

Understandings Maghreb Traveler's Notes and Writer's Texts: Phantasmagorias of the Western Crusaders in the Muslim West during the fall of Alandalus Religious Tolerance History (500-1070)

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Abstract: Ghiyath Al-Din Naqqshwho wrote, in Persian, a detailed account of his travel from Herat to Beijing on a diplomatic mission in 1420-1422. It became one of the most detailed accounts of China in the Persian and Turkish literature for the next century or two. In the 14th century we can trace Ibn Battuta (أبن بطوطه) (1368 – 1304 or 1369), Moroccan world traveler in his *Rihla* (1355) – literally entitled "A Gift to those Who Anticipate the Wonders of Cities and the Marvels of Traveling". We have also another example from the 13th century Yaqut al-Hamawi (ياقوت الحموي) (1229–1179) *Mu'jam Al Buldan* (نجومالبلدان) (اطلس الدول) (Dictionary of Countries). From the 12th century, we find Abu ad-Din al-Husain Muhammad ibn Ahmad Ibn Jubayr (1145 – 1217) *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr* ((1185) رحلات ابن الجابري). The core interest of the essay is to underline how the Maghreb travelers contributed in the literature of Journeys as great writers who traveled from Maghreb and lived in the Muslim Spain at that time.

Keywords: Views, images, Alandalus, Western Crusaders, Muslim West, Arab Travelers, Religious Tolerance, Literature of Travels, literature of Journeys,

Introductory Notes:

Ghiyath Al-Din Naqqshwho wrote, in *Persian*, a detailed account of his travel from *Herat* to *Beijing* on a diplomatic mission in 1420-1422. It became one of the most detailed accounts of China in the Persian and Turkish literature for the next century or two. In the 14th century, we can trace Ibn Battuta (أبن بطوطه) (1368 – 1304 or 1369), Moroccan world traveler in his *Rihla* (1355) – literally entitled "A Gift to those Who Anticipate the Wonders of Cities and the Marvels of Traveling". We have also another example from the 13th century *Yaqut al-Hamawi* (ياقوت الحموي) (1229–1179) *Mu'jam Al Buldan* (نجومالبلدان) (اطلس الدول) (Dictionary of Countries). From the 12th century, we find *Abu ad-Din al-Husain Muhammad ibn Ahmad Ibn Jubayr* (1145 – 1217) '*The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*' (1185) رحلات ابن الجابري.

Travel writings are a variety that has, as its focus, accounts of real or events and places during the journey. The category encompasses a number of styles that may range from the *documentary* to the indicative, from literary to journalistic, and from the humorous to the serious. Maghreb Arab Travel writings are often associated with pilgrims and migrants and include works of a momentary nature such

as *guidebooks*, observations and reviews. Effective travel writings allow us to brilliant recollection of the historical events described in way that is useful.

Our writers of this essay will represent a different style of documentations during their journey based on Views from Maghreb Traveler's Notes and Writer's Texts: Phantasmagorias of the Western Crusaders in the Muslim West during the Fall of Alandalus, Spain. The core interest of the essay is to underline how the Maghreb travelers contributed in the literature of Journeys as great writers who traveled from Maghreb and lived in the Muslim Spain at that time. In another words, this essay will draw from them certain Phantasmagorias of the crusaders as they appeared to the Muslim Spain's writers and travelers.

Alandalus and Its History:

The town of Barbastro (510 to 1075), which situated in the upper front of Allandale's retaken and subjugated by the military of Franks, and the fallen of this town, caused compassion in the rest of the Muslim Spain; it was the first town retaken by Christians from Muslim Spain. In the same period, several Muslim towns were lost from Muslims. In fact, the loss of Barbastro differs from another sieges and loss territory.

In this frame, we gathered a unique number of texts of Arab travelers and writers, literary and historical, monitoring the reaction of the Muslim Spain faced with a very aggressive result. This paper will draw from them certain images of the crusaders as they appeared to the Muslim Maghreb Spain's writers and travelers.

For many centuries, Alandalus had shared the most parts of the Iberian Peninsula with Christians living in the northern part of Spain, who were, at that time, divided into tiny kingdoms. However, at the beginning of the 5th and 12th century, the political theatre reversed that the state of caliphate Umayyad disintegrated into several principalities and regions. Many problems occurred, especially in Cordoba, **Granada, Toledo, Seville and in Alandalus**: the Christian troops of the north, aiding one Muslim faction against another, leading to the complete conquer of the city, as a direct military contact¹ between Muslims and Christians. Such experience, for the Muslims Spain, seemed nothing to have them to be prepared for the shock of the fall of Barbastro, nearly for a century.

Maghreb Travelers' Contribution to the Muslim West:

Ibn Bassam (أبْنِ بَسَامٍ), in his text entitled *al-Dhakhira fi mahasin ahl Al-Jazeera*, collected the fragmented of two *risalas*. The first, written by Abu Muhammad Abd Allah, son of the jurist Abu Umer Yusuf abd Allah, Ibn al-Barr², and himself a Katib and prose writer. However, Ibn Bassam only copied the passages, which he thought the most clarified, and readable text³. Ibn Abd al-Barr writes as though the residents of Barbastro was seeing the whole of al-Andalusia in search of outside assistance.

Ibn Bassam's First Risala (the first message)

1For more details see: Ibn Idhari, *al-Bayan al-Magrib fi Akkbar muluk al Andolus wa-IMaghrib*, v III, ed. E. Levi-Provencal, Paris, 1930, pp. 90-100.

2Further details on Abu Umar Ibn Abd al-Barr, see Martin, M., *La obra genealógica de Ibn Abd Al-barr*, *Actas de las Jornadas de Cultura Arabe e Islamica*, Madrid, 1981, pp. 200-230.

3Ibn Bassam, *al- Dhakhira*, ed. I. Abaas, Beirut, 1979, III\1 pp. 170-176.

The first Risala⁴ describes the disaster state of affairs in Barbastro with deep emphasis of the feeling of the cruelty of the Christian conquerors, he said, 'they surrounded us as the necklace surrounds the neck, imposing upon us the misfortune of agony and the affliction of war and spears. Night and day, their thunderbolts fell upon us and their calamities swept over us'⁵. Abu Muhammad Ibn Abd al Barr continues to describe the city seizure: 'Satan became arrogant, the tyrant made himself famous, church bells rang openly, devils became daring, heathen pigs ran mad and houses became like baking ovens; body numbers cut, ravage perpetrated, furniture seized, mosques burnt, Korans destroyed, women raped and goods destroyed'⁶.

After the Christian' capture of the city, and during the seizure, Abd Barr describes the city through his Muslim countrymen:" what your opinion would be Muslims when you see mosques, after having witnessed Quran recitation and sweetness of prayer calling, covered by polytheism. And slander loaded with bells crosses in replacement of followers of the Merciful imam⁷, and pious men those are dragged by the infidels, as sacrificial animals brought to the butcher".

He continued further "they prostrate themselves humbly in our mosques which are then burnt and reduced to ashes while the infidels laugh and our religion wails, weeps)⁸. The end of the Risala concluded with a call for Jihad, asking all Muslims to come and help to recover the Muslim town of Barbastro".

Ibn Bassam Second's Risala

The second Risala dominated by the same theme, which Ibn Bassam preserved by and written by Abu Hafis Umar b. al-hasan b. Abd al-Rahman al-Hawzani. He was a native of Seville, where he attained a high prestige as a Muslim scholar. In addition, he was a trustworthy friend of the king -to be al-Mutadid. During the king's rule, al-Hawzani seeing the king's ruthless way of governing, which became famous throughout Alandalus for his cruelty, as he stored the heads of his dead enemies in a room in his palace, with labels attached to them were their names written!

Al-Hawzani asked for permission to leave the country and undertake a rihla⁹ to the east¹⁰; his departure from Alandalus was in 1049. Moreover, returned to Allandale's and established himself in Murcia, under the protection of Banu Tahir, then ruler of Murcia. When he heard the news of the fall of Barbastro town, he wrote a request to the king of Seville urging him to fight the unbelievers; Ibn Bassam recorded parts of his Risala, in which he inserted a number of verses.

The letter of al-Hawzani based on using the fall of Barbastro as a pretext to build up a carefully literary piece: 'In the image of war there is a beautiful bride whose clothes attire the crowds; in its complexion there is a grey-haired severity whose blaze withdraws the life of people'¹¹.

The Risala, which addressed by Al-Hawzani to a king, not to the Muslims of Spain, as was the one written by Ibn Abd al-Barr. He used it as a device to permit his return to Seville as he asked Al-Mutadid's opinion as to where he should go and establish himself. Al-Mutadid suggested that al-

4Risala is an Arabic word and in English means message or notes.

5Ibid. P.171.

6Ibid, p. 176-178.

7Imam, in Arabic, is a religious person who led the collective prayers in the mosque.

8Ibid, P. 176.

9Rihla means in Arabic a Trip or Journey

10He visited Mecca for pilgrim, Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Sicily.

11Ibn Bassam, Dhakhira, II/1, P.86.

Hawzani return to Seville and he explained to him that he had already taken measures to send aid to the threatened and defeated Muslims of the North. In fact, al-Mutadid had sent 600 equestrians, and small part of army, which counted of 6,500 bowmen¹². Here, the Risala by al-Hawzani has also been over-emphasized.

The personality of al-Mutadid, as a man of a special characteristic, did not need to argue to offer military assistance, or fight; in fact, he had expanded his kingdom by a ruthless method at the expense of his neighbors. As a result, after two years later, al-Hawzani decided to return to his native homeland, and then later killed him with his own hands, in January 11, 1068.

The other literary text is the al-qasida (القصيدة)¹³ which written by Abu Muhammad Abd Allah b. Faraj b. Gazlun, known as Ibn al-Ghassal. A native of the Muslim Toledo, he studied with well-known teachers and thinkers of his time and became a judge in Talavera. Besides that, he was renowned for his capability of understanding and explaining of hadith¹⁴¹⁴, Arabic language and literature. In the main time, he was an ascetical person who led a piosity life with many Kara mat¹⁵¹⁵ were attributed.

Ibn Gassal's elegy as well as another pieces he composed after the fall of Toledo has been translated into other languages¹⁶. The alqasida constitutes of 13 lines; describes the sufferings inflicted on the Muslims in Barbastro town, by the polytheists, the humiliation and loss Muslim lives, including old people and the rape of virgin's girls. He stated through his poem that the responsibility for the disaster, he says; fall upon the shoulders of Muslims themselves, because it was in fact a punishment of God for their sins.

All the three literary works have some thoughts in common, although they differ in character and intention. They seek to provoke a fast response from both the community and the ruler. However, these writers went to resort to literary forms in order to counter-attack the crusaders since their Muslim brothers were suffering by God's enemies.

Abu Marwan Ibn Hayyan: the Maghreb Historian

The oldest historical text relating to the fall of Alandalus of Spain, which preserved by Ibn Bassam, was written by the Cordoba historian Abu Marwan Ibn Hayyan, the greatest Arab historian. His father Abu AL Mansour Ibn Ameer as a minister during the Muslim rule of Allandale's, later he become as minister until the fall of the Ibn Jahor's state when Ibn Abbad conquered Cordoba in 1059. Ibn Hayyan died in 1064, after completed his major historical work entitled "Al Muqtabis Fi Tarehk Ahl Alandalus" which used by Ibn Bassam as main references of his writings. Ibn Hayyan was not only describing the fall of Barbastro town, but he collected images of crusaders in several Andalusia's towns¹⁷.

Here it is worthy to deal with the original Arabic text of Ibn Hayyan, which entitled "Almuqtabis fi Akkbar Ahl Al Andalusia" to trace the images it gives of the invasion of the crusaders. Ibn Hayyan

12Ibn Idhari, Al bayan, III, pp.220-227.

13It's a kind of literary poet in the Arabic literature

14Hadith means the explanations of the Quran and the statements that have said by the prophet Mohammad.

15Karamat means in Arabic...A man who lives a pious life with miracles as an evidence of his relationship with God.

16 Most of his writings has been translated into Spanish and French, and become one of the most detailed accounts of China in the Persian and Turkish literature for the several centuries

17Ibn Hayyan has written several historical texts describing the fall of the Muslim Caliphate: (1) Almuqtabis fi Tarehk Ahl Alandalus (2) Alma teen, in sixty parts (3) Akkbar the Ameria's State (4) AlbatshaAlkubra (Grand), which means the Grand Conspiracy of Al Andalusia Fall.

described the crusaders and their invasion of the Muslim towns. In fact, he believes that the Christians were not the real enemies of the Andalusia; they had come from beyond the Pyrenees, and he calls them as the Army of Normans.

In his analysis, they were foreigners who were carrying with their mission a culture of subversion and ferociousness. He stated that the Christians break their promise for safe conduct for the Muslim inhabitants who are ready to leave their towns, but then kill them. In another words, Muslims subjected to torture after having promised Alaman (Security), which meant the security. The second themes in Ibn Hayyan's narrative *Almuqtabis fi Akkbar Ahl Al andolus* are the booties. When Barbastro fallen down he stated in his words " the general of the Roman horse regiments had a share of about 600 slaves-Muslim girls, all of them virgin, and 600 loads of jewelry ". His terminology used to designate the crusaders does offer special inimitableness: they called *mushrikun*, *aduw*, *nasara*, and **kaffra**¹⁸ .

Conclusion and Remarks

Several lessons can be derived from our travelers' writers. Tolerance is being patient, understanding and accepting of anything different. An example of tolerance is Muslims, Christians and Atheists being friends. Tolerance defined as a fair and objective attitude towards others whose beliefs and lifestyles are different from that which we are experiencing. Because the human brain is complex, many individuals are apt to behave and think differently from one another.

Therefore, we see that even historically Islam was prepared to live in peace with the followers of other monotheistic religions, especially Judaism and Christianity. All Maghreb' travelers' writers to the rulers of various Muslim Spanish towns are interesting documents for our discussion for our today world. Even most of the writings did threaten them of a military aggression if they did not accept the message of departure from the cities..." We have an interesting historical document from 'AliZaynul Abidin. This document is entitled as *Risala*¹⁹ 'Al huquq²⁰ which means "The Charter of Rights". This *Risala* has mentioned rights related to various issues and people in human society, the last part is on the rights of non-Muslims in a Muslim society. Among other things, it says: "And there must be a barrier keeping you from doing any injustice to them, from depriving them of the protection provided by God, and from flaunting the commitments of God. The Muslim history, unfortunately, the events after the deportations of all Muslim Span from Spanish territories to the present time have created an atmosphere in the Western world where Islam is proprietary as a religion of "terror" and where Muslims generally labeled as terrorists. History books, especially by the Orientalists, like to present the Islam phobia of the Muslims as holding different faiths in one hand and the sword in another, thus implying that wherever the Muslims went, they gave only two choices to the conquered people.

However, more historians that are serious would challenge this distorted picture of Muslims. There is no denying that Muslims in Middle East and Asia conquered lands of other peoples but they did not impose their religion over them. There is a clear distinction, in history, between, "the expansion of Muslim states" and "the expansion of Islam" as a religion. For example, Muslims ruled India for many centuries, but majority of its citizens always remained non-Muslims. India came under Muslim rule by

18Ibn Hayyan has written several historical texts describing the fall of the Muslim caliphate: (1) *Almuqtabis fi Tarehk Ahl Alandalus* (2) *Alma teen*, in sixty parts (3) *Akkbar the America's State* (4) *Albatsha Alkubra*, which means the Grand Conspiracy of Al Andalusia Fall. He described the Crusaders as they are called *mushrikun*(unbelievers who believe on more than Gods), *aduw* (Enemies), *nasara*(Christians , and *kaffra*(invaders with religion).

19Means in Arabic messages or letter

20 Means in Arabic Rights

force, but Islam penetrated among the people of India by spread and example of the Sufis. Time does not allow going into this discussion more than this. However, one say one thing about the issue of tolerance towards minorities and freedom of practicing religion. If we were to compare the attitude of the Muslim rulers towards the minorities living under their rule during the nineteenth century, with the attitude of westerns towards their minorities, I ultimatum to say that the record of the Muslims would be much better. I think it would be appropriate to quote Roderick H.Davison, a prominent Western historian of the Ottoman Empire, on the issue of tolerance towards the minorities he writes: "It might in fact have been argued that the Turks were less "oppressive of their subject people than were Prussians of the Poles, the English of the Americans of the Negroes, there is evidence to show that in this period {late 19th century Irish", there was emigration from independent Greece into the Ottoman Empire, since some Greeks found the Ottoman government more generous master " than their own Greek government".

Maghreb Travelers Names

Names of the Arab Writers and Travelers

Ibn al-Ghassal أبن الغزال

Abu Marwan Ibn Hayyan أبو مروان ابن حيان

Abu AlMansour Ibn Amer أبو منصور أبن عامر

Abu Muhammad Abd Allah أبو محمد أبن عبد الله

Jurist Abu Umer Yusuf abd Allah

القاضي أبو عامر يوسف عبد الله

Ibn al-Barr

ابن البار

Abu Muhammad Ibn Abd al Barr أبو محمد ابن عبد البار

Ibn Bassam ابن بسام

Al-Hawzani الهوازاني

Abu Hafs Umar b. al-hasan

أبو حفص عمر الحسان

Abu Muhammad Abd Allah b. Faraj b. Gazlun, known as Ibn al-Ghassal,

Suggested Reading and Consultad References:

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- Ibn Bassam, al- Dhakhira, ed. I. Abaas, Beirut, 1979, III\1 pp. 170-176 (الخيرة)

- Ibn Idari, Al bayan, III, pp.220-227. (البيان)

- Ibn Hayyan (1064), after "Al Muqtabis Fi Tarehk Ahl Alandolus" (المقتبس في تاريخ اهل الاندلس).