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Original Article

Exploring Muḥallabī and His Place in Islamic Geography

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Abstract: Since Strabo's work titled Geography, the content of such informative works has expanded and the contribution of the field of Geography to the field of History has increased. Western and Eastern sources provide geographical information and a wide range of information that will help us understand the period. The information in the works of Muslim Geographers also has rich content. In these works, it is possible to find a wide variety of information about both general world geography and Muslim geography. The information contained in the works of travelers is mostly based on their observations and therefore has historical value.[1] These geography books are regarded as first-hand sources, especially among historians. The main reason for this is that the authors themselves verify most of the information contained in these works. Apart from being a source, it is also important that their content is rich. Because, in addition to historical and geographical information, there is also economic, cultural, anthropological, and philological information. In this respect, it is possible to consider these works among the basic sources of cultural history. Muḥallabī's Kitāb al Azīzī-el-Masālik wa al Mamālik is one of the works written in the field of geography. It is a unique work on the geography of sub-Saharan Africa. It is a work written on the geographies traveled and seen by the author himself. In this respect, the information it provides is a first-hand source.

Keywords: Muḥallabī, Kitāb al Azīzī-el-Masālik wa al Mamālik, First-hand Sources, Historical Geography, Islamic Geography.

Introduction to Life and Works of Muḥallabī: Hasan b. Aḥmad al Muḥallabī was a traveller and scholar of the Fatimid rule in Egypt. However, unfortunately, Arabic biographical books are silent about him. Kātip Chalabī, the author of *Kashf al Dhunūn*, stated in his work that the book *al Masālik wa al Mamālik* became famous with Azīzī b. Aḥmad al Muḥallabī. He gave his name as Husayn instead of Hasan, following al Yaqūt al Hamāwī. Ibn al Adīm also mentions that he was a righteous and valuable person and states that he was the author of *al Masālik wa al Mamālik*. Muḥallabī wrote this book in the second half of the 4th century during the reign of Azīz-Billāh al Fāṭimid. The book written for Azīz-Billāh between 365/975 and 380/990 is known as *al Azīzī*. Many people who wrote works in this field after him benefited from this work. However, Arab biographers did not give information about him. So much so that even Ibn Hallikan did not mention him in his work *Wafayāt al A'yān*. Similarly, Dhahabī, Safadī and Ibn al

Nadīm did not mention him. Although Haji Khalifa and Ismāil Pasha al Baghdādī gave the year of his death as 380/990, it is not known how they estimated it.

According to the researches of some scholars, it is one of the main sources of Jāqūt. It was also used by Khafiz Ābrū in the 9th/15th century. The book is traced back to Muizz Lidinillah al Fātimī and makes no mention of Azīz Billāh, to whom it was presented as a gift. Probably, Azīz Billāh had not yet ascended the throne at the time of the writing of the work or, in accordance with tradition, his reign was not included in the book before the sultan died or was deposed. It must be said that this ignorance took place because he was a Shia supporter. Kalkashandī quotes him more than a hundred times in his *Subḥ al A'shā*. However, this quotation is not made directly from Muḥallabī, but through Abū al Fidā. A similar situation can be seen in Izz al Dīn Ibn al Saddad's quotations about Halab not from his work but through Ibn al Adīm.¹

Geographical Schools and Muhallabī: In the Islamic Geography tradition, two different schools, Iraq and Balkh, are generally mentioned. In the mid-9th century, the Iraqi school of descriptive geography emerged in Iraq, and in the 10th century, the Balkh school of geography emerged. The main difference between the Iraqi school of geography and the Balkh school of geography is the new form of structuring, which we can call '*transition to regional geography*'. Representatives of the Iraqi school of geography treat the Ecumenical (Habitable) World as a whole and tend to classify and describe a world in their works. On the other hand, the representatives of the Balkh school of geography focus on the broad and detailed descriptions of Islamic countries²³ and peoples rather than the description of the world. In their works, they do not include the countries outside the Islamic lands.⁴

The reason why the Iraqi school is called by this name is that its first two representatives were from Baghdad and the foundations of the school were laid by Ibn Hurdazbih, a Baghdad scholar. Ibn Hurdazbih was the first person in the Islamic world to describe the world and to write on this subject. The authors who are the representatives of this school consider the habitable part of the Earth as a whole and give information about all the countries.⁵ The 10th century school of Balkh is characterised by excluding non-Muslim countries and focusing on the geography of Islamic countries in detail.⁶ The work of Balkhī, who gave his name to the school, does not exist. However, de Goeje's opinion that the work written by al Istahrī between the years 930-933, i.e. when al Balhī was still alive, is an extended arrangement of al Balhī's work is still valid.

The methodology of al Istakhri and Ibn Hawqal is parallel to each other. Because both of them compiled their works under 20 titles in a similar order.⁷ Al Maqdisi, on the other hand, divided his work into the Islamic world under 13 headings.⁸

Muḥallabī, who was a contemporary of al Istākhrī, wrote his work in the style of the authors belonging to the Balkh school and described the Islamic world under 26 headings. These titles are as follows:

1. Arabian Peninsula (جزيرة العرب)
2. Land of Egypt (ديار مصر)
3. Governors of Egypt (ولاة مصر)

4. Country of Maghreb (بلاد المغرب)
5. Country of Sudan (بلاد السودان)
6. Andalusian Peninsula (جزيرة الأندلس)
7. North Side of the Earth (الجانب الشمالي من الأرض)
8. Subject of Bilād al Sham (ذكر الشام)
9. Subject of the al Cazira between the Tigris and Al Furat (ذكر الجزيرة بين دجلة والفراط)
10. Subject of Iraq (ذكر العراق)
11. Subject of Khuzestan (ذكر خوزستان)
12. Subject of Persia (ذكر فارس)
13. Subject of Kerman (ذكر كرمان)
14. Subject of Secestan (ذكر سجستان)
15. Subject of Sindh (ذكر السند)
16. Subject of Hind (ذكر الهند)
17. Subject of East Sea Islands (ذكر جزائر بحر الشرق)
18. Subject of Irminia, Arrān ve Azerbaijan (ذكر أرمينية وأران و أذربيجان)
19. Jabal Country / Iraq al Ajam (عراق العجم / بلاد الجبل)
20. Country of Daylam and Qīlan (Jīlan) (بلاد الديلم و كيلان)
21. Country of Khorasan (بلاد خراسان)
22. Zābolistan (زابلستان)
23. Tokharistan (طخارستان)
24. Khwarezm (خوارزم)
25. Country of Maverā al Nahr / Transoxiana (بلاد ماوراءالنهر)
26. Unknown Places (مواضيع مجهولة)

In this context, it is possible to say that al Muhallabī, who was a contemporary of al Istakhrī and Ibn Hawqal, was a geographer belonging to the Balkh school. The ‘Sudan Country (بلاد السودان)’, he mentioned in the fifth title is a country that the geographers of the period did not touch. In this respect, he differs from other geographers.

In Muhallabī's work, 254 settlements are mentioned under the 25 headings given above. However, apart from these, some settlements are mentioned in the work under

subheadings. He gives the cities in alphabetical order. There is no classification according to climates in the work. However, when he gives information about some settlements, he explains which climate they are in and their latitude degrees. In this context, no astronomical data is used in the work.

Some cities, which were famous in the 10th century when the work was written, are not included in the work. For example, while 21 settlements in the Arabian Peninsula are mentioned, three important cities of this region such as Mecca, Medina and Tāif are not mentioned. Likewise, it is noteworthy that Baghdad is not mentioned in Iraq. It is possible to explain this issue with his belonging to the Shiite sect and his sectarian fanaticism. Another reason may be that he only mentions the cities he visited.

Muhallabī informs the reader about the religious, cultural and social characteristics of the settlements. He mentions the products grown in the region, the agriculture and animal husbandry of the region, local elements, clothing and attire, and in some places the peoples of the region. He expresses these distances with clear figures.

Bilād al Sham occupies the largest place in the work. He mentions 45 settlements in this section. Bilād al Sham is followed by the Arabian Peninsula with 21 settlements and the land of Egypt with 20 settlements.

There are no quotations or citations from a specific source in the work. The reason for this, as we have mentioned above, must be that he included only his own observations in his work. As Taysir Khalaf states, the author's belonging to the Shiite sect is evident in some passages.⁹

There is no title devoted to the Turks in the work and the information about the Turks is limited to the following.

‘There is no inhabitant here because of the severity of the cold. From here towards the country of Rūsiya, there are nations of Turks. It is adjacent to Guziyya (Oghuz) of the Turks in the eastern direction.’¹⁰

‘(Kaitak mountain) is called Elsūn mountain. Because there are nations with different languages here. It is said that they are a people with 300 languages. (The mountain) is located on the north side of Kaitak. On the south side (of the mountain) is Lekdhi. They are also a tribe. At a distance of 1 month, it extends from Bāb al Abwāb to the land of Roman. Its southern direction is like a wall without a road, as if it had been chiselled with a chisel. Its width is a distance of 10 days on foot. There is no other road to the Turkish country except the road between the shore of the Caspian Sea and the mountain side. The distance between the (mountain) side and the sea is 3 miles.’¹¹

- ‘(The distance of Kās) from the Turkish country to Yenikent (Yengikent) is 50 leagues.’¹²
- ‘This place (Shalj) is a city from the cities of the Turks. Its people are Muslims. It is four leagues from Tirāz.’¹³

Important Cities in Al Azizi:

1. Bayt al Maqdis/بيت المقدس: Muhammad b. Hasan al Kilā'i said: ‘I read (the following) in the book of Hasan b. Ahmad al Muhallabī in his book al Masālik wa al Mamālik (Roads and Countries):

'Hasan b. Ahmad al Muhallabī said: Abu Ubaydah b. Jarrah conquered the city of Nablus in Palestine, Medina, Sabastia, Bayt al Jibrīn and Yāfā by peaceful conquest on condition that they pay tribute and jizya from their lands. All this happened in 16 AH during the reign of Umar b. al Khattāb. Amr b. al As conquered Gaza by peaceful settlement under the same conditions during the reign of Abu Bakr. Later, Abu Ubaydah besieged the city of al Iliyah, which was Bayt al Maqdis.¹⁴ Thereupon, its people asked for peace for the whole of the camp (jund/ جند)¹⁵ on the condition that they pay jizyah and kharaj and that Umar b. al Khattāb would personally execute the contract. Then Abū Ubaydah informed Umar of this situation in a letter. (Upon receiving the news) 'Umar left Madīna and proceeded and reached Jābiya.¹⁶ Then he marched from there to Bayt al Maqdis. In the year 17 AH, he finalised the peace and wrote (the agreement) to his people. He kept the place where the church was located separate and built the mosque recognised by him there.'¹⁷ 'Iliyah is a large city (located) on a steep mountain at a distance of one day's walk from the city of Ramla. It was built with old stones. It was founded by Solomon b. Dawud.'

'There is a big mosque here. Its length is 900 cubits and its width is 520 cubits. It is built on the cavity underneath it and it is descended by stairs. Large doors have been made in the cavity to lead to the paths made under the mosque. (This) is like a second floor under the mosque.' 'The Masjid is on the edge of the valley known as the valley of Hell in the eastern direction. The roads on the second (lower) floor of the Masjid lead to this valley. Its walls and foundations are built with hewn stones. Each stone is 10 cubits in length and 4 cubits in width and thickness.'

'The portico in the qibla direction of the masjid, where the mihrab is located, is hexagonal. There is no portico in the entire latitude of the courtyard. Rather, about a third (of the courtyard) is like this. The remaining third is open without a portico.' 'The roof of the portico over the churches rises on marble pillars. On them are curved and knotted arcs that carry the churches. In the centre is the largest church. The great church is opposite the altar. When a person reaches the centre of the church, between the altar and the door equal to it, he arrives under the dome that cuts the great church. The width (of the dome) is 20 cubits and as many more (20 cubits).' 'The entire portico is paved with marble. Its walls are carved. Doors placed from other directions surround the portico. In front of it are porticoes on pillars in other directions of the masjid. As in the porticoes surrounding the courtyard on pillars, the width of the porticoes is 14 cubits. There is a rock ledge in the centre of the courtyard. Its height from the ground is 6 cubits, its length is 120 cubits (zirā), and its width is 120 cubits.'

'In the centre of the (rock) ledge, there is a high dome on quadrangular columns. It is surrounded by a wall between the pillars. The length of each of these is 55 cubits. There are four doors on the four sides of the dome.' 'From each door one enters a place like a passage, the length of which is 5 cubits. All the doors lead to the building (bayt) with the dome in the centre. The dome is on well-cut pillars. Its height is more than 60 cubits. The dome is covered with copper tiles. Underneath are cylindrical and ornate columns made of marble. The dome and walls are decorated with tiles, mosaics and gold embroidery.' 'The sacred rock

(sahrah) is in the centre of the dome and surrounded by a fence. Its height from the base of the dome is about 3 cubits. Its length is about 12 cubits by 12 cubits.'

'The fence that surrounds it is also precious. There is a cave underneath where people descend by stairs. The entire dome is furnished with exquisite Beyāmīn wicker. There are many silver lamps in it. This mosque was built by Sulayman b. Dawud on the foundations built by Prophet Dawud.'

'According to the claim of the Ahl al Kitāb,¹⁸ when this rock (sahrah) first appeared, Prophet Isaac b. Abraham allocated it to his son Jacob with prayer and blessing. However, his brother Īs/Asaw was jealous of him. (Īs/Asaw) was a violent and ill-mannered person. Their mother feared that the two of them would stay together. So she told him to go to Harran and marry his uncle's daughter Rābān there. (His uncle's) wife was there. So she wanted to keep (Jacob) away from the evil of his brother. (Jacob) walked and reached the place where the rock (sahrah) is now located. Night fell and he slept there. He had placed 12 stones under his head. In his dream, he saw a door opening in the sky, greeting him and angels descending and ascending. Upon this he said to himself: 'This is the gate of the sky. And this place is a place of honour.' 'Then he saw that the stones under his head became one stone. Then the honour of this place increased even more.'

Ahl al Kitāb say: 'Surely the first creation on the earth was this rock. Surely Adam was created there. The water of the Great Flood (Toophan)¹⁹ was drawn from the place where the rock was, and (this is) the first slaughtering place after the Great Flood. Allah, azza wa jalla, commanded Prophet Abraham to pray here. Allah, azza wa jalla, informed His awliya that this place was honoured until the Children of Israel came from Egypt to Damascus. When they settled down and their faith in Allah was revealed, their status was honoured. They saw the rulers of the inhabitants of the earth (Ahl al Ard). They wished that they had a ruler who would rally them. (But) their leaders ruled them outside the (classical) ruler (model). At this time, the Prophet Samuel was the leader. The Prophet Samuel asked Allah, azza wa jalla, to give them a ruler from among them who would inform them of Himself and set their situation in order. Thereupon Allah said to him: 'Gather the people! The tallest among them is their ruler. Tālūt,²⁰ whom Allah has mentioned in His Book, was the tallest of the Banu Israel. The tallest of them could only reach up to his shoulders. When he was asked to be the ruler, he fled in fear because he did not want to bear the weight of rulership. The Prophet (Samuel) brought him forward and made him their ruler. He ruled for a long time and (finally) died.

After him, David became the ruler. He ruled for 40 years. He wanted to build a house (temple) in (the place) which is now a mosque. So Allah revealed to him his son Solomon who would build this house (temple). Prophet David built the foundation I have mentioned and made preparations for the house (temple). According to the Ahl al Kitāb, he prepared 3,000 kantars²¹ of gold, 7,000 kantars of white silver, thousands of kantars of ordinary gold, ordinary silver, iron and copper, and countless precious stones. When Solomon started the construction of the house, Banu Israel donated 5,000 kantars of gold, 10,000 kantars of silver, 100,000 kantars of copper and iron.

Solomon completed the house (temple) in 13 years. The number of the labourers (who worked in the construction of the house) was 70,000 and the stonemasons 80,000. The number of construction leaders and deputies was 3,500. Not a single chisel blow was

heard during the construction of the house (Bayt). The stones and wood were hewn outside the house (temple) and brought inside when they were finished.

- Ahl al Kitab: 'The house (temple) is covered with gold'.
- They said: 'Solomon made a garden of gold in the house (temple). There were trees of gold in it.'
- They said: 'Allah has made it a sign.'
- They said: 'Each tree in it has a fruit that is tasted, just like trees that are known for their fruit.'
- They said: 'There are 10 verses in this house (temple).'
- (These verses) are:
 - No pregnant woman has ever miscarried because of the odour (of the food) cooked in it.
 - No sacrificial meat has ever stunk here.
 - No flies have ever been seen in it.
 - The imam here will not be jinuab.
 - The bread inside will never go mouldy.
 - The smoke of the sacrifice never rises upwards.
 - Rain never extinguishes the sacrificial fire.
 - Poisonous reptiles never sting anyone inside.
 - People used to pray in cramped conditions inside the house (temple). However, when they prostrated, there would be a gap of 4 cubits between them. It was as if the earth would expand for their prostration.
 - The fire appears as a lion to the one sitting opposite the slaughterhouse.
- They said: 'On the day when Solomon/as completed the construction of the house (temple/bayt), he sacrificed 120,000 sheep and 22,000 cows. He burnt all their fat in the fire on the place of slaughter.'
- They said: 'This house (temple) was built at the beginning of the year 480, the year Banu Israel came out of Egypt.'
- They said: 'Bakht Nasar²² destroyed it and the city of Bayt al Maqdis. He took Banu Israel captive and killed them violently in the beginning of the year 410 after the construction of the house because they had disobeyed Allah's command.'
- They said: 'The rebuilding of the House (the Temple) for the last time was in the time of Dārā b. Dārā and the Prophet Danyal in the early 70's after its first destruction.'
- They said: 'In this last building, it resided for 921 years. Then the Greeks became Christians and the ruler Taitūs destroyed it.'
- The Christians of the Ahl al Kitāb said: 'The Messiah was born in Bayt al Lahm, which is 4 miles away from Bayt al Maqdis in the direction of the qibla. At the place where he was born, they built a church that has no other analogue on the earth.'
- They said: 'He was learning knowledge with the Banu Israel.'
- They said: 'The Israelites killed him in the city of Bayt al Maqdis. The place where the wood of his crucifixion and the grave where he was buried are here, and it is in the church known as Qumāma. (It is the largest church built with veined marble, coloured mosaics, tiles, gold and copper. The tomb of the Maryam is on the edge of the valley known as the valley of Hell, and a magnificent church known as Jismāniya was built on it.'

After building the church of Qumâma and other churches, the mother of the ruler Kustantîn Halana ordered the demolition of the house (temple) to be investigated. She turned the place of the rock into the threshing floor and garbage dump of the city, and thus (the house) disappeared.

When Umar b. Al Khattâb conquered the city, the Jews came to him and informed him of the location (of the house). So, he ordered the Muslims to clean it. The Jews also helped him in this matter. They revealed the place and the Muslims built a masjid here.

‘During the reign of Walid b. Abd al Malik, a masjid was built on the old foundations and a dome was built on the rock. He beautified the pale and expanded it. He built other domes, one of which he called the *Dome Miraj*, the other *Dome of the Midhan*, the other *Dome of Silsila* and the other *Dome of Makhshar*. He planted the idea among the people of Damascus rabble that the people of Damascus will be gathered in this place and will be held to account, that the Prophet scended to heaven from here, and that visiting this place is superior to performing the Hajj. (The caliph's) fear was that the people of Damascus would go to Hijaz and meet people and learn the virtues of the Ahl al Bayt against the sons of Umayya. Because the people in Damascus thought that only the sons of Umayya were related to the Prophet.’²³

2. Abraham al Khalil Mosque/ مسجد إبراهيم الخليل: ‘Eighteen miles in the qibla direction of Bayt al Maqdis is the mosque of Abraham Khalil. This is the place of his home and the place of his guests. Here he entertained the angels sent to the people of Lot.’ The Ahl al Kitâb said: ‘Surely Abraham liked this place and made it his home. Because the graves of Prophet Adam and his wife Eve are here. He bought the cave with the graves in it from Afron b. Savkhar for 400 cantars of silver.’ They said: ‘At present, there are the graves of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rafakâa, Jacob and Lâiâ in that place.’²⁴

3. Beirut/ بيروت: Azîzî said: ‘The distance between Beirût²⁵ and Baalbek is 36 miles via Aqabat al Mughîsa. Between them is the city of Arjamus, and (Arjamus) is 24 miles from Beirut.’ He said: ‘Beirut is a glorious city. The drinking water of the people is from the canals (through which the water flows into the city). (It also has) a splendid harbour. The distance between it and the city of Jubail is 18 miles. Jubayl has a harbour, a bazaar and a mosque.’²⁶

4. Antioch/ أنطاكية: I read (the following) in Hasan b. Ahmad al Muhallabî al Azîzî's book al Masâlik wa al Mamâlik (Roads and Countries), which he put forward for al Azîz al Fâtîmî who ruled Egypt: ‘The city of Antioch²⁷ is a city of Awâsim.²⁸ It is a glorious city.’ Abu Ubaydah b. Jarrah conquered it and settled the Muslims here. This place is in the fourth climate²⁹. Its latitude is 35 degrees. It is a great city and has no analogue either in the land of Islam or in the land of Roman (Bilâd al Roman). It is on the slope of a mountain. (The mountain) extends towards it from the east. The sun falls on it only after two hours of the day. There is a stone wall around it, enclosing the plain (places). (This wall) then extends halfway up the mountain. Then it rises to the highest point. Then it descends (again) towards the plains and completes the circle. There are many squares, agricultural fields, gardens and orchards inside the wall, on the mountain (side). The water from the mountain flows into the city, bazaars and houses through canals. In the same way, it flows in Damascus. All of its buildings are made of stone. There are many fruits and flowers here. The length of the wall in a circle is 12 miles. Here is the

church of Kasiyān, (which is) majestic, of great construction and precious in the eyes of the Christians. It is said that inside the church there is a picture of Yaḥyā ibn Zakariyā (John, son of Zakariyā) (in the form of an ace glove and a patriarch). It has great value in the eyes of Christians. From east to west there are large lands. The majority of the people were Persians and the descendants of Salih b. Ali and the mawalis. The people are the most beautiful in face, the most virtuous in morals, the most graceful in nature, and the most tolerant in soul among the creations of Allah. They are mostly white and red. Except for the specialized ones, their sect is that of the people of Damascus. The administrative regions (of Antioch) are as follows:

- The administrative region of Tizīn: (It consists of) valuable villages.
- The administrative region of Jūma: Here are sulphur springs that cure malaria.
- The administrative region of Jendāres: (It is) a city of strange construction, built of stone and pillars.
- The administrative region of Artāh: This is a precious city.
- The administrative district of al Daks: This is a splendid administrative district.
- The administrative region of Karsīlī: It consists of splendid villages.
- The administrative region of Suwaydiya: This is a city on the Mediterranean coast (Bakhr al Mālih).
- The administrative region of al Fārisiya wa al Arabiya: It is valuable.
- The administrative region of Yadābiyā and Kurashiya.³⁰

5. Dumyat/ دميات: Hasan b. Muhammad al Muhallabī said: ‘One of the amazing things of Dumyat and Tinnīs is this: (There is) a community of weavers (in these places). These people, who belong to the lower segments of society who eat and drink the least, produce high quality Copt cloth. Their food is mostly fresh, salted and dried munten fish. Most of them eat and do not wash their hands, and then they return to the weaving of this quality and precious fabric. They weave the threads and produce clothes from them. Whoever buys these fabrics will think that they have been perfumed with incense.’ (Hasan b. Muhammad al Muhallabi) said: ‘One of the amazing things of Dumyat is this: On the south side of the Khaleec, there are workshops known as ma’āmil. The weaver rents it for the production of cloth and no one can take it away from him. If a garment is made there and is missing an inch, it is taken to another workshop. The commission agent who knows about this is deducted from the value of the cloth when he receives his commission.’³¹

6. Constantinople/ قسطنطينية: Azīzī said: ‘The Gulf of Constantinople³² (Khlaleec) becomes narrower as one moves towards the south, and at the place called Andalus its width is about the length of an arrow shot.’ Azīzī said: ‘The Gulf surrounds the east and north of Constantinople. However, its west and south are land. There are about 100 gates on these two sides. There are 14 lands of Constantinople to the east and west of the Golden Horn.’ Azīzī also said: ‘The height of the wall of Constantinople is 21 cubits. (The city) has 14 workshops.’³³

7. Damascus/ دمشق : Al Muhallabi said: ‘As for Damascus,³⁴ it is a city with a long history. It is a city of Sham al Uzmā (Bilād al Sham). It is also a military garrison. It is in the fourth climate³⁵ and its latitude is 33 degrees.’

- They said: 'It is "irama zāt al imād/ Irem full of pillars'.³⁶ It is the most beautiful country and the most splendid place with mountains and plains. To the north of it is a great mountain, the length of which is 4 days' walk. (It was once) the city and the administrative centre of the Greeks.'
- It was said: 'A pillar was found here from the pillars of a house (temple) built for worship. (It) later became a church and later a large masjid. On (the pillar) was written in Greek: 'This house (temple) was built in the name of the god Ezīs (إزيس) by Dāmeşkiyūs.'
- They said: 'Dāmeşkiyūs is the name of the ruler who built the house (temple). Īzīs (إيزيس), the explanation in Arabic is Jupiter.'

A group said: Jīrūn b. Abbād built this place. The Sabians claim that this is one of the seven houses (temples) built with star names. This is Jupiter, and here they perform pilgrimage and sa'y.³⁷

- They said: 'The temple of the Jupiter was rebuilt and has stood for 4,500 years.'
- They said: 'Most of them (who come here) are Greek idol worshippers who abandoned the religion of their fathers. It remained in their hands for a thousand years.'
- They said: 'The Greeks later became Christians and turned the house (temple) into a church. It remained a church for 500 years.'
- They said: 'Then Islam came and the masjid was built. It has stood like this for 300 years.'

(Al Muhallabi) said: 'Gūta is 30 miles long and 15 miles wide. The sun does not reach most parts of it because of its many trees. Water flows through many parts of Gūta, through which the villages are irrigated, cultivated and used for drinking water.'

- They said: 'The mountain mentioned to the north of Damascus is Kasyoun.'
- They said: 'On this mountain is the cave where Ka'b killed Hābīl.'
- They said: 'Here Abraham hid from Nimrud.'

(Al Muhallabi) said: 'After conquering all of Gūta by force, the Muslims landed in Damascus on the 14th of Muharram in the year H. 14. Abu Ubaydah b. Jarrah landed at Bāb al Jābiya. Khālīd b. Walīd landed at Bāb al Ash-Sharī. Yazīd b. Abī Sufyān landed at Bāb al Bisyāb. Shurahbīl b. Hasana went down to the Bāb al Firdaws. Amr b. al As landed in Bāb al Tumā. The Muslims besieged (the city) for a while. Then Abu Ubaydah conquered the city from the vicinity of Bāb al Jābiya.'

'When they (the people) felt the defeat, they made peace with him near the Bāb al Sharqī, where Khālīd b. Walīd was, and opened the gate. (Khālīd) entered from there. (Khālīd) met Abu Ubaydah in the city. They disagreed whether the city was conquered by peace or by force. They wrote to Khalifa Umar about the situation. Khalifa Umar signed "conquered by peace". The Muslims built a mosque next to the church of John.'

'When Muāwiyah b. Abi Sufyan became the ruler, he wanted to join the church to the mosque. Christians prevented this. He also gave up this demand.'

'Then Abd al Malik became the ruler and wanted to do the same thing. He spent a lot of money on this (but) the Christians prevented him from doing so.'

‘When Walīd b. Abd al Malik came to power, he gathered them and treated them moderately. He spent a large amount in this regard. (However) they did not accept it. He said to them: ‘If you do not do what I want, I will destroy the church.’ Then one of them said: ‘Whoever destroys the church will lose his mind.’ Then he (Walid) became angry and, wearing a yellow silk robe, took a hammer in his hand and demolished the church and joined it to the mosque. He built here a building that has no equal in the earth.’

‘The length of the mosque of Damascus from its north wall to its qibla is 156 cubits, and its width is 170 cubits, more than its length. The portico is half the length of the length of the portico. There are 42 poles in the portico. There are three pure curves on (the poles). All of the pillars are made of veined marble. The arches and all the walls of the mosque up to the ceiling are decorated with gold and colored tiles and embroidered with embroidery. (These decorations) are in an eye-catching form.’

‘There is a dome in the center with a height of 50 cubits. The inside of the dome is embroidered with gold. The outside is paved with lead tiles. The roof of the mosque is in the same shape. The floor of the courtyard is paved with white marble. Likewise, the walls, the floor of the courtyard and other porticoes are paved with gold-embroidered tiles.’

‘After completing the building, Walid b. Abd al Malik drank alcohol with his concubines for 40 days until the morning. Then he said: ‘I have taken the good of this house (temple) and left the evil to the people.’

‘One of the people of knowledge mentioned the following: ‘Hud built the wall (of the Masjid) in the direction of the qibla.’

‘One of the original alliances about (the Masjid) is that on the tiles on the wall facing the qibla, surahs from the *Qoran* were written with gold embroidery and embroidery. The first surah written in this way is ‘And certainly those who take away (their souls) violently, suffocating them.’³⁸ (Another) alliance is that verses from the *Qoran* are written on the curve of the wall in the direction of the qibla, which is opposite the face of the imam: ‘They have labored and are weary. They will enter a blazing fire.’³⁹

They said: ‘On the ceiling of the masjid there are five talismans for snakes, scorpions, spiders, swallows and crows. None of these animal species can enter.’

‘One of the defects of the mosque is that its qibla has deviated greatly from the correct qibla towards the east.’

They said: ‘It was the custom of the Greeks that when a church needed to be repaired, it was done by foreigners who were in their city. Before Islam, the Quraysh used to travel to Damascus for trade. At a time when the work of foreigners was needed, Umar ibn al Khattāb entered (the city). In this way he worked in the church for days.’

‘Behind the mosque was Hadrā, the house of Muāwiyah. Today it is a centre of Shurta⁴⁰ (Public Order) and a mint.’

‘One of the astonishing situations of Damascus is the house known as the house of Karamān. It is still standing today. It contains 63 wells, each with a certain amount of water.’

‘At the back of Damascus is the valley of Banafsaj. It is about 4 miles (in length) in parts. The river Baradā divides it in two. The valley is full of cypress trees and the sun does

not reach most of it (due to the abundance of trees). The whole place is full of violets adjacent to each other. It has a very beautiful view.'

'There are roses of various colours in Damascus. Ibrīz yellow, black and somāqī are among them. There are roses with different colours inside and outside the petals. There are not so many roses in any other city of the world except Damascus.'⁴¹

8. Aleppo/ حلب : I read (the following) in Hasan b. Ahmad al Muhallabī's book Roads and Countries (al Masālik wa'l-Mamālik), which he wrote for al Azīz al Fāṭimī, the ruler of Egypt. (Al Muhallabī) said: 'As for Aleppo,⁴² it is a city of Qinnasrin.⁴³ This is the place where the sultan stays. It is a splendid, prosperous and developed city. Its houses are beautiful and there is a stone wall around it. It has a castle in the centre, on the edge of the mountain in the middle of the city. There is no other road (except the road) opposite (the castle). There is also a strong wall around the castle. The water of the people of Halab is from the river known as Kuveyk, which is on the edge of the gate of the city. The people call (this river) Hilā'a Aba'l-Hasan (الخلاعةأباالحسن). The lands of Kinnesrin and the city of Aleppo were conquered by peace.' (al Muhallabī) said: 'As for the climates to which it belongs, Aleppo is from the fourth climate. Its latitude is 34 degrees. As for its people, they are a mixture of Arabs and Mawali. There is a city plan of the descendants of Sālih b. Ali b. Abdullah b. Abbas. They had a wealthy livelihood. They had marvellous properties. The Banu Qalandar caught up with the rest of them. I saw that they had a wealthy livelihood. I saw that they had houses at the end of Sarw. There was a community here known as Banu Sinan. They also had a wealthy livelihood. Ahmad b. Qyghalagh (كيغلاغ) settled there and built a house known to this day. His slave Badr owned a beautiful village. All this happened over time. Those who managed their affairs treated them badly. Nevertheless, there was no one in Damascus whose people were wealthier than the people of Aleppo. All this happened (in time).'

The city was ill-treated by Ali b. Hamdān. It was seen that he had frivolous demands (from the people).'

Let us return to the words of al Azīzī. (al Muhallabī) said: 'Aleppo is one of the most splendid and beautiful cities. It has villages and administrative districts from which it collects much revenue. The city of Maarrat Misrayn was towards Mount Summāq. It is a city of figs, raisins, pistachios, sumac, and nuts. (These products) are cheaply procured from here and taken to Egypt and Iraq, from where they are sent to all cities. The cities of Athārib and Artākh are also in the vicinity of Mount Summāq. Just as olives are abundant in the land of Palestine, olive oil is abundant here. This is Iraqi olive oil. It is sent to Raqqa through the Euphrates and (from there) to all the cities. (However) this situation (gradually) changed and the Greeks disrupted (this order). As for the nature of its people, they are beautiful in face and body.'

'Mostly their colour is bright, red and dark. Their eyes are black and hazel. They are tall people with good morals. In the past, their beliefs were like the beliefs of the people of Damascus. However, they were more specialised than them. Their qibla is in accordance with the qibla of the people of Damascus.'

Azīzī said: 'This is a city with splendid buildings and beautiful houses. There is a stone wall around it. There is a castle on a hill in the centre. It is 36 miles from Maarrat al Nu'mān and 25 leagues from the city of Bālis.'⁴⁴

9. Tarsūs/ طرسوس : I read (the following) in Hasan b. Ahmad al Muhallabī al Azīzī's book al Masālik wa'l-Mamālik (Roads and Countries), which he put forward for al Azīz al Fāṭimī who ruled Egypt: 'As for the city of Tarsūs,⁴⁵ it is in the fifth climate⁴⁶ and its latitude is 36 degrees. As for the city of Tarsūs, it is in the fifth climate and its latitude is 36 degrees and its latitude is 36 degrees. It is (the) uppermost of the Sugūr, and its tax and income totals one hundred thousand dinars compared to the middle of the Sugūr, and (this income) is spent on sentries, guards, those who are responsible for the safety of the roads and borders, and so on. Apart from this, (the amount spent) for the expenses of the camp administrators (shikhna)⁴⁷ and the winter and summer expeditions of the Mamluks they manage, both on land and sea, and for making the artisans economically prosperous is one hundred and fifty thousand dinars. (The amount spent for expansion) is three hundred thousand dinars. As for the enemy countries and the places adjacent to them from the land side: 'Opposite Sugūr al Jazzeriya⁴⁸ is the country of Funduk⁴⁹ from the country of Roman and a part of Nātulīn.⁵⁰ On the sea side (opposite it) is the country of Salūqiya. The fortified cities of this Sugūr from the Damascus direction are Antioch, the country of Jūma⁵¹ and Kūrus.⁵² As for the people of Sugūr, the inhabitants, the condition of the cities and the amount (of their revenues), Tarsūs is the most splendid of them, and its people are the most numerous and its bazaars the most crowded. There is no city on earth more splendid than this one. Some of its people have beautiful waqf (lands) around them. The (waqf) house has servants, (furniture) sets and equipped materials. The majority of them are the people of Baghdad. They and others who were among the dignitaries and rich people of their country had servants who served them well and had ample provisions. Their work was to take care of the horses and prepare them (for hunting) and to do the work related to (hunting) weapons.'

They spent most of the day doing these things and prepared the houses for them. There were gardens, running water and a comfortable life. The people of the city were those who rode horses and used good weapons. There is not one among them who cannot or does not want to do these things. Even the lower class of craftsmen and merchants used to join the upper class (of the society) in horsemanship, valour, horse-related matters and weapon preparations. Because they had constant wars. Their livelihood was not interrupted by the spoils and their distributions. As for the people of the city, they are from other parts of the earth with their beautiful and fair skin. There are large slaves among them. They are mostly light white, red and dark skinned. Most of them are harsh and rude to foreigners. The number of those who are partial to foreigners is very few. However, they are on a covenant with those who are close to them among the foreigners. Likewise, there are many among them who are stingy towards foreigners. The riffraff and servants of the people are the Hūz people who constitute the lower stratum of the Persians. These were the people who lacked labour, who were lazy in earning a living, who emphasized zuhd and vera, and who expressed that they were nasb⁵³ (people). '(They denied all Our signs.) So We seized them with the seizure of the strong and powerful.'⁵⁴

(Al Muhallabi) said: 'As for the sons of the people of the city, the sons of the mujahideen, the sons of the servants, the sons of the Khorasanians, they were generous, good-natured and humble. There is not a single one of them who does not feel affection for strangers. However, they are in fear of those who are the riff-raff. These are the

majority of Tarsūs. As for the other cities of the Sugūr, they are of this quality and character, especially Massīsa.

(Al Muhallabī) said: 'Here, in Sugūr, a dress called Shafāyā, like the elegant Dībekī (dress), was produced, and from here it was taken to all countries. In Sugūr, there are dried grapes without seeds such as wolf grape (القشمش). Birds of prey come to Bilād al Sugūr from the country of Rum and the falcon is caught among them. Likewise, in the mountains of Sugūr, there are nests of birds of prey and qualified hunting dogs from the country of Salūqiya⁵⁵. These are the conditions of Sugūr. It is still in order, comfort and peace. Although wars continue, their lives are abundant. Although there are attacks from Iraq and Egypt, their roads are safe. When they realised asceticism in the point of goodness, rivalry, jealousy and hatred arose among them, and especially between the servants of Semliyya, Ibn al Zayyāt (lineage) and Ali b. Abdullah b. Hamdān, known as Sayf al Dawla.⁵⁶

10. Rafah/ رفح : Al Muhallabi said: 'Rafah⁵⁷ is a prosperous city with a bazaar, a mosque, a minbar and hotels. Its people are from Lahm and Juzām. Among them are those who plunder people's property and steal. Even their dogs are the most thieving dogs that steal in the same way. It has a governor who manages the affairs of many camps. It is 18 miles from Rafah to Gaza City. Three miles from Rafah to Gaza, on the right and left sides of the road, there are about 1,000 pharaoh fig trees with their branches adjacent to each other. This distance is about two miles on foot. Here (the road) is cut by a sand pit where travellers fall on cold (days).⁵⁸

11. Ramla/ الرملة : Azīzī said: 'Remle is the central city of Palestine. It was founded later. It is a day's walk from Bayt al Maqdis. (Al Muhallabī) said: 'Remla is not a city with an ancient history. This was the city of Lud⁵⁹. Sulayman b. Abd al Malik destroyed it and founded the city of Remla. Their distance is about 30 leagues. Lud is in the right direction. Abd al Malik had a house in Remla. (Abd al Malik) poured drinking water into Remla with a weak canal.' 'They get most of their drinking water from fresh water wells and cisterns where they collect the water of the lowland rainwater.⁶⁰

12. Bulgarian Country / بلاد البلغار : Azīzī said: 'From the right side of the Bulgarian⁶¹ country, the southern direction is the land of Kāsāq⁶² of the nations of Abkhāz and Lān. Then from the right side of the land of the Bulgars southwards, one reaches the land of Lān. This is the border of Bulgar (country). Further to the south, it ends in the land of Khazar. This is the Bulgarian border where there is a nation called Marūsiya. (The Marūsites) are strong and well-built. One of them has a strength equal to 10 people. They worship the sun. The east of Marūsiya is the country of Rūsiya. To the north of it is Saqāliba⁶³. (Saqāliba) is a barren land until the ocean and there is no construction here.' 'There is no inhabitant here because of the severity of the cold. From here, towards the country of Rūsiya, there are nations of Turks. It is adjacent to Guziyya (Oghuz)⁶⁴ of the Turks in the eastern direction.⁶⁵

13. Tinnīs/ تَنيس : Husayn b. Muhammad al Muhallabi said: 'As for Tinnīs,⁶⁶ its condition is like that of Dumyat. However, this place is more splendid and more centred. Colourful fabrics and chameleon (colourful) exhibits are produced here. The amount of the lake it is on the edge of is one day vertically and half a day transversely. The water (of the lake) is sweet most of the year. This is because, when the north winds blow, the

waters of the Mediterranean Sea begin to enter. In early winter, the west winds blow more. Thus, (the waters) of the lake and the sea coast remain sweet for the amount of two mails to cover the city of Faramā. During this period, the waters are stored in the wells and meet their needs throughout the year. This is a feature of the sea in this lake. They (the ships) move with the wind (blowing from one direction) and wait for it to move. Eventually they drift in two different directions, and the ships travelling in different directions are confronted by the blowing of a single wind. There are no biting insects in Tinnīs. Because its soil is extremely salty and barren.’⁶⁷

14. Jifār/ الجفار : Abū al Hasan al Muhallabī, in his book written for (caliph) Azīz, who died in 386 AH (996 A.H.), and the notables of the cities of Jifār,⁶⁸ Arīsh, Rafah and Verrāda, said: ‘Dates are abundant in all parts of Jifār. There are also many grape and pomegranate trees.’ Its people are the inhabitants of the desert. They have many gardens, properties and huts around the cities. They cultivate poorly in the sandy land and pay ushr⁶⁹ from it. At a certain time of the year, a bird of the quail species, which they call mur, passes through their city, and it comes from Selwa, from the Mediterranean Sea. They hunt this bird (Māshāllāh), eat its flesh fresh and salt and dry it. Likewise, birds of prey such as falcons, hawks, falcons, and falcons, and a small number of jackdaws pass through the land of Roman by sea at a certain time of the year, and they hunt them as well. They do not need guards because they have many gardens. For one of them will not be hostile to anyone (who enters his garden). If someone realises from the condition of his garden that something has been taken from it, he will look for traces in the sand and follow them for a day or two days and finally reach the person who stole them. According to one of them, from the traces (in the sand) they know whether the person who stole was young or old, black or white, black or white, a married woman or an engaged girl. All of this is true; (but) it is more than surprising.’⁷⁰

15. Al Arīsh/ العريش : Hasan b. Muhammad al Muhallabi said: ‘It is three leagues from Varrāda to the city of Arīsh.’ (Hasan b. Muhammad al Muhallabī) said: ‘The city of Arīsh⁷¹ is a glorious city. It was the guardian city of Egypt during the reign of Pharaoh. It is the last city of the land of Egypt to join the land of Damascus. It is under the rule of the Jifār (though it is under Egypt). This place is in stability. There are two mosques and two minbars⁷² here. The air is good and healthy. Its water is sweet and flavourful. There is a big bazaar, big hotels, agencies for traders and plenty of date palms. There are types of dates and pomegranates that are taken to each country for a price. Its people are from Juzām.’ (Hasan ibn Muhammad al Muhallabī) said: ‘It is 6 miles from here to the two Abi Ishaq wells. These two are two big wells. The caravans come here and shop. It is 6 miles from here to Shajaratayn, the beginning of the land of Damascus. It is 6 miles from here to Bermekiyeh and 6 miles from there to Rafah.’⁷³

16. Aoudaghost / أودغست : Azīz said: Aoudaghost⁷⁴ has a large land. It is really hot. It rains in the summer. They cultivate wheat, tobacco, corn, beans and vetch. There are many date palms (trees) in their country. There is no fruit in their country except figs. There are trees growing on the rocks of al Sunt and al Maql and other rocks other than these two.’ (Al Muhallabi) said: ‘This is a city between two mountains. It is one of the splendid cities. It is south of the city of Sijilmāse. The distance between them is about 40 steps (around) familiar waters (in a sandy and barren area).’ (al Muhallabī) said: ‘This place has splendid bazaars and travellers from everywhere stop here. Its people are

Muslims. The rulers of this place are from Sanhāja. To the east is the land of Sudan. As for the west, it is the ocean. The south is the border of Sudan.’ al Muhallabī said: ‘Homegast is a city in the centre of the land between two mountains. To the south of it is the city of Sijilmāse. The distance between them is about 40 kilometers (40 miles) in a sandy and barren (area), with familiar waters and some Berber houses. There are splendid bazaars in Evagust and it is one of the splendid cities. Travellers from everywhere stop here. Its people are Muslims. They read the Qurān and learn fiqh. They have masjids and mosques. They became Muslims by the hand of Mahdi Ubaydullah. Previously they were infidels and they used to sanctify the Sun and eat the flesh and blood of the dead. Their rains fall in summer (season). They cultivate wheat, tobacco, corn, beans and vetch. The east (of their country) is the land of Sudan, the west is the ocean, the north is the land of Sijilmāse towards the west, and the south is Sudan.’⁷⁵

17. Barqa/ برقة : Azīzī said: Barqa⁷⁶ has two mountains with traces of Greek buildings, agricultural fields, running water, and beautiful villages. Its prices are really cheap compared to other places. A large quantity of tar, liquor and sheep are sent from here to Egypt. (Berka) has a harbour called Ajye where ships anchor.’ ‘There is a pulpit, a bazaar, and a guard station six miles from Berka. (There is also) another beach called Talamīsa.’ Azīzī said: ‘This is a wide plain. Its soil is red. A wall was built around (the city) in the time of al Mutawakkil.’⁷⁷

18. Tāhart/ تاهرت : Al Muhallabi said: ‘There are four stages between Ashīr and Tāhart⁷⁸. These two are Old Tāhart and New Tāhart. Old Tāhart is called Tāhart Abd al Hālik.’ Azīzī said: ‘Old Tāhart is Tāhart Abd al Hālik. The distance between Old Tāhart and New Tāhart is one step. This is a magnificent city. It used to be called Iraq al Maghreb. There is a harbour by the sea in its land. (This harbour) is called Farūh harbour. The first city of Tāhart is on the side of the middle mountain and there is a pulpit here. Likewise, there is a pulpit in New Tāhart. (This pulpit) is bigger than the one in the old city. It has water running through the houses of its people.’⁷⁹

19. Tunis/ تونس : Azīzī said: ‘Tunis⁸⁰ is an ancient and splendid city. It is surrounded by agriculture and has weak flowing waters. It has very fertile crops. Nearby is the mountain of Zagwān, which is two days’ walk south-westwards. (Zagwān) ze is superior, ayn is silent, vav is superior, then elif and nun (in the form of).’⁸¹

20. Aqsintalā/ أكسنتلا : Abu al Hasan al Muhallabī said: ‘Aqsintalā⁸² is a great and splendid city. It is the home of a man called Sahl b. Fihri from the Berbers of Huwayrah. He is a Muslim and has a great sultanate of Berbers in his country, the number of which cannot be counted. They obey him well.’ (al Muhallabī) said: ‘According to what I heard from many people and what they said, he used to have cavalry mounted on elegant horses with which he used to go to war.’ (al Muhallabī) said: ‘There are bazaars and mosques in al Asintilā. At the back of it is a building in which there are all kinds of fruits, grapes and fig trees. Among them, date palms are the most. There is a pulpit, a large mosque and a community reciting the Qurān. They do their agriculture according to the rain.’ (al Muhallabī) said: ‘There are two roads from Aqsintalā: The northern road is on the eastern border and its direction is towards the country of Kenz (where the people from Sudan are). It is a distance of 5 days on foot.’⁸³

21. Zaghawa/ زغاوة : Al Muhallabī said: ‘Zaghawa⁸⁴ has two cities, one of which is called Mānān and the other is called Tarādhāqī. Both are in the first climate⁸⁵. The latitude of both of them is 21 degrees.’ (al Muhallabī) said: ‘The land of Zaghawa is one of the largest of the Sudanese lands. On its eastern border, above Saeed al Misr,⁸⁶ is the land of Nūbia⁸⁷. The distance between them is ten days on foot. They are a populous nation. The length of their country is 10 steps by 10 steps in a built-up and contiguous state. All their houses are made of lime, as is the pavilion of their rulers. They sanctify their ruler and worship him apart from the God. They think that he does not eat (because the ruler's food is brought in secretly) and they enter his house without knowing where it comes from. If one of his subjects meets the camel carrying the food, he is killed on the spot. (But) he drinks in the presence of those close to him. His drink is made of milk mixed with honey. His clothing is a shalwar of fine wool, a thin dībāj over it, and a robe made of fine fabrics of Sūs silk and Asmāt wool. His hand reaches out to all his subjects and takes by force the goods, sheep, cows, camels and horses he wants from them. The agriculture of their country is mainly corn, beans and wheat. The majority of the subjects are naked and covered with skins. Their livelihood is agriculture and animal husbandry. Their religion is to worship their ruler. They believe that (the ruler) creates, kills, makes sick and heals.’ ‘This is one of the cities of Balmā, a city of the country of Qāwār in the eastern direction, sloping towards the south.’ Azīzī said: ‘It is 20 kilometres westwards from Dankala to the country of Zaghawa.’⁸⁸

Notes and References:

¹ For information about Muḥellebī's life, see: Mustafa Hizmetli, *İslâm Tarihinin İlk Kaynakları*, Ankara Okulu Publications, Ank. 2018, p. 202.

² Ibn Khurdadhbīkh, *Ülkeler ve Yollar Kitabı*, translated by M. Ağar, Ayışığı Kitapları, 2nd Edit. İstanbul, 2019.

³ İstakhrī, *Ülkelerin Yolları, Değerlendirme-Metin*, trans. by M. Ağar, Ayışığı Kitapları, 2nd Edit. İstanbul, 2020.

⁴ Murat Ağar, ‘Irak ve Belh Coğrafya Ekolleri ve İlk Temsilcileri – İbn Hurdazbih, Ya’kubî ve İstahrî’, *Journal of the Institute of Turkish Studies*, Y: 14, I: 34, 2007, pp: 169-170.

⁵ Ağar, Murat, ‘Irak ve Belh Coğrafya Ekolleri ve İlk Temsilcileri – İbn Hurdazbih, Ya’kubî ve İstahrî’, *Journal of the Institute of Turkish Studies*, Y: 14, I: 34, 2007, pp: 170-171

⁶ Ağar, Murat, ‘Irak ve Belh Coğrafya Ekolleri ve İlk Temsilcileri – İbn Hurdazbih, Ya’kubî ve İstahrî’, *Journal of the Institute of Turkish Studies*, Y: 14, I: 34, 2007, p. 178

⁷ This order is as follows: Arabia, the Persian Sea, the Land of Maghrib, the Land of Egypt, the Land of Damascus, the Roman Sea (Mediterranean), the land of al Jazira, Iraq, Khuzestan, the land of Persia, the land of Kerman, the land of Sind, İrmīniye, Rān and Azerbaijan, Jibal, Deylem, the Caspian Sea, the Desert of Khorasan, Secestan, Khorasan and Transoxiana (Mavera al Nahr). For more information see: Muḥallabī, *Kitāb al Azīzī al Masālik wa al Mamālik*, edit: T. Halef, Damascus, 2006; for Turkish Translation, see: Muḥellebī, *Kitābū'l-Azīzī (el-Memālik ve'l-Mesālik) Yollar ve Ülkeler Kitabı*, Turkish Trans.: M. Ağar, Ayışığı Kitapları, 2023.

⁸ The order in al Maqdisī is as follows: Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, Aqūr Region, Damascus, Egypt, Maghreb, Mashrek Region, Daylam, Rihāb Region, Jibāl Region, Khūzistan Region, Persia Region, Sindh Region. For more information see: Maqdisī, *Ahsan al Taqāsīm fī Marifat al Akālīm*, Leiden, Brill, 1906.

⁹ Muḥallabī, *al Azīzī*, 91.

¹⁰ Muḥallabī, *al Azīzī*, 60.

¹¹ Muḥallabī, *al Azīzī*, 60.

¹² Muḥallabī, *al Azīzī*, s. 160.

¹³ Muḥallabī, *al Azīzī*, 163.

¹⁴ For Bayt al Maqdis, see: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam al Buldān*, Beirut, Dār Sādr, 2nd Edit. 1995, V: 5, pp. 166-171.

¹⁵ Jund means military camp city.

¹⁶ Jabiya is the military camp city in Syria, famous for the visit of Umar b. al Khattāb.

¹⁷ The place in question is the Qubbat al Sakhra (Dome of the Rock). It is an octagonal structure with a dome in the centre, built by the Umayyad Caliph Abdulmalik b. Marwan, located on the sacred rock in the Jerusalem harem. It is one of the first known domed works of Islamic architecture and is also known as the Mosque of Omar, mostly by Westerners, since it was built in place of the mosque built by Hz. Omar after the conquest of Jerusalem.

¹⁸ *Ahl al Kitāb* is the term generally used in the *Qoran* for Jews and Christians.

¹⁹ Toophan is the great flood disaster that occurred to punish the people of Noah.

²⁰ Tālūt is the first king of the Banu Israel mentioned in the Qur'an.

- ²¹ Kantar is any of various units of weight used in Mediterranean countries (as an Egyptian unit equal to about 99 pounds and a Turkish unit equal to about 124½ pounds)
- ²² Bakht Nasar, Nebuchadnezzar II or Namrood, (634 – 562 BC) was king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, who reigned 605 BC – 562 BC.
- ²³ Muhallabī, *al Azizī*, 69-81.
- ²⁴ Muhallabī, *al Azizī*, 82.
- ²⁵ For Beirut, see: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 1, 525.
- ²⁶ Muhallabī, *al Azizī*, 83.
- ²⁷ For Antioch, see: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 1, 266.
- ²⁸ Awāsim is the name given to the fortified border regions between the Islamic states and the Byzantine Empire.
- ²⁹ Ağarı, Murat, 'İslâm Coğrafyacılarında Yedi İklim Anlayışı', Journal of Ankara University Faculty of Theology, V: 47, I: II, 2006, pp: 157-176.
- ³⁰ Muhallabī, *al Azizī*, 64-6.
- ³¹ Muhallabī, *al Azizī*, 33.
- ³² For Konstantinapolis, see: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 4, 347.
- ³³ Muhallabī, *al Azizī*, 61-2.
- ³⁴ For Damascus, see: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 2, 463-470.
- ³⁵ Ağarı, Murat, 'İslâm Coğrafyacılarında Yedi İklim Anlayışı', Journal of Ankara University Faculty of Theology, V: 47, I: II, 2006, pp: 157-176.
- ³⁶ *Qoran, Facr*, 89, 7.
- ³⁷ Sa'y is a jurisprudential term that refers to travelling back and forth between the hills of Safa and Marwa seven times in Hajj and Umrah worship.
- ³⁸ *Qoran, Nādhiāt*, 79,1.
- ³⁹ *Qoran, Ghāshiya*, 88, 2 and so on.
- ⁴⁰ Shurta is the organization responsible for ensuring safety and security in cities in Islamic states.
- ⁴¹ Muhallabī, *al Azizī*, 87-92.
- ⁴² For Aleppo, see: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 2, 282-290.
- ⁴³ Qinnasrin is a historical city in Northern Syria.
- ⁴⁴ Muhallabī, *al Azizī*, 83-86.
- ⁴⁵ For Tarsūs, see: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 4, 28.
- ⁴⁶ Ağarı, Murat, 'İslâm Coğrafyacılarında Yedi İklim Anlayışı', Journal of Ankara University Faculty of Theology, V: 47, I: II, 2006, pp: 157-176.
- ⁴⁷ Shikhna was a military governor responsible for the security and public order of a city or region.
- ⁴⁸ Starting from Tarsūs and following the Adana-Misis (Massisa)-Marash-Malatya line, this region extends eastwards to the Euphrates and is divided into two parts: Sugūr al Shām with Marash as its centre and Sugūr al Jazīra with Malatya as its centre.
- ⁴⁹ Funduk is a place in Sugūr near Massisa. See: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 4, 277.
- ⁵⁰ Nātulin is a city in Kustantiniyye. See: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 4, 412.
- ⁵¹ It is a place located around Aleppo. See: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 2, 189.
- ⁵² It is a place located around Aleppo. See: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 4, 412.
- ⁵³ Nasb is a term used by the Shia for those who harbor hostility towards the supporters of Ali b. Abū Tālib.
- ⁵⁴ The inclusion of this verse immediately after the expression "they declared that they were nasb" can be explained by the supportership of Ali b. Abū Tālib.
- ⁵⁵ For Salūqiya, see: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 3, 242.
- ⁵⁶ Muhallabī, *al Azizī*, 96-9.
- ⁵⁷ For Rafah, see: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 3, 242.
- ⁵⁸ Muhallabī, *al Azizī*, 93.
- ⁵⁹ Lud is a historical city in Palestine. Lud, located 18 kilometres southeast of Jaffa on the Mediterranean coast and on the plain of Şefelah between Jerusalem and Jaffa, is frequently mentioned as Lod and Lydda in the Old and New Testaments. The remains of the tomb or only the head of Saint George, who was killed in Izmit (Nicomedia) in 303 A.D., were later moved to Lüd, which is known as his birthplace in Christian tradition, and the church built over his tomb became a shrine identified with the city in time.
- ⁶⁰ Muhallabī, *al Azizī*, 93-4.
- ⁶¹ For Bulgarian, see: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 1, 485.
- ⁶² The name Circassian, which was first used in 1245 for the people called Zigoi (Ζίγοι) by ancient Greek sources and Kesek, Kasog by medieval Islamic and Russian sources, became widespread from this date onwards.
- ⁶³ Saqālība is the name given to Slavs and Slavic slaves in medieval Islamic sources.
- ⁶⁴ Oghuzs are a Turkic tribe, the ancestors of the Turks of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq and Turkmenistan. The name Oghuz is first found in the Gokturk inscriptions.
- ⁶⁵ Muhallabī, *al Azizī*, 59-60.
- ⁶⁶ For Tinnis, see: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 2, 51.
- ⁶⁷ Muhallabī, *al Azizī*, 31.
- ⁶⁸ For Jifār, see: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 2, 144.

⁶⁹ Ushr, is the alms (zakat) collected from land products. The Turkishised form of the word ushr (plural, ushur or a'shar), which means 'one tenth' in the dictionary, refers to the zakat collected from land products in jurisprudence.

⁷⁰ Muhallabī, *al Azīzi*, 31-2.

⁷¹ Arish is the administrative centre of the North Sinā region in Egypt. For Arish, see: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, 4, 113.

⁷² Since Friday prayers were held in certain mosques in the cities, minbars could only be found in these mosques. As such, the pulpit appears as a religious and political symbol.

⁷³ Muhallabī, *al Azīzi*, 35.

⁷⁴ Aoudaghost Evzegast is the city of Tagdaou in the southeast of present-day Mauritania. Jākūt al Hamawī spelt it as Evzegast. For Evzegast, see: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 1, 277.

⁷⁵ Muhallabī, *al Azīzi*, 45-6.

⁷⁶ For Barqa, see: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 1, 388.

⁷⁷ Muhallabī, *al Azīzi*, 46-7.

⁷⁸ For Tāhart, see: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 1, 7-9.

⁷⁹ Muhallabī, *al Azīzi*, 48.

⁸⁰ For Tunis, see: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 2, 7.

⁸¹ Muhallabī, *al Azīzi*, 48.

⁸² See for Aqsintalā, see: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 1, 240.

⁸³ Muhallabī, *al Azīzi*, 53.

⁸⁴ For Zaghawa, see: Jākūt al Hamawī, *Mu'jam*, V: 3, 141.

⁸⁵ Ağar, Murat, 'İslâm Coğrafyacılarında Yedi İklim Anlayışı', *Journal of Ankara University Faculty of Theology*, V: 47, I: II, 2006, pp: 157-176.

⁸⁶ Saeed al Misr is Northern part of Egypt.

⁸⁷ Nubia, is a region along the Nile river located in what is today northern Sudan and southern Egypt.

⁸⁸ Muhallabī, *al Azīzi*, 53-5.