:

We see from this that the problem posed by Ibn Khaldun in his study of the modes of access to the supernatural has at its stake the place of religion in society, religion being defined as the institution responsible for governing these modes of access. Therefore, the place of religion appears to be primordial, supernatural conditions at least as important as natural conditions. This does not apply to any single religion, but to all religions in general.⁴⁷

45 For more on this concept see Lars Th. Christensen, Mette Morsing and Ole Thyssen, “Discursive Closure and Discursive Openings in Sustainability” (*Management Communication Quarterly* 29 (2015): 135–144, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318914563574>) or Renee G. Heath and Jennifer L. Borda, “Reclaiming Civility: Towards Discursive Opening in Dialogue and Deliberation” (*Journal of Deliberative Democracy* 17 (2021): 9–18, <https://doi.org/10.16997/jdd.976>).

46 Syed Farid Alatas, *Applying Ibn Khaldūn: The Recovery of a Lost Tradition in Sociology* (London/New York: Routledge, 2014), 1.

47 Abdesselam Cheddadi, *The World Until 1400 According to Ibn Khaldun: A Global History of Humanity* (New York/London: Routledge, 2025), 62.

It may thus be possible to place supernatural conditions on the same level as natural conditions.

Conclusion

A non-Orientalist, non-Western presentation of Ibn Khaldun and his *Muqaddimah* that includes the sixth prolegomenon remains to be written for Western readers. The text's references to religion and attempts to understand supernatural phenomena are to be understood as part of the epistemological world of an early modern author working in North Africa, and a new approach is needed to overcome the limitations of the purely secularist, Eurocentric epistemology that still dominates global research. It is essential that any study of the *Muqaddimah* accepts the simple fact that this work of Ibn Khaldun "was not rejected or fought against", which "is proof that it was, in the eyes of the society it was born in, not faulty or shocking".⁴⁸

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