



# The Arab Rediscovery of Europe: A Study in Cultural Encounters (Saqi Essentials)

*Ibrahim Abu Lughod*

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"[Ibrahim Abu Lughod is] Palestine's foremost academic and intellectual."—Edward Said

Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 exposed the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire to a Europe vastly different from the one known to the Arabs of the Middle Ages. At the start of the nineteenth century, Arabs were unprepared for the social, economic, and political progress made in Europe.

By 1870, however, their vague notions had evolved into a fairly sophisticated knowledge of the historic background and contemporary achievements of various European nations. The new reform movements in Egypt and the Fertile Crescent had incorporated into their programs the ideological premises and political institutions of European liberalism.

*The Arab Rediscovery of Europe* is a pioneering work tracing the role of the Arab intelligentsia in increasing Arab awareness of Europe and in shaping an Arab image of the West. First published in 1963, it was hugely influential in instigating a detailed study of Arab views and experiences of Europe during the reign of Egypt's Mohammad Ali in the early to mid-nineteenth century.

**Ibrahim Abu-Lughod** (1929–2001) was an American Palestinian academic, writer, and editor. He taught at Smith College, Massachusetts; McGill University, Montreal; and then spent thirty-four years at Northwestern University, Illinois, where he founded the Institute of African Studies. He founded the Association of Arab-American University Graduates in 1968 and the journal *Arab Studies Quarterly* in 1978, and held two UNESCO posts. He later became a professor and vice president of Bir Zeit University in the West Bank.

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