Historiography in al-Andalus “The Historian Abd al-Malek Andalusi as Model”

Maher Sabry Kadhim*

Introduction

The science of history (histology) has developed in the ancient times and its branches multiplied for its importance as far as its relatedness to the life of man by documenting and writing down the events and incidents that have passed, in particular after the Islamic epoch. The historical writings varied and increased in their trends by the variation of the geographic locations, whether in the East mashreq or the west Maghreb of the Islamic world. After the conquest of Iberia (Spain and Portugal) in 92 A.H. / 711 A.C. the historical writing quoted from the mashreq Islamic state to produce Islamic writing in al-Andalus by the historiography Abd al-Malek b. Habeeb al-Andalusi from his book at-Tareekh (History), where he displays a concise history of humanity passing through the Toiafe era to his time, taking in his own methodology in history writing. In this paper, the researcher tries to shed light on the importance of historiography in Andlus through the character of the historiography Abd al-Malek al-Andalusi due to his immense influence on the historical writing.

In his demonstration, the researcher divided the topic into four inquiries. The first inquiry is entitled The Development of historiography in al-Andalus, which describes the first beginning of historiography and its development over the successive ages briefly and simple with a concentration on the methodologies followed by the historians in al-Andalus. The second inquiry, the Historical Awareness for the Historians of al-Andalus, in which he displayed the al-Andalus historians’ perception of the historical events and their interpretation of history in terms of the development of the events

* Asst. Prof. Dr., Al-Mustansiriyah University, Department of History, Baghdad, kadhim-msk@yahoo.com DOI: 10.37879/9789751749994.2022.13
and the risks that surrounded al-Andalus. The third inquiry tackles the biography of Abd al-Malek al-Andalusi, as a model of his Andalusi. historians for his importance as far as the historical writings in Andalus is concerned. The inquiry tackles the biography of the historians from birth to death taking into consideration the scientific aspects of life. The study ends with a conclusion in which the researcher tackles the methodology of Abd al-Malek al-Andalusi on which he depended through his book *at-Tareekh* clarifying his sources that he used in writing his historical books as well as the method and style with which he has written down history in terms of precision and concise and the chronological order of events.

The researcher depended on a group of sources and sources the most important of which are the following: The book of *at-Tareekh* by Abd al-Malek al-Andalusi (D. 238 A.H. / 852 A.C.) which is employed in the fourth inquiry to deal with methodology which the historians has followed. Also, the book of *Tareekh Ulama al-Andalus* by Ibn al-Farethei (D. A.H./1013 A.C.) which contains the accurate information about the personality of Abd al-Malek b. Habeeb al-Andalusi in addition to the book of *al-Bayan al-Madribi fi Akhbaar al-Andalus wa’l-Maghreb* for the importance in the history of Andlus which the researcher depended on in the third inquiry. Among the modern references on which the researcher depends are the following: *The Emergence of the Arab Historical Writing in al-Andalus* by Abd al-Wahid Thanoun Taha, who details the stages through which Andlus has gone in all the inquiries of the research, as well as some other references and previous studies.

**First Inquiry**

**The Development of Historiography in al-Andalus**

Historiography has developed since the first emergence of the ancient civilizations until it reached advanced stages in the Islamic epoch through the prophetic hadiths (tradition) and the anecdotes. It developed to a study of the life of prophet (peace be upon him), and the stages of prophetic life history sira , the pioneers of which were narrators who emphasized the importance of crediting Isnad or the series of narrators in arriving at the first witness who witnessed the event.⁵

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When the Muslims conquered al-Andalus in 92 A.H. / 711 A.C., the studies were still in their beginning in the mashreq but they developed and flourished specially at the end of the second half of second century A.H. / eight century A.C. The study of sira spread during that century into other Medina locations such as Yemen, Iraq, the Levant and Egypt. Then, he developed historical studies to include other topics such as the Islamic historical events to include other disciplines like the narrations of Jahalaiya, the pre-Islamic Arab, and the history of earlier prophets. The need for new places for the writing of history consecrated for them emerged as a result of the Islamic conquests. However, it did not deviate from the historical movement that began in the early stages of Islam.

The early al-Andalus attempt in historical writing after the al-Andalus conquest has been influenced by the Mashreq as far as historical writing specially in Egypt due to the travels of al-Andalusi scholars to Egypt. Among the most important historians of al-Andalus after Abd al-Malek b. Habeeb was Maarik b. Marwan, who had one lost treatise about the history of al-Andalus. He is a grandson of Moussa b. Nusair in the third century A.H. \ Ninth century A.C. The historian al-Dinury has quoted from the book of Maarik b. Marwan in the book of *Imamite and Politics*. In the fourth century A.H. \ Tenth century A.C. the historical writings spread in Andalus about the life in al-Andalus like the historian Mohammed Abdullah al-Hakim, who composed a genealogy book called *Ansab al-Dakhlen Ala al-Andalus* men Arab wo garehem, which he dedicated to Abdurrahman Aa-Nasser. In that book he mentioned the caliphs and their progeny in al-Andalus and Qureish and their attendants. His book is lost, but it was quoted by Mohammed b. Abd al-Malek al-Ansari (D. A.H./703/ 1303 A.C.) in his book *At-Theil wa’t-Takmila le-Kitabayi’l Mousool wa’l-Sela*. In the same time, many writings appeared about biography, tabaqat books and other. The most important of which is the historian al-Khashni, even though he was originally from Qerawan and has travelled to Andalus and was tutored there. He composed a book *Akhbara Al-Qudhat bel al-Andalus* in which he presented an honest depiction about the social life in Cordoba in that age.

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Other writings include the book of *Tarekh Eftatah al-Andalus* by Ibn al-Quythia, which is a pioneer attempt in historical writing in al-Andalus for its distinguishing features in relation to the nature and the composition of the society in Andalus, as well as the author’s affiliation to that society and the attempt to draw a realistic image of the events that passed through the nation since conquest to the end of the third century A.H. Ninth century A.C. It is notable that he did not write down his book but one of his disciples conveyed it through hearing.3

**The Role of ar-Razzi Family**

The first and serious attempt to lay the foundation of historiography in al-Andalus was in the fourth century A.H. Tenth Century A.C. by Ahmed b. Mohammed b. Moussa al-Razzi (D. 344 A.H. / 955 A.C.) who had the greatest influence as far as the historical writing in Al-Andalus is concerned. But all his writings have been lost. However, the late historians quoted from his book and conveyed from unknown authors like Thikr belad Al-andlus and Akhbar Al-Majmoua. One finds that his style of analyzing the events and showing his opinion about the reasons of disputes and their sequences. An example of his opinion is the disputes between Arabs and Berber.

Ar-Razzi school has left a rich legacy in the subsequent studies when it introduced the geography with history. Many subsequent historians took from him such as Ibn Abi Fayyadh (D. 459 A.F./1066 A.C.).

The historian al-A’athary (D. 478 A.H. / 1085 A.C.) is among the contemporary historians. His approach in history writing is by mentioning the geographic information about each location and then stating the historical details associated with that location since the conquest and the preceding eras up to the time he lived in. However, sometimes he wrote in chronological order, especially in recounting one incident.

The writings of ar-Razzi family (Ahmed and Essa Ar-Razzi) were the bases on which all the subsequent writings were based as they were regarded as the peak to which historical writing has attained in the fourth century A.H. Tenth Century A.C. After them came Ibn Hayyan (D. 469 A.H. / 1076 A.C.) who is one of the greatest historians of Islam in al-Andalus.4

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Second Inquiry

The Historical Awareness for al-Andalus Historian

The Muslims did not have the enhancement of their historical knowledge as their first priority since they were living in internal and external struggles. Also, the climate was suitable for the preachers of religion Duaat and their efforts as far as the canonical Islamic laws, the thing that delayed the historical writing at the tie.

The al-Andalusi civilization was eastern in its inception because of its association with the east Mashreq. Then, with the emergence of new generation the Andalusi association has been shifted and the al-Andalusi identity began to be felt in all fields in general and the historical fields in particular. That was reflected on the policy of independence through the Umayyad emirates and finding a new authority away from the Abbasids. A great historians like Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi (D. 456 A.H./1064 A.C.), and Ibn Bassam al-Shantareiny (D. 542 A.H. / 1147 A.C.) appeared in the scene.

With the advance of history and the emergence of the al-Andalusi caliphate and the completion of the civilization character, the need for historical writing to document what their state had contributed in the Islamic Mashreq in the construction of the Islamic civilization through the fourth and fifth centuries A.H. Therefore, the themes of historiography were varied in tackling conventional fields like the general history and regional history, biographies and tabaqat and life history. Additionally new topics were emerged like the historical geography and history of literature and others.

The curricula of historiography were developed and the historian of the subsequent eras began to resort to criticism, analysis and even interpretation. They took their interpretations from the conscious induction of the historical events supported with quick logic. Some of them introduced of economic interpretations for some of events when they showed the effect of natural disasters in the life of people, they linked between the increase of taxes and fees with the breakout of the political and social movements. They also attributed them to the mistakes of the Walit (administrative official) and employees. This reflects the expansion of their view horizon to events and looks at all the aspects for analysis and not only one. The most influential development was not in the form of writing which still revolved around the same pivots (general history, local history, general or specialized biography), but in the content of the intellectual framework and structure

which dealt with in the past as a new concept, especially the level of analysis and interpretation.

Historical writing in al-Andalus shifted from the foundation started by Abd al-Malek b. Habeeb to the specialization by al-Razzi to reach out to the integration by the troubles Fitna school such as Ibn Hazm, Ibn Abd al-Berr al-Andalusi until he that found this work in the late generation the front most of which was Ibn al-Khateeb al-Gharnati.\(^6\)

There was a suitable environment for the development of history in al-Andalus due to the political stability, and the official direct sponsorship by the rulers of al-Andalus, the accessibility of books and libraries as well as the accumulation of knowledge and the economic prosperity. All these were basic inducements of innovation without us denying the effect of the crisis that occurred during the eras of troubles fitna and the Sect Taoifa in addition to the personal subjective factors. The historian Ibn Saeed al-Maghrebi (D. 685 A.H./ 1286 A.C.) was the one who become aware of the situation and Al-Andlus and warned against it.

The quality shift for the development of sciences in general and history in particular during the epoch of caliph Abd ar-Rahman al-Nasser and his son al-Mustansir. The political stability, which is the cornerstone for the civilization growth and prosperity, was established and growth and creativity spread unprecedentedly. In spite of the total collapse which accompanied the troubles and the abolish of the Umayyad caliphate, the succession of the Sect rulers to assuming power in many places of al-Andalus enriched the scientific movement and added impulse in a phenomenon that spurred historians’ astonishment.\(^7\) In the age of troubles two aspects of historiography took place: The selling of libraries in Cordoba had a positive impact as far as facilitating the spreading of knowledge and art in the various cities of andalus is concerned. The reflection of what happened in andalus on the historian who began to follow a deep philosophical course to know the cause of events and the reasons of emergences of states and the causes of their fall as well as the aspects of architecture and social origins and the like. The troubles were the important factor that stimulates the al-Andalusi historical thinking and pushed for searching for the cause and effect of what had taken place and the comparison between an old glorious times and another negative time.\(^8\)

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\(^6\) Taha, *ibid*, p.34-36.


\(^8\) Khairu, *ibid*, p.34-36.
Third Inquiry

The Biography of Abd al-Malek al-Andalusi

He is Abd al-Malek b. Habeeb b. Suleiman b. Harun b. Jelha b. Abbas b. Mardas. He is one of the Arabs who resided in Andalus. He is affiliated to Bani Saleem in geology and loyalty. He had many titles such as (The Mufti of al-Andalus), (the Scholar of al-Andalus) for the expansion of his knowledge. He is called the Iberian following his birthplace, the Cordovan after the city of Cordoba, as-Salami after his tribe, al-Andalusi ascription to al-Andalus and al-Maliki due to his Maliki sect to which he adhered. His Kunya name is Abi Marwan.

His Birth and Upbringing: He was born in Albeira in Andalus. There is no agreement about the exact date of his birth. Some mention that his birth was after the year 170 A.H./786 A.C. while others mention the year 174 A.H./790 A.C. Then, he moved with his family to the city of Cordoba in which he was brought up, learned and become renowned and listened to a number of sheikhs (tutors) including the tutor Ziyad Abd ar-Rahman. Then, he traveled to the east and attended lessons in Mecca and Medina in which he studied fiqh (jurisprudence) according to the doctrine of Malik b. Anas. Then, he returned to Cordoba and he was known for his knowledge in fiqh, hadith, arts, literature and poetry in addition to genealogy, lexicography and medicine. He was known as the ‘scholar of al-Andalus’.

The historians praised him for his scientific status as he was clear in the bases for sciences, arts, literature in al-Andalus as well as being with an excellent scientific status.

Family: The history of Abd al-Malek b. Habeeb’s family goes back to the beginnings of the Islamic conquests of Andalus. His family is attributed to Bani Saleem, an Adnanite tribe that took part in the conquest. His family was a remarkable family with scientific and religious standing.

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He was simple family, he moved with his brothers to live in Albeira because of al-Rabedh Revolution (202 A.H. / 818 A.C.). He was brought up on the knowledge and arts and after that he moved to the east seeking knowledge and there he met with the scholars and men of letters. He had three sons and a daughter who followed in the steps of their father in seeking knowledge.\textsuperscript{11}

**Scientific Course:**

Abd al-Malek received his first instruction from Ktateeb (elementary school) as was the case during the period. His father and the greatest scholars of al-Andalus and its tutors aided him to acquire knowledge. He has to take something from his jurisprudent father. His father religious tendencies were a simulative for him to follow the same course of life and that his first interest was the holy Quran, hadith, Rijaal (Biography evaluation). His grandfather and sheikhs (tutors) helped him in that in addition to the capital of al-Andalus Cordoba which was the basic motivation for learning. It was the capital of the Islamic world and even competing Baghdad as far as the scientific development and encouraging the sciences was concerned known by its sciences and buying the rare books in the east. Abd al-Malek has received knowledge in the mosques of Cordoba during the second stages of his study. He remained taking from these sciences especially the book Al-mu’taa which had a special place for the people of Andalus for the speared of al-Maliki doctrine.

**His Scientific Travels:**

After Muslims were settled in al-Andalus, the eyes were directed towards that model. Thus, travels began to go eastwards for many purposes such as pilgrimage, book collecting, studying at the hands of trusty tutors thiqaa in Egypt, Damascus, Hijaz and Baghdad. Abd al-Malek was one of them who were considered as a pioneer of al-Andalusi who studied in the East and were like the modern day fellowship students who study abroad.

The historian Abd al-Malek b. Habeeb was one of the scholars who desired scientific travels to learn the sciences from its original sources. The historians disagree in the year of his travel. Al-Qadhi Ghayyadh recounts that he travelled to the east in 208A.H./824 A.C. whereas at-Thahabi mentioned

his travel in 260 A.H. /821 A.C. he collected and gathered the prophetic tradition hadith, then he frequented the circles of sciences in the city study the fiqh of the Maliki doctrine. He entered Iraq in 227 A.H. / 841 A.C. and there he met with its scholars and sheikhs. Before that he had been tutored under the scholars of Qierawan and Egypt. Upon his return to Cordoba he settled in the al-Jama’ Mosque he took part in educating the boys to recite the Qur’an and hold prayers. Then, he began to be known when he attended the jurisprudent and scientific circles which were held in the mosques after al-Maliki jurisprudent and scientific. Thus, he obtained the admiration of many of the sheikhs and notables of Andalus. He encouraged the scholars of Andalus to travel to the Islamic Mashreq to study at the hands of eastern tutors because of their knowledge of the prophetic tradition.12

**His Sheikhs (tutors):**


**His Disciples:**

Under his tutorship a great number of scholars, jurisprudents and Judges were educated. They pursued the spread of his sciences in al-Andalus and he made it a great center for the Islamic fiqh and graduate studies. They include:

1. Ibraheem b. Yazid from Cordoba.
2. Ibraheem b. Shu’aib from Albiera.

**Samples from his Scientific Onions and the Opinions of scholars about him:**

His opinions are characterized by inclusiveness for his knowledge and the width of his scope that varied to include more than one sciences and were

characterized by accuracy and objectivity. An example of his opinions is his saying “No one can be Imam in fiqh unless he is an Imam in Qur’an and tradition and no Imam in tradition unless is an Imam in fiqh…” He has an opinion about alcohol drinking which he condemned. His opinions include also the jurisprudential, judicial, political issues as well as in Arabic language and its sciences and natural issues and his emphasis on mediation and henna. He warned against the bad sequences of cautery and surgical intervention without prior knowledge.

He had political works through his good relation with its monarchs and his job as an advisor to them. He suggested military plants. Ibn al-Fardhi, al-Ashbili, Ibn Farhoun al-Maliki, Yaqut al-Hamawim al-Thahabim Ibn Hajar al-Askalani as well as Provençal praised him.13

Fourth Inquiry

Historian Abd al-Malek al-Andalusi of Methodology

The historian Abd al-Malek al-Andalusi was the first author who presented the history of his state. It is the most outstanding writings that reached to us of the historical treatise. The book of *Tarekh* was like the at-Tabari’s book *tarekh al-rusul* we al-milook in the general pattern. The book *tarekh* by Abd al-Malek al-Andalusi was regarded as the first source from which information has been quoted about the conquest of al-Andalus. Therefore, it has a great importance since many of the late historians cited the book as one of historical events and texts. Abd al-Malek al-Andalusi is regarded as the founder of the historical school in al-Andalus. He has been influenced by the Iraqi and Medina schools of history recording.

It seems that the historian Abd al-Malek al-Andalusi did not record but part of the book because the series of emirs if Andalus each to Emir Abdullah (275 A.H./888 A.C.), and he died 35 year before that. It is believed that one of his disciples (Ibn Abi al-Raqa‘) has reecoded the rest and added may things.14

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Abd al-Malek al-Andalusi started history writing by speaking about the history of the world after he has divided the book into many parts each concerned with a specific period. He started the first part with “The commencement of good and evil,” detailing the parts according to the successive historical stages, the first was “The Section of Creation of the Heavens and Earth” in which there is a story of the creation of life, and the creation of Adam and then the prophets from Adam up to the Messenger (pbuh) with an account of their nations and the revealed book. His sources from pre-Islamic period was Assad b. Moussa, al-Khazaai, Muttaraf b. Abdullah and Ali b. Maubad.

The second part is concerned with the biography of the prophet (pbuh), The Emissary of Prophet and the battles explaining their etiology and their course as well as their sequences until his death. Concerning that part, he cited from Ibn Husham and the narrations of al-Waqidi.

The third part is concerned with the Orthodox caliphate and then the Umayyad caliphate after that he detailed the “Conquest of Andalus.” He referred to the riches and the valuable metals found there. Then he mentioned the stories of its rulers; emirs and governors. Thus, Abd al-Malek made the history of the world as a preface to the history of al-Andalus and when he speaks about al-Andalus he referred to the plans and preparation and equipping them with military campaigns as well as the stages of conquering Andalus cities, those who entered them from the followers. In his account of the history of al-Andalus, he included myths like the dream of Tariq b. Ziyad and his description of the Muslim siege of the lodgings of Jinns and the treasures in the palace Toledo and the story of Suleiman’s table. Most of his accounts are taken from the Egyptian narrators like al-Layth b. Saad and his disciple Abdullah b. Wahab. He mentioned the governors Walis of Andalus and its emirs from conquest to the year 275A.H. / 888 A.C. .

In the rest of the book he accounts the tabaqaat of jurisprudents of the followers from Medina, Basrah, Kufa, Egypt and the Levant, and the tabaqaat after the followers including the people of Andalus. After that he consecrated a subject to interpret the preface to Malik b. Anas concluding his book with miscellaneous subjects about the letters of the wise and the anecdotes of the scholars.15

Concerning his sources, at some times he did not attribute to anyone but he recounts the incident without citation. Sometimes he used the citation like he says “Ibn Abbas says so and so” and he had ambiguous statements like citing “a wise of the wise people says so and so…” or “it is said…” or “Somebody says…” many times he recounts oral narrations like saying “I was informed by…” “someone informed me…” His tradition in recording is chronological of events according to year orders starting from the year 2 A.H. until the era of the author.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{16} Ibn Habeeb, \textit{ibid.}, p. 15-16.
Conclusion

Historiography has developed throughout the historical eras of the Islamic epoch and the historical writings varied and schools multiplied in the Eastern island provinces Mashreq. When the Muslims conquered al-Andalus in 92 A.H./711 A.C. and settled there, the trends for history recording influenced by the eastern schools as a result of the mutual scientific travels. A number of historians emerged in Andalus in the top of whom is Abd al-Malek b. Habeeb al-Andalusi, who is called the scholar of Andalus, for his many distinguishing features and an outstanding scientific status in al-Andalus. He was contemporary to the Umayyad era in Andalus. In spite of the disagreement of historians about the years of his birth and death, they agreed on praising him as a founder of historical school in al-Andalus for his literature in that field. Most of his literature has been lost but they were quoted by the late al-Andalus historians. However, his book tarekh, which survived, is considered one of the important as far as the history of al-Andalus is concerned. It is thought that he had not written the book by himself but was compiled by one of his disciples in which he has recorded the history of the works from the creation until after the death of the author many years in a concise and specific manner in history writing.

The al-Andalusi historians continued history recording which led to the specialization in that as found in the ar-Razzis and then into integration by adding geographical prefatory in recording for what the historians had in analysis and prediction of historical events like Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi like the. The historian Ibn al-Khateeb al-Ghernati, who is regarded as one of the late generation of historians, has concluded history recording in al-Andalus.
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