

## QĀḌĪ ṢĀʿĪD'S INTRODUCTION TO HIS ṬĀBAQĀT AL-UMAM

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This article provides a critical assessment of the first chapter of *Ṭabaqāt al-Umam* of Qāḍī Ṣāʿīd al-Andalusī who died at Toledo in 1070 CE. This book is a slender volume of great importance for the history of science in antiquity and early Middle Ages. The first chapter, simply called "Introduction", is described here in detail and its merits and demerits are considered.

**Keywords:** *Ṭabaqāt al-Umam* of Qāḍī Ṣāʿīd al-Andalusī; history of science in Antiquity and early Middle Ages; early Muslim scholars and geographers; history of nations.

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The *Ṭabaqāt al-Umam* of Qāḍī Ṣāʿīd al-Andalusī who died at Toledo in 1070 CE, is a slender volume of great importance for the history of science in antiquity and the early Middle Ages and it could be considered as the first global history of science. Its manuscripts are found throughout the world and it is available in several editions and reprints.<sup>1</sup> An English translation of this book has already been published as *Science in the Medieval World: Book of the Categories of Nations* by S. I. Salem and A. Kumar.<sup>2</sup> My translations of chapters on

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1. It was first edited by L. Cheikho (Beirut: Dār Ṭalāʾī, 1913); a new edition appeared in 1985, this time edited by Hayāt Bū ʿAlwān (Beirut: Dār Ṭalāʾīʿa, 1985); an Iranian edition was published by Gholam Rezā Jamshed Nazād Awwal (Tehran: 1376 AH).

2. Semann I. Salem and Alope Kumar (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991). This translation contains innumerable errors and its introduction is short and inadequate. It received many negative reviews from scholars; see my critical review in *Muslim*

India, Persia, Chaldea, Egypt, and Greece have already been published.<sup>3</sup> A critical assessment of the “Introduction” of the book is presented here.

There are three important statements at the beginning of the “Introduction”.<sup>4</sup> First, the nations of the world differ in three distinct traits: (i) character; (ii) physical appearance; and (iii) language. Second, the author states that before linguistic divisions appeared as distinguishing marks, nations of the world were divided into seven original nations: Persian, Chaldean, Greek, Egyptian, Turk, Indian and Chinese.<sup>5</sup> These seven nations share a common scientific and philosophical heritage. The Arabs are not included in this list of seven nations but the author adds them to those who contributed to the development and progress of science. Third, the people of the world are divided into two broad categories: the first category is consists of those who have contributed to the intellectual and scientific knowledge; the other which did not cultivate sciences and

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*World Book Review*, Vol. 15 (1995) No. 2, 46-50.

3. See: “Qāḍī Šāʿid al-Andalusī’s Account of Ancient Indian Science and Culture” in *Journal of Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. 45 (January, 1997) No. 1, 1-39; “A Chapter on Ancient Persia in an Eleventh Century Hispano-Arabic Work” in *Iran Society Silver Jubilee Souvenir Volume* (Calcutta: n.p., 1970), 213-30; “A Chapter on Ancient Chaldean Science in an Eleventh Century Hispano-Arabic Work” in *Islamic Quarterly*, Vol. XVI (Jan-June 1972) No. S1 &2, 12-35; “Qāḍī Šāʿid al-Andalusī’s Account of Science among the People of Egypt” in *Islamic Culture* Vol. LXXX (April 1997) No. 2, 51-75; “A Chapter on Roman (Byzantine) Sciences in an Eleventh Century Hispano-Arabic Work” in *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 22 (Spring 1983), 41-70; the chapter on Greece, “al-ʿilm fi’l Yūnān” is under preparation.
4. These statements are found in al-Masūḍī’s *Kitāb al-Tanbīh*, ed. by Do Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1894); reprnt. (Beirut: Khayat), 1965.
5. This classification of the ancient nations into seven was first mentioned by al-Masūḍī. Before him, generally speaking, they were classified into four: the Byzantines, the Arabs, the Persians, and the Indians. See al-Jāhīz, *al-Bayān*, 1, 384 and at-Tawḥīdī, *al-Imtāʿ*, I, 70. Taʿrīf Khālīdī believes that the seven nation theory is Greek. See his *Islāmic Historiography, The Histories of Masūḍī*, 90, note 2. See also Aḥmed M. H. Shboul, *Al-Masudi and His World* (London: Ithaca Press, 1979), 156, n. 300.

occupied themselves with material and manual tasks.

The first category consists of eight nations of the world: the Indians, the Persians, the Chaldeans, the Greeks, the Hebrews, the Romans, the Egyptians, and the Arabs. According to him, the second category of people, which did not contribute to science and knowledge, are more like beasts than human beings. They are the Chinese, the Gog and the Magog, the Turks, the Burtās, the Sarīr, the Khāzār, the Jilān the Mūgān, the Kashshak, the Alans (Scyths), the Slavs, the Bulgārs, the Russians, the Burgāns, and the various black peoples such as the Abyssinians, Nūbians, Zanj, Ghanāians. They did not acquire wisdom, nor did they study sciences.

### **Environmental Determinism**

Following Greek ideas, Qāḍī Ṣāʿid divides the inhabited world into seven latitudinal regions north of the equator. He also divides it longitudinally into eastern and western regions situated in the extreme north on the basis of the seven climatic zones corresponding to the seven signs of the Zodiac.<sup>6</sup> The author does not discuss astral or planetary influences, i.e. astrological, on the character and personality of human beings but writes about climatic and atmospheric influences on man which in modern terms would be called environmental determinism, a theory which has now been discarded.

Ibn Khaldūn (d. Ramaḍān 808/ March 1406) expresses similar ideas that the temperate zone contains the civilized people of the golden mean which are situated from the third through fifth climatic zones. This is due to the fact that the first and second zones are too hot and the sixth and seventh zones are too cold. The temperate zone countries are North Africa, Syria, Iraq, India, China, Spain, and France. Among them Syria and Iraq have the most moderate climate.<sup>7</sup>

Qāḍī Ṣāʿid stated that the nations inhabiting the extreme northern or southern regions of the world are not civilized. Ibn Khaldūn is of the view that the peace and prosperity of an

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6. See al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 22ff. The geography of the inhabited world given in this chapter is actually taken mainly from al-Masʿūdī.

7. Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, trans. by Franz Rosenthal, edited and abridged by N. J. Dawood (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 45-90.

established government are enjoyed only by nations living in the fourth climatic zone, i.e. the temperate regions of the world.<sup>8</sup> But Qāḍī Ṣāʿid also adds that all the illiterate and uncivilized nations who inhabit different parts of the world in the north or the south, the east or the west are sedentary, but not devoid of civil government nor could they escape those unwritten Divine Laws which placed them under a settled organization. He records that this remark does not apply to some Bedouin and savage tribes of Africa, such as those of Beja, Ghāna and Zanj.

#### **Habitat of the Seven Original Nations**

Qāḍī Ṣāʿid's use of the phrase "habitable world" (*maʿmūr*) is more or less correct. Geographer Hecataeus of Miletus (*ca.* 499-449 BC) and the Greek historian Herodotus (*ca.* 485-425 BC) had first used this phrase. Here Qāḍī Ṣāʿid states that the inhabited world extends south of the equator, contrary to the view of the ancient authors. He says that the habitat of the first people, the Persians, the fourth climatic zone, was known as the best zone in ancient and medieval times. The boundaries of the Persian Empire changed slightly due to the political and military upheavals.

The second group of people was that of the Chaldeans, Babylonians, Syrians, Assyrians, Nabateans, and others who inhabited modern Syria and Iraq, the land of the two rivers—the Tigris and Euphrates. They enjoyed the best climate in the fourth climatic zone,<sup>9</sup> close to the habitat of the first nation and they formed one people.

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8. The statements about environmental determinism made by al-Masʿūdī, Qāḍī Ṣāʿid and Ibn Khaldūn are similar. Qāḍī Ṣāʿid has copied from al-Masʿūdī, who might have had a copy of the Arabic translation of the *Geography* of Ptolemy. Ibn Khaldūn clearly mentions the *Geography* of Ptolemy and the *Kitāb al-Muṣhtāq* of al-Idrīsī as his sources. See Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddimah*, *op. cit.*, 94-176.

9. Borrowed from al-Masʿūdī, 35. The word 'clime' is not used in the English translation, the Greco-Latin form 'clima', pl. 'climata' is preferred by O. Neugebauer, *A History of Ancient Mathematical Astronomy* (Berlin, Heidelberg, and New York, n.p., 1975), 727-36. The standard monograph on the subject is that of E. Honigsmann, *Die Sieben Klimata* (Heidelberg, n.p., 1929). See A. Miquel, "Iklim" in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. III, 1076-78.

The habitat of the third people includes the Greeks, the Romans, the Franks, and others; it covers a very wide area extending to Russia. Qāḍī Ṣāʿid treats them as one nation, perhaps because all these territories once formed part of the Roman Empire.

The fourth people are the Coptic Christians living mostly in Egypt.<sup>10</sup> Qāḍī Ṣāʿid differentiates them from other nations inhabiting other parts of northern and western Africa perhaps because they belong to the second category. The fifth people are different Turkish tribes but their habitat is not defined.<sup>11</sup> The sixth people inhabited the Sind region. It is quite evident that Qāḍī Ṣāʿid had knowledge only of Sind which was under Muslim rule, and formed a separate region from the rest of India in the north-western part of Indian subcontinent. It is correct that this area spoke one language, Sindhi; this is confirmed by many Muslim geographers.<sup>12</sup>

He mentions the Chinese as the seventh original nation of antiquity living in a vast and powerful empire and it is correct that their language was one, but most probably several dialects were spoken in China.

### Languages

Qāḍī Ṣāʿid asserts that the unity and diversity of the peoples of the world are based mainly on language and he believed in the multiplicity of languages<sup>13</sup> and cultural traditions. He is particular in

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10. Al-Masʿūdī mentions that Libya is included in Egypt as the fourth nation, *Tanbih*, 83; Qāḍī Ṣāʿid has omitted it.
  11. Al-Masʿūdī mentions only five Turkish tribes: Kharlukh, Ghuzz, Kimāk, Tughuz-Oghuz, and Khāzar. See *Tanbih*, 85, whereas Qāḍī Ṣāʿid has recorded ten Turkish tribes who have contributed to the development of science. They are: Kharlukh, Kimāk, Toghuz-Oghuz, Khāzar, Sarīr, Gilān, Jurzān (Georgians), Tilasān, Kashak and Burtās. See *Ṭabaqāt* (Tehran ed.), 144.
  12. See al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-Dhahab*, edited by Charles Pellat, Vol. 2 (Beirut, 1960) Section 1169, 276. *Tanbih*, 83. Also see, G. Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate* (Cambridge, n.p., 1930 reprint), 331 where references to Arab geographers on Sind are given in note no. 1, and Ibn Hawqal, *Kitāb Ṣurat al-Ard* (Leiden: n.p., 1939), Pt II, 317-330 who gives a map of Sind.
  13. Like al-Masʿūdī, Qāḍī Ṣāʿid also expressed the view that language is the most important constituent of a people (nation). See *Tanbih*, 80-1. About the different languages spoken by the

recording the languages spoken by the seven original nations as well as branches and dialects of all major languages. For example, for the Chaldean-Babylonian region,<sup>14</sup> he states that Syriac was the main language but its branches Hebrew and Arabic were also spoken in this area. Similarly, the first people, the Persians, spoke mainly Persian or Fārsī, though some of them also spoke Pahlawī and Darī which were dialects of Persian. Throughout this “Introduction” the author gives the impression that in his view language is the most important constituent of a people. It is interesting to note that the author states that Syriac was the language of Adam and some other Prophets. Generally speaking, it is considered to be the language of Abraham.<sup>15</sup> Hebrew was the language of Isra’īl as Arabic was spoken by the Arabs. Pahlawī was spoken in five towns of Irān, Iṣfahān, Rayy, Hadmadān, Nehawand, and Azarbayjān. The seven peoples are divided on the basis of ethnic and linguistic differences.

### Religion

Qāḍī Ṣā’id records religion followed by each of the seven original peoples of antiquity but does not give the impression that he considered it an important constituent of a people. He uses a general nomenclature “Sabeans” for all who worshipped idols as symbols of the heavenly essence and celestial forms i.e. the seven planets. The author suggests that those who were not Jews, Christians, or Muslims, were all pagans. He does not mean particularly the Sabeans of Ḥarrān only but uses it in a general sense.<sup>16</sup> However, the Sabeans are called “People of the Book” in the Qur’ān.

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seven ancient nations Qāḍī Ṣā’id follows al-Mas’ūdī. Both state that one single Kingdom can only be established on the basis of one language spoken by the people.

14. This book contains a chapter entitled “*al-‘ilm fi’l-Kaldān*” (see *Ṭabaqāt*, Tehran ed. 163-66), dealing with the sciences of the Chaldeans but Qāḍī Ṣā’id does not mention the language spoken by these people. Hebrew and Arabic are not branches of Syriac. It is correct to state that Hebrew, Arabic, and Syriac all belong to the Semitic family of languages.
15. Qāḍī Ṣā’id states that Syriac was the language of Adam, a legendary statement not acceptable in modern times.
16. Sabeian is used by both al-Mas’ūdī and Qāḍī Ṣā’id as a general term for star worshippers of the ancient world. When they

### Occupation

Qāḍī Ṣāʿid divided people of the world on the basis of their contributions to sciences and learning. He relegated the Western peoples to the bottom of the second category which made no contribution to sciences.<sup>17</sup> Their habitat is deep in the north between the end of the seven climatic zones and the margin of the habitable world, he reasoned, this climatic situation has made their bodies bulky, their color pale and their hair long. They are unintelligent, ignorant, and stupid due to the extreme distance of the sun from their heads resulting in cold climate and thick atmosphere; their temperaments have become chilly and their humors rude. They are ranked with Berbers, Sudanese, Slavs, Bulgās, Chinese and Turks who cultivated no sciences.

### Sources of Qāḍī's Ṣāʿid's Views

Qāḍī Ṣāʿid is not very particular in mentioning the sources of his information and in this "Introduction" he has not mentioned even one of them. However, the publication of a critical edition of the *Kitāb at-Tanbih wa'l-Ishrāf* by ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956) has made it easy to identify an important source of Qāḍī Ṣāʿid's views. The statement that the people of the world are distinguished and differentiated by three traits, (character, physique and language) has been taken from al-Masʿūdī's book.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the division of humanity into seven nations recorded by Qāḍī Ṣāʿid has been borrowed from the same book, as they appear in the same order in both texts.<sup>19</sup> The idea that each of these seven nations was formed on the basis of one language is that of al-Masʿūdī's.

Al-Masʿūdī's younger contemporary, Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī (ca. 356/961) also divides the ancient world into seven nation groups.<sup>20</sup>

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mean the Sabeans of Ḥarrān, they specifically mention this. The Sabeans are mentioned in the Qurʾān along with Jews and Christians, see *al-Baraqah*: 62 and *al-Ḥajj*: 17.

17. See *Ṭabaqāt*, Tehran ed., 146-47. Quoted by P. K. Hitti, *Islam and the West* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1962), 166. On 165 of this book, Hitti writes about al-Masʿūdī's view of the West quoting from his *Murūj adh-ṣḥāb*.

18. *Tanbih*, 77.

19. *Tanbih*, 77-78.

20. See his *Tārīkh Sanī Mulūk al-Ard wal-Anbiyāʾ*, ed. by I. M. E. Gottwald (Leipzig, n.p., 1844).

Originally, this idea of seven primordial nations is Greek and it might be the source of both Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī and al-Masʿūdī. Generally speaking, four original nations (the Arabs, the Byzantines, the Persians and the Indians) are often mentioned by many Arab authors.<sup>21</sup> It appears that no Arabic geographical work of the genre of *Kitāb al-Masālik w'al-Mamālik* was available to Qāḍī Ṣāʿid. Therefore, his geographical information and his comments on environmental determination are derived from Ptolemy's work.<sup>22</sup>

Like al-Masʿūdī, Qāḍī Ṣāʿid was not interested in political chronology<sup>23</sup> but each of them was interested in cultural history. Therefore, insofar as the cultural history of the ancient nations are concerned, one of Qāḍī Ṣāʿid most important sources of information was the works of al-Masʿūdī available to him in al-Andalus.<sup>24</sup> There cannot be any doubt that this book was none other than his *Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa'l-Ishrāf*.

A comparative study of the two texts, the *Tanbīh* and the *Ṭabaqāt*, reveals that the extensive borrowing by Qāḍī Ṣāʿid from al-Masʿūdī is not total but is selective and much condensed. Great detail of the influence of the geographical and physical conditions of different nations appears in al-Maʿsūdī, but is very short and concise in Qāḍī. Information about languages spoken by the earlier nations is quite short in the *Ṭabaqāt* but al-Maʿsūdī describes these languages and discusses their linguistic characteristics in detail. Similar is the case

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21. Taʿrīf Khalidī states that this classification is Greek in origin and refers to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *The Roman Antiquities* trans. by Ernest Cary (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), Book I, 2-3.

22. There is evidence in the *Ṭabaqāt* to prove that an Arabic translation of this book of Ptolemy was available to Qāḍī Ṣāʿid. In the chapter "Sciences in Greece" he has mentioned Ptolemy as one of its scientists and mentions his two books *Almajest* and *Geography*. *Ṭabaqāt*, 180-81. In fact, Qāḍī Ṣāʿid has mentioned Ptolemy eight times in the *Ṭabaqāt*.

23. In his *Tanbīh*, al-Masʿūdī gives a detailed account of the political history of the seven ancient nations but Qāḍī Ṣāʿid completely ignores it.

24. Twenty-four books which Qāḍī Ṣāʿid has mentioned in the *Ṭabaqāt*, which he is supposed to have used, are listed by the editor of the Tehran edition of the *Ṭabaqāt*, see his *Muqaddimah*, 92-5 and its Arabic version 342-44.

with the definition and characteristics of the seven climatic zones in these two works. But the names of the Turkish tribes given by al-Mas'ūdī and Qāḍī Ṣā'id differ widely.

The *Tanbīh* of al-Mas'ūdī is an important source of this "Introduction" but other sources are difficult to determine with any accuracy. In his chapter on "Sciences Among the Greeks", Qāḍī Ṣā'id mentions al-Mas'ūdī but not any book of his as his source for the explanation of the word Aristotle and the meaning of his father's name Nichomachus. In the same chapter he again refers to al-Mas'ūdī for the life and times of Galen. But he does not mention al-Mas'ūdī in this "Introduction" at all, although he extensively borrowed from the *Tanbīh*.<sup>25</sup> This is a very serious omission. Perhaps, like the habit of other Arab writers of Medieval times, he did not consider it necessary to acknowledge his indebtedness to al-Mas'ūdī or his book and assumed that readers already know al-Mas'ūdī's work and can easily trace the source back to him.

Qāḍī Ṣā'id's ideas about the division of the nations of the world into two categories, one contributing to the development of human knowledge and the other comprising of those who did not, seems to be his own. It is difficult to find a parallel idea in the whole gamut of Arabic works currently available. He has also given a number of Arabic proverbs at the end of his "Introduction"; the sources of these proverbs can be easily identified.<sup>26</sup>

The author's description of the artistic and delicate craftsmanship and manual skills of the Chinese and their expertise

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25. See the *Ṭabaqāt*, Tehran edition cited 172 and 178. These two statements are actually copied from the *Tanbīh*. See edition of the *Tanbīh* cited above, 116 and 131.

26. These proverbs are to be found in the following: Aḥmad al-Maydānī, *Majma' al-Amthāl* (Beirut: Bulaq, 1284 AH); Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Dhur'āt al-Fākhirā fi Amthāl as-Sā'ira*, 2 vols. (Cairo, n.p., 1971-72); Ibn 'Avd Rabgīhī, *al-Iqd al-Farīd*, 7 vols. ed by Aḥmed Amīn (Cairo, 1940-49). Volume VII contains Indices. Abū Ḥilāl al-'askarī, *Jamhārt al-Amthāl*, 2 vols. (Cairo, n.p., 1284/1964); Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Majstaqsā fi Amthāl al-'Arab*, 2 vols. (Hyderabad, n.p., 1281/1962); Abū 'Ubayd al-Bakkar, *Faṣl al-Maqāl fi Sharḥ Kitāb al-amthāl*, ed. by Iḥsān 'Abbās (Beirut, n.p., 1291/ 1971). See also G. W. Fraytag, *Arabum Proverbis*, vols. 1-3 (Bonn, n.p., 1838-43).

in the technique of painting have been obtained from the *Murūj*<sup>27</sup> of al-Mas‘ūdī and not from his *Tanbīh*. The *Murūj* is a voluminous book and the question may be asked whether it was available to Qāḍī Ṣā‘id at Toledo or if he had borrowed this statement from some other source which copied from the *Murūj* of al-Mas‘ūdī. Similarly, it cannot be stated for certain whether his use of the *Tanbīh* of al-Mas‘ūdī is direct or indirect.

In selecting the seven nations, he does not follow the Biblical genealogy of nations nor does he follow the Qur’ān which states that *Mankind was one single nation,*<sup>28</sup> and *O ye people, We have created you from a male and a female, and have made you into tribes and nations, so that you might come to know one another. Verily, the noblest amongst you in the sight of God is the one who is most deeply conscious of Him. Behold, God is all-knowing, all aware.*<sup>29</sup>

### Merits

In this “Introduction” the author has laid stress on the rational faculties of man which is basically an Aristotelian idea. He asserts that it is due to reason that man is superior to all animals. He suggests explicitly that man should always make use of his rational faculty which is the greatest gift of God to man. If he does not use his reason and does not take interest in intellectual pursuit, he becomes like an animal. But insofar as physical strength is concerned, and even in common sense, many animals are superior to man. Therefore, it is only human reason which makes him superior to all creatures, provided he makes use of this reason for the development and progress of knowledge.<sup>30</sup>

The division of the different nations into two categories on account of their different occupations seems to be an original idea. This classification furnishes interesting information regarding the

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27. T‘arīf Khalidī, 107 and 108 where he refers to the *Murūj of al-Mas‘ūdī*, also see: 319-20, 323 and 353.

28. *al-Baqarah*: 213, repeated again in *Yūnus*: 19.

29. *al-Hujurat*: 13.

30. In the concluding paragraph, it is stated that God has created human beings with certain aims and objects which only they can understand and achieve with the help of reason, which is His best gift to man. This teaches them to abstain from the brutalities of animals and develops in them the quality of leadership. Thus, they are guiding, illuminating lamps of knowledge in the abject darkness of ignorance.

predominant occupations of the different nations of the world in antiquity. Qāḍī Ṣāʿid correctly states that the Turks have a reputation of being hardy fighters, expert in horsemanship and wars. The author asserts that the Chinese did not contribute to the development of science but they are experts in manual arts and crafts especially in painting.

A modern historian of science considers this statement about the nations who contributed to the development of science as correct, if it is supposed that by the Romans Qāḍī Ṣāʿid means the Byzantines and by the Egyptians, the Alexandrian School.<sup>31</sup> This statement about the original nations is repeated by Ibn al-ʿIbrī<sup>32</sup> and Ibn al-Qifṭī<sup>33</sup> and others; the latter mentions the eight nations who have contributed to the development of science.

The author ends his “Introduction” by stating that the rational qualities of the human soul are important while physical strength is not.<sup>34</sup> Beasts surpass human beings in their ways of performing many functions. He illustrates this with many Arabic proverbs relating to the qualities of animals in which they prove to be superior to human beings in beastly power. If the nations belonging to the first category would not have spread the light of knowledge and reason in this world then it would have been a dark and desolate place, not suitable for human habitation.

### Demerits

This chapter’s demerits have to be critically discussed. The theory of environmental determinism was discussed by leading modern

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31. See Otto Neugebauer, “Transmission of Planetary Theories in Ancient and Medieval Astronomy” in *Scripts Mathematica*, Vol. 12 (1956), 105-92.

32. See his *Mukhtaṣar Taʾrīkh al-Duwal*, ed. E. Pocock (Oxford, 1663, Suppl. 1672; ed. A. Ṣāliḥānī, Beirut, n.p., 1890), 158-9, 236-7.

33. See his *Taʾrīkh al-Ḥukamāʾ*, ed. by J. Lippert (Leipzig, n.p., 1903), 27; he also borrows this division from Qāḍī Ṣāʿid and mentions the eight nations that have contributed to the development of sciences.

34. I believe that Qāḍī Ṣāʿid was influenced here by the following and other verses of the Qurʾān: *Verily, the vilest of all creatures, in the sight of God are those deaf and dumb ones who do not use their reason.* *al-Anfāl*: 22.

geographers such as McKinder of Britain, Ellsworth Huntington of the United States, and Griffith Taylor of Australia, but now has been totally discarded. Qāḍī Ṣāʿid has confounded the correlation between racial and ethnic characteristics and internal features; also he claims that the inhabited world extends south of the equator, which is contrary to the statement of all ancient authors. Further, he does not territorially define North, South, East and West, and merely uses generalizations.

One may not agree with the classification of nations on the basis of their difference about their occupations as has been done in this “Introduction” as this is scientifically incorrect, because each nation has a mixture of occupational groups such as scientists, agriculturists, weavers, lay workers, and ordinary laborers who are manual workers. However, this classification furnishes interesting information regarding the predominant occupations of the different nations of the world in Antiquity. It is correct to state that the Turks had a reputation of being hardy and brave fighters<sup>35</sup> as has been attested by al-Jāḥiẓ and other early Arab writers.<sup>36</sup>

It is not correct that the Chinese did not contribute to the development of science and technology. They had invented paper and glass which were taken to Turkey from China and from there to Europe.<sup>37</sup> However, contrary to the popular view that there was little or no science in early China, the Chinese were known as experts in calligraphy and painting at the time of Qāḍī Ṣāʿid. There were also brilliant engineers among them who contributed to the development of new techniques.

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35. “The Turk would rather obtain a maintenance by violent means than a Kingdom freely; he cannot enjoy his food at all unless he has got it by hunting or by plunder.” in Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī Manāqib at-Turk* in *Tria opuscula*, ed. by G. Van Vloten (Leiden, 1903), 37. See also the chapter on the Turks in Ṭāḥir Marvazi in *China, the Turks and India*, ed. by V. Minois (London, n.p., 1942).

36. According to Al-Jāḥiẓ, there are only four civilized nations: the Arabs, the Persian, the Indians and the Byzantines. See his *Kitāb al-Bayān waʾl tibyān*, Vol. 1 (Cairo, 1352), 128. This view was accepted and followed by the Arab geographers al-Iṣakhri (ca. 951 AD) and Ibn al-Ḥawqal (fl.977 AD).

37. See Joseph Needham’s books *Science and Civilization in China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1954—), several volumes.

Further, it can be pointed out that Qāḍī Ṣāʿid had no sense of chronology or sequence of time while writing the chapter. Moreover, ethnically differentiated people have been lumped together, for example, the Copts and the Berbers are not ethnically the same people. He writes about the Copts but he should have mentioned the Egypt of Pharaohs which represented a remarkable ancient civilization. Writing about those nations who have contributed to the development of science and philosophy, he attributes it to the favor God has especially bestowed on them. His statements that Allah bestows His favor generously on whomsoever He chooses and withholds His grace away from whomsoever He chooses are actually derived from the verses of the Qurʾān, but are not applicable to such classifications.

### **Conclusion**

The “Introduction” has to be appreciated “for its rich and vast range of information on a variety of subjects, for the insight it offers and for its remarkable observations on human behavior and society.”<sup>38</sup> It contains historical and geographical facts and personal opinions and observations of the author, some of which are difficult to agree with now. He depended heavily on al-Masʿūdī who drew not only on Islamic sources and his own observations and research, but also on Greco-Roman sources. For example, the idea of the influence of the geographical and physical factors on human character and behavior seems to be original and valuable and was accepted and appreciated at the time of the writing of this “Introduction” in the eleventh century but in modern times it has been completely discarded. If some statements in the “Introduction” were to be rationally evaluated or checked in the light of empirical evidence available now, they would be proven incorrect and unacceptable.

Regarding the similarities of the ideas of Qāḍī Ṣāʿid and Ibn Khaldūn about the influence of geographical and physical factors of a country on the physique and character of its people, it has already been stated that both have used identical Greek sources of information. But there may be good reasons to believe that Ibn

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38. Quoted from a letter written by Professor A. R. Momin, Head Department of Sociology, Bombay University in India, dated 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2000.

Khaldūn might have been influenced<sup>39</sup> by this book because it was widely diffused in al-Andalus from where Ibn Khaldūn hailed.

It is a fact that the publication of the *Kitāb at-Tanbīh* of al-Mas'ūdī, which is the main source of this chapter, has greatly reduced its value and importance. The most serious omission is that Qāḍī Ṣā'īd has not acknowledged this indebtedness as already stated above. However, the fact remains that extensive borrowing from a former author by a later one, even without acknowledgement, was quite common among the Medieval Arab Muslim authors. Qāḍī Ṣā'īd has mentioned al-Mas'ūdī's full name as Abū'l Ḥasan 'Alī bin al-Ḥusain al-Mas'ūdī twice in the chapter of "Sciences among the Greeks" but has not mentioned the *Tanbīh*, nor any actual title of any book of al-Mas'ūdī. But this chapter cannot be discarded completely as it contains some original and useful information in a new context not found in al-Mas'ūdī or elsewhere. Moreover, it represents the humanistic weltanschauung of a judge of Toledo about his assessment of sciences in antiquity in the eleventh century, like that of al-Mas'ūdī,<sup>40</sup> the humanist, who was broadly interested in the culture of non-Muslims and their history and civilization.

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39. The influence of Ibn Khaldūn on Montesquieu and other European scholars and social scientists is frequently discussed but authors and books that might have influenced and guided him to form his revolutionary ideas about human society, *'aṣabīyah* (tribal solidarity), and culture of science are seldom discussed.
40. Al-Mas'ūdī was an early Muslim humanist. See Aḥmed M. H. Shboūl, *al-Mas'ūdī and his World, A Muslim Humanist and his Interest in Non-Muslims* (London, n.p., 1979), 366. Ta'rif Khālidī, op cit. 180.