

**A kingship is like a house, the foundation of which is *īmān*,
its root is *taqwā*,
its pillars are the laws,
its furniture is justice,
its veils are praiseworthy conducts.
So, if the king dwells in it, the whole world rejoices.
(Ibn al-Azraq)**



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IBN AL-AZRAQ'S POLITICAL THOUGHT:
A STUDY OF *BADĀ'Ī'AL-SILK*
FĪ ṬABĀ'Ī' AL-MULK

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ABSTRACT

Finding a Muslim polity through leadership based on *īmān* that is rooted in *taqwā* Ibn al-Azraq says is the answer to the best governance. An Islamic leadership in this form, he says will prevent the extinction of any Muslim polity. This prevention is possible because, he says, a leader, who is conscious of the trust given by Allah to administer a state, would receive not only the blessings of Allah but also win over the hearts of his people. Ibn al-Azraq's political thought is discerned through a comparative analysis of the two editions of *Badā'i' al-Silk fī Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*, where the influence of Ibn Khaldūn on Ibn al-Azraq's political thought is clearly revealed. The survey of socio-political milieu in which Ibn al-Azraq lived illustrates how the conflicts of the Muslim leadership of Granada persisted despite its war with the Christians. In this context and in formulating his political thought, Ibn al-Azraq combined *uṣūl al-fīqh* and syllogism as his methodology. This methodology has led him to synthesise Ibn Khaldūn's theory on *'aṣabiyyah* as the catalyst for the rise and fall of a civilization, and the *sharī'ah*. This formulates the premises where the rational justification and the religious justification for the necessity of leadership are combined, whereas previous scholars have failed to assign Ibn Khaldūn's theory on *'aṣabiyyah* as the rational justification for the necessity of leadership. This is clarified in the review of *Badā'i' al-Silk fī Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*. In his discussion on Muslim polity, Ibn al-Azraq presented various qualifications and recommendations related to political ethics which the leader of the state should possess. Ibn al-Azraq also elaborates on the two principles of governance, namely, justice and consultation in addition to state various institutions which he thinks must be established as part of governance. The study of Ibn al-Azraq's political thought in his book *Badā'i' al-Silk fī Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk* reveals the significant contribution in the ingenuity of ascribing Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'aṣabiyyah* as the rational justification to the necessity of leadership in human societies, while agreeing with other scholars on *sharī'ah* as the religious rational.

ملخص البحث

يعتقد ابن الأزرق أن البحث عن دولة مسلمة من خلال قيادة قائمة على الإيمان المتأصل في التقوى هو الحل لأفضل حكم. إن أي قيادة مسلمة قائمة على هذا الشكل ستمنع من اندثارها. هذا لأن القائد، و بحسب ابن الأزرق أيضا، الذي يعي الثقة التي أعطاه إياها الله لإدارة الدولة، سيفوز برضا الله و قلوب الناس. يتبين فكر ابن الأزرق السياسي هذا من خلال التحليل المقارن لطبعتي كتاب *بدائع السلك في طبائع الملك* حيث يتضح أثر ابن خلدون في فكر ابن الأزرق السياسي. إن استعراض المحيط السياسي-الاجتماعي الذي عاش فيه ابن الأزرق يوضح أن صراعات القيادة المسلمة في غرناطة استمرت على الرغم من الحرب مع المسيحيين. ووسط هذا المحيط و في تشكيل فكره السياسي، دمج ابن الأزرق أصول الفقه و القياس المنطقي كمنهج علمي، مما قاده إلى الربط بين نظرية ابن خلدون حول العصبية، التي تقول بأن العصبية هي الحافز لقيام و سقوط الحضارة من جهة، و الشريعة الإسلامية من جهة أخرى كأساس للمبرر العقلاني والديني لضرورة القيادة. بينما لم ير من سبقوه أن نظرية ابن خلدون حول العصبية تعبر عن المبرر العقلاني لأهمية القيادة. و هذا ما يتضح في استعراض كتاب *بدائع السلك في طبائع الملك*. يستعرض ابن الأزرق في نقاشه حول الدولة المسلمة مؤهلات متنوعة و توصيات متعلقة بالأخلاقيات السياسية على قائد الدولة أن يمتلكها. ويناقش ابن الأزرق أيضا مبدأي الحكم : العدل و المشورة بالتفصيل إضافة لمؤسسات عديدة للدولة يعتقد ابن الأزرق أنها يجب أن تؤسس كجزء من الحكم. وبعد دراسة فكر ابن الأزرق السياسي كما في كتابه *بدائع السلك في طبائع الملك*، يتبين أن إسهامه الفكري يتجلى باعتماده نظرية ابن خلدون حول العصبية على أنها المبرر العقلاني لضرورة القيادة في المجتمعات الإنسانية مع اتفاقه مع من سبقوه بأن الشريعة الإسلامية هي المبرر الديني.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Aldila Binti Isahak

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**IBN AL-AZRAQ'S POLITICAL THOUGHT:
A STUDY OF *BADĀ'Ī' AL-SILK FĪ ṬABĀ'Ī' AL-MULK***

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For Mama and Abah

Who have provided me with the key for the success of this world and the next.

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INTRODUCTION

Ibn al-Azraq, a fifteenth century Andalusian *qāḍī* and scholar, made a significant contribution to Islamic political thought. His work *Badā'i' al-Silk fī Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*¹ or *The Nature of Governance* puts into perspective the conduct of statesmanship and its inseparability from following the *dīn* of Islam. His work investigates the forces that lead to the establishment of a state, it discusses the essence of governance and its characteristics and it contains advises for the ruler on the best way to govern a state - which forms the foundation of a civilization. The primary focus of this dissertation is an elucidation and an analysis of these core ideas as propounded by Ibn al-Azraq in his book *Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*.

While doing so, it must be emphasised that classical Muslim scholars, including Ibn al-Azraq, were normally inclined to discuss all aspects of thought or transmit knowledge within a worldview which was based on *tawḥīd*. They were frequently masters of many disciplines ranging from logic, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *kalām*, philosophy, Arabic grammar, sciences of the Qur'ān, sciences of ḥadīth, literature, ethics, politics, history and sociology, among others. These disciplines were studied by classical Muslim scholars with a comprehensive interpretation of reality of the world *vis-à-vis* the ultimate Existence namely Allah. The core disciplines namely *'ilm al-kalām* (theology), *manṭiq* (logic), *uṣūl al-fiqh* (principles of Islamic jurisprudence), *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and Arabic language equipped them with a certainty that *tawḥīd* is the basis of all human endeavours. Indeed, it is this uniqueness that qualified the intensity and expertise of their knowledge in their own disciplines as well as in other

¹ Henceforth cited as *Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*.

disciplines. Thus, many of them came to be known as masters of encyclopedic knowledge. Ibn al-Azraq was one among these masters.

A. LITERATURE REVIEW

In addition to *Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*, Ibn al-Azraq wrote two other books, namely, *Rawḍah al-'I'lām bi Manzilah al-'Arabiyyah min 'Ulūm al-Islām*² and *Shifā' al-Ghalīl fī Sharḥ Mukhtaṣar Khalīl*³, which contains his interpretation of Mālikī *fiqh*⁴ and his *fatāwā*.⁵ Al-Maqqarī in his book *Nafḥu al-Ṭīb*, said that the book *Rawḍah al-'I'lām* was a voluminous compendium. It was hailed by him as a book whence the like of it was not seen before, and in it contains many stories.⁶ With regard to *Shifā' al-Ghalīl*, al-Maqqarī said when he was in Tilimsan (Tilimsān), he had the opportunity to browse through the book and described it as authoritative and easy to understand.⁷ However, *Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*, remains Ibn al-Azraq's only comprehensive treatise on political thought. It also provides ample evidence that, contrary to what has often been alleged by contemporary scholars both western and Muslim, Ibn Khaldūn's thought was studied by Muslim scholars long before the present 'discovery' of Ibn Khaldūn by modern western scholars.

With the editing and the publication of Ibn al-Azraq's *Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk* in recent years by two Arab scholars; 'Alī Sāmī al-Nashshār and Muḥammad 'Abdul Karīm, the claim that Ibn Khaldūn's thought was first studied by the Europeans has

² Henceforth cited as *Rawḍah al-'I'lām*.

³ Henceforth cited as *Shifā' al-Ghalīl*.

⁴ Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn al-Azraq, *Badā'i' al-Silk fī Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*, edited by 'Alī Sāmī al-Nashshār, Volume 1 (Baghdād : Manshūrāt Wizārāt al-'I'lām; 1977) p. 19.

⁵ Khairuddīn al-Zirikli, *al-'Ulūm Qāmūs Tarājīm li Athmar al-Rijāl wa al-Nisā' min al-'Arab wa al-Musta'ribīn wa al-Mustashriqīn* (Bayrūt : Dār al-'Ilm lilmaalāyīn; n.d.) p. 289.

⁶ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥu al-Ṭīb min Ghuṣn al-Andalus al-Raḥīb*, vol. 2 (ed) Dr. Iḥsān 'Abbās (Bayrūt : Dār Ṣādir; n.d.) p. 699. Henceforth cited as, *Nafḥu al-Ṭīb*.

⁷ Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Makhḥūf, *Shajarah al-Nūr al-Zakiyyah fī Ṭabaqāt al-Mālikiyyah* (Bayrūt : Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, n.d.) p. 262.

been disproved.⁸ From these editions it has come to light that Ibn al-Azraq, who was born about thirty years after the demise of Ibn Khaldūn, has already made an extensive study of *al-Muqaddimah*. This gives a new insight into the impact of Ibn Khaldūn on later thinkers.

In surveying various works in English that can be considered as standard references in the field of Islamic thought in general and Islamic political thought in particular, one finds that there is a noticeable absence of Ibn al-Azraq in these writings. Works such as the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, edited by H.A.R. Gibb, *Muslim Political Thought and Administration* by Haroon Sherwani, *State and Government in Medieval Islam* by Ann Lambton and *Political Thought in Medieval Islam* by E.I.J. Rosenthal, include al-Farābī, al-Māwardī, Niẓām al-Mulk, al-Ghazālī, Ibn Khaldūn, and Ibn Taymiyya but they fail to mention Ibn al-Azraq either as a *qāḍī* whose contribution was significant in the history of al-Andalus, or as a scholar whose political thought was influenced by Ibn Khaldūn. The same is also applicable to Shaukat Ali, who has devoted half of his *Intellectual Foundations of Muslim Civilization* to Ibn Khaldūn, but made no mention of Ibn al-Azraq.

There is however one exception, Aziz al-Azmeh, one of the contemporary scholars on Ibn Khaldūn who made a brief reference on Ibn al-Azraq in comparison with Ibn Khaldūn in two of his books, *An Essay in Reinterpretation* and *Muslim Kingship*. He states that Ibn al-Azraq was the only Andalusian scholar to have made an extensive and systematic study of Ibn Khaldūn's *al-Muqaddimah*. Al-Azmeh says the "historical merit of Ibn al-Azraq lies in his having stripped away the incongruous and paradigmatically impossible garb with which political subjects were clothed in the

⁸ Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn al-Azraq, *Badā'i' al-Silk fī Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*, edited by Muḥammad 'Abdul Karīm, 2 volumes (Tūnis : al-Dār al-'Arabiyyah lil-Kitāb; 1977) and 'Alī Sāmī al-Nashshār, 2 volumes (Baghdād : Manshūrāt Wizārāt al-'I'lām; 1977, 1978).

Muqaddima,⁹ and classified *Ṭabā'ī' al-Mulk* under the genre of *fürstenspiegel* or a mirror for princes.¹⁰ That notwithstanding however, al-Azmeh can be credited with having been the first author writing in English who has mentioned Ibn al-Azraq and shown serious awareness of his significance. Al-Azmeh pointed out in his book *Muslim Kingship* that Ibn al-Azraq also contributed by giving an exhaustive reference on the sources that Ibn Khaldūn referred to in *al-Muqaddimah*.¹¹

In addition to al-Azmeh's work in casting light on Ibn al-Azraq's contribution, there is a brief and short citation written by Hans Daiber in the *Bibliography of Islamic Philosophy* about Ibn al-Azraq. Here Hans Daiber mentions the existence of the previously mentioned two editions of *Ṭabā'ī' al-Mulk* by 'Alī Sāmi al-Nashshār and Muḥammad ibn 'Abdul Karīm. Hans Daiber also pointed out that *GAL* classified Ibn al-Azraq as an unknown author in Muslim scholarship as well as the author of *al-Ibrīz al-Masbūk fī Kayfiyah Ādāb al-Mulūk*.¹² In an article written by L.P. Harvey, Ibn al-Azraq is identified as the Granadan emissary who sought the help of the Mamlūk king, Qā'it Bey to defend Granada against the onslaught of Christian Spain led by Ferdinand and Isabella.¹³

While the English speaking academia, until recently, showed a noticeable silence on Ibn al-Azraq, the Arabic speaking academia on the other hand has known Ibn al-Azraq since the fifteenth century. There are many classical Arabic biographical dictionaries dated since then, that have recorded his life and times, and some even

⁹ Aziz al-Azmeh, *Ibn Khaldūn: An Essay in Reinterpretation* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd.; 1982) p. 158. Henceforth cited as, *An Essay in Reinterpretation*.

¹⁰ Al-Azmeh said in his book, *Muslim Kingship: Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian and Pagan Politics* (London : I.B. Tauris Publishers; 1997), the genre of writing which falls under the category *fürstenspiegel* means "human association, the necessity of order imposed by a ruler, the manners of kings, retainers, friendship, order and hierarchy." p. 95.

¹¹ Al-Azmeh, *An Essay in Reinterpretation*, p. 157.

¹² Hans Daiber, *Bibliography of Islamic Philosophy: Index of Names, Terms and Topics*, Volume 2 (Leiden : Brill; 1999) p. 431. Henceforth cited as, *al-Ibrīz al-Masbūk*.

¹³ L.P. Harvey, "The Political, Social and Cultural History of the Moriscos", Salma Khadra Jayyusi (ed) *The Legacy of Muslim Spain* (Leiden : E.J. Brill; 1992) p. 205. Henceforth cited as "The Moriscos".

commented on his book *Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*. Examples of such references can be found in *al-Azhār al-Riyād fī al-Akhhbār 'Iyād and Naḥḥu al-Ṭīb* by al-Maqqarī, *al-Ḍau' al-Lāmi'* by al-Sakhāwī, *al-'A'lām: Qāmūs Tarājim li Athmar al-Rijāl wa al-Nisā' min al-Maghrib wa al-Musta'ribīn wa al-Mustashriqīn* by al-Zirikli, *Shajarah al-Nūr al-Zakiyyah fī Ṭabaqāt al-Mālikiyyah* by Ibn Muḥammad Makhlūf and *al-Uns al-Jalīl bi Tārīkh al-Quds wa Khalīl* by Mujīruddīn al-Ḥanbalī. Al-Maqqarī states that Ibn al-Azraq was a *qāḍī* who had summarised the thought of Ibn Khaldūn from his *al-Muqaddimah* to formulate his political thought in *Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*, as well as having made improvements other than just summarising *al-Muqaddimah*.¹⁴ However, al-Maqqarī did not point out what those improvements were. Al-Nashshār and 'Abdul Karīm also reiterated al-Maqqari's qualification of Ibn al-Azraq's standing, and added that Ibn al-Azraq had contributed a lot more in political ethics.

Ibn al-Azraq in expounding his political theory on the nature of kingship followed the footsteps of the major Muslim political thinkers, such as al-Farābī and al-Māwardī, stating that there are two reasons as to why kingship or political authority comes into being - the rational and religious justifications. In so doing, he utilised Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'aṣabiyyah* as the basis for the rational justification and the *sharī'ah* as the basis for the religious justification. By placing the former as the major premise in his book *Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*, and the latter as the minor premise, he elucidates, the correct political conduct of a kingship that would help perpetuating it. Ibn al-Azraq made a mark for himself as one the orthodox scholars of political thought following and developing on his predecessors, utilizing the methodologies of *uṣūl al-fiqh* and syllogism. It is due to his heavy reliance on Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'aṣabiyyah* and civilization as expounded in *al-Muqaddimah*, that Ibn al-Azraq is

¹⁴ Al-Maqqarī, *Naḥḥu al-Ṭīb*, pp. 699-700.

labeled as a scholar who had not only summarized and codified Ibn Khaldūn’s thought but had also expanded the latter’s ideas.¹⁵ It is possible because of Ibn al-Azraq’s heavy reliance on Ibn Khaldūn’s thought that Ḥassan al-Sā’ih called him the commentator of Ibn Khaldūn in his article “Ibn al-Azraq: Shāriḥ Ibn Khaldūn”.¹⁶ However, this claim is open to discussion because Ibn al-Azraq has also relied among others on Ibn Riḍwān, al-Ṭurtūshī¹⁷ and Aristotle on political ethics, as has been clearly acknowledged by Ibn al-Azraq in *Ṭabā’i’ al-Mulk*. A careful reading of al-Sā’ih’s article reveals that he did not give any evidence to support his presumed designation of Ibn al-Azraq as having been merely a commentator of Ibn Khaldūn. Otherwise, this article provides extensive information on the life of Ibn al-Azraq and gives a fairly comprehensive outline of the content of his book, which serves as an introduction to Ibn al-Azraq’s political thought.

Apart from acknowledging *Ṭabā’i’ al-Mulk*, *Rawḍah al-’I’lām* and *Shifā’ al-Ghalīl* as the writings of Ibn al-Azraq, al-Sā’ih states Ibn al-Azraq has written two more books in addition to the above mentioned. The fourth book according to Sā’ih is called *al-Ibrīz al-Masbūk* and the fifth is called *Taḥbīr al-Riyāsah*.¹⁸ However, this claim has not been substantiated by any other scholar.¹⁹ On the contrary ‘Abdul Karīm has in fact refuted it by making a comparative study between the two manuscripts, *al-Ibrīz al-Masbūk* and *Ṭabā’i’ al-Mulk*, he found that the contents of the two manuscripts are identical. He further verified this by providing a photocopied entry of the first page of a manuscript of *Ṭabā’i’ al-Mulk* which was included in his edition; in the first paragraph of which, Ibn al-Azraq had written the title of his book

¹⁵ This will be further elaborated later in this chapter.

¹⁶ Ḥassan al-Sā’ih, “Ibn al-Azraq Shāriḥ Ibn Khaldūn”, *Da’wah al-Ḥaqq* (Morocco; 1967).

¹⁷ *Badā’i’ al-Silk fī Ṭabā’i’ al-Mulk*, edited by al-Nashshār, vol. 1, p. 6.

¹⁸ Al-Sā’ih, “Ibn al-Azraq: Shāriḥ Ibn Khaldūn”, p. 104.

¹⁹ With the exception of *al-Ibrīz al-Masbūk* we saw earlier Hans Daiber said GAL had attributed this book to Ibn al-Azraq.

Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk as *al-Ibrīz al-Masbūk*.²⁰ Quite understandably therefore 'Abdul Karīm concludes that Ibn al-Azraq had changed the title of the book from *al-Ibrīz al-Masbūk* to *Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*.²¹

It should be pointed out however, that al-Sā'ih was not the only scholar to have mistakenly thought that *al-Ibrīz al-Masbūk* is a different book from *Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*. 'Abdul Hādī al-Tāzī²² and Muḥammad 'Inān²³ have also made the same mistake. These two scholars regarded *al-Ibrīz al-Masbūk* as a different book from *Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*. 'Inān also made the same point in his book *Ibn Khaldūn: Ḥayātuh wa Turāthuh al-Fikrī*²⁴ and claimed that *al-Ibrīz al-Masbūk* was published much earlier than *Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*. He briefly discussed the content of *al-Ibrīz al-Masbūk* by going through its chapters, and mentioned *Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk* only in passing in his article. 'Abdul Karīm further pointed out that 'Inān made a mistake in stating *al-Ibrīz al-Masbūk* was published in Algeria, while it was and still is in manuscript form.²⁵ Similarly, one could not fathom why al-Tāzī gave the book a title different from the actual one which he himself had correctly listed down in his article as being *Badā'i' al-Silk fī Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*. It is probably due to the inconsistencies found in this article that 'Abdul Karīm was highly critical of al-Tāzī, describing his writing as being inaccurate and unreliable in many matters with regard to Ibn al-Azraq.²⁶ Al-Nashshār also stated that 'Inān and al-Tāzī were wrong in regarding *al-Ibrīz al-Masbūk* as a

²⁰ *Badā'i' al-Silk fī Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*, edited by Muḥammad 'Abdul Karīm, vol. 1, p. 48.

²¹ *Ibid*, vol. 1, p.45.

²² 'Abd al-Hādī al-Tāzī, "Ma'a Ibn al-Azraq fī Makḥṭūṭātih: *Badā'i' al-Sulūk fī Ṭabā'i' al-Mulūk*", *Majallah Majma' al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* (Dimashq) vol. 1, no. 50, 1975.

²³ Muḥammad 'Abdullah 'Inān, "Kutub Ta'atharat bi *Muqaddimah* Ibn Khaldūn", *al-'Arabiyyah*, no. 182, 1973, p. 189.

²⁴ Muḥammad 'Abdullah 'Inān, *Ibn Khaldūn: Ḥayātuh wa Turāthuh al-Fikrī* (al-Qāhirah : Mu'assasah Mukhtār; 1991)

p. 145.

²⁵ *Badā'i' al-Silk fī Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*, edited by Muḥammad 'Abdul Karīm, vol. 1, pp. 34-35.

²⁶ *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 33.

different book from *Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*.²⁷ This has been substantiated in the above mentioned point as to how 'Abdul Karīm went about verifying his claim that the two books are in fact one and the same. However, an explanation can be provided as to why there is a confusion regarding *al-Ibrīz al-Masbūk* and *Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*, based on a monograph, *al-Tawālīf al-Islāmiyyah fī al-'Ulūm al-Siyāsiyyah wa al-Idāriyyah*,²⁸ wherein it has been mentioned that an author by the name of Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Aṣḥabī had authored *al-Ibrīz al-Masbūk* and this manuscript has been published in Tunis.²⁹ After further investigation, it is found that Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Aṣḥabī is Ibn al-Azraq, and the book *al-Ibrīz al-Masbūk* that is claimed to have been published could not be found anywhere. It is possible that some contemporary scholars have been somewhat confused by the different names used by Ibn al-Azraq in referring to *al-Ibrīz al-Masbūk* and also because it has been said that the book is published. According to 'Inān he said, the book was published in Tunis, not in Algeria as claimed. Al-Nashshār was also critical of al-Sā'iḥ for having wrongly attributed *Taḥbīr al-Riyāṣah* as a book authored by Ibn al-Azraq based on a description by Ibn 'Askar. He states that the claim by Ibn 'Askar, *Taḥbīr al-Riyāṣah* described as an excellent political treatise written by Ibn al-Azraq was a figment of his imagination without any concrete evidences.³⁰

Thus far, only one contemporary scholar has produced a significant analytical study of *Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*, which is an important contribution to the study of Ibn al-Azraq. Barakāt Muḥammad Murād described Ibn al-Azraq as first and foremost a *qāḍī* who applied the inductive method in his study of kingship based on Ibn

²⁷ *Badā'i' al-Silk fī Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*, edited by al-Nashshār, vol. 1, p. 20.

²⁸ This monograph was obtained from the personal collection of Dr. Zayd Abul Ḥajj. It shows manuscripts that have been published on the subject of political science written by Muslim scholars.

²⁹ *Al-Tawālīf al-Islāmiyyah*, (Bayrūt : Maḥalliyyah al-Jam' al-'Ulyā al-'Arabīy, n.d) 18, p. 339.

³⁰ *Badā'i' al-Silk fī Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*, edited by al-Nashshār, vol. 1, p. 20.

Khaldūn's thought. Murād made one important point in the comparative study which he made of Ibn al-Azraq and Ibn Khaldūn, namely that Ibn al-Azraq disagreed with the cyclic nature of a state or a civilization arguing that the perpetuation of the state is possible as long as the state is governed on the basis of justice as prescribed by the *dīn* of Islam.³¹ This however, in one's opinion, does not necessarily mean that Ibn al-Azraq disagrees with Ibn Khaldūn's theory of the cyclic nature of a state or a civilization. What one can conclude is that Ibn al-Azraq was prescribing ways and means for a particular rulership to prolong its reign, hence, delaying its downfall, and this part will be further discussed in the chapters on polity and governance. In addition to the analytical study of Ibn al-Azraq's *Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*, Murād also made a brief historical survey of the rise and fall of al-Andalus to illustrate the social and political background within which Ibn al-Azraq had lived.

With regard to the two editions of *Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*, al-Nashshār, in his edition, did not provide any information about the references that Ibn al-Azraq made, or about the scholars whose books were referred to. 'Abdul Karīm on the other hand has provided extensive information on these sources, and his input provides invaluable background information needed to understand Ibn al-Azraq's sources. Though such a difference might render one to claim that 'Abdul Karīm's edition is more reliable, however, a comparative study of the contents of the two editions of *Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk*, reveals that both contain mistakes. If each book is read independently some important aspects of Ibn al-Azraq's political thought can be misinterpreted. Therefore, with regard to the content of the two editions, it cannot be said that one is better than the other. In this case it means that the two editions complement each other – thus facilitating a better understanding of Ibn al-Azraq's thought and arguments.

³¹ Barakāt Muḥammad Murād, "Ibn al-Azraq: bayna *Badā'i' al-Silk fī Ṭabā'i' al-Mulk wa Rawḍah al-'Ilām*", *al-'Arabī* (Kuwait Ministry of Information : Kuwait) no. 520, March 2002, p. 65.

Notwithstanding this, ‘Abdul Karīm’s edition does provide much needed information concerning the sources which Ibn al-Azraq has used.

As mentioned previously, the two editions of *Ṭabā’i’ al-Mulk* published by al-Nashshār and ‘Abdul Karīm have greatly facilitated the study of Ibn al-Azraq’s thought among contemporary Arab academics. However, his other writings have also contributed to the rise of his thought in the fields of political ethics, education, and history. Among the more important works which have since been published by contemporary Arab scholars are, *al-Fikr al-Tarbawī ‘inda Ibn Khaldūn wa Ibn al-Azraq* by ‘Abdul Amīr Shamsuddīn,³² *al-Falsafah al-‘Ilmiyyah ‘inda Ibn Khaldūn wa Ibn al-Azraq fī al-Tiyyār al-Ijtimā’ī al-Tārīkhī* by ‘Alī Zay‘ūr,³³ and an unpublished masters thesis, “al-Fikru al-Siyāsī ‘inda Ibn Khaldūn wa Ibn al-Azraq” by Isma‘īl Zarūkhī.³⁴ Another book by Muḥammad Jasim al-Ḥadīthī, *Badā’i’ al-Silk fī Ṭabā’i’ al-Mulk li Abī ‘Abdillāh ibn al-Azraq al-Siyāsah wa al-Idārah* is listed among books available in the library of Bayt al-Ḥikmah in the University of Baghdād. Owing to invasion of Iraq and destruction of libraries there at the time when this research was carried out, it has unfortunately not been possible to verify further and gather more literature.

The present literature review gives two insights: one, Ibn al-Azraq is known among the classical and contemporary Arab scholars writing in the Arabic language; two, among Western scholars on classical Muslim writers there is scanty and little reference to Ibn al-Azraq’s works and contribution, this considering their tremendous interest in Ibn Khaldūn’s thought and its impact on Islamic Political thought. It

³² ‘Abdul Amīr Shamsuddīn, *al-Fikr al-Tarbawī ‘inda Ibn Khaldūn wa Ibn al-Azraq* (Bayrūt : Dār Iqra’; 1984).

³³ ‘Alī Zay‘ūr, *al-Falsafah al-‘Ilmiyyah ‘inda Ibn Khaldūn wa Ibn al-Azraq fī al-Tiyyār al-Ijtimā’ī al-Tārīkhī* (Mu’assasah ‘Izzuddīn; n.d.).

³⁴ Isma‘īl Zarūkhī, *al-Fikr al-Siyāsī ‘inda Ibn Khaldūn wa Ibn al-Azraq* (University of Algiers: unpublished M.A. thesis; 1989).

therefore becomes imperative that Ibn al-Azraq be introduced to a broader English speaking academia, to further our knowledge and understanding of classical Islamic political writers.

Until the present day, Ibn al-Azraq's unique contribution to Islamic political thought has not been fully appreciated. Thus, apart from elucidating the political thought of Ibn al-Azraq this dissertation also aims to make up for this omission and to rightly place Ibn al-Azraq among those scholars who have contributed significantly to Islamic political thought.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Basic research methodology include library research, field-based study carried out in Jordan, Syria and Egypt, further studies in Arabic language, interviews with relevant scholars, reading and analysis of text and translation. Library research at ISTAC and the International Islamic University Malaysia, yielded that there was a copy of *Ṭabā'ī' al-Mulk* edited by al-Nashshār, however the librarians in charge have been unable to locate the book. Eventually, a copy was made available by Fatih University, Turkey.³⁵

Facing scarcity of materials on Ibn al-Azraq in Malaysia, it was decided that field research needs to be carried out in the Arab region, especially in the *bilād al-Shām*, in this case Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt. This decision proved most effective especially in researching for sources in Arabic, as there is little substantial material available on Ibn al-Azraq in English or in any language other than Arabic thus far. Libraries accessed include: IIIT –Amman, Jordan; University of Jordan, Amman; University of Yarmouk, Irbid, Jordan; Zarqa Private University, Zarqa,

³⁵ This was made available by Professor Mehmet Ipsirli, Professor of History, Fatih University, Istanbul.