

History as science

Markiewicz, Christopher

DOI:

[10.1163/15700658-12342525](https://doi.org/10.1163/15700658-12342525)

License:

Other (please specify with Rights Statement)

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (Harvard):

Markiewicz, C 2017, 'History as science: the fifteenth-century debate in Arabic and Persian', *Journal of Early Modern History*, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 216-240. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700658-12342525>

[Link to publication on Research at Birmingham portal](#)

Publisher Rights Statement:

Eligibility checked 31/05/18

Markiewicz, C., 2017. History as Science: The Fifteenth-Century Debate in Arabic and Persian. *Journal of Early Modern History*, 21(3), pp.216-240.

10.1163/15700658-12342525

General rights

Unless a licence is specified above, all rights (including copyright and moral rights) in this document are retained by the authors and/or the copyright holders. The express permission of the copyright holder must be obtained for any use of this material other than for purposes permitted by law.

- Users may freely distribute the URL that is used to identify this publication.
- Users may download and/or print one copy of the publication from the University of Birmingham research portal for the purpose of private study or non-commercial research.
- User may use extracts from the document in line with the concept of 'fair dealing' under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (?)
- Users may not further distribute the material nor use it for the purposes of commercial gain.

Where a licence is displayed above, please note the terms and conditions of the licence govern your use of this document.

When citing, please reference the published version.

Take down policy

While the University of Birmingham exercises care and attention in making items available there are rare occasions when an item has been uploaded in error or has been deemed to be commercially or otherwise sensitive.

If you believe that this is the case for this document, please contact UBIRA@lists.bham.ac.uk providing details and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate.

Journal of Early Modern History

History as Science: The Fifteenth-Century Debate in Arabic and Persian

--Manuscript Draft--

Manuscript Number:	JEMH-D-15-00048R1	
Full Title:	History as Science: The Fifteenth-Century Debate in Arabic and Persian	
Short Title:	History as Science	
Article Type:	Full Length Article	
Corresponding Author:	Christopher Markiewicz, Ph.D. University of Oxford Oxford, UNITED KINGDOM	
Corresponding Author's Institution:	University of Oxford	
First Author:	Christopher Markiewicz, Ph.D.	
Order of Authors:	Christopher Markiewicz, Ph.D.	
Manuscript Region of Origin:	UNITED STATES	
Abstract:	<p>In the fifteenth century, scholars writing in Arabic and Persian debated the nature of historical inquiry and its place among the sciences. While the motivations and perspectives of the various scholars differed, the terms and parameters of the debate remained remarkably fixed and focused, even as it unfolded across a vast geographic space between Herat, Cairo, and Constantinople. This article examines the contours of this debate and the relationships between five historians working on these issues. Although the scholars who considered these questions frequently arrived at different conclusions, they all firmly agreed, in contrast to previous doubt regarding the status of history, that historical inquiry did indeed constitute a distinct science requiring its own particular method. Accordingly, the debate and its conclusions helped cement the place of history within the broader pantheon of the sciences as conceived by scholars in the Ottoman Empire from the sixteenth century onwards.</p>	
Keywords:	historiography; fifteenth century; Ottoman Empire; Mamluk Sultanate; Timurid Iran	
Funding Information:	European Research Council (263557 IMPAcT)	Not applicable
	Fulbright-Hayes DDRA	Dr. Christopher Markiewicz

Title:

History as Science: The Fifteenth-Century Debate in Arabic and Persian¹

Abstract:

In the fifteenth century, scholars writing in Arabic and Persian debated the nature of historical inquiry and its place among the sciences. While the motivations and perspectives of the various scholars differed, the terms and parameters of the debate remained remarkably fixed and focused, even as it unfolded across a vast geographic space between Herat, Cairo, and Constantinople. This article examines the contours of this debate and the relationships between five historians working on these issues. Although the scholars who considered these questions frequently arrived at different conclusions, they all firmly agreed, in contrast to previous doubt regarding the status of history, that historical inquiry did indeed constitute a distinct science requiring its own particular method. Accordingly, the debate and its conclusions helped cement the place of history within the broader pantheon of the sciences as conceived by scholars in the Ottoman Empire from the sixteenth century onwards.

Keywords:

historiography, fifteenth century, Ottoman Empire, Mamluk Sultanate, Timurid Iran

Introduction

Between 1397/800 and 1513/919, five Muslim scholars writing in Arabic and Persian presented their ideas on the nature of historical inquiry and its place within the larger pantheon of the sciences as conceived by Islamic learning. In contrast to the disparate and often independently conceived remarks of Arab and Persian historians before the fifteenth century, the

1
2
3
4 terms and parameters of these scholars' discourses remained remarkably fixed and focused: what
5
6 is history? How should it be defined linguistically and practically? Is history a science? If so,
7
8 what kind of a science is it? How should its aims, problems, and proper spheres of inquiry be
9
10 defined? Although the scholars who considered these questions frequently came to varying and
11
12 even contradictory conclusions, they all firmly agreed, in contrast with the doubt of previous
13
14 generations on the status of history, that historical inquiry did indeed constitute a distinct science
15
16 requiring its own particular method.
17
18
19

20
21 Despite the existence of this fifteenth-century debate on history, contemporary
22
23 scholarship has largely overlooked the multilingual aspect and geographically wide-ranging
24
25 extent of this major development within the Islamic historiographical tradition. The oversight
26
27 stems, in part, from two separate tendencies within modern approaches to Islamic historiography.
28
29 First, modern scholarship continues to operate in some measure under the residual influence of
30
31 twentieth-century scholarly inclinations to emphasize the significance of earlier periods of
32
33 Islamic history and marginalize later developments. Second, as a consequence of the mass of
34
35 historical literature produced by Muslim scholars over centuries and across continents, modern
36
37 historians understandably tend to delimit and synthesize Islamic historical thought within
38
39 individual linguistic traditions, most frequently Arabic, Persian, or Turkish.
40
41
42
43
44

45
46 The tendency to favor earlier periods is largely a consequence of the development of the
47
48 field in the twentieth century. Whether with respect to literature, the religious traditions, or the
49
50 cultural implications of travel, scholars in the twentieth century framed discussions of Islamic
51
52 intellectual phenomena through a search for 'origins' and the demarcation of a 'classical period'
53
54 ending, at the latest, in the mid-thirteenth century, during which the various cultural traditions
55
56 purportedly originated, developed, and matured.² As Nile Green has noted in criticism of certain
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 approaches to Sufism, historical process in this mold was viewed primarily “as a set of
5
6 “inheritances” and “influences” that acted on and were received by each passing generation so as
7
8 to give cumulative shape to their thoughts, actions, and creations.”³ In contrast, he has noted the
9
10 need to recognize the significance of historical context and view the past as a set of continuously
11
12 negotiated cultural references. He is not alone in his criticism of this earlier approach; indeed,
13
14 recent scholarship in a number of sub-fields within Islamic intellectual and cultural history has
15
16 rejected the earlier approach and sought to redress the imbalance through detailed studies of the
17
18 period after the mid-thirteenth century.⁴ More often than not, such studies uncover and explore
19
20 rich developments in the intellectual and cultural life of Islamic societies up to and over the
21
22 course of the great transmutations initiated by the modern age. In this sense, contemporary
23
24 historians generally reject the basic premises of the various decline paradigms that appeared to
25
26 exercise such influence on much of twentieth-century scholarship.
27
28
29
30
31
32

33
34 Despite the explicit, resounding rejection of any decline paradigm, the effects of
35
36 twentieth-century scholarship still exert an unintentional residual influence on certain aspects of
37
38 the main narratives of Islamic intellectual history. Indeed, recent publications continue to
39
40 acknowledge the lasting, undesirable consequences of twentieth-century historiographical
41
42 paradigms of decline. In his study of scholarly currents within seventeenth-century Ottoman
43
44 domains, Khaled El-Rouayheb notes the persistent deleterious effects of three distinct paradigms
45
46 of decline on contemporary considerations of the intellectual history of this period.⁵
47
48 Significantly, the lingering consequences of this attitude have obstructed observation of major,
49
50 far-reaching scholarly developments after the middle of the sixteenth century. Specifically, El-
51
52 Rouayheb demonstrates that the many glosses, commentaries, and super-commentaries on
53
54 dialectical disputation (*ādāb al-baḥth*)—citation of which in previous decades was marshalled to
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 uphold notions of intellectual stagnation—in fact, underscore the dynamism and vitality of
5
6 largely novel approaches to dialectical argumentation and logic.⁶ Vestiges of the dominant
7
8 narratives described by El-Rouayheb persist in other surprising and unexpected places. In an
9
10 otherwise engaging work that argues effectively for continued large-scale and diverse cultural
11
12 production in Arabic after the twelfth century, Muhsin al-Musawi's *The Medieval Islamic*
13
14 *Republic of Letters: Arabic Knowledge Construction* nonetheless opens by embracing “the
15
16 postclassical era” as a suitable and unproblematic term to describe the period between the twelfth
17
18 and nineteenth centuries.⁷
19
20
21
22

23
24 The vestigial effects of earlier academic agendas and outlooks are perhaps equally
25
26 observable with respect to the study of Islamic historical thought. As in other sub-fields, in the
27
28 twentieth century, most scholars of Islamic historiography characterized historical writing after
29
30 the thirteenth century as a reflection of a more general societal decadence that undermined the
31
32 value of historiography as a rigorous area of intellectual inquiry.⁸ Even twentieth-century
33
34 scholars who actively engaged historical writing in later periods upheld observations of
35
36 stagnation and decline. For instance, Franz Rosenthal, who first brought some of the fifteenth-
37
38 century historians examined in this article to widespread scholarly attention, nevertheless
39
40 concluded his study of Muslim historiography with the turn of the sixteenth century, as the
41
42 subsequent period was, in his estimation, consciously or unconsciously exposed to occidental
43
44 influence.⁹ Since Muslim historical production continued to flourish “without hardly any changes
45
46 in its forms of expression,” he concluded that its inclusion “would have shed no additional light
47
48 upon the contours and substance of the great cultural phenomenon of Muslim historiography.”¹⁰
49
50
51
52
53 By the end of the century, historians roundly dismissed such a characterization by emphasizing
54
55 the evolving and varied nature of the enterprise, and, to be sure, the field has benefited from a
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 great number of specialized studies that consider aspects of Islamic historiography after the
5
6 fifteenth century.¹¹ Unfortunately, in some instances, the new approach is not reflected in the
7
8 broader synthesizing narratives of Islamic historiography. Indeed, such narratives, especially in
9
10 their periodization, still implicitly reconfirm the impression of stagnation and decadence in a so-
11
12 called ‘postclassical’ period, however demarcated. To wit, Tarif Khalidi’s *Arabic Thought in the*
13
14 *Classical Period* presents a more nuanced approach to Islamic historiography by examining the
15
16 tradition as the product of the immediate cultural climates that informed its development
17
18 diachronically.¹² Premised on the notion that historical writing in all cultures and at all times is
19
20 “peculiarly susceptible to surrounding climates of ideas and beliefs,” Khalidi identifies four
21
22 major points of view that informed the development of Arabic historiography between the eighth
23
24 and fourteenth centuries.¹³ However, because he associates the last stage with the rise of the
25
26 politically-minded court historian, who seemed to abandon the philosophical underpinnings of
27
28 his craft in favor of a sycophantic catalog of rulers’ great deeds, Khalidi’s approach implicitly
29
30 confirms earlier scholars’ impressions of later centuries as essentially decadent.¹⁴ Even if other
31
32 contemporary historians disavow themselves of this conclusion, recent syntheses, like Khalidi’s
33
34 work, frequently continue to neglect historiographical developments past the fourteenth or
35
36 fifteenth centuries.¹⁵ While it is certainly the case that such syntheses often do not present the
37
38 latest research in any detail, the persistent absence in some cases of any consideration of
39
40 historical writing between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries in the very least suggests a lack
41
42 of willingness to integrate specialized scholarship into a broader framework.
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51

52
53 Beyond these narrative tendencies, monolingual approaches to Islamic historiography
54
55 further obscure the full extent of the fifteenth-century discourse on history. The tendency to
56
57 divide Islamic historiography between its Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish expressions
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

reinforces an understanding of the historical tradition as separate, linguistically delineated dialectics. Moreover, while considerations of Ottoman historical writing generally acknowledge its relationship to Arabic and especially Persian historiography, the interrelationship between the three remains only superficially acknowledged. Yet many scholars from this period, including several of the historians discussed below, were completely fluent readers and writers of both Arabic and Persian. For instance, the sixteenth-century Ottoman historian Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī authored thirty-eight works in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish¹⁶ and cites 130 chronicles in Arabic and Persian as sources for his world history in Turkish, *Kūnhü’l-aḥbār* (*The Essence of Histories*).¹⁷ Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī’s method still seems sensible; the wide-ranging interaction between Arabic and Persian historical thought since the tenth century—and Turkish historiography, as well, beginning in the fifteenth century—constituted a fundamental aspect of the development of Islamic historiography as a vibrant cultural tradition until the rise of national historiographies in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁸

Indeed, the salient cultural features of the fifteenth century would appear to underscore meaningful scholarly interaction across Islamic lands, irrespective of language. As in earlier centuries, Muslim scholars and other producers of cultural and literary material maintained a relatively high level of social and cultural cohesion during this period. Such cohesion, which modern historians have variously identified as a common Islamicate social pattern or Islamic world-system, facilitated the relatively free movement of people and ideas across political, ethnic, and vernacular boundaries.¹⁹ The politically volatile and fragmented terrain of the fifteenth century frequently afforded and occasionally necessitated the movement of scholars and their works from one land to another and in this manner helped facilitate a novel and lively debate on the place and meaning of historical inquiry.²⁰

Background to the Debate

In fact, the fifteenth century witnessed a veritable renaissance of rigorous considerations of the nature and purpose of the historian's craft on the part of Muslim scholars. Beginning in the late fourteenth century, historians writing in Arabic, Persian, and occasionally Turkish regularly included formal discourses on the purpose and benefits of history within the prefatory sections of their chronicles.²¹ Yet, for the most part, such remarks remained disparate and disconnected from any unified discourse. For example, in the late fourteenth century, Ibn Khaldūn's (d. 1406/808) introduction to his universal history failed to elicit any thorough and sustained reaction from most contemporary and subsequent historians either in Mamluk Egypt or further afield.²² Similar circumstances prevailed in Persian lands. In the introduction to his history of Tīmūr, Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī (d. 1454/858) postulated the etymological origins of history (*ta'rīkh*) in Syriac, defended its study as an honorable branch of knowledge as substantiated by Quranic revelation, pointed to some of its worldly and otherworldly benefits, and compared various dating systems.²³ One generation later, Mīr Kh^wānd (d. 1498/903), a historian working in the Herat of the late Timurid Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqara (d. 1506/911), offered a lengthy discussion on the benefits of history in the introduction to his universal history.²⁴ A few years later, Faẓlullāh Khunjī-Iṣfahānī (d. 1521/927), working for the Aqquyunlu court of Ya'qūb (r. 1478-1490), offered an apologia for history, detailed its benefits and aims, and specified his own contributions to the tradition in the introduction to his chronicle on the reign of his Aqquyunlu patron.²⁵ At the turn of the sixteenth century, the Egyptian polymath Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī (d. 1505/911) likewise contributed to the burgeoning yet dissociated discourse through his own treatise on the subject.²⁶

1
2
3
4 Even in the nascent Ottoman historiographical context, historians occasionally sought to
5
6 elaborate the benefits of history in limited ways. During the reign of Sultan Bāyezīd II (r. 1481-
7
8 1512), Neşrī (d. ca. 1520/926) suggested the fundamental importance of knowledge of history for
9
10 kings in the introduction to the volume of his universal history devoted to the Ottoman dynasty.²⁷
11
12 Although such discussions frequently shared common features—and may therefore be a
13
14 reflection of the sort of climate of ideas suggested by Khalidi—the variegated remarks of these
15
16 historians do not necessarily imply direct knowledge of parallel historiographical developments.
17
18
19
20

21 Concurrent with these reflections, a more limited and focused discourse about the
22
23 meaning and purpose of history unfolded in the work of five Arabophone and Persophone
24
25 scholars. These men, most of whom shared scholarly connections or had access to one another's
26
27 work, developed a formal approach to locating and defining history within the classification of
28
29 the sciences (*taqṣīm al-ʿulūm*). Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Ījī (fl. 1397/800), a student of the great
30
31 fourteenth-century theologian ʿAḍud al-Dīn Ījī (d. 756/1355) and scion of the Fālī-Sīrāfī family
32
33 of Shiraz, established this rigorous approach to defining his subject in several chapters that he
34
35 included in a larger historical work in Arabic dedicated to Tīmūr in October 1397/Muḥarram
36
37 800.²⁸ Half a generation later, Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, boon companion of Tīmūr and historian at the court of
38
39 the conqueror's son and ultimate heir Shāhrukh, borrowed Ījī's approach in discussions that he
40
41 included in two of his Persian historical works written between 1414/817 and his death in
42
43 1430/833.²⁹ In the 1460s, Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Kāfiyājī (d. 1474/879), an émigré from western
44
45 Anatolia who rose to scholarly prominence in Cairo, followed in the intellectual footsteps of
46
47 these two Persian scholars and situated history among the religious sciences in a short
48
49 monograph entitled *al-Mukhtaṣar al-mufīd fī ʿilm al-taʾrīkh* (*The Useful Digest on the Science of*
50
51 *History*).³⁰ A few years later, one of al-Kāfiyājī's colleagues, the prominent Egyptian scholar of
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 *ḥadīth* (traditions of the prophet Muḥammad) Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī (d.
5
6 1497/902), composed his own monograph on the subject, entitled *I'lān bi'l-tawbīkh li-man*
7
8 *dhamma al-ta'rīkh* (*The Pronouncement of Reproach for Those Who Defame History*), in which
9
10 he sought to defend the suitability of history for study against theologians for whom its necessity
11
12 as a religiously sanctioned body of knowledge remained dubious.³¹ Lastly, in the second decade
13
14 of the sixteenth century, Idrīs Bidlīsī (d. 1520/926), scholar and chancery official of the
15
16 Akquyunlu and Ottoman courts, included a lengthy discussion of history as science along the
17
18 lines of his predecessors in the introduction to his massive Persian dynastic chronicle of the
19
20 Ottoman house.³²

21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

Even as their particular audiences varied, their analogous formal approaches to discussing history addressed a similar concern for examining the epistemological underpinnings of their subject. Although Muslim scholars had written history since the first centuries of Islam, widespread disagreement remained regarding its nature as a body of knowledge and true relationship to the other sciences. The disagreement stemmed largely from the classification system of the sciences that had been worked out over the centuries. The earliest such systems, namely those advanced by al-Fārābī (d. 950/339) and Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037/428), adapted the Aristotelian system of knowledge and insisted upon human reason (*al-'aql*) as the fundamental basis for elaborating the definitions, precepts, and problems of any science.³³ In this way, they both agreed with the Hellenistic tradition that history is not a science, since it deals with individual occurrences in time and precludes the possibility of any universal judgment.³⁴ Yet the emphasis on human reason as the source of theoretical and practical knowledge posed a challenge to Muslim scholars, as it failed to incorporate the well-developed Islamic traditions of learning that were derived from and concerned with the prophet Muḥammad's revelation. To

1
2
3
4 resolve this problem, scholars developed a bifurcated system of knowledge that differentiated
5
6 between rational and revealed/transmitted sciences.³⁵ Along these lines, at the end of the tenth
7
8 century, al-Khwārazmī, in his *Keys of the Sciences* (*Mafātīḥ al-‘ulūm*), divided knowledge
9
10 between “the sciences of religious tradition and what is joined to them from among the Arabic
11
12 sciences, and secondly the sciences of the foreign lands of the Greeks and other peoples.”³⁶
13
14 Although cast in terms of an anthropological distinction between indigenous and foreign
15
16 learning, the system articulated by al-Khwārazmī largely corresponded to the basic division
17
18 between rational (‘*aqlī/ḥikmī*) and transmitted or revealed (*naqlī/ghayr ḥikmī*) sciences as
19
20 expounded by most subsequent scholars, including Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 1210/606), Quṭb al-Dīn
21
22 Shīrāzī (d. 1311/710), and Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406/808).³⁷
23
24
25
26
27

28
29 Consequently, the rigorous considerations of history’s place in the late fourteenth and
30
31 fifteenth centuries addressed a fundamental concern for historians to legitimize their craft within
32
33 the wider context of Islamic learning. Such considerations also benefited from a more general
34
35 reappraisal of the classification system that gathered steam first among scholars working within
36
37 the religious sciences. Increasingly, these scholars applied Aristotelian principles and
38
39 terminology to the precise definition of religious bodies of knowledge. Specifically, they
40
41 accepted the philosophers’ assertion that science is differentiated from knowledge through
42
43 demonstrable proof (*burhān*). Moreover, they concurred that any particular science (‘*ilm*)
44
45 investigates a single specified and clearly defined subject matter (*mawḍū‘*) and that it endeavors
46
47 to reach conclusions within that subject matter in a systematic manner.³⁸ Increasingly in the
48
49 fourteenth century, religious scholars applied this philosophically oriented approach to defining
50
51 and investigating the traditional Islamic religious sciences; scholars such as ‘Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī
52
53 recast theology (*kalām*) in this mold in the middle of the century,³⁹ while many others worked
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 contemporaneously to redefine the orientation of theoretical jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) along
5
6 these lines.⁴⁰
7
8

9 Concurrent with these developments—and perhaps in some measure as a consequence of
10
11 them—Muslim scholars began to produce encyclopedias on the sciences with renewed energy.⁴¹
12
13 Some of these enormous projects produced detailed information on specific branches of
14
15 knowledge, such as Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī's (d. 1418/821) fourteen-volume work
16
17 on epistolography entitled *Ṣubḥ al-a 'shā* (*Dawn for the Blind*) or Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad al-
18
19 Damīrī's (d. 1405/808) zoological survey, *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān* (*Life of Animals*).⁴² Others, such as
20
21 Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī's *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (*The Ultimate Ambition in the*
22
23 *Branches of Erudition*) sought to survey the widest range of literary arts in a comprehensive and
24
25 pleasing manner.⁴³ More radically, certain strains within the encyclopedism movement argued
26
27 for a complete restructuring of the metaphysical underpinnings of Islamic learning as conceived
28
29 by philosophers, jurists, and Sufis. In this way, 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Biṣṭāmī's (d. 1454/858) *al-*
30
31 *Fawā'ih al-miskīya fī al-fawātiḥ al-makkīya* (*The Musky Perfumes in the Meccan Openings*) and
32
33 Sā'in al-Dīn Turka's (d. 1432/835) treatises on the science of letters presented an occult
34
35 challenge both to the traditional division of the sciences, as well as to its metaphysical
36
37 presuppositions.⁴⁴ Not surprisingly, in this climate of encyclopedism—both traditional and
38
39 radical—historians examined the epistemological underpinnings of their craft with renewed rigor
40
41 and vitality.
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52

53 **History as Science in the Fifteenth Century**

54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Ījī's application of the same method to history should come as
5
6 little surprise. His training tied him to some of the great intellectual luminaries of mid-
7
8 fourteenth-century Shiraz. At an early age, Ījī, known as Shihāb in his lifetime, studied under his
9
10 grandfather, Najm al-Dīn Ismā'īl,⁴⁵ patriarch of the Fālī-Sīrāfī family, long-time judge of the
11
12 province of Fars, and a man whom the great Persian poet Ḥāfiẓ identified as one of the five most
13
14 important notables of the Shiraz of his day.⁴⁶ Perhaps more importantly, Ījī spent years studying
15
16 under 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī, whose *Kitāb al-mawāqif fī 'ilm al-kalām* argued for the Aristotelian-
17
18 infused approach to theology and became one of the most fundamental texts for its study in
19
20 subsequent centuries.⁴⁷

21
22
23
24
25
26 Despite such an intellectually auspicious youth, Ījī's fortunes declined with those of his
27
28 family after the establishment of Muzaffarid rule in Shiraz in 1353/754; little is known after the
29
30 mid-fourteenth century about his life and the circumstances of the other members of his once
31
32 great family.⁴⁸ By the late 1390s, he had entered the courtly orbit of Tīmūr, who invested heavily
33
34 in Samarqand both through the construction of monumental architectural projects and through
35
36 the resettlement and patronage of learned men. Ījī was eager to secure such patronage, for in
37
38 1397/800 he gathered a number of works that he had written—some of which he penned in the
39
40 mid-1380s before Tīmūr's conquest of Fars⁴⁹—and presented the compendium to the conqueror
41
42 as a single monograph on history entitled *Tuḥfat al-faqīr ilā ṣāhib al-sarār* (*The Gift of the Poor*
43
44 *One to the Master of the Throne*), the explicit purpose of which was to elicit Tīmūr's notice of its
45
46 author, who had been dismissed from office and wallowed away in solitude.⁵⁰

47
48
49
50
51
52 Yet the opportunistic tone of Ījī's dedication and petition is no indication of intellectual
53
54 vapidty. On the contrary, Ījī applied the precise and exacting vocabulary deployed by his teacher
55
56 with respect to theology in his effort to define the science of history (*'ilm al-ta'rīkh*).⁵¹
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 Accordingly, his work offers a definition of history as science through clear statements of its
5
6 subject matter (*mawḍūʿ*), purpose (*gharaḍ*), benefits (*fawāʾid*), and underlying principles
7
8 (*mabādiʿ*). The science of history is “knowledge of what was transmitted concerning the
9
10 occurrences of the world fixed to particular times, from which a historical report originates.”⁵²
11
12 Elsewhere in the work, Ījī defines history, or more properly dating (*taʾrīkh*) in a strict linguistic
13
14 sense as an indication of time, and in a practical sense as the designation of time for the purpose
15
16 of defining the relative position between two occurrences.⁵³ Its subject matter is created things,
17
18 especially humankind, and the effects of their activities in the world, while its purpose is study of
19
20 the conditions of outstanding individuals (*aʿyān*).⁵⁴ The adaptation of this technical approach
21
22 was directed toward locating history within the classification of the sciences, for in the first
23
24 chapter of the work, Ījī identifies history as a subsidiary branch of the literary sciences (*al-ʿulūm*
25
26 *al-adabīya*), one of Ījī’s trifold epistemological divisions of knowledge along with the religious
27
28 sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-sharʿīya*) and the philosophical sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ḥikmīya*).⁵⁵
29
30 Specifically, history is a subset of the science of historical information (*ʿilm al-akhbār*) and is
31
32 distinguished from this broader category through its concern with fixing past occurrences with
33
34 dates.⁵⁶
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42

43 Whereas Ījī’s historical thinking bore the imprint of the scholarly circles from which he
44
45 emerged as a young man, the historical writing of a younger contemporary, Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, the
46
47 renowned Timurid historian, focused more thoroughly on the centrality of rule in the recounting
48
49 of past events. Even so, Ḥāfiẓ Abrū clearly drew on Ījī’s discursive method, for like his fellow
50
51 Timurid courtier, he preserved much of the terminology and many of the same definitions
52
53 presented in *Tuḥfat al-faqīr* in the prefatory sections of several of his universal historical projects
54
55 in Persian.⁵⁷ Like Ījī, he distinguishes between history, or more properly dating (*taʾrīkh*), and the
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 science of history. In a nod to his predecessor, he defines history/dating in a strict linguistic sense
5
6 (*dar lughat*) as the expression of time (*ta'rif-i vaqt*) and in a broader practical sense (*dar iştihāh*)
7
8 as the fixed designation of time periods to events.⁵⁸ His discussion of the science of history
9
10 likewise was indebted to Ījī, but with minor modifications. He begins by asserting that all
11
12 sciences are defined through establishment of their quiddity (*māhiyyat*), purpose (*ghāyat*), and
13
14 subject matter (*mawḍūʿ*). As this is the case, he asserts that history's subject consists of "the
15
16 events of the realm of generation and decay through investigation of which one discovers in what
17
18 regard and at what time they occurred."⁵⁹ Its quiddity, that is to say its distinguishing feature as a
19
20 science, is knowledge (*ma'rifat*) of those past events—whether they concern social or natural
21
22 phenomena—that occurred in the realm of generation and decay.⁶⁰ Yet such a definition of
23
24 history's quiddity precluded the possibility that it could offer its investigator any universal
25
26 judgment. For this reason, the purpose of history was consideration and reflection (*i'tibār va*
27
28 *istibṣār*) upon that knowledge, through which a historian could discern the appropriate course of
29
30 future action.⁶¹ The relationship between historical phenomena, reflection, and future action was
31
32 a frequently lauded benefit of history at least since the historian Miskawayh (d. 1030/421)
33
34 asserted in the eleventh century that knowledge of history offered an alternative type of
35
36 experience of worldly matters.⁶² Yet Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's assertion that this possibility constituted the
37
38 fundamental purpose of history lent historical inquiry a heightened level of rigor. In fact, this
39
40 conception of history's purpose closely resembles the purpose of Ibn Khaldūn's self-proclaimed
41
42 new science of culture (*ʿilm al-ʿumrān*) as he outlined it in the *Muqaddima*.⁶³ Whereas Ibn
43
44 Khaldūn sought to move beyond history to establish a science that would uncover the underlying
45
46 forces that informed historical developments through rational consideration of past occurrences,
47
48 Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, a contemporary of Ibn Khaldūn, independently arrived at the same conclusion, but
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

maintained that such an objective was in fact the proper purpose of history.⁶⁴ In other words, Ibn Khaldūn's science of culture remained for Ḥāfiẓ Abrū the appropriate conception of history as a scientific enterprise.

This formal approach of Ījī and Ḥāfiẓ Abrū to defining history in linguistic and practical terms and identifying its purpose and subject as a body of knowledge remained a basic feature of the subsequent considerations of history in the fifteenth century. However, whereas Ḥāfiẓ Abrū sought to define history as a science, the benefits of which primarily accrued to kings seeking counsel, the reflections of al-Kāfiyājī and al-Sakhāwī in the middle of the fifteenth century tended toward Ījī's emphasis and stressed the necessity of history for the religious sciences. Such emphasis reflected the more immediate scholarly milieu of the two men in fifteenth-century Cairo. Al-Kāfiyājī had immigrated to Cairo from his place of birth in Bergama (Pergamon) to continue his studies. He stayed on in the city and held teaching positions at several prestigious institutions in the Mamluk capital.⁶⁵ Over the course of his career, al-Kāfiyājī, perhaps following the earlier impulse of religious scholars to define their subjects in exacting philosophical terms, penned a number of short treatises that took up consideration of individual disciplines. Some of these were well recognized, if poorly defined, bodies of knowledge, such as history, while others, such as the science of the legal school (*'ilm al-madhhab*),⁶⁶ seemed, in the critical tone of his colleague al-Sakhāwī, to be fanciful inventions of their author.⁶⁷ Yet even if al-Sakhāwī criticized al-Kāfiyājī for overenthusiasm in some areas, he clearly agreed with his impulse with respect to history, for a few years after al-Kāfiyājī completed his short monograph on the science of history, al-Sakhāwī presented his own thinking on the subject in a work entitled *I'lān bi'l-tawbīkh li-man dhamma al-ta'rīkh* (*The Pronouncement of Reproach to Those Who Defame History*).

Both of these Egyptian scholars undertook their considerations of history in an effort to remedy their forebears' exclusion of historiography from the necessary branches of religious learning. Al-Kāfiyājī writes that although the ancients were able to dispense with a codification of history, this neglect does not suggest that it should be excluded from the classification of the sciences. Rather, he writes, "it is a science just like the other codified sciences, such as jurisprudence, grammar, style, and the like. It is, therefore, needed just like the other branches of learning."⁶⁸ Similarly, al-Sakhāwī defended history against those religious scholars (*ulamā*) who found fault with history and historians by showing its proven instructiveness and proclaiming its status among the fundamental branches of learning.⁶⁹ While a defense of history's status as science constituted the primary objective of al-Kāfiyājī and al-Sakhāwī's discourse, like ʿĪjī and Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, the two Egyptian scholars initiated their discussion of history through an exploration of the concept in its linguistic and practical senses. Because they sought to defend history's status as science, they also codified the study of history through a definition of its subject and problems (*masā'il*). All four scholars agreed that history's subject concerned past events in the realm of generation and decay, yet unlike Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, neither of the Egyptian historians attributed to the science of history an ability to elucidate underlying causes for events as they unfolded in time. For al-Kāfiyājī, history's subject was remarkable events, while al-Sakhāwī identified its subject as man and time.⁷⁰ However, even as they denied history an ability to pronounce universal judgments, they argued for its basic necessity within the framework of Islamic learning. In particular, al-Kāfiyājī went so far as to argue for history's status as a joint obligation of the Islamic community (*farḍ al-kifāya*).⁷¹ Similarly, al-Sakhāwī argued for the obligatory nature of some aspects of history and acknowledged the fact that some scholars—a reference perhaps to his colleague al-Kāfiyājī—categorized history as a communal obligation.⁷²

1
2
3
4 Accordingly, both men couched their considerations of history's benefits in terms of its necessity
5
6 in confirming the basic facts upon which the conclusions of jurisprudence and other religious
7
8 sciences were based.
9

10
11 Idrīs Bidlīsī, the last author in this discourse, was in some ways heir to both the scholarly
12
13 approach of Ījī and the Egyptian scholars and the courtly approach of Ḥāfiẓ Abrū. His early life
14
15 was spent in study under the tutelage of his father, Ḥusām al-Dīn 'Alī (d. 909/1503), whose
16
17 association with the great scholars of mid-fifteenth-century Iran afforded Bidlīsī opportunities to
18
19 meet leading luminaries such as 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 1492/898) and Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī (d.
20
21 1502/908). Despite his adolescent commitment to study and follow a Sufī path, in his early
22
23 adulthood, Bidlīsī entered the service of the Aqquyunlu court through employment in the
24
25 chancery. Over the remainder of his professional life Bidlīsī worked for the Aqquyunlu and later
26
27 Ottoman sultanates. He produced a massive Persian chronicle of the Ottoman dynasty entitled
28
29 *Hasht bihisht* (*The Eight Paradises*), the poor reception of which—in Bidlīsī's assessment—
30
31 prompted him to recommit to a pious life through a pilgrimage to Mecca. These travels brought
32
33 him to Cairo, where he enjoyed the patronage of the Mamluk sultan and met with the leading
34
35 scholars of the city, many of whom were the students of al-Kāfiyājī and al-Sakhāwī. Upon the
36
37 accession of Selīm to the Ottoman throne in 1512/918, Bidlīsī returned to Ottoman lands where
38
39 he presented a revised version of his chronicle.⁷³
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47

48 Perhaps then as a consequence of these varied experiences, when Bidlīsī sat down to
49
50 write the introduction to *Hasht bihisht* while residing in Mecca in 1512/918, he included a
51
52 discussion of the meaning and epistemological place of history that engaged the works of the
53
54 four earlier scholars in several respects. Like his immediate forebears, Bidlīsī sought to dignify
55
56 history by locating it within the broad classification of the sciences. Although he departed from
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 the rigorous formal efforts to define history's problem, purpose, and subject, he reproduced
5
6 aspects of these definitions in an altered format. Bidlīsī organized his discussion of history in
7
8 three subsections of his introduction that defined history, located it among the sciences, and
9
10 defended its status as a necessary and desirable branch of learning for both courtly audiences and
11
12 religious scholars.⁷⁴
13
14

15
16 In the introduction, Bidlīsī offers an abbreviated discussion of history's definition in both
17
18 its linguistic and practical senses and establishes its relationship to other bodies of knowledge
19
20 that are concerned with temporal occurrences.⁷⁵ As with all of his predecessors, he defines
21
22 history linguistically as the expression of time (*ta'rif-i vaqt*). However, he departs from these
23
24 scholars, insofar as his characterization of the practical definition (*ism-i rasmī*) of history focuses
25
26 on developing an understanding of the science of history (as opposed to a practical definition of
27
28 the term generally). Here, Bidlīsī inclines towards the more modest claims of Ījī and the two
29
30 Egyptian scholars and concludes that the science of history is "a science through knowledge
31
32 (*ma'rifat*) of which the conditions of temporal occurrences are obtained."⁷⁶ By focusing on
33
34 history as knowledge, Bidlīsī deemphasized Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's strong assertion that history contained
35
36 the possibility for insight into the underlying forces that inform events. While in later discourses
37
38 Bidlīsī acknowledges this aspect of history,⁷⁷ his primary definition of the science reproduces a
39
40 more traditional understanding.
41
42
43
44
45
46
47

48 Even if this more traditional understanding of history seems to limit its claim as a
49
50 veritable science, Bidlīsī distinguishes history by characterizing it as the loftiest branch of the
51
52 Arabic sciences (*'ulūm-i 'arabīya*), by which name he referred to the literary sciences
53
54 enumerated by Ījī. He places history within the broader category of rhetorical sciences (*'ulūm-i*
55
56 *muḥāzarāt*), which he defines as the apex of the twelve Arabic sciences.⁷⁸ The lower Arabic
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 sciences concern basic aspects of language: knowledge of speech, conjugation, etymology,
5
6 grammar, syntax (*ma' nā*), and stylistics (*bayān*). These basic linguistic building blocks constitute
7
8 the basis upon which the more advanced literary sciences are elaborated: poetry, prose writing,
9
10 prosody, rhyme, epistolography (*inshā'*), and finally the rhetorical sciences. For Bidlīsī, rhetoric
11
12 was primarily concerned with investigating the modes of discourse and dialog within the polite
13
14 gatherings of refined notables. It constitutes the summation of the literary sciences, because, by
15
16 their varied nature, conversations taken up at such gatherings require a refined handling of a vast
17
18 array of subjects. Within this scheme, Bidlīsī asserts history's status as the most complete
19
20 application of the rhetorical sciences, presumably since it draws upon the widest array of literary
21
22 sciences to create historical narratives.⁷⁹
23
24
25
26
27

28 Bidlīsī's historical writing fully reflects this conception of his craft. In *Hasht bihisht*,
29
30 Bidlīsī rejected the more common practice of the Ottoman chronicles of his own day, which most
31
32 frequently offered simple accounts of the great deeds of the Ottoman sultans. Instead, Bidlīsī's
33
34 chronicle drew upon the most varied epistemological traditions—Quranic, poetic, esoteric,
35
36 astrological, philosophical, and theosophical—to create a narrative that also substantiated his
37
38 overarching claim for the cosmically ordained and divinely sanctioned rule of the Ottoman house
39
40 in his own age.⁸⁰ The result was a massive work that in volume, scope, and stated ambition easily
41
42 surpassed all previous historical projects supported by the Ottoman house. Although the work
43
44 elicited considerable criticism for a number of reasons from several quarters—including for its
45
46 prolixity⁸¹—Bidlīsī continued work to impose his vision on the nascent Ottoman
47
48 historiographical landscape until his death in 1520/926.
49
50
51
52
53
54

55 Later in life, some years after the completion of *Hasht bihisht*, he reflected on his
56
57 motivation for undertaking the project and wrote that before completion of his history “there had
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 been absolutely no deserving and worthy work in the canon of accustomed historical writing
5
6 (*qānūn-i ta'riḵh-i mu'tād*).⁸² By this, he likely meant that his chronicle was the first work of
7
8 Ottoman history to produce historical narratives with a clear conception of history's proper
9
10 subject, purpose, and basic principles. To be sure, Bidlīsī had his own particular ideas about this
11
12 conception, yet in a more general sense his thinking was conditioned by the century-long
13
14 discussion by historians on their subject.
15
16
17
18
19
20

21 **Parallels, Connections, and Contributions**

22
23
24
25

26 The differences between the positions taken by the five historians largely derived from
27
28 the varying audiences that the authors had in mind as they framed their remarks on the science of
29
30 history. While all five of the scholars recognized the alternate positions of the others as valid,
31
32 they emphasized certain aspects of history in accordance with their particular intellectual and
33
34 professional affiliations. As such, Ḥāfiz Abrū and Idrīs Bidlīsī, both of whom wrote chronicles
35
36 for a powerful sovereign, stressed those aspects of history that would accrue to the benefit of
37
38 kings. For Ḥāfiz Abrū, history was the science *par excellence* for formulating political counsel
39
40 and deciding future policy. For Bidlīsī, it was an ideal medium for advancing complex
41
42 ideological positions. Alternatively, the other three scholars' immersion in the scholarly scenes
43
44 of their day motivated them to frame their remarks on history in religious and jurisprudential
45
46 terms.
47
48
49
50
51

52 Despite such differences, their structural approaches to defining history remained similar.
53
54 All of the historians defended history as a science. Moreover, such apologia unfolded through the
55
56 adaptation of Aristotelian terminology previously pioneered by religious scholars working in
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 theoretical jurisprudence and theology. All of the historians analyzed the definition of history in
5
6 discrete linguistic and practical terms. Most of them—with the exception of Bidlīsī—sought to
7
8 define history as a science in terms of its subject (*mawḍūʿ*) and purpose (*gharaḍ* or *ghāyat*).
9

10
11 Beyond these structural similarities, the five historians shared certain personal and
12
13 intellectual connections with one another that bound them together across time and space. In
14
15 several instances, the opportunities for patronage and study offered by princely and sultanic
16
17 courts created the intellectually rich environment in which such connections were established.
18
19 More often than not, this patronage was part of a ruler's conscious effort to attract talented men
20
21 and augment his prestige. Tīmūr famously failed to resettle Ibn Khaldūn in Samarqand after their
22
23 meeting outside the walls of Damascus in 1401/803,⁸³ yet he managed to settle a number of other
24
25 prominent scholars and historians, including al-Jazarī (1429/833), Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d.
26
27 1413/816), and Saʿd al-Dīn Masʿūd al-Taftazānī (d. 1390/793). Both Ījī and Ḥāfīz Abrū were
28
29 affiliated with Tīmūr's court during the last years of the fourteenth century, and it is likely as a
30
31 consequence of this connection that Ḥāfīz Abrū drew inspiration for his discourse from the
32
33 earlier work of Ījī.
34
35

36
37 Certainly, the two Egyptian scholars, al-Kāfiyājī and al-Sakhāwī, enjoyed the more
38
39 traditional scholarly relationship that thrived largely independently of the activities of royal
40
41 patronage. Al-Sakhāwī, in his treatise on history, acknowledges al-Kāfiyājī's pioneering effort
42
43 and cites a lengthy passage from his predecessor.⁸⁴ Connections with their eastern near
44
45 contemporaries are considerably less direct. Al-Kāfiyājī, who was born and first educated in
46
47 Ottoman lands, studied with a number of Persian émigré scholars or with learned men who
48
49 themselves had studied previously in Iran.⁸⁵ Moreover, in his early adulthood, his studies took
50
51 him to Iran before he turned westward toward Mamluk lands.⁸⁶ Possibly as a consequence of
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 these travels and studies, he had some familiarity with the Aristotelian approach to defining
5
6 scientific subjects, as advocated in the work of Persian scholars, such as ‘Aḍud al-Dīn Ījī with
7
8 respect to theology, and Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Ījī and Ḥāfiẓ Abrū with respect to history.
9

10
11 Moreover, al-Kāfiyajī, despite the jurisprudential focus of his historical discourse, also
12
13 maintained important ties with sultanic courts, which subsequently contributed to the spread of
14
15 his work to Ottoman lands. Al-Kāfiyajī freely associated with the Mamluk political
16
17 establishment of his adopted home. He accepted teaching positions from several Mamluk sultans
18
19 at institutions in Cairo, and, upon his death in 1474/879, the reigning sultan Qāyitbāy attended
20
21 his funeral.⁸⁷ One of his students, the historian ‘Alī ibn Dawūd al-Jawharī al-Ṣayrafī (d.
22
23 1495/900) mentions that Mamluk court officials used to frequent al-Kāfiyajī’s home⁸⁸ and that
24
25 his teacher, on at least one occasion, endorsed a favorable religious opinion when the sultan, in
26
27 the face of opposition, asked whether it was licit to remove a *miḥrāb* (wall niche indicating the
28
29 direction of Mecca) from an unused mosque in one of the Mamluk barracks.⁸⁹ In reference
30
31 perhaps to these mutually beneficial relationships, al-Sakhāwī, rather disparagingly, remarks that
32
33 his colleague “aggrandized kings.”⁹⁰ He adds that such aggrandizement was especially directed
34
35 toward the Ottoman sultan, with whom he regularly corresponded and presented great gifts.⁹¹ As
36
37 a consequence of this correspondence, within one year of al- Kāfiyajī’s completion of his treatise
38
39 on history, he asked one of his students, Yaḥyā ibn Muḥammad al-Damīsī, to prepare a copy of
40
41 the work for Maḥmūd Pasha, the powerful grand vizier of Mehmed II. In 1464/868, the copy was
42
43 completed, sent to the Ottoman court, and incorporated into the royal library after Maḥmūd
44
45 Pasha’s execution in 1474/879.⁹² Around the same time that al-Damīsī prepared this copy for the
46
47 Ottoman chief advisor, he prepared another copy for the future Mamluk sultan Qāyitbāy.⁹³ By
48
49 the turn of the sixteenth century, the Ottoman court had added another copy of the treatise, so
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 that when Bidlīsī arrived in Ottoman lands and took up his first major historical project, he had
5
6 access to at least two copies of al-Kāfiyājī's work.⁹⁴
7
8

9 In addition to these copies of *al-Mukhtaṣar al-mufīd*, the royal library of Bayezid II also
10
11 contained a copy of Ījī's *Tuhfat al-faqīr*.⁹⁵ More generally, by the turn of the sixteenth century,
12
13 the Ottoman court had assembled a massive library of more than 7,000 titles in 5,600 volumes
14
15 ranging from traditional religious subjects, such as traditions of the prophet, jurisprudence, and
16
17 theology, to Sufism, medicine, geography, history, astronomy, and the esoteric sciences, among
18
19 many others. The section on history was considerable and included hundreds of titles in Arabic,
20
21 Persian, and Turkish.⁹⁶ As Emine Fetvacı has shown for a slightly later period, the palace library
22
23 was a lending library of sorts for court officials and scholars affiliated with the dynasty.⁹⁷ In this
24
25 way, the Ottoman court—and Islamic princely courts more generally—became a major site for
26
27 scholarship as its wide-ranging collection frequently supplemented the private collections of
28
29 scholars and the public holdings of mosques and formal teaching institutions. Through patronage
30
31 of works, such as Bidlīsī's *Hasht bihiṣht* in an Ottoman context or *Tuhfat al-faqīr* in a Timurid
32
33 one, the princely court stood not only as a repository of learning, but also a promoter of its
34
35 advancement. Rather than a signal of intellectual decay, courtly patronage was also, therefore, a
36
37 great spur for scholarly activity, which, in the instances of these fifteenth-century considerations
38
39 on history, constituted something of the cutting edge of Islamic scholarship during this period.
40
41 Supported by courtly environments, yet informed by the religious scholarly circles that were
42
43 concurrently arguing for a reappraisal of knowledge, these five scholars insisted successfully
44
45 upon the place of history within the wider framework of knowledge.
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54

55 The effects of these historical discourses of the fifteenth century were widely registered
56
57 in the general views of scholars of later generations. Increasingly, in the wake of this fifteenth-
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1 century discourse, scholars came to accept history's place within the pantheon of the sciences.
2
3
4
5
6
7 The two most popular sixteenth-century Ottoman classifications of the sciences—
8
9 Taşköprüzade's *Miftāh al-sa'āda* and Nev'ī Efendi's *Netāyicü'l-'ulūm*—both included history in
10
11 their catalogs and adopted the formal approach to defining the subject as worked out in the
12
13 fifteenth-century discourses on the matter.⁹⁸ In the seventeenth century, the great Ottoman
14
15 polymath Katib Çelebi similarly accepted the fifteenth-century definitions and included them in
16
17 his massive bio-bibliographical work.⁹⁹ The widespread and lasting acceptance of the fifteenth-
18
19 century discourses and their incorporation into the main strands of Ottoman historical thought
20
21 therefore underscore the extent to which Ottoman developments were intimately bound to the
22
23 broader currents of Islamic intellectual history. In the example of Bidlisi's *Hasht bihisht*, we may
24
25 register clearly how basic ideas about the meaning of history—first developed in Iran, then
26
27 adopted in Egypt—became the standard approach in Ottoman lands in the sixteenth and
28
29 seventeenth centuries. To be sure, the Ottomans developed a distinct tradition of historical
30
31 writing, especially through the cultivation of a hyper-literate, high-register Turkish idiom, yet in
32
33 many fundamental respects Ottoman intellectual culture remained intimately tied to the historical
34
35 legacies and contemporary currents of a broader Islamic ecumene. In an academic age in which it
36
37 has become standard practice to define Ottoman early modernity primarily in relation to the
38
39 Mediterranean or contemporaneous European developments, we should remain mindful of just
40
41 how significant continuing ties with other geographies could be.
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

51 ¹ Transliteration of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish words conforms to guidelines established by the
52 *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. Specific dates are given in Common Era and
53 Hijri calendars. Date ranges are given only with reference to the Common Era.

54 ² Surprisingly, this attitude persists in the twenty-first century. For instance, Houari Touati
55 explicitly embraced this approach with respect to exploring the contours of travel as an
56 intellectual endeavor within Islam. He concludes that after the twelfth century “the construction
57 of Islam became definitively fixed in structures and representations that it retained up to the
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

period of colonial conquest. To the extent that there was nothing left to elaborate or construct, the voyage—as a literary practice—lost the efficacy with which it had been credited in the formative period, making it one of Islam’s major intellectual acts. It is understandable that, under these conditions, the founders of Islamic knowledge should have traveled more than their later counterparts. Having almost nothing left to invent, the latter progressively abandoned the voyage,” Houari Touati, *Islam and Travel in the Middle Ages* (Chicago, 2010), 265–266.

³ Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History* (Chichester, West Sussex, 2012), 17.

⁴ For example, with respect to Arabic literature, see Thomas Bauer, “In Search of ‘Post-Classical Literature’: A Review Article,” *Mamluk Studies Review* 11:2 (2007): 137–167; with respect to scholarship on *ḥadīth* (traditions of the prophet Muḥammad), see Garrett Davidson, “Carrying on the Tradition: An Intellectual and Social History of Post-Canonical Hadith Transmission” (Ph.D., University of Chicago, 2014); for a synthesis of literary and cultural history during this later period, see Muhsin J. al-Musawi, *The Medieval Islamic Republic of Letters : Arabic Knowledge Construction* (South Bend, Indiana, 2015). For a general consideration of Islam with particular focus on the period after the thirteenth century, see Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton, 2016).

⁵ Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (Cambridge, 2015), 1.

⁶ See especially Part I, El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History*.

⁷ Muhsin J. al-Musawi, *The Medieval Islamic Republic of Letters*, 1.

⁸ See for example the remarks of H.A.R. Gibb, “Ta’rīkh,” *Encyclopedia of Islam*; and Gustave E. von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam: a Study in Cultural Orientation*, 2d ed. (Chicago, 1953), 282–283.

⁹ Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 2d rev. ed. (Leiden, 1968), 8.

¹⁰ Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*, 7–8.

¹¹ Among many such studies, see in the context of Arab lands, Benjamin Lellouche, *Les Ottomans en Égypte: historien et conquérants au XVI^e siècle* (Paris, 2006); Dana Sajdi, *The Barber of Damascus: Nouveau Literacy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Levant* (Stanford, CA, 2013); for the Persian context, see Sholeh Quinn, *Historical Writing During the Reign of Shah ‘Abbas: Ideology, Imitation, and Legitimacy in Safavid Chronicles* (Salt Lake City, UT 2000); İlker Evrim Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran: Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Alī Yazdī and the Islamcate Republic of Letters* (Cambridge, forthcoming 2016); and in the Ottoman context, see Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)* (Princeton, N.J., 1986); Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Suleyman: Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World* (Cambridge, 2013).

¹² Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization (New York, 1994); Tarif Khalidi, Prasenjit Duara, and Viren Murthy, “Premodern Arabic/Islamic Historical Writing,” in *Companion to Global Historical Thought* (Malden, MA, 2014), 78–91.

¹³ Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 232.

¹⁴ For instance, in his assessment of the general disposition of the historian of this period, Khalidi writes, “As in earlier ages the historians were in their majority drawn from the ranks of religious scholars and the senior bureaucracy. Nor was there anything new in the self-importance felt by the ‘ulama’ or their elevated opinion of their role in history. What was new was the high profile that these classes had acquired or been given: as propagandists for the state, as regular recipients

of state largesse or beneficiaries of private endowments, as frequent employees on state business, as public preachers,” Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 200.

¹⁵ Chase F. Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (New York, 2003); Julie Scott Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century* (Edinburgh, 1999); a notable exception in this regard is C. P. (Charles Peter) Melville, ed., *Persian Historiography*, vol. 10, *A History of Persian Literature* (London; New York, 2012).

¹⁶ Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 333–336.

¹⁷ Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī, *Künhü’l-aḥbār* (Istanbul, 1277 [1860-1861]), 1:17–19.

¹⁸ On the development of an Arab nationalist historiography, see Alexis Wick, “Modern Historiography - Arab World,” in *Companion to Global Historical Thought*, ed. Prasenjit Duara and Viren Murthy (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 308–320; for the same phenomenon in Iran, see Farzin Vejdani, *Making History in Iran : Education, Nationalism, and Print Culture* (Stanford, California, 2014).

¹⁹ On the Islamicate social pattern, see Marshall G. S Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago, 1974), 2:9; on the Islamic world-system, see John Obert Voll, “Islam as a Community of Discourse and a World-System,” in *The SAGE Handbook of Islamic Studies*, ed. Akbar S. Ahmed and Tamara Sonn (London, 2010), 8; aspects of these concepts may be observed in Gagan Sood’s discussion of Islamicate Eurasia in the early modern era, Gagan Sood, “Circulation and Exchange in Islamicate Eurasia: A Regional Approach to the Early Modern World,” *Past & Present* 212:1 (2011): 113-162.

²⁰ On the movement of scholars and their works, see İlker Evrim Binbas, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran*.

²¹ Historians and scholars in earlier periods occasionally included discussions of history in their introductions. These frequently included enumerations of the benefits of history or discussions of its etymological origins. See for example, ‘Izz al-Dīn ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-tā’rikh*, 1st ed. (Beirut, 1997), 1:9–11; Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-wāfi bi’l-wafayāt*, (Leipzig, 1931), 1:1-46.

²² Such neglect was by no means universal. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī mentions the high regard with which one Egyptian historian, al-Maqrīzī, held Ibn Khaldūn’s *Muqaddima*, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsi’* (Beirut, 1966), 4:147. On the reception of Ibn Khaldūn in the fifteenth century, see Stephen Frederic Dale, *The Orange Trees of Marrakesh: Ibn Khaldun and the Science of Man* (Boston, 2015), 255-257.

²³ Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Alī Yazdī, *Zafarnāma*, ed. Sayyid Sa‘īd Mīr Muḥammad Ṣādiq and ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Navā’ī, vol. 2 (Tehran, 1387 [2008]), 1:23–24; For analysis of how this discussion fits in Yazdī’s larger historical project, see İlker Evrim Binbaş, “Sharaf Al-Din ‘Ali Yazdi (ca. 770s-858/ca. 1370s-1454): Prophecy, Politics, and Historiography in Late Medieval Islamic History” (Ph.D. Diss., University of Chicago, 2009, 236–242).

²⁴ Muḥammad ibn Khāvandshāh Mīr Khvānd, *Tārīkh-i rawḥat al-ṣafā* (Tehran, 1338 [1959-1960]), 1:9–13.

²⁵ Faḥr Allāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, *Tārīkh-i ‘ālam-ārā-yi amīnī*, ed. John E Woods, (London, 1992), 80–96; for an analysis of this section, see Charles Melville, “The Historian at Work,” in *Persian Historiography*, ed. Charles Melville, *A History of Persian Literature*, vol. X (London; New York, 2012), 64–67.

²⁶ Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, *al-Ṣamārīkh fī ‘ilm al-ta’rīḥ: Die Dattelrispen über die Wissenschaft der Chronologie ...*, ed. Christian Friedrich Seybold (Leiden, 1894).

²⁷ Neşri, *Cihânnümâ: 6. Kısım: Osmanlı Tarihi (687-890/1288-1485): Giriş, Metin, Kronoloji, Dizin, Tıpkıbasım*, ed. Necdet Öztürk (Istanbul, 2008), 4.

²⁸ The treatise exists as a unique manuscript: Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ījī, *Tuḥfat al-faqīr ilā ṣāhib al-sarīr*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi (Istanbul), Turhan Valide Sultan 231. Zeki Veli Togan first introduced this work to a scholarly audience in 1954, Zeki Veli Togan, “Ortaçağ İslâm Âleminde Tenkidî Tarih Telâkkîsi,” *İslâm Tetkikleri Enstitüsü Dergisi* 1 (1953): 43–49; Franz Rosenthal subsequently incorporated this treatise in the second edition of his work on Islamic historical writing, Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 201–244.

²⁹ Felix Tauer, working independently of Togan and Rosenthal, introduced Ḥāfiẓ Abrū’s discussion of history in an article published in 1963: Felix Tauer, “Hâfizi Abrū sur l’historiographie,” in *Mélanges d’orientalisme offerts à Henri Massé ... à l’occasion de son 75ème anniversaire*. (Tehran, 1963), 10–25.

³⁰ Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*, 245–262.

³¹ Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*, 263–529.

³² The earliest copy of *Hasht bihisht*’s introduction is contained in an autographed copy produced while Bidlīsī was on pilgrimage in Mecca in 1512/918, Idrīs Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi (Istanbul) Ayasofya 3541, 1b-14a. For details of the production history of the introduction, see Christopher Markiewicz, “The Crisis of Rule in Late Medieval Islam: A Study of Idrīs Bidlīsī (861-926/1457-1520) and Kingship at the Turn of the Sixteenth Century,” (Ph.D. Diss., University of Chicago, 2015), 183-185.

³³ Fārābī, *Iḥṣā’ al-‘ulūm*, ed. ‘Uthmān Amīn (Cairo, 1968); Ibn Sīna, *Tis ‘rasā’il fī al-ḥikmah wa-al-ṭabī‘iyat* (Cairo, 1908).

³⁴ Muḥsin Maḥdī, *Ibn Khaldūn’s Philosophy of History: A Study in the Philosophic Foundation of the Science of Culture* (London, 1957), 138–139; Stephen Frederic Dale, *The Orange Trees of Marrakesh*, 2.

³⁵ For a discussion of the development and harmonization of this bifurcated system, see Gerhard Endress and Abdou Filali-Ansary, *Organizing Knowledge: Encyclopaedic Activities in the Pre-Eighteenth Century Islamic World* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2006).

³⁶ ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Muḥammad al-Khwārazmī, *Mafātīḥ al-‘ulūm*, ed. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Muḥammad ‘Abd (Cairo, 1978), 5.

³⁷ Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar Rāzī, *Jāmi’ al-‘ulūm, ya, Ḥadāyiq al-anwār fī ḥaqāyiq al-asrār: ma’rūf biḥ Kitāb-i Sittīnī*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Tasbīḥī (Tehran, 1346), 3; Shīrāzī, *Durrat al-tāj li-ghurrat al-Dubāj*, ed. Muḥammad Mishkāt (Tehran, 1317), 1:71–72; 1332-1406 Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn*, ed. Étienne Quatremère (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān, 1970), 2:385.

³⁸ Abdurrahman Atçıl, “Greco-Islamic Philosophy and Islamic Jurisprudence in the Ottoman Empire (1300-1600): Aristotle’s Theory of Sciences in Works of Uṣūl al-Fiqh,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 41 (2013): 35. Such an understanding of science may not have stood up to the scrutiny of Aristotelian philosophers or post-Enlightenment thinkers, yet it fairly represents the greater rigor (in an Aristotelian mold) with which these scholars went about defining and demarcating the boundaries of particular bodies of knowledge. Insofar as such an exercise demanded that they identify the purpose of bodies of knowledge, these scholars were articulating sciences (clearly defined modes of knowledge production). For a thorough discussion of the merits of a broader understanding of science, see David Pingree, “Hellenophilia versus the History of Science,” *ISIS* 83 (1992): 554-563.

³⁹ ‘Aḍud al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad Ījī, *Kitāb al-Mawāqif fī ‘ilm al-kalām*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī ‘Aṭīyya and Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥanbūlī (Cairo, 1938); A.I. Sabra, "Science and Philosophy in Medieval Islamic Theology: The Evidence from the Fourteenth Century," *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabischen-Islamischen Wissenschaften* 9 (1994): 1-43.

⁴⁰ Atçıl, "Greco-Islamic Philosophy," 35.

⁴¹ For a discussion of the efflorescence of encyclopedism in fourteenth-century Mamluk lands, see Elias Muhanna, "Why Was the Fourteenth Century a Century of Arabic Encyclopaedism?" in *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, ed. Jason König and Grege Woolf (Cambridge; New York, 2013), 343-356.

⁴² Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī Qalqashandī, *Kitāb Ṣubḥ al-a‘shā*, 14 vols. (Cairo, 1331 [1913]); Muḥammad ibn Mūsā Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān al-kubrā*, ed. Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ, al-Ṭab‘ah 1, 4 vols. (Damascus, 2005); for a recent assessment of this encyclopedic impulse, see Maaïke van Berkel, "Opening up a World of Knowledge: Mamluk Encyclopaedias," in *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, ed. Jason König and Grege Woolf (Cambridge; New York, 2013), 356-375.

⁴³ On al-Nuwayrī’s encyclopedic project, see Elias Ibrahim Muhanna, "Encyclopaedism in the Mamluk Period: The Composition of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī’s (d. 1333) *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab*" (Ph.D. Diss., Harvard University, 2012).

⁴⁴ On al-Bisṭāmī’s role in this movement, see Cornell H. Fleischer, "Ancient Wisdom and New Science: Prophecies at the Ottoman Court in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in *Falnama: The Book of Omens*, ed. Massumeh Farhad and Serpil Bağcı (London, 2009), 232-243, 329-330; on the role of Ṣā‘in al-Dīn Turka, see Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "The Occult Challenge to Messianism and Philosophy in Early Timurid Iran: Ibn Turka’s Lettrism as a New Metaphysics," in *Unity in Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam* (Leiden; Boston, 2014), 247-276.

⁴⁵ Ījī, *Tuḥfat al-faqīr*, 67b-68a.

⁴⁶ John W. Limbert, *Shiraz in the Age of Hafez: The Glory of a Medieval Persian City* (Seattle, 2004), 80.

⁴⁷ Ījī, *Tuḥfat al-faqīr*, 66a.

⁴⁸ Limbert, *Shiraz in the Age of Hafez*, 82.

⁴⁹ Ījī, *Tuḥfat al-faqīr*, 79b.

⁵⁰ Ījī, *Tuḥfat al-faqīr*, 295a/b.

⁵¹ Ījī cites his teacher’s *Mawāqif* directly as a source for his historical work, Ījī, *Tuḥfat al-faqīr*, 70b.

⁵² Ījī, *Tuḥfat al-faqīr*, 12b.

⁵³ Ījī, *Tuḥfat al-faqīr*, 17a.

⁵⁴ Ījī, *Tuḥfat al-faqīr*, 12b-13a.

⁵⁵ Ījī, *Tuḥfat al-faqīr*, 13a-17a.

⁵⁶ Ījī, *Tuḥfat al-faqīr*, 16b.

⁵⁷ On the various works of Ḥāfiẓ Abrū that contain his discourse on history and their most important manuscript copies, see Felix Tauer, "Ḥāfiẓi Abrū sur l’historiographie;" on the relationship of these works to one another, see Felix Tauer *Cinq Opuscles de Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū concernant l’histoire de l’Iran au temps de Tamerlan* (Prague, 1959), xi. One of these works is *Jughrāfiya-yi Ḥāfiẓ Abrū*, the published edition of which I have used in this article.

⁵⁸ Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Jughrāfiyā-yi Ḥāfiẓ Abrū: mushtamil bar jughrāfiyā-yi tārikhī-i diyār-i ‘Arab, Maghrib, Andalus, Miṣr va Shām*, ed. Ṣādiq Sajjādī, 1st ed. (Tehran, 1996), 73.

- ⁵⁹ Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Jughrāfiyā*, 76.
- ⁶⁰ Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Jughrāfiyā*, 76.
- ⁶¹ Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Jughrāfiyā*, 76.
- ⁶² Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam*, ed. Leone Caetani (Leiden, 1909), 1–2; Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, 170–176.
- ⁶³ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn*, 60–62.
- ⁶⁴ Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy of History*, 288–289; Dale, *The Orange Trees of Marrakesh*, 2–4.
- ⁶⁵ On al-Kāfiyajī's biography, see especially the remarks of his contemporaries, al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi*, 7:259–261; Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-wu'ā fī ṭabaqāt al-lughawīyīn wa-al-nuhā*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Beirut, 1979), 1:117–119.
- ⁶⁶ Abdurrahman Atçıl, “The Formation of the Ottoman Learned Class and Legal Scholarship, 1300-1600” (Ph.D. Diss., University of Chicago, 2010), 218.
- ⁶⁷ Al-Sakhāwī praises al-Kāfiyajī for his mastery of a wide array of sciences, but adds that “he perhaps concocted a few sciences (*rubbamā ikhtara 'a ba'd al-'ulūm*),” al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi*, 7:261.
- ⁶⁸ Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Kāfiyajī, *al-Mukhtaṣar fī 'ilm al-ta'rīkh*, ed. Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn 'Izz al-Dīn, al-Ṭab'ah 1 (Beirut, 1990), 66; Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 252.
- ⁶⁹ Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *al-I'lān bi'l-tawbīkh li-man dhamma al-ta'rīkh*, ed. Franz Rosenthal (Baghdad, 1963), 6; Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 270.
- ⁷⁰ al-Kāfiyajī, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 65; Sakhāwī, *al-I'lān*, 7.
- ⁷¹ He writes: “knowledge of [history] is necessary as a community duty (*'alā sabīl al-kifāya*), like the necessity of the other sciences, for it establishes the chronology of the whole course of the universe in the best possible manner,” Kāfiyajī, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 66–67.
- ⁷² al-Sakhāwī, *al-I'lān*, 47, 263.
- ⁷³ For a detailed study of Bidlīsī's life and scholarly work, see Christopher Markiewicz, “The Crisis of Rule in Late Medieval Islam.”
- ⁷⁴ Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi (Istanbul), nr. 3209, 11a-14b.
- ⁷⁵ Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 11b.
- ⁷⁶ Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 11b.
- ⁷⁷ Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 13b.
- ⁷⁸ Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 11b.
- ⁷⁹ Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 12a.
- ⁸⁰ Markiewicz, “The Crisis of Rule in Late Medieval Islam,” 375–384.
- ⁸¹ Bidlīsī alludes to some of this criticism in a private letter of complaint to Sultan Bayezid II, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi (Istanbul), E. 5675. In his conclusion to *Hasht bihisht*, presented in the second version of the chronicle, Bidlīsī included further details about the specific criticisms, one of which included prolixity (*iṭnāb*), Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 633a.
- ⁸² Idrīs Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi (Istanbul), Emanet Hazinesi 1423, 19b.
- ⁸³ Ibn Khaldūn's account of this meeting has been translated into English, Ibn Khaldūn, *Ibn Khaldūn and Tamerlane: Their Historic Meeting in Damascus, 1401 A.D. (803 A.H.): A Study Based on Arabic Manuscripts of Ibn Khaldūn's "Autobiography"*, trans. Walter Joseph Fischel (Berkeley, 1952).
- ⁸⁴ Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 318–320.

- ⁸⁵ Al-Suyūṭī reports that al-Kāfiyājī's teachers included the prominent scholar of fifteenth-century Ottoman lands, Mollā Shams al-Dīn Fenārī (d.1431/834), who had studied under many of the late fourteenth-century scholarly luminaries of Iran, as well as two Persian émigrés, Burhān al-Dīn Ḥaydar Haravī and 'Abd al-Vājid ibn Muḥammad, al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-wu'ā*, 1:117.
- ⁸⁶ al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-wu'ā*, 1:117.
- ⁸⁷ al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi*, 7:261.
- ⁸⁸ 'Alī ibn Dāwūd al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā' al-ḥaṣr bi-abnā' al-'aṣr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1970), 433.
- ⁸⁹ al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā' al-ḥaṣr*, 441.
- ⁹⁰ al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi*, 7:261.
- ⁹¹ al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi*, 7:261.
- ⁹² The manuscript is preserved in the Ayasofya collection of the Süleymaniye Library. For mention of its preparation for Maḥmūd Pasha, see al-Kāfiyājī, *al-Mukhtaṣar al-mufīd fī 'ilm al-ta'rīkh*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi (Istanbul), Ayasofya 3403, 1a; for details of its copy date and evidence of its inclusion in the royal library, see the colophon and seal of Bāyezīd II on 59a. Aside from this codex, some portion of the grand vizier's personal library was incorporated into the collection of the *madrassa* that he endowed, Theoharis Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs: the Life and Times of the Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelović (1453-1474)* (Leiden, 2001), 307-310.
- ⁹³ al-Kāfiyājī, *al-Mukhtaṣar al-mufīd fī 'ilm al-ta'rīkh*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi (Istanbul), Ayasofya 3402.
- ⁹⁴ The royal library inventory of Bāyezīd II was compiled in 1503/909. The inventory mentions two copies of al-Kāfiyājī's work, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Budapest), Török F 59, 94a, 95a.
- ⁹⁵ Török F 59, 93b.
- ⁹⁶ On the historical sections of this inventory, see Miklós Maróth, "The Library of Sultan Bayazid II," in *Irano-Turkic Cultural Contacts in the 11th-17th Centuries*. (Piliscabas, Hungary, 2003), 111-132.
- ⁹⁷ Emine Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court* (Bloomington, IN, 2013), 29-30, 35.
- ⁹⁸ Aḥmad ibn Muṣṭafā Taşköprüzade, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda wa-miṣbāḥ al-siyāda fī mawḍū'āt al-'ulūm*, ed. Kāmil Bakrī and 'Abd al-Wahhāb Abū al-Nūr (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadītha, 1968), 1:252; Nev'i Efendi, *İlimlerin özü: Netayic el-Fünun*, ed. Ömer Tolgay (Istanbul, 1995), 85.
- ⁹⁹ Kātib Çelebi, *Kashf al-Zunūn* (Istanbul, 1941-1943), 1:271.

Title:

History as Science: The Fifteenth-Century Debate in Arabic and Persian

Author:

Christopher Markiewicz

Exeter College (Oxford)
Turl Street
Oxford OX1 3DP
United Kingdom

christopher.markiewicz@history.ox.ac.uk

+44 07508 031 209

Acknowledgements:

The initial research for this article was made possible by a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Award that permitted me to work in the manuscript libraries of Istanbul in 2012-2013. Additional funding for the research and writing of this article was made available from the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) / ERC Starting Grant 263557 IMPAcT. In this respect, I would like to thank Judith Pfeiffer, the principal investigator of the IMPAcT project, for the welcoming and stimulating environment that she fostered in Oxford while I wrote this article. Also, I would like to thank Cornell Fleischer, John Woods, and Kaya Şahin, all of whom offered insightful suggestions and advice during the research and writing stages of this work.