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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION IN SUBH AL-ASHA AND OTHER SOURCES OF THE ERA

Abstract. A critical written source in the context of geographical and historical data is the encyclopedias of researchers who lived during the time of the Arab Caliphate, which existed before the capture of the Mamluk Sultanate by the Ottoman Empire in 1517. During the existence of the Arab Caliphate as the first Muslim state, outstanding researchers and scientists such as Al-Qalkashandi, Ibn Khordadbeg and Ibn Khaldun worked. The current article aims to conduct a comparative analysis of geographical information in the encyclopedias «The Dawn for the Blind in the Art of Writing» (Al-Qalkashandi), «The Book of Roads and Kingdoms» (Ibn Khordadbeg) and «Book of Lessons, Record of Beginnings and Events in the History of the Arabs and the Berbers and Their Powerful Contemporaries» (Ibn Khaldun). Data monitoring, comparison, historical-critical approach, and specification were chosen as the research methods. As a DOI result of the comparative analysis, it was found that the authors almost do not contradict each other, supplementing the data given in their encyclopedias. This indicates that they often used the same sources, which is a consequence of the compiler nature of encyclopedias. The analysis results also revealed that Al-Qalqashandi and Ibn Khaldun used historical geography methods more actively than Ibn Khordadbeg. This indicates that the foundations of historical geography as a science in the Arab world were laid only in the fourteenth century. The prospect of further research is to compare the geographical information given in the works of Al-Qalqashandi, Ibn Khordadbeg and Ibn

Khaldun and their colleagues from Europe of that time to identify the influence of the environment and place of residence of the researchers on the peculiarities of their worldview, which were reflected in their works.

Keywords: Al-Qalkashandi, Subh al-A‘sha, arab medieval travelers, encyclopedia, Arab researchers, historical geography, Mamluk Sultanate, sociology, treatise.

Introduction

History and geography, as academic disciplines, have always been closely interconnected, as past events occurred in specific locations and regions (Rajovic & Bulatovic, 2020). This connection led to establishing historical geography, which examines the temporal changes in geographical phenomena linked to human activity (Taxel, 2023). Fortunately, historical geography is increasingly integrated into school and university curricula (Keighren et al., 2017). One of the primary research methods in historical geography is analysing information contained within specific sources from the studied eras. Such analysis enables the comparison of descriptions of regions and cities provided by scholars of earlier periods, identifying potential inaccuracies, errors, or even deliberate attempts by some authors to present exaggerated or false data. For instance, this issue is particularly relevant to encyclopaedias due to their compilatory nature, as demonstrated by Al-Qalqashandi in *Subh al-A‘sha*, where he describes the Roman people as “the most cowardly among those created by Almighty Allah” (Safuan, 2020). However, while Al-Qalqashandi included these claims based on the statements of Ibn Khordadbeh, which points to Al-Qalqashandi’s conscientiousness as a scholar referencing an unverified source, the credibility of Ibn Khordadbeh in this context becomes questionable.

To conduct a comparative analysis of geographical information across different sources from the era of the Arab Caliphate, we selected three works by prominent encyclopaedists: *Subh al-A‘sha* by Al-Qalqashandi, *Kitab al-Masalik wa’l-Mamalik* by Ibn Khordadbeh, and *Kitab al-Ibar* by Ibn Khaldun. This selection allowed us to explore the features of the development of Arab historical geography—from the first geographical work written in Arabic to the last significant encyclopaedia of the Mamluk Sultanate era. Particularly intriguing is the evolution of methods in Arab historical geography for describing cities and regions from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries, as reflected in all three works through their analysis.

Among the three works chosen for our analysis of geographical information, only Ibn Khordadbeh’s *Kitab al-Masalik wa’l-Mamalik*, written in the ninth century, can be considered exclusively geographical. This treatise contains the first references to Slavs in the Arab world. A distinctive feature of Ibn Khordadbeh’s work is its reliance on the accounts of contemporaries and Baghdad’s archives, as the scholar himself did not travel. Similarly, Al-Qalqashandi did not travel either, as he spent much of his life working as a bureaucrat, which precluded him from personally verifying the data presented in *Subh al-A‘sha*. This sharply contrasts with Ibn Khaldun, who was renowned as an avid traveller of his time. These differing circumstances underline the relevance of selecting these authors’ works, as their approaches to compiling encyclopaedias and materials varied, making their comparative analysis particularly compelling in the context of the author’s use of historical geography methods and its evolution in the Arab Caliphate. Moreover, the significance of studying Arab historical geography is justified by its distinctiveness from medieval traditions and its proximity to ancient traditions (Silverstein, 2009).

Research materials and methods

At the preparatory stage, the monitoring method was employed. Its objective was to collect, systematise, and analyse data on geographical information contained in *The Dawn...*, *The Book of Exemplary Lessons...*, and *The Book of Routes and Realms*. At the initial research stage, we conducted a critical analysis of all three encyclopaedias, enabling us to describe their organisation and structure. The critical analysis also facilitated the identification of the purpose behind the

composition of each of the examined books. During the main stage of the research, we compared geographical information and methods of historical geography utilised by Al-Qalqashandi, Ibn Khordadbeh, and Ibn Khaldun in their works. This allowed us to discern the specific features of the evolution of Arab historical geography. At the evaluative stage, the method of analysis and synthesis was applied. It helped identify the main stages and factors in the development of the elements of the research object, which formed the foundation for further evaluation of Al-Qalqashandi's encyclopaedia as a historical and geographical source in comparison to *The Book of Exemplary Lessons...* and *The Book of Routes and Realms*. In the final stage, the method of scientific abstraction was employed to formulate the conclusion. As this method ensures focus on the most significant aspects of the phenomenon under study, we constructed a representation of *The Dawn...* solely as a source of geographical information.

Thus, the step-by-step approach to the research enabled the development of a transparent algorithm for applying scientific cognition methods, making the current work more accessible to the average reader and promoting historical geography among specialists and the broader public. Another vital advantage of the algorithm for applying scientific cognition methods developed in this study is the saving of time without diminishing the work's scientific value.

Firstly, defining the criteria used to select the literature for the review is necessary. In our opinion, the most important criteria for selection include relevance, accessibility for researchers and readers, and scientific value. The requirement for relevance encompasses the timeliness of the source in terms of when it was written and its content, indicating its applicability for analysis without the need for additional reservations. Exceptions among the literature reviewed include translations of the original works or their fragments into Russian and English, as it is impossible to analyse geographical information without referencing primary sources. The requirement for accessibility ensures that the reviewed literature is available to researchers and readers, either in whole or in part, enabling them to verify the results of our research and expand upon it, if desired, in their scientific works. As a criterion for literature selection, scientific value implies that all the analysed sources adhere to a scientific writing style and utilise scientific research methods. This establishes their reliability and allows us to consider the results credible.

To begin with, it is worth noting that the first work providing excerpts from Al-Qalqashandi's *The Subh al-A'sha* in Russian is Semenova's (1974) book *From the History of Fatimid Egypt*. This book describes the construction of a canal in Sharqiya, the House of Knowledge in Cairo, and the size of the naval and land forces of the Fatimid dynasty. A complete Russian translation of Al-Qalqashandi's *The Subh al-A'sha* does not exist to date. It is often referenced through scattered excerpts in the works of Russian and Kazakh scholars in the context of studying the geography and history of territories that were part of the Golden Horde (Grigoryev & Frolova, 2001; Pochekayev, 2020; Sayfetdinova, 2024; Zhuzbayeva & Ilyasova, 2024). Another research direction where Kazakh scholars refer to the material in Al-Qalqashandi's *The Subh al-A'sha* is the study of relationships between the Ottomans and Arabs, both at a societal level and at the level of state rulers (Namatov & Rasulova, 2023; Tayman & Aubakirova, 2022). The only accessible source containing geographical information from *The Subh al-A'sha* is the book by Tarek and Heba (2017). Like Al-Qalqashandi's original work, it is divided into four sections, describing the world's geography, the characteristics of the Arab Caliphate and its most prominent rulers, and the lands of Egypt and neighbouring states.

Unlike Al-Qalqashandi's *The Subh al-A'sha*, Ibn Khordadbeh's geographical treatise *The Book of Roads and Kingdoms* has been fully translated into Russian (Khordadbeh, 1986). This indicates its incredible popularity among Soviet scholars, likely due to its relative accessibility compared to *The Subh al-A'sha*. Typically, modern researchers use Ibn Khordadbeh's treatise to describe significant trade routes and distant regions (Japan, China, and Korea). An example of such work is Asadov's (2020) article, which describes the route from Khorezm to Western Europe based on data from *The Book of Roads and Kingdoms*. Additionally, *The Book of Roads and Kingdoms*

has allowed researchers to identify the significant role of Jewish merchants in trade between the East and West (Golofast, 2020). Another essential function of Ibn Khordadbeh's *The Book of Roads and Kingdoms* is the localisation of cities, demonstrated in Anarbayev's (2019) article, which uses the treatise to determine the locations of capital cities in the Fergana Valley. Similarly, Ibn Khordadbeh's treatise enables the localisation of battles, such as the Katwan battle of 1141, which has been localised along the Dargom canal (Tursunbekov & Tukembaev, 2021).

The first English-language translation of part of Ibn Khaldun's treatise *The Book of Instruction and Collection of Reports on the Days of Arabs, Persians, Berbers, and Their Contemporaries Who Possessed Great Power* was completed by Rosenthal in 1958, which included the translation of the *Muqaddimah* (Introduction). The *Muqaddimah* was translated into Russian by Batsiyeva in 1965, enabling Russian-speaking readers to familiarise themselves with at least part of *The Book of Instruction*.... A complete translation of all seven parts comprising *The Book of Instruction*... does not yet exist in Russian or English, complicating the analysis of its information. *The Book of Instruction*... is frequently used in studying the history and geography of the Maghreb, as Ibn Khaldun possessed more significant knowledge of this region than of the East (Alekseyev, 2019). Another intriguing topic addressed by Ibn Khaldun in *The Book of Instruction*... is the connection between the mentality of peoples and the climate of geographical regions (Rasim & Burhan, 2023). According to Ibn Khaldun's climate theory, climate directly influences the formation of nations and societies. Furthermore, Ibn Khaldun introduced his term, which partially corresponds to the ancient concept of the *oecumene* (the inhabited part of the world) and the process of human settlement of lands (Kaumova, 2021). Ibn Khaldun is among the earliest representatives of scholar-geographers in sociology, defining his area of interest as studying the relationship between geography and social processes (Bosov et al., 2021).

From the selected works of contemporary Arab and English-speaking researchers, the following are of interest in the context of historical geography: Martín's (2024) article, which analyses the description of the kingdoms of Castile, Portugal, Barcelona, and Navarre in *The Dawn*... by Al-Qalqashandi; Pramono's (2022) study, which, referencing Al-Qalqashandi, claims that Damascus was a well-known centre for iron and steel production as early as the twelfth century; Ali's (2024) work, which examines the rule of the Hasanwayhid Barzikani dynasty based on Al-Qalqashandi's division of Jibal; Mohammed's (2020) article, which compares the level of development of cities in the Khorasan region, according to their descriptions in *The Dawn*...; Hamad's (2020) scholarly work, which analyses the influence of the geographical location of the cities of Nishapur, Marv, and Bamyan on economic interactions between them; Hameed and Al Ali's (2024) article, which describes the geographical features and rulers of the Ghor province; the joint work of Husson and Al-Aarajee (2024), which provides brief descriptions of bridges, hospitals, and baths constructed in Cairo and mentioned in *The Dawn*...; and Mohammed's (2023) article, which compares facts from *The Dawn*... with data from its sources, identifying inaccuracies made by Al-Qalqashandi during the compilation of the encyclopaedia.

The analysis of the roles of Al-Qalqashandi, Ibn Khordadbeh, and Ibn Khaldun and their works in modern historical literature highlights their importance as geographers or historians and as sociologists, economists, and true philosophers. Since none of the reviewed studies identified a comparative analysis of geographical information contained in the encyclopaedias of other authors from the era of the Arab Caliphate, such a comparative analysis has been undertaken in the current scholarly work. Among its primary objectives, we have identified the following: to provide the historical background and conditions in which *The Dawn*..., *The Book of Instruction*..., and *The Book of Roads and Kingdoms* were written; to select the most significant geographical data contained in all three encyclopaedias; to identify the methods of historical geography employed by each author in gathering information and compiling the encyclopaedia; and to evaluate *The Dawn*... as a historical-geographical source in comparison with *The Book of Instruction*... and *The Book of Roads and Kingdoms*.

Discussion

Although Al-Qalqashandi primarily compiled data from other sources, his achievement lies in creating a clear structure for his work and making his additions and clarifications, with which he attempts to summarise each point of *Zahret al-Athar*. One of the contemporary researchers who described Fustat and Cairo during the Fatimid period in the context of their urban development is Darwish (2023). He studied the architectural heritage of the Fatimid Palace in Cairo and the residential architecture of Fustat's inhabitants. His research confirms the scale of Fustat and its constant expansion. Additionally, archaeologists have uncovered evidence of partial destruction of one of the Fatimid palaces due to fire, corroborating the data in Al-Qalqashandi's *Zahret al-Athar*.

Another study, which presents conclusions similar to those of Al-Qalqashandi himself, focuses on the development of Fustat during the reigns of the Tulunid, Ikhshidid, and Fatimid dynasties (Vakilitanha & Adavoudi, 2023). Like M. Derwish's article, this research demonstrates the northward expansion of Fustat following the establishment of the Abbasid dynasty. It was also revealed that during this time, Fustat became Egypt's political and administrative centre. However, Fustat achieved unprecedented prominence in Egypt with the arrival of the Fatimids, as Al-Qalqashandi also asserts in *Zahret al-Athar*. This study further highlights the process of Fustat being absorbed into Cairo, a development initially described by Al-Qalqashandi, who noted that “the buildings are continuously located.” The study also mentions the construction of aqueducts, which began during the Umayyad and Abbasid periods and continued under the Fatimids, aligning with the text of *Zahret al-Athar*.

The final work selected for discussion is an article detailing excavations in Fustat (Ali & Adam, 2023). It confirms Fustat's location on the eastern side of the Nile near the Babylon fortress, contradicting Al-Qalqashandi's assertion that Fustat and Babylon were essentially one city. On the other hand, the article acknowledges the importance of Fustat's suburbs and their tribal-based organisation, which is described in *Zahret al-Athar*.

Thus, comparing the descriptions of Fustat and Cairo provided in Al-Qalqashandi's *Zahret al-Athar* with modern sources highlights almost complete alignment on key issues. Certain inaccuracies in *Zahret al-Athar* may be attributed to the limited research tools available to Al-Qalqashandi and his errors in interpreting data from other researchers. This underscores the need for integrating other historical and archaeological sources alongside Al-Qalqashandi's encyclopaedia to create a comprehensive picture of the historical and geographical development of cities and regions.

Results of research

The treatise “Book of Roads and Kingdoms” by Ibn Khordadbeh was written in the ninth century, around 870 CE. As a representative of the Iranian school of geography, Ibn Khordadbeh demonstrated such characteristic features as the use of maps, references to wonders, an emphasis on patriotism and self-identity, and the absence of religious (Islamic) influence in interpreting his findings (Alijani & Sharafi, 2020). Unlike “*The Subh*” and “*The Book of Lessons*”, the “*Book of Roads and Kingdoms*” is exclusively a geographical work, a rarity among authors of the Arab Caliphate, who typically sought to encompass multiple scientific disciplines within their writings. The historical backdrop to Ibn Khordadbeh's encyclopaedic activities was the decline of the Abbasid dynasty, which became especially evident following the events of 861–870 CE, referred to as the “anarchy at Samarra”. By the early tenth century, the Abbasids had almost entirely lost control over Iraq, as internal contradictions and the resulting erosion of social solidarity rendered the Abbasid Caliphate vulnerable to external conquest (Rofiq, 2022).

Due to the chaos that plagued the Arab Caliphate during the years of its decline in the final decades of Abbasid rule, much of Ibn Khordadbeh's work was irretrievably lost. Even the “*Book of Roads and Kingdoms*” has survived only in an abridged form. The primary goal of writing the

“*Book of Roads and Kingdoms*” was enlightenment. Ibn Khordadbeh sought to provide an accessible geographical map of his time, featuring key designations in regions, cities, and routes. Additionally, one of his tasks was to compile essential information about enemy states, evidenced by his detailed descriptions of the defensive capabilities of Byzantium.

Although parts of Ibn Khordadbeh’s treatise have been lost, the remaining version reveals its structured nature. The “*Book of Roads and Kingdoms*” begins with an introductory section, followed by descriptions of the Earth’s features and explanations of the administration of provinces and the taxation system in the Arab Caliphate. In terms of geographical data, the treatise contains information about the regions of al-Mashriq (modern-day Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, and Lebanon), al-Maghrib (modern countries west of Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula), al-Jarbi (the northern governorship of the Caliphate), and at-Taymani (southern countries). It is important to note that Ibn Khordadbeh used a highly conditional division of regions, including even the lands of India and Japan within al-Mashriq. Additionally, he described the trade routes of “the Jews and the Rus”, often mentioned very briefly and somewhat “dryly”. A notable feature of Ibn Khordadbeh as an Arab encyclopaedist is his work’s near-total absence of source citations. This significantly distinguishes the “*Book of Roads and Kingdoms*” from “*The Subh*” and “*The Book of Lessons*”, which contain hundreds of references to sources.

An intriguing example illustrating Ibn Khordadbeh’s presentation of geographical information is his description of Misr (future Cairo). Initially, he lists the surrounding districts. Next, he describes the extent of Misr, stating that “Misr stretches from al-Shajaratayn, located between Rafah and al-Arish, to Uswan, and from Barqa to Aila, which constitutes a journey of 40 nights (in length) and 40 nights (in width)”. He then briefly discusses the tribal composition of Misr’s population, noting among them the Nubians and remarking that “Uthman ibn Affan concluded a peace treaty with the Nubians on the condition of delivering 400 slaves annually.” Finally, in his description of Misr, he explains the tax revenues during the reigns of the Pharaohs, the Umayyads, and the Abbasids, providing exact amounts in dinars.

“*The Book of Lessons*”, written by Ibn Khaldun, was completed in the second half of the fourteenth century. This work was authored while Ibn Khaldun served as an official in the Mamluk Sultanate, under conditions similar to those during the creation of “*The Subh*” by al-Qalqashandi. The latter even mentions “*The Book of Lessons*” in “*The Subh*”, albeit only once, which can be attributed to the relative “novelty” of the encyclopaedia for al-Qalqashandi (as the two works were separated by only a few decades). Like Ibn Khordadbeh’s work, “*The Book of Lessons*” also possesses a clear structure. It consists of an introduction and three main parts: “*An Introduction to the Superiority of the Science of History*”, “*On the Nature of Social Life*”, “*On the Arabs, Their Generations, and States from Their Origin to Our Time*”, and “*On the Berbers*”.

“*The Book of Instructive Examples...*” and “*The Star...*” contain data not only on history and geography but also on other areas of science, which is entirely characteristic of Arabic encyclopaedism of that time. The “*Introduction on the Superiority of the Science of History*” is typically highlighted as a separate treatise, “*The Muqaddimah*”. The *Muqaddimah* is divided into six chapters, the most significant of which, in the context of geography, is the fourth chapter entitled “*Countries and Cities and All Other Forms of Settled Civilisation. The Conditions That Occur There. Primary and Secondary Considerations in Connection with This*”. It is here that Ibn Khaldun states that “the construction and planning of a city are characteristics of settled culture” and that “the life of a dynasty is the life of a city”. He substantiates the latter by pointing out that “during the time of al-Ma'mun, the number of public baths in Baghdad reached 65,000”. However, using Cairo as an example, Ibn Khaldun concludes that “now the mountainous and plain areas surrounding the city are deserted, which constantly ensures the (influx) of civilisation (population). Hence, this (fact) will preserve the city’s existence. The city will continue to thrive after the dynasty’s demise”. He also uses Cairo as an example when discussing the succession of a new dynasty replacing the old one, stating that “after the destruction of the original builders, (the city) is

utilised by another state and dynasty as a capital and residence”. According to Ibn Khaldun, this indicates that “its buildings and structures will expand in proportion to the improved circumstances and luxury of the new dynasty”. Additionally, he outlines the geographical requirements for city planning and the consequences of disregarding these requirements. Ibn Khaldun rarely provides detailed descriptions of cities or regions; instead, he presents his theses with brief explanations supported by actual examples. Most of the fourth chapter of “The Muqaddimah” is devoted to Ibn Khaldun's reflections on mosques and religious structures of the world. He pays particular attention to Mecca and Jerusalem in the context of their sanctities and history.

“The Star...” by Al-Qalqashandi, like the previously examined encyclopaedias, is a compilation of information from various sources written at significantly different times. Its scope is comprehensive, so its pages even cover the fundamentals of cryptography and cryptanalysis (Aziz, 2024). Unlike Ibn Khurradadhbih, Al-Qalqashandi, in the context of studying the geography of cities and regions, references numerous researchers and diligently provides citations (Bjorkman, 1928). An especially valuable source for “The Star...” was the work of Al-Masudi, “The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems”, as Al-Masudi consistently analysed and dismissed unreliable facts (Khalidi, 1975). It is important to note that, similar to Ibn Khaldun, Al-Qalqashandi's knowledge was universal, as he was interested not only in the history and geography of Islamic lands but also in most known countries and kingdoms surrounding Egypt, including the names of rulers and the most significant events in these kingdoms' histories up to his time.

The influence of Al-Qalqashandi's culture and place of residence on his encyclopaedia cannot be disregarded. He describes even the structure of the encyclopaedia in a rather specific manner. He divided his book into an introduction, ten articles, and a conclusion. The introduction and articles are further divided into chapters, which are subsequently divided into subsections and sections. The primary information on the geographical characteristics of cities and regions is concentrated in the second article of “The Star...”, which is divided into four chapters: “The Geography of the World”; “The Caliphate and Various Dynasties”; “On the Kingdom of Egyptian Lands and Its Supplements”; “On the Kingdoms and Other Countries Surrounding the Egyptian Kingdom” (Al-Qalqashandi, 1922).

The first city described in “The Star...” is Fustat, the capital of Egypt during the rule of the Umayyads and Abbasids. The description begins with the correct name of the city (Fustat or Fissat). It is then noted that this city, known among ordinary people as “Misr”, had an ancient name of “Babalyun” (Babylon). Fustat is located in the third of the seven regions. Several sources provide the width and length of the city's borders, while Al-Qalqashandi offers contemporary measurements in kilometres. Fascinating is the information about the origin of the city's name. Citing Al-Zamakhshari, the author claims that “Al-Fustat” is a name given to a structure that is more petite than a pavilion. At the end of this brief description, information is provided about the city's founding history on the site of the tent of Amr ibn al-As, around which members of various tribes began constructing their homes and mosques. This led to the formation of Fustat's outskirts, named after the tribes or their leaders. Notable houses, the residences of amirs, and mosques are specifically mentioned. It is observed that Fustat constantly grew in terms of both the number of buildings and population. This led to the problem of the city's overpopulation. To prevent epidemics, a complex of baths was built in Fustat, supplied with water from the Nile through its delivery in copper buckets. It is also noted that Fustat had a sewage system and aqueducts, which were initiated during the Umayyad and Abbasid periods and continued during the Fatimid dynasty. Additionally, Al-Rawdah Island, located near Fustat, is described as a site for building boats and ponds known as Al-Habash (named after gardens in the east). The final fact about Fustat provided by Al-Qalqashandi is the construction of a hospital in 873 by Ahmad ibn Tulun. He asserts that the latter decreed that no soldier or mamluk should be treated in the hospital.

The next city described in *The Dawn...* is Cairo. It is mentioned that the distance between the walls of Fustat and Cairo is three miles, but by the time of Al-Qalqashandi, the two cities had

already merged, as buildings were continuously constructed. This allows Fustat to be considered a suburb of Cairo during that period. The structure of the description of Cairo aligns with that of Fustat, except for additional mentions of the Fatimid palace and fortifications (walls and gates). It is noted that the palace formerly occupied an area extending in length from the Al-Salihyya madrasa in Bayn al-Qasrayn to the Al-Aydumari Square and in width from Al-Sabha Huwaqa to Bab al-‘Id Square.

Al-Qalqashandi noted that the palace had nine gates, some of which were original, while others were added later. The palace area was continuously built to address new challenges. For instance, during the Crusades, a shrine was constructed within the palace to house the head of Imam Al-Husayn due to fears that the Crusaders might capture Ascalon. This was not a one-off event but a common practice, as nearly every caliph expanded the palace territory, attempting to build something of their own. Another notable structure mentioned by Al-Qalqashandi in *Dawn...* is the mint (Dar al-Darb), which had not survived to his time, except for the “old hospital,” which was previously part of it. According to Ibn Abd al-Zahir, The palace suffered greatly from fire damage, attributed to “burning wood and accumulated dust.”

Analysing the geographical data presented in *The Book of Roads and Kingdoms*, *The Muqaddimah...*, and *The Dawn...*, we draw the following conclusions:

1. Ibn Khordadbeh lacked a clear plan for describing regions, cities, or routes, and his style can be “dry.” This is exacerbated by the near-absence of source citations, with his brief descriptions lacking additional commentary from the author.

2. In *The Book of Roads and Kingdoms*, Ibn Khordadbeh employed only two historical geography methods: statistical observation and cartography.

3. Unlike Ibn Khordadbeh, Ibn Khaldun adhered to a structured plan when describing cities and regions in *The Muqaddimah...* This is particularly evident in his contrast between nomadic and sedentary lifestyles in the context of city-building.

4. In *The Muqaddimah...*, Ibn Khaldun utilised all existing historical geography methods, including cartography.

5. Al-Qalqashandi attempted to describe cities following a specific plan, mentioning their founding history, location, notable buildings, and the condition of their surroundings.

6. Al-Qalqashandi refrained from creating maps; therefore, *The Dawn...* lacks visual elements that could have been realised through cartography as a method of historical geography.

7. Among the historical and geographical research methods explicitly employed in *The Dawn...*, analytical-synthetic, comparative-historical, and statistical methods can be identified.

Our findings demonstrate that Al-Qalqashandi’s *The Dawn...* played a significant role in popularising historical geography by providing the most comprehensive compilation of works by other historians and geographers of the Arab Caliphate. The evolution of Arab historical geography becomes evident, progressing from the “dry” and brief geographical descriptions by Ibn Khordadbeh in *The Book of Roads and Kingdoms* to the extensive and informative accounts by Al-Qalqashandi and the philosophical conclusions of Ibn Khaldun contained in their encyclopaedic works. While Ibn Khordadbeh can be regarded as one of the founders of the Arab school of geographical research, Ibn Khaldun and Al-Qalqashandi should be recognised as geographers and early popularisers of historical geography.

Conclusion

Although historical geography is a relatively young discipline, as shown by Al-Qalqashandi in *Zahret al-Athar* and Ibn Khaldun in *The Muqaddimah*, historical geography methods were already actively applied in the fourteenth century. This is not surprising, as they, like Ibn Khordadbeh, were among the most erudite individuals in the Arab Caliphate, enabling them to grasp the essence of scientific research.

The comparative analysis of geographical data results indicates that Al-Qalqashandi in *Zahret al-Athar* provided the most detailed descriptions of events and phenomena compared to Ibn Khaldun and especially Ibn Khordadbeh. This points to the evolution of Arab scientific thought from the ninth to the fourteenth century in the context of geography and sociology (the latter being vividly reflected in *The Muqaddimah*).

Thus, it can be asserted that, despite its relative obscurity among general readers, Al-Qalqashandi's *Zahret al-Athar* is a true pinnacle of Arab scholarship during the Caliphate period. A promising avenue for future research involves comparing the geographical data presented in the works of Al-Qalqashandi, Ibn Khordadbeh, and Ibn Khaldun with those of their European contemporaries to identify the influence of environment and place of residence on the worldview reflected in their works.

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«СУБХ ӘЛ-АША» ЖӘНЕ БАСҚА ДӘУІРДЕГІ ДЕРЕККӨЗДЕРДІҢ ГЕОГРАФИЯЛЫҚ МӘЛІМЕТТЕРІН САЛЫСТЫРМАЛЫ ТАЛДАУ

Аңдатпа. 1517 жылы Осман империясы Мәмлүк сұлтандығын басып алғанға дейін болған Араб халифатының тұсында өмір сүрген зерттеушілердің энциклопедиялары географиялық және тарихи деректер контекстіндегі маңызды жазба дереккөз болып табылады. Араб халифаты өмір сүрген кезеңде алғашқы мұсылман мемлекеті ретінде Әл-Қалқашанди, Ибн Хордадбек, Ибн Халдун сынды көрнекті зерттеушілер мен ғалымдар еңбек етті. Бұл мақаланың мақсаты – «Жазу өнеріндегі зағиптар таңы» (Әл-Қалқашанди), «Жолдар мен күйлер кітабы» (Ибн Хордадбек) және «Күшті билікке ие болған арабтар, парсылар, берберлер және олардың замандастарының күндері туралы Нұсқаулық мысалдар кітабы және хабарламалар жинағы» (Ибн Халдун) энциклопедияларындағы географиялық мәліметтерге салыстырмалы талдау жасау. Зерттеу әдістерінің ішінде деректерді бақылау, салыстыру, тарихи-сыни көзқарас және нақтылау әдістері таңдалды. Салыстырмалы талдау нәтижесінде авторлар өздерінің энциклопедияларында келтірілген мәліметтерді толықтыра отырып, бір-біріне қайшы келмейтіндігі анықталды. Бұл энциклопедияларды құрастыру мақсатында жиі бірдей дереккөздерді пайдаланғанын көрсетеді. Сондай-ақ талдау нәтижелері Әл-Қалқашанди мен Ибн Халдунның Ибн Хордадбекке қарағанда тарихи география әдістерін белсендірек пайдаланғаны анықталды. Бұл араб елдеріндегі тарихи географияның ғылым ретіндегі негізі тек XIV ғасырда ғана қаланғанын көрсетеді. Келесі зерттеулердің перспективасы зерттеушілердің ортасы мен тұрғылықты жерінің әсерін анықтау үшін Әл-Қалқашанди, Ибн Хордадбек және Ибн Халдун және олардың сол кездегі Еуропадағы әріптестерінің еңбектерінде келтірілген географиялық мәліметтерді салыстыру болып табылады.

Кілт сөздер: Әл-Қалқашанди, Субх әл-аша, ортағасырлық араб саяхатшылары, энциклопедия, араб зерттеушілері, тарихи география, мәмлүк сұлтандығы, социология, трактат.

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СРАВНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ ГЕОГРАФИЧЕСКИХ СВЕДЕНИЙ В «СУБХ АЛЬ-АША» И ДРУГИХ ИСТОЧНИКАХ ЭПОХИ

Аннотация. Важным письменным источником в контексте географических и исторических данных являются энциклопедии исследователей, которые жили во времена Арабского халифата, существовавшего до захвата Мамлюкского султаната Османской империей в 1517 году. В период существования Арабского халифата, как первого мусульманского государства, работали такие выдающиеся исследователи и ученые, как Ал-Калкашанди, Ибн Хордадбех и Ибн Халдун. Целью данной статьи является проведение сравнительного анализа географических сведений в энциклопедиях «Заря для подслеповатого в искусстве писания» (Ал-Калкашанди), «Книга путей и государств» (Ибн Хордадбех) и «Книга назидательных примеров и собрание сообщений о днях арабов, персов, берберов и их современников, обладавших могущественной властью» (Ибн Халдун). Среди методов исследования были выбраны методы мониторинга данных, сравнения, историко-критического подхода и конкретизации. В результате проведенного сравнительного анализа было выявлено, что авторы почти не противоречат друг другу, дополняя данные, приведенные в их энциклопедиях. Это указывает на то, что они часто использовали одни и те же источники, что является следствием компиляторской природы энциклопедий. Также результаты анализа позволили установить, что Ал-Калкашанди и Ибн Халдун активнее, чем Ибн Хордадбех, использовали методы исторической географии. Это свидетельствует о том, что основы исторической географии как науки в арабском мире были заложены только в XIV веке. Перспективой дальнейших исследований является сравнение географических сведений, приведенных в трудах Ал-Калкашанди, Ибн Хордадбега и Ибн Халдуна, с работами их европейских коллег того времени для выявления влияния окружения и места проживания исследователей на особенности их мировосприятия, что отразилось в их работах.

Ключевые слова: Ал-Калкашанди, Субх аль-аша, арабские средневековые путешественники, энциклопедия, арабские исследователи, историческая география, мамлюкский султанат, социология, трактат.

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