Toponymy between Arabization and Westernization

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Abstract:

Toponymy, also known as "the science of place names" or "geographical nomenclature" or "the science of geographic names" or "the science of geographic labels" or "toponymics," which is referred to in French as "La Toponymie". All these appellations denote one concept that carries multiple meanings focusing on researching place names, attempting to explain their emergence and disappearance within their geographical and historical context, and the evolution of their meanings.

The Arabs in the ancient times paid attention to this branch of science and assigned a specific term for each type of place name. They composed numerous linguistic materials, some of which are still in manuscript form, receiving little attention and interest from researchers and enthusiasts. This material was the cornerstone from which lexicographers embarked on building their dictionaries and famous geographical encyclopedias.

However, the neglect in the field of the Arabic language and its sciences and the focus on Western output and the translation of its sciences have led Arab researchers not to delve into their heritage to select terminology for these sciences to the extent that there is increasing interest in imported terminology, including terms in the field of place names. This research is an attempt in the field of toponymy, where the researcher addresses key points, firstly defining this science and its origin, secondly its importance, types, and related sciences, and thirdly the interest of both Arabs and the West in the field of toponymy and their authorship in it.

Keywords: Toponymy, Arabization, Westernization.

Introduction:

Toponemia or (toponymy) or (topology) or (geographical names) or (geographic names) or (geographical names) or (locational names), which is known in French as (La Toponymie), and in English as (Toponymy), all of which are names for one concept that carries many meanings that are concerned in their purpose with researching place names, and trying to explain their emergence and decline within their geographical and historical scope and the development of their meanings.

The Arabs of old paid attention to this branch of science and created a special term for each type of place name. They composed a great deal of linguistic material on this subject, some of which is still in manuscript form and has not received attention or interest from researchers and those interested. This material was also the basic foundation from which lexicographers set out to build their famous geographical encyclopedias and works.

However, the shortcomings in the field of the Arabic language and its sciences, and the attention paid to the production of the West and the translation of its sciences, have made us reject our Arab heritage in selecting the terms of these sciences, to the extent that the demand for imported terms is increasing, including terms in the field of place names, and this research is considered an attempt in the field of toponymic study. It raises a number of questions that we hope to answer in turn: What is toponymy and what is its importance? Does it exist in our Arab heritage? And how do other cognitive sciences benefit from this science?

To achieve the desired goal, the research plan came as follows:

1– Definition of toponymy and its importance.
2– Types of toponymy.

3– Sciences related to toponymy.

4– Interest in toponymic research among Arabs and the West.

First: Definition of toponymy and its importance

The name has many benefits and advantages that many people do not know. It is a characteristic, a mark, a tool of identification and distinction, with which people and types of creatures are distinguished from humans, jinn, animals, plants, insects, inanimate objects, lands, heavens, planets, galaxies, and everything that God created from the four elements of existence: water, earth, air, and fire. [1].

The name is "a drawing or mark placed on something by which it is known."[2], and also "what is known by something and used to indicate it"[3]. Its importance also lies in the many functions it performs in people's religious and social lives, as well as in the field of communication and building cultures and civilizations. Names are the keys to sciences, windows to thought, and symbols of beings in this vast kingdom whose secrets the Creator, glory be to Him, has revealed to man by means of the name(s).[4].

Because the name is a large title and a vast field of knowledge, it can be approached with different methods on more than one level and from multiple angles. It is subject to study and analysis from a historical perspective, from a linguistic perspective, from a social and psychological perspective, and also from a human perspective. Moreover, understanding some of its dimensions and manifestations is possible based on purely religious, philosophical, and scientific positions.[5].

The ancients actually addressed it from the aforementioned aspects. Grammarians and linguists studied it from the angles of their concerns, and they excelled in observing its phenomena, issues, and problems in great detail, which resulted in subsidiary sciences concerned with sounds, meanings, structures, and circulation. Rhetoricians were interested in it, highlighting its aesthetic, rhetorical, and communicative aspects. Jurists and scholars of jurisprudence were active in studying the rulings, controlling the guidelines of dealing and sound understanding, and clarifying the objectives of the Sharia. Other scholars did the same.[6].

Among these is that places have names by which they are known, and "they are dealt with by the science of place names.(*name-place*) or geographical names (*toponymy*) ([7])It is a Greek term composed of two words (tabo =*top*) means place and (Onoma)*not=*) It means name, and from it toponyme means (place name), and toponymy is the science that is concerned with studying place names.[8].

Where we find Anoma phrase s*onoma*, and *unnatural*, and *onomatopoeia*. They are all expressions that mean identifying, naming a person or a city.[9].

This science is translated into Arabic as (toponymy) or location.[10], or (locational science) or (locationalism)[11]Or (the science of names or geographical names or designations) or (locations), "as the science of toponymy is known as *Tismidegt* in the Amazigh language[12].

We may come across many translations of this science into Arabic. This difference reflects the multiplicity of terms used by Westerners in this field, and also reflects the tendency of some researchers to root this science within the framework of Arabic sciences by linking it with the linguistic and geographical heritage and the books of countries of the ancient Arabs, all of which carry in their connotations "the science that is concerned with studying the meaning and significance of place names."[13].

It is also known as the science of studying the names of places that people associate with by residence, visitation, or mere thought and imagination, with the aim of reaching an understanding and interpretation of the relationship between the name and the named and realizing the connections that people establish with these places.[14].

This science, which we have defined as toponymy, falls within a broader science concerned with the study of names and proper nouns, which is known as "anomastics," that is, man's philosophy in naming what is around him.[15]Spatialism, within the network of branches of this

science, specializes in studying the names of places as a document that bears witness to the connection of man to place over time.[16]We find that most of the scholars who used this term in relation to the history of North Africa in general, and Morocco in particular, during the Roman period meant the media aspect. Among these researchers, we mention, for example, but not limited to, Hans Georg Pflaum, Jean-Marie Lasserre, Jan Le Bohec, Mustafa Al-Ghaithi, and Abdel Latif Al-Gharfi.[17].

To avoid giving a synthetic translation such as the study of names or the study of anomistics, Dr. Mustafa Al-Ghaithi suggests translating it as informational studies, which is in fact close to the term anthroponymy more than one term *onomatopoeia*[18] *w*hile Dr. Mohammed Hassan translates the term anthroponymy into scientific[19].

As for Dr. Ibrahim bin Murad, he referred to the term "nominalism," which he transferred from the French term *onomatopoeia*...to include "a branch of lexicography, and a new study in linguistics specific to the proper noun, fixed and variable, examining its morphological rules and the contextual changes that accompany it, giving it semantic charges that it was free of outside the text."[20].

The importance of toponymy lies in the results obtained from the research process. Some place names may be common, but their meaning is unknown, as the name of the signifier receives attention over the name of the signified, a signified that can draw the features of the language, culture and thought of a society, through what these names reflect of concepts that have a deep historical extension.[21].

However, research into the process of development of place names over time, and the changes and distortions that befall them during their transfer from their original linguistic system to other linguistic systems (Latin, Greek, or Arabic), implicitly refers us to the purposes of adopting toponymy to reach the control and sorting of the original names of places and control their original forms, and even to correct the distortion and distortion that befell them during the process of transfer and circulation.[22].

In the modern era, a group of factors emerged that helped further change, distort and forget many of the old geographical names, including:[23]:

✓ The urbanization and urban expansion that we see in various parts of the Islamic world, and the Arab world in particular, has led to the inclusion of geographical landmarks that were previously outside the framework of cities, and have now become neighborhoods of those cities. Many of those places have taken on new names that are far removed from the old names, of which only a very few landmarks remain that are now given to neighborhoods.

✓ The major changes in the economies of desert countries, especially in the Arabian Peninsula and the Sahara Desert, led to the migration of Bedouins to Arab cities in the hope of benefiting from the care and services generously provided to city dwellers. With their migration, we lost an important heritage, as they were the only ones who preserved the various knowledge related to the desert, its society, land and climate. They were the ones who could distinguish between the names of geographical landmarks in the desert.

No one disputes that the names of proper names, in their entirety, were not placed haphazardly or arbitrarily, but rather were placed with prior awareness by a specific person or a specific group, with the intention of giving the named a character of identification and distinction from other names. Rather, they were often connected to reasons, the search for which indicates reaching the meanings of the names, their contents, and their eras.[24].

The names of sites are evidence of the toponymic continuity in the Maghreb countries across time and space, as there are names of sites that are shared between them, and are not explained by a single tribal origin, but rather are the result of the unity of linguistic roots and language in the countries of the Maghreb, which explains the similarity of many site names in this field, and here they are evidence of the extent of site continuity in the Maghreb countries, and of the necessity of addressing the lexical issue of the aforementioned sites on a Maghreb level.[25]

Second: Types of toponymy

The Arabs had their own method of naming their places, based on[26]:

- Naming the site after the first person who inhabited it or after whom it was attributed. This is an ancient method that has roots in the Torah.

- Naming a proper noun by its description, and this is a matter of establishing the description in place of the described, and it is one of the most prominent guidelines that stand behind assigning some proper nouns to specific locations, because the location becomes famous among people by a description that it soon becomes known by, and it becomes established in people's minds as a proper noun for it.

- Limitation of meaning, which is to give the place its generic name as a proper noun and not another, and this is common in the speech of the Arabs, and it is a type of specifying the general, whether it is singular or plural, definite or indefinite.

- Naming water resources.

- Naming a plant, animal, or other thing that is commonly found in the location.

In addition to the efforts of the ancients, place names are now classified in toponymic studies into several categories, including:[27)]:

- Hydronomy (*Hydronym*), taken from the Greek compound (*hydro*) which means water and studies the names of places that are related to water such as: spring, well, valley, ...

- Oronim *(Oronyme)*, from the Greek compound (Oros) means mountain, studies the names of places that are related to topography such as mountain, plateau, hill...

- The Ethnom *(ethnonym)*, naming proper names that are specific to the race, such as the names of tribes.

- Agiotoponim (*Hagiotoponym*), a compound word of (*Hagios*) It means guardian and saint: It is used for the names of places that are related to righteous guardians and saints.

- The Odonim *(Odonyme)*, from the Greek compound (odos) means road and is concerned with the study of the names of roads, streets and paths.

- Zotoponim[28]: *The zoo toponym,* is a place name of animal origin indicating its presence in the region for which it was named, and it is found in all parts of the world.

- Acronim[29]: *The acronym, a*cronyme or acrotyponym is known as a place composed of letters or a group of letters or words or phonemes derived or borrowed from different names, and this phenomenon is particularly common in foreign languages such as French and English.

- Apotekonim: *The apothecary* is a scientific term that refers to the name of a place specific to a commercial store or market that was and still is located in the place named after it.[30].

- Exonem[31]: (*the exonym) i*n toponymy, an exonym is known as a place that denotes a foreign geographical environment in a language other than the original language in which it was known in the environment in which it originated. Translation or modification is often the reason for the existence of these types of place names, and they are especially common in foreign languages.

- Partial positioning (*Microtoponymy*), place names that relate to plants and animals.

Partial sciences that deal with proper nouns in literary and linguistic terms also branch off from nominalism, including metaphorical nominalism or the scientific deductive substitution dictionary, with which we translated the term *antonomas*e, which means the metaphorical transformation of proper nouns through metaphor and simile, such as "He plays Mozart" (il joue Mozart), meaning he plays a piece of music by Mozart.[32].

Also, after the restoration of sovereignty to the colonized countries, they restore their original names, or create new names by which they are known among the system of countries, and they also reconsider the names associated with the colonial period in confirmation of their independence and emancipation from the colonizer.[33]Here, we can distinguish between two types of toponyms:

❖ **Dedicated typography[34]:** *the dedicatory toponym,* It is a place name that refers to a group or a specific person of great importance and influence in the social environment in which he lived or lives. This type of toponymy exists in various societies and is present in all global cultures.

❖ **masculine toponym[35]:** *The communicative toponym,* the memorial toponym differs from the dedicatory toponym in that it mentions an important historical event that had an impact on social life and affected people's souls. This type of place name is also common in the world because no society is devoid of historical events.

Third: Sciences related to toponymy

Spatial science is considered a multidisciplinary science that draws on many scientific fields that spatial science considers to be auxiliary sciences.

This may be manifested in what is known as the reference structure, which means "that internal structure that motivates the choice of the name, or rather, the reference basis for choosing the name, circulating it, and retaining it, because delving into controlling the internal structure for choosing the name is delving into the elements of the cultural identity of the place. The reference structure of geographical landmarks is the deep cultural structure from which the concepts, perceptions, and philosophical visions drew their roots, so they took from the names a manifest appearance, and from the names of places an expressive meaning, which gave it an expressive energy that people agreed upon in their circulation and description of the place throughout history, or it was changed for a motive from the connected motives, whether by changing the reference structure looking at the name of the place or by the presence of a dominant event that the place contained."[36].

The most important of these auxiliary sciences are:

1. - Linguistics:

Arab grammarians had become acquainted with the Aristotelian theory of limits through Arab philosophers, and they quickly used it in their definition of the word and its three parts, as it was established among them that the word is the expression that denotes a single meaning by position.[37].

The Arabs also relied in their division of the word into noun, verb, and particle on the condition of meaning mentioned in the definition of the word. They returned to this condition and distinguished between two types by taking into account the manner in which meaning is obtained in the word. They believe that meaning in it is either intrinsic, meaning that the meaning in it lies in the word itself, and this is the case with nouns and verbs, or it is not intrinsic, meaning that the meaning in it is inferred from something other than the word itself, and this is the case with the particle.[38].

Hence, the subject of spatial study is primarily linguistic, as it is words and structures that are subject to what the linguistic system is subject to. Comparative historical linguistics provides great benefit to the student of spatial names, because these names mostly belong to ancient times, and may even precede the emergence of writing, so oral communication is the primary means of their circulation, and this leads to their development across the ages, even if this development does not necessarily keep pace with the development of language in general, and this makes the researcher in need of reconstructing the original assumed forms of spatial names in an attempt to reach their meaning, and to learn about the developments they have known, and this is not available to him in the absence of comparative historical linguistic study.[39].

2- Historiography:

If the linguistic dimension depends on the collective or individual linguistic stock, inherited, circulated or forgotten, to control geographical names, then this stock is only revealed to us by history, as a living memory with its texts, documents and names. And if the linguistic stock is important in controlling geographical names, then this stock, no matter how high its balance, will not be present with all its derivatives unless it is based on history to clarify its meanings, which makes the historical dimension present during the control of geographical names, a dimension that

represents the living stock of the name as the framework or historical context in which it was formulated, and the set of influences that contributed to its establishment.[40].

Then, if the geographical dimension depends on the components of the topography of the place, and the conditions associated with it, and the parts that form it, then these components are not expanded over time except by history, as it is the recorder of human movement affected by the nature of the field and its elements. And if the geographical dimension is important in controlling geographical landmarks, then this dimension will not be clear with all its changes and transformations unless it is based on the texts describing it in the different eras, as the sources have clarified them in their diversity of geographical, historical, and jurisprudential books.[41].

The existence of a name such as *Budayul* in the Marwana region, which means the owner of the donkey, the historical facts related to Mukhallad bin Kaddad al-Yafriny, who is called the owner of the donkey Buðyul or Bu awid, and his immortalization in this region is evidence of the role of its inhabitants in the revolution of this character against the Fatimids, are undoubtedly confirmed.[42].

2- Geography:

Geographical flags are linked in their naming to several elements that form a basis, source and reference for them. Among these elements that form the structure of their reference is the geographical dimension, not in consideration of the place named being related to the geographical dimension. This is an aspect present in the analysis from the beginning, given that geographical flags are initially places and areas. However, what is being discussed here is the geographical dimension in the naming and not in the named.[43].

The geographical dimension of the place name is a necessary element for its control, and it cannot be verified or fully controlled except after inspection or what leads to it, in search of the aspect of conformity between the explanations provided for the place name and the surface features or the outward characteristics that the place has acquired.[44].

It seems that the most important manifestation of man's awareness of his surroundings is his distinction between its elements and parts by attaching specific names to them, names that give meaning to the environment, milieu and field in which man settled or passed through, and he had no greater effect that proves his presence in them than his naming of them, a name that may be taken from the topography of the field or one of its elements, colors, landmarks and events, which reveals his influence by it in terms of glorification, belittling or veneration.[45].

Toponymy, as it is an openness to old issues with a new vision that gives priority to the name and its origin in terms of control, study and interpretation, is not separate from research from other sciences, especially those that are related to historical research such as anthropology, archaeology, linguistics and sociology.[46].

The archaeologist's interest in toponymy is an interest in a tool to attract the largest number of names that help reveal many traces of human movement in space and time.[47]In addition to various other human and natural sciences, such as geology, hydrography, ethnography, sociology, psychology, and others.

For example, "addressing the names of geographical locations through inscriptions means digging into the past twice, once in the language of these inscriptions, and another time in the extent of the continuity of the name of the location mentioned in the inscription, and what its maximum or minimum age is, and to which linguistic layer it belongs, and whether it is in the form in which it appeared in the inscriptions that matches its current form, and whether it is in its form today and in the inscriptions that it has been influenced by a language other than its mother tongue, such as the influence of the Canaanite name by Aramaic, the language of the Nabataean inscriptions, or Arabic, the mother tongue of the Nabataeans."[48].

In the current stage, anthropologists have begun to move in the direction of linking the name and naming to the human being, even though the ancients had preceded them in that, while the approach of the contemporaries came accompanied by new methods that the ancients could not have benefited from in their time.[49].

Because the written texts from which place names can be studied are few, and are limited to what has reached us from toponyms in historical and geographical sources, travel books in ancient times, whether Greek or Latin, epigraphic discoveries, and testimonies of Arab geographers and analysts, the researcher must therefore, in order to fill this gap, rely on maps and an inventory of the names contained therein, and complete this with field research. Sometimes he finds himself forced to expand the framework of the study to include ethnonyms, i.e. the names of tribes and peoples, due to the lack, in many cases, of clear boundaries between them and place names.[50].

Fourth: Interest in toponymic research among Arabs and the West

Since the pre-Islamic era, Arabs have taken care of their names and lineages. It is said that the Arab used to seek out and understand the purposes of naming his sons.[51]On the other hand, "most Arabs lived in the desert during their pre-Islamic era, and their lives were strongly linked to natural phenomena."[52],Their interest in the various geographical features surrounding them was a natural matter, since the nature of their life, which depended on wandering in the vast deserts with their herds of camels and sheep in search of grass and pasture, following water wells, required them to know the different paths and trails, to read the clouds and follow the changes in the weather, and to be aware of the locations of water springs and valleys.[53].

If poetry contains their information and knowledge, then we find in it a lot of geographical information, whether it is related to astronomy, weather, winds and clouds, or a description of the surface of the earth and its paths and what it contains of mountains, water, rivers, cities and so on.[54],Perhaps the most prominent thing that the Arabs left behind in abundant material is the area of mentioning the different places in the Arabian Peninsula, and the mention of names did not exceed the borders of their peninsula except rarely.[55].

In ancient times, the Arabs used to record documents, covenants, alliances, pacts, and other things, but literary works were rarely recorded, because poetry was most prevalent in the desert, and only a small minority read and wrote, as illiteracy was widespread there. Therefore, their primary reliance was on memory and oral narration.[56]With the beginning of documentation and writing, the science of countries received attention like other sciences.

Linguists played an important role in these beginnings, as their writings constituted a large part of them.[57]This is what Yaqut al-Hamawi confirms in his dictionary, as he mentioned that he relied in his book on a class of people of literature, meaning linguists, who spoke about Arab places and Bedouin dwellings. He says: "The predecessors have classified books on place names, and we have followed their example and been guided by them. They are of two types: some of them were intended to be classified to mention inhabited cities and famous inhabited countries, and some of them were intended to mention deserts and wastelands, and were limited to the Arab dwellings mentioned in their news and poetry."[58].

The books that were written in the first century AH were not books in the known sense of the word, but rather papers and newspapers on which their authors wrote fragments and parts of the culture of that era. Then these papers and newspapers were collected after that, and some of them were joined together. It is unfortunate that none of them have reached us, as they were all lost due to their long history and people's preoccupation with them in the following centuries and their interest in the large books that absorbed them after the movement of writing developed and flourished, and expanded to include poetry, sermons, language, proverbs, stories, history, philosophy, criticism, and other sciences and knowledge that adorned the Arab library. This movement of writing witnessed a great renaissance since the end of the second century AH, especially after the Arabs learned how to make paper, which they transferred from the Chinese in Samarkand in the year 94 AH/712 AD during the Islamic conquests.[59].

Dr. Hussein Nassar counted about sixty books on places. The author of the Dictionary of Dictionaries omitted from that number what seemed to overwhelm its linguistic material with geographical and news material, and he also ignored what was unclear to him and was unclear to him.[60].

Among the oldest linguistic books that included geographical information are the books of anecdotes that contain eloquent and well-received sayings. These were sources not only for Arabic dictionaries, but also for a lot of geographical information, especially with regard to the homes of tribes, the names of places, waters, and mountains. We have learned about fifty of these books attributed to famous linguists, but they were lost over the course of time and the succession of events, and only a small number of them remain, such as the anecdotes of Abu Zaid, the anecdotes of Abu Ali al-Qali (d. 356 AH), and the anecdotes of Abu Mashhal al-A'rabi (d. 230 AH). It is noticeable about these books of anecdotes that the information in them may be contradictory due to the contradiction of the narrators.[61].

The Arabs are credited with being the first to create toponymic lexicography, "as they are innovators in this field, not imitators, and unprecedented creators. The first geographical dictionaries is "The Dictionary of What Is Obscure" by Al-Bakri (404 AH-487 AH), which was written in the fifth century AH, and is arranged according to the Moroccan alphabet. This dictionary was preceded by Ortelius' dictionary. Ortelius, the first European dictionary in five centuries, and among the other dictionaries is "Dictionary of Countries" by Yaqut al-Hamawi (574-626 AH) in the seventh century AH.[62]And a Moroccan completed a geographical dictionary that is almost the last link in that series of geographical dictionaries that reached its peak, and that is the book "Al-Rawdh Al-Mu'tar fi Khabar Al-Aqtar" by Abdullah Muhammad bin Abdul-Muneim Al-Himyari (d. 900 AH/1495 AD), which was revealed not long ago and published by Levi-Provençal (*Levi-Provencal*)[63].

If we leave aside the chronological arrangement of the composition of geographical dictionaries, we can classify them into three clear categories:[64]:

1. Dictionaries aimed at clarifying the agreement of the spelling and the difference in pronunciation resulting from the difference in diacritics or punctuation marks.

2. Dictionaries intended to explain what is similar in pronunciation but different in location. This cognitive aspect in recording geographical names is of particular importance in removing the confusion that the reader faces as a result of the similarity of names.

3. Dictionaries of countries that have adopted the alphabetical order known in modern times.

We point out here that Arab scholars were interested in creating encyclopedias and dictionaries that dealt with the efforts of their predecessors in various topics and research, "and geography is no different in this from other types of knowledge."[65]The main factor in composing their toponymic dictionaries was the emergence of misspellings and distortions in the names of countries. This distortion was an ancient disease from which even the imams of narrators and senior scholars, such as Al-Asma'i among the linguists, and Yazid bin Harun among the hadith scholars, as Al-Bakri says, were not spared. This startled him and inspired him to compose his book. He says in his introduction, in which he explained his goal of composing, collecting, and writing it: "When I saw that this had become obscure to people, I wanted to make it clear by mentioning every place with a clear structure and a dictionary of letters, so that no ambiguity or distortion would be perceived in it."[66].

Yaqut mentioned in the introduction to his dictionary that he was asked in Marv in the year 615 AH in the council of his sheikh, Imam Fakhr al-Din Abu al-Muzaffar Abd al-Rahim ibn Sa`d al-Sam`ani, about the name (Hubasha), a place mentioned in the prophetic hadith, and it is a market of the Arab markets in the pre-Islamic era. Yaqut said, I see (Hubasha) with a damma on the ha', based on its origin in the language, because the Habashah is a group of people from different tribes. One of the hadith scholars disagreed with him and said:**Habashah**) with the fat-ha, and he insisted on his opinion and was stubborn, so when the meeting ended, Yaqut began searching for this word in the books of language and strange hadith, until he found it after great effort, and it was in agreement with his statement that it was with the damma, at that point he knew that the people needed this book.[67]He says: "Then it occurred to me that the world was in need of a book on this subject that was precise, with perfection and correct wording, written in manuscript, so that it would be a guide in such darkness, and a caller to the light of truth. I was alerted to this noble virtue, and my chest was

opened to attain this merit that the first ones had overlooked, and the past ones had not been guided to it."[68].

However, there are other motives, perhaps the most important of which is what Al-Himyari stated in the introduction to his dictionary, which he began with a well-known, innovative introduction in which he says: "I intended in this collection to mention the places that are famous among people in Arabic and Persian and the regions that are related to a story, and in mentioning them there is a benefit or a speech that contains wisdom, or it has a funny story or a meaning that is pleasant or strange and is good to present. As for what is strange among people and is not related to mentioning a benefit or a story that is good to present, I do not bother to mention it... I stole that from the hours of my time, and made it a spiritual joke, even if my mind and body were set on it, and I satisfied it until it submitted to work, and came according to hope, so it became a repeller of sorrows and a dispeller of worries, a witness to the power of the Self-Sustaining, enriching the company of companions, alerting to the wisdom of the Lord, inciting consideration, recalling the characteristics of countries, pointing to the effects of nations and their events, pointing to the events of generations and their news."[69].

After Yaqut al-Hamawi, successive generations passed during which the country was destroyed or its name was transferred to a place adjacent to the original place, or it was buried by the winds, or it was destroyed by wars and the vicissitudes of time, and some roads and paths changed, and many of the inhabitants migrated from their homes to new homes, and they named them after some of their old places that they loved.[70].

Interest in anometics and toponymy and their application increased intensively in the field of ancient history during the nineteenth century, and witnessed a tangible development starting from the third decade of the twentieth century.[71].

In the modern era, toponymy did not find its way into Arab studies until late, unlike Western studies that have given it great importance since their inception within and outside their geographical borders, as "Biblical studies contributed in the early nineteenth century to interest in physical geography in the Levant, and among the studies conducted in the field of topographic studies (*toponymy*)What Seetzen started in 1805*V.J. SEETZEN)*Through his journey through Jordan and other countries in the region, he was able to identify a number of ancient site names that preceded classical Arabic, as well as what Burckhardt did in 1912 (*BURCKHARDT*) On his journey through southern Syria, he did well in his transfer of the Arabic names, as they were free from the errors that Stezen fell into, and among the biblical researchers who were interested in studying the names of places with reference to some linguistic features was Edward Robinson (*E .ROBINSON*) who visited Palestine and the surrounding area in 1867, has included this in his book (*Biblical research in Palestine and the adjacent region*) in 1867[72].

Modern Arab researchers waited until 1956 to study this subject, when the book (Names of Lebanese Cities and Villages and the Interpretation of Their Meanings, a Linguistic Study) was published in Beirut by Anis Freiha. It is an important study, as it is the first study in the Arabic language to address the names of cities and villages from a linguistic perspective, not only within the framework of Arabic, but also in terms of its reference to other Semitic languages.[73].

There are also deliberate attempts with religious and political motives to obliterate some landmarks with religious or national significance. A striking example of this is the Jews replacing many of the names of ancient geographical landmarks in Palestine with Hebrew names, and the attempts of political regimes in some Islamic countries to change names that are related to the heritage and civilization of Islam in those countries.[74].

This encouraged writing in the field of Palestinian site names, "contributing to preserving the Palestinian character, by defining its features, studying it and recording its components is a basic duty felt by everyone concerned with serving the Palestinian cause in thought or publication. There is no doubt that the geographical framework of this character, i.e. Palestine as a country and a land, is one of the first topics that deserves study, not only to learn more about it, but also to preserve and

define the names of its sites, to consolidate the Arab identity of the martyred country in the face of Israeli measures to obliterate Arab features, change sites and alter names as a fierce means of Judaizing Palestine."[75].

Among the distortions that befall the names of Arab places are the distortions of the geographical and historical Andalusian names, which have ancient and stable Arab origins. The Spanish distorted many of them and replaced them with Spanish names, many of which are difficult to recognize. The author of the Dictionary of Geographical and Historical Andalusian Names in Spanish and Arabic, arranged alphabetically, has noted since the beginning of his Andalusian research more than thirty years ago that literature and journalism in Egypt, and in all other Arab countries, are constantly distorting the Andalusian names in unfortunate ways, even for the most famous of these names, such as Seville, which they distort to Saflea, Valencia, which they distort to Valencia, Toledo, which they distort to Toledo, Malaga, which they distort to Malaga, Alhambra, which they distort to Alhambra, and countless other examples.[76].

The problem was solved lexically in modern Western linguistics, and the subject was devoted to many theoretical studies, books were written about it, university theses were written about it, scientific seminars were organized for it, and the fields of research in it expanded, including morphology, which is concerned with the issue of derivation, and semantics, which is concerned with issues of naming *denomination a*nd the appointment *design* and referral reference and transformation from scientific to general or from general to scientific[77].

Interest in writing in this field continued, and considerable efforts were made in this regard, especially in the middle of the twentieth century, "but it is not of a scientific technical nature, and does not mostly take the rooting approach, nor the lexical semantic approach that traces the word in origin, derivation and meaning, nor knowledge of ancient languages."[78)]Although the attempts are still in their infancy with us, and require concerted efforts, here the importance and necessity of preparing a comprehensive toponymic dictionary or lexicon is raised, which includes an inventory of current place names and ancient names mentioned in literary and archaeological sources, their derivation and meaning, and their historical development, due to their importance in localizing some peoples and sites, or correcting many of the historical and geographical terms and names mentioned in ancient Latin and Greek sources, and medieval Arabic sources.[79].

- **Conclusion:**

In this modest scientific paper, I have defined toponymy as one of the modern sciences that is witnessing increasing interest and great demand from researchers. I have highlighted its importance and the sciences related to it, and I have also referred to the efforts of the Arabs, ancient and modern, in this field. The bottom line of what I have reached is that our Arab heritage is rich in spatial geography terms, and it needs more exploration and induction by referring to the most important books of Arab geographers, travelers and linguists, to be a true scientific material from which lexicographers in the modern era can build dictionaries and toponymic lexicons.

I also urgently call for the need to unite efforts by Arab academies and centers to unify toponymic terminology and build an Arab toponymic database with unified international standards, without excluding all specialists in theoretical and applied lexicography, and all those working in the field of modern geography with those working in ancient geography.

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