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978-1-107-16124-5 - Freedom in the Arab World: Concepts and Ideologies in Arabic Thought in the Nineteenth Century

Wael Abu-ʿUksa

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Freedom in the Arab World

A preoccupation with the subject of “freedom” became a core issue in the construction of all modern political ideologies. Here, Wael Abu-ʿUksa examines the development of the concept of freedom in nineteenth-century Arab political thought, its ideological offshoots, their modes, and their substance as they developed the dynamics of the Arabic language. Abu-ʿUksa traces the transition of the idea of freedom from a term used in a predominantly non-political way, through to its popularity and near ubiquity at the dawn of the twentieth century. Through this, he also analyzes the importance of associated concepts such as “liberalism,” “socialism,” “progress,” “rationalism,” “secularism,” and “citizenship.” He employs a close analysis of the development of the language, whilst at the same time examining the wider historical context within which these semantic shifts occurred: the rise of nationalism, the power of the Ottoman court and the state of relations with Europe.

DR. WAEL ABU-ʿUKSA is a Polonsky Fellow at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and an assistant professor in the Political Science department at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is also the author of *Liberalism and Left in Arab Thought after 1990*.

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WAEL ABU-ʿUKSA

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*To my mother, Nayfi,
and in memory of my father, Nasrat*

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All translations in this book, unless otherwise noted, are by the author. Arabic is transliterated in accordance with the system commonly used in the field of Islamic studies. Diacritics appear in all Arabic transliterations, except in authors' names, where only the *ʿain* and *hamza* are retained. Names in book or journal titles are written using full diacritics. The Arabic definite article, when used with “and,” as in *wa-ʿal* or *wa-ʿil*, is abbreviated to *wal-*, and the first letters in Arabic titles are capitalized. To reduce the length of the notes and because of the frequent lack of complete information, nineteenth-century newspaper and periodical references are cited without the name of the author or the title of the article. Places of publication in Arabic sources are written in English: for example Cairo, not al-Qahira, is used. Arabic terms in the text are italicized, with the exception of words widely used in English, such as Qurʿan, ʿulama, and Tanzimat.