An outstanding man of science and historian, Lisan Al-Din Ibn Al-Khatib (1313-1374) played an important role in the history of the medieval Muslim Spain. In his works he combined many branches of science, that is why his Muslim contemporaries called him “al-‘Allama” (“the greatest scientist”), and the Spaniards gave him an honorary title of “el Poligrafo” “the Encyclopaedist”.

He owns about 60 scientific works, which occupy a special place in the history writings that make up the most complete historical annals of Muslim Spain.

Ibn al-Khatib viewed history as a means of transferring information to the next generations, immortalizing the moral qualities, tracing their lineage and gaining experience.

Marking his era through the official duties he had, Ibn al-Khatib has had an ongoing influence on people – with the books he wrote – especially, in the fields of history and literature, until today.

Key words: Lisan Al-Din Ibn Al-Khatib, history, historiography, culture.

Айтулы галым және тарихшы Лисан ад-Дин Ибн ал-Хатиб ортағасырылық мұсылмандық Испания тарихында манызды орын алады. Ол оз еңбектерінде ғылымдың көптеген салаларын біріктірді. Осы еңбегі үшін замандастары оны ‘аллама, «ғұлама», ал испандықтар el-Poligrafo: «әмбебап галым» деп атады. Оған 60-қа жуық ғылыми еңбектер тиесілі. Олардың арасында мұсылмандық Испанияның тарихы ғылымдарынан құралған тарихқа қатысты шығармалар манызды орын алады.

Ибн ал-Хатиб тарихты келесі ұрпаққа ақпарат беру, өзінің шығу тәртібі арқылы, өткеннен тәжірибе алу және моральдық қасиеттерді мығымдау құралы ретінде қарады.

Ибн ал-Хатиб орындағы ұрпаққа әлі күнге дейін адамдарға ықпал етіп келеді.

Түйін сөздер: Лисан ад-Дин Ибн ал-Хатиб, тарих, тарихтану, мәдениет.

Выдающийся ученый и историк Лисан ад-Дин Ибн ал-Хатиб занимает важное место в истории средневековой мусульманской Испании. В своих работах он объединил многие отрасли науки, за что арабские современники почтительно называли его ‘аллама, «ученый», а испандықтар el-Poligrafo: «ученый-универсал», энциклопедист. Ему принадлежит около 60 научных трудов, в которых особое место занимают сочинения по истории, составляющие наиболее полную историческую летопись мусульманской Испании.

Ибн ал-Хатиб рассматривал историю как средство передачи информации следующим поколениям, укрепления моральных качеств, прослеживая их происхождение и получение опыта.

Ибн ал-Хатиб имел влияния на людей благодаря тем книгам, которые он писал, особенно в области истории и литературы, до сегодняшнего дня.

Ключевые слова: Лисан ад-Дин Ибн ал-Хатиб, история, историография, культура.
His Life

Lisân al-din Ibn al-Khatib, a member of a noble Yemeni family who migrated to Syria from Andalusia after the conquest of Andalusia¹, was born on 25 Racab 713/15 November 1313² in Loja, a city in the west of Granada. His early education started under the inspection of his father. Afterwards, he was educated in the fields of religious studies, grammar, poetry and natural sciences by the distinguished scholars of Banu Ahmar dynasty and of North Africa³.

Ibn al-Khatib, who drew Yusuf I (r. 733-755/1333-1354) attention after having penned a eulogy for him, gained his favour and was accepted to the palace and appointed as the grand vizier, or the councillor of state, and became the chief of the royal council, diwan (Shavval 749/January 1349).⁴

Ibn al-Khatib had successfully conducted the duties he had until Abû al-Walid captured the reign of Ismail II in 760 AH/1359 AD. After that, the toppled Sultan Muhammad V fled the country and went to Wâdi Âsh. Though Ibn al-Khatib spent efforts to compromise with the new administration, he was arrested and imprisoned and they confiscated all his assets with his opponents’ incitement against him.⁵

With the involvement of Sultan Abû Sâlim, who kept close watch on the incidents taking place in Banu Ahmar dynasty⁶, and through the efforts spent by his official secretary Ibn Marzûq, Ibn al-Khatib was released from prison and took refuge in Morocco with Muhammad V. (761 AH/1359 AD).

When Sultan Muhammad V succeeded to the throne again about three years after the coup (763 AH/1362 AD), Ibn al-Khatib was invited to

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²Vila J., Bosch, “Ibn al-Khatib”, El2, Leiden 1986, III, 835-837.
³Shihâb al-dîn Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Maqqarî, Nafh al-Tîb min ghusn al-Andalus al-ratîb wa zikru vezirihâ Lisân al-din Ibn al-Khatib, (Ed. Yusuf al-Sheyh M. al-Bukai), 10 vols. Beirut 1419/1998, VI, 63.
⁴Ibn al-Khatib, al-Ihâta fî akhbâr Gharnâta, (Ed. M. AbdullahInân), 4 vols.Cairo 1973-1977, IV, 443; Ibn al-Khatib, al-Lamha al-badriyya fi al-Dawla al-Nasriyya, (Ed. Lacnâlîyâ al-Tûrîsî al-Arâbî), Beirut 1980, p.104; Bosch, “Ibreal-Khatib”, El2, III, 835-837.
⁵Ibn al-Khatib, Ilhâta, IV, 443; Ibn al-Khatib, A’ma’l al-a’lâmînフィmen bûyi’a kabla al-ihtilâmîn mulûk al-Islâm, (Ed. Levi-Provençal, E.), Beirut 1956, p. 311.
⁶Ibn al-Khaldûn, Kitâb al-Iber, 5 vols. Bulak, 1284, VII, 333.
his former position. Ibn al-Khatib’s return to his former position with a more powerful stance (2 Ramadan 763 AH / 25 June 1362 AD) was not welcomed in some quarters and his activities caused disturbance to some.

Disturbed by the recent developments, and corresponding secretly with the Sultan of Marinid, Ibn al-Khatib took refuge in Sultan Abū al-Faris Abd al-Aziz’s country after having been informed that he would be taken under the protection of the Sultan (1 Camaz al-akhir 773/10 December 1371 AD).7

The successive attempts to the Marinid dynasty made by those wishing to see Ibn al-Khatib’s arrest and execution failed. At that time, young Abū al-Abbās Ahmad bin Abū Sālim, who had close ties with the Banu Ahmar dynasty, was enthroned.8 Thus, Ibn al-Khatib was arrested by the new regime and imprisoned in early 776 AH/1374 AD.

Ibn al-Khatib, who had been unjustly judged by the legislative council from Banu Ahmar dynasty, was massacred in his cell during the process of ongoing debates over his execution due to his ideas in his books leading to accusations of blasphemy 776 AH/1374 AD. The corpse, which had been buried, was taken out, set on fire, and buried again.9

As a Historian

Ibn al-Khatib viewed history as a means of transferring information to the next generations, immortalizing the moral qualities, tracing their lineage and gaining experience. According to him, history is a science, which collects and stores the events that took place in the past, draws lessons from them, and allows people to prepare for the future.

According to Ibn al-Khatib history is also of great significance from religious point of view. This can be clearly seen both in his works about history and in other works as well. Because, according to him: “History reminds those who are unaware about God, thereby helping people approach God. Knowledgeable people, upon feeling the power of God, discover their faith and find salvation. Those, having witnessed the death of cruel and ruthless people, draw lessons from this for themselves. Hence, they realise the power of God better and their faith grows stronger.”10

Ibn al-Khatib admits that history is of great importance due to the fact that it is comprised of ever-changing events that are doomed to vanish so long as they are not recorded. Because those witnessing some events are indeed rare. Therefore, as time passes, they are prone to be forgotten in time.11

Owing to his ideas, Ibn al-Khatib can be counted as a ‘didactic’ and ‘pragmatic’ historian. Because, in this type of historiography drawing a lesson from history and drawing effective conclusions are one of the fundamental aims.12 This perspective can also be seen in Ibn al-Khatib’s works. For example, when examining the relations between France and Castalia–Aragon, Ibn al-Khatib, having informed his readers extensively about the topic, stated that he deliberately prolonged the topic in order to warn Muslims to be more cautious, and to draw lessons from the events.13

Ibn al-Khatib wrote history so as to introduce the Muslim societies and states in the west, especially the Banu Ahmar dynasty.14 Though he wrote seventeen books about history, only ten of them have survived today.

The works of Ibn al-Khatib on history are comprised of two sections. In the first sections, the history, cities, social and cultural structure of Banu Ahmar dwelt upon. The second sections of the works, which constituted a great part, focused on people. In these sections, the biographies of the people from different layers of societies in North Africa and sometimes of the distinguished people in Christian Spain as well as the biographies of those in Banu Ahmar dynasty were concentrated on.15 We call this practice – by which Ibn al-Khatib gave information about people in alphabetic order - ‘person-oriented narration’. The content of the second sections was not restricted to biographies only, but he also gave key and historically valuable information. Because, ‘spatial framework’ has broadened to a great extent in this type of person-oriented narration.

In his works pertaining to history, Banu Ahmar dynasty takes priority over other subjects. Hence, Ibn al-Khatib can be regarded as a local historian.

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7 Ibn al-Khatib, A’mâl, 316-318.
8 Ibn al-Khaladîn, Iber, VII, 335-340.
9 Ibn al-Khaladîn, Iber, VII, 341-342; The grave, which is near B-b al-Mahrûk in Morocco, was restored by the Moroccan government (during the reign of King al-Khamis) in 20th century and a tomb-like building was constructed on it. Inân, Lisân al-dîn, 174; Sâim 42.
10 Ibn al-Khatib, Ihtâta, I, 81. Ibn al-Khatib sets forth some evidence taken from Koranic verses so as to confirm this view. 11 Hûd 120, 12 Yusuf 3.
11 Ibn al-Khatib, Lamha, 19.
12 Historical works have been classified into groups as to their style. 1. Transmitting 2. Didactic / Pragmatic 3. Reason-Result 4. Social History. Z. Veliî Togan, Tarihte Usûl, Ist. 1969, p. 2-3.
13 Ibn al-Khatib, Ihtâta, II, 48.
14 Ibn al-Khatib, A’mâl, 277; Ibn al-Khatib, al-Kâtîba al-kâmîna fi men lakînîhu bi al-Andalus min shuarâî miet al-sâminâ, (Ed. Ihsân Abb-s), Beirut 1983, p. 28.
15 See Ibn al-Khatib, A’mâl, 332-338.
However, his successful narration observed in all his historical works has led him to be called as a ‘great historian’.

Ibn al-Khatib penned the political history of Banu Ahmar as well as writing its history of civilisation. In his works he not only examined the political and administrative position of Banu Ahmar but also analysed its social structure. While writing the history of Banu Ahmar dynasty, Ibn al-Khatib also took special interest in the Muslim states in Maghreb as well as the Christian states in the north.

In his works related to history, it has been observed that his audience was not only comprised of statesmen, administrators and luminaries but also common people. Because, in some of his works he preferred a highly erudite style while in some works he favoured to write in plain language.

Ibn al-Khatib benefited from various sources, which had different characteristics. Apart from the widely known sources, he also made use of very different sources, such as; a piece of information carved in a tombstone, or private notes belonging to a certain person, or personal comments in the margin of the cover page of a book, or sometimes inscriptions in the walls of a building.

In the prologues of his works related to history or in sections, which he specially added, he gave information about geographical features, social characteristics and administrative structures of Banu Ahmar country, and sometimes he went into details.

While transmitting historical information, he, for some reasons, made criticisms and analyses. Ibn al-Khatib, time to time, criticised both the sources from which he cited and the persons about whom he gave information. It was also observed that he criticised the former historians from the point of view of methodology.

Ibn al-Khatib, if he was not sure about the credibility of his sources, he clearly preferred to use certain expressions, like ‘yu’abberru’ (it is stated that…), ‘yäqalu’ (it is said that…), and ‘qile’ (it is expressed that…), etc. If he had some doubts about the information he had, he clearly expressed it and added: “I am still in the process of investigating the credibility of the information I quoted” to show his sensitivity about the issue. If he was so sure about his sources, he also asserted “if this news is correct, I cannot possibly be unaware of it!”.

Ibn al-Khatib was not able to influence his contemporaries in the field of history. For instance, his contemporaries, like Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Battûta, and Ibn al-Ahmar did not make any negative or positive comments about Ibn al-Khatib as a historian. However, Ibn Khaldun, and Ibn al-Ahmar praised Ibn al-Khatib’s literary identity and poetry and expressed their opinions with quite extravagant words.

Ibn Khaldun called Ibn al-Khatib as ‘one of the miracles of God in poetry and prose’. However, we also observed that Ibn al-Khatib was not mentioned in Ibn Khaldun’s works pertaining to ideas and thought. Furthermore, we have concluded that, though not expressing clearly, Ibn Khaldun criticised Ibn al-Khatib’s historiography. The reason why we have reached this conclusion lies in the fact that the style of history-writing, which Ibn Khaldun generally criticised without revealing any name, invariably overlaps with that of Ibn al-Khatib’s historiography.

Though widely known in the milieu of the scholars, Ibn al-Khatib is not, unfortunately, known by large audience. We believe that the reason for this lies in the fact that the political struggles, especially the virulent hate campaigns against him in his home country, thereby leading to burning of his books in the squares, have all been effective to a great extent. On the other hand, his remarkable erudition and frequent use of literary applications have all contributed to misconceptions about him or his recognition only by a small minority.

Marking his era through the official duties he had, Ibn al-Khatib has had an ongoing influence on people – with the books he wrote – especially, in the fields of history and literature, until today. Hence, he has influenced the authors and thinkers of the following eras to a great extent. The historians, such as Ibn Farhun (d. 1397 AD / 799...
Ibn al-Khatib's work, **Mufradat**, can be regarded as a sort of dictionary for some certain important words. There are also words from medical terminology in this work. Yet, as Brockelmann expressed, this work is not only a medical dictionary.

Ibn Askar al-Gassani’s work, called **al-Ikmâl**, is one of the sources from which Ibn al-Khatib benefited in **İhâta**. However, Ibrahim Mustafa, who studied Ibn al-Khatib’s sources, was not able to ascertain this. Thus, he did not mention this source in the study, which he conducted about the sources used by Ibn al-Khatib. Again, in the same study, Mustafa Ibrahim mentioned Musa al-Radi (d. 955 AD / 344 AH) among the sources benefited by Ibn al-Khatib; however, he also added: “Ibn al-Khatib did not mention from which of Radi’s books he had benefited.” Actually, Ibn al-Khatib stated that he had benefited from the book called **al-Istiaâb** by Radi on page 133 in **İhâta** II.

Apart from these, it will be appropriate to mention two points in general. Ibn al-Khatib strove hard to appoint his own men both to the palace and to the high-ranking positions. He never hesitated to get rid of those who were able to become affiliated with the royal family in the palace without his permission, or those who were held in high esteem by the royalty or even those who were likely to be shown respect in the palace in the long run. However, all these political struggles led to his murder.

Numerous things have been said and written about Ibn al-Khatib after his death. But an incident, which took place fifty years after his death, is of significance. During the first reign of the sultan, Abû Abdullah Muhammad from Banu Ahmar dynasty (820 – 830 AH / 1417 – 1427 AD), a copy of Ibn al-Khatib’s work, **İhâta**, was donated by the vizier and the qadi (Islamic magistrate), Abû Yahya bin Asım, to Yusufiya Madrasah (theological school attached to a mosque) in Granada. The vizier eulogized Ibn al-Khatib in the charter of the will, which he especially wrote for the work, **İhâta**.**32** We can claim that this could be regarded as a sort of reinstatement of his shattered memoir.

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25 Kalkashandi, Subh al-ashâ, (Ed. M. Husayîn Shamsaddîn), 14 vols. Beirut-Lebanon, 407/1987, I, 128-129; II, 458-461, 535-537; VI, 458-461, 535-536; VII, 40-41, 64-69, 70-73, 108-110, 348-349; XI, 4-6.
26 Ibn al-Khatib, Sharh Raqm al-hulal fî nazm al-duwal, (Ed. Adnân Darvish) Damascus 1990, p. 42.
27 Hasan al-Zayyât Târîkh al-adab al-Arabî (Cairo nodate), 343.
28 Ibn Hazm, Güvercin Gerdanlığı (Trans. Mahmut Kanik, Ist. 1995), 30.
29 Ibn al-Khatib, Mi’yâr al-ihtiyâr fî zikr al-ma’ahid wa al-di‘yâr, (Ed. M. Kamal Shabâna), Mavsû’a al-turâs al-insâniyya, IV, 288-308; George Sarton, Introduction to the History of Science, New York 1975, II, 1762; Hannâ al-Falhûrî, al-‘ âmî fî Târîkh al-adab al-Arabî, Beirut 1986, p. 928.
30 Ibn al-Khatib, İhâta, IV, 462.
31 Brockelmann, Târîkh al-adab al-Arabî (Trans. Mahmut Fehmi Hicazi), 9 vols. Egypt 1995, VII, 529.
32 Maqqarî Nafh al-Tîb, VIII, 276.
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