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## СРАВНИТЕЛЬНЫЕ ЧЕРТЫ В ТВОРЧЕСТВЕ ИБН БАТТУТЫ И ДРУГИХ СОВРЕМЕННЫХ ЕМУ ПУТЕШЕСТВЕННИКОВ

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## COMPARABLE FEATURES IN THE WORKS OF IBN BATTUTA AND OTHER CONTEMPORARY TRAVELERS

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*Abstract.* The famous Moroccan Arabic traveler Ibn Battuta made a remarkable contribution to both eastern and western literature. His work *Tukhfat an-nuzzor fi garoib al-amsor va ajoib al-afsor* (Travelogue) is highly regarded as a valuable source which gives unique information about the culture and traditions, lifestyle of medieval cities and countries. This article analyses the extensive comparison between travels of Ibn Battuta and other outstanding travelers such as a Venetian traveler Marco Polo and a Russian traveler Afanasy Nikitin. Furthermore, it investigates the common situations which can be encountered in each traveler's journey.

*Аннотация.* Знаменитый арабский путешественник Ибн Баттута родом из Марокко внес достойный вклад в развитие восточной, а также западной литературы. Его произведение «*Тухфат ан-нуззар фи гараиб ал-амсар ва ажаиб ал-асфар*» («Путешествие») отличается от других подобных произведений тем, что повествует о странах, городах, культуре и жизнедеятельности народов Средневековья. В статье приводится обширное сравнение путешествия Ибн Баттуты с путешествиями других его современников: венецианского путешественника Марко Поло и русского купца Афанасия Никитина. Анализируются схожие черты путешествий каждого из вышеупомянутых путешественников.

*Keywords:* Marco Polo, Afanasy Nikitin, jurisprudence, travelers, Ibn Battuta's Travelogue, Marco Polo's Travels.

*Ключевые слова:* Марко Поло, Афанасий Никитин, Путешествие Ибн Баттуты, путешественники, юриспруденция, Путешествие Марко Поло.

*Methods and styles of the research:* historical and cultural (providing information about each subject), comparative (data comparison), and systematic analysis (theoretical analyses of information).

### Introduction

Ibn Battuta was highly regarded as one of the greatest travelers of the East. According to Richard Henning, he was more outstanding than Italian traveler Marco Polo. As he had traveled

nearly all non-Christian countries within twenty-six years in the XIV century and left a huge heritage to the science of geography of the Middle Ages<sup>1</sup>.

The famous German geographical expert and scientist Richard Henning mentioned that without any exaggeration. Karl Burckhardt, the great orientalist of R. Henning's compatriot, is even more adamant to regard Ibn Battuta, saying, "Perhaps, Ibn Battuta is the most famous traveler who portrayed his travels"<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, the scientist considered him as one of the most famous travelers of the Arabic world.

The famous venetian traveler Marco Polo was a professional diplomat, captious observer, linguist, and a person who had great knowledge of ethnographic, social issues. His work "Travels of Marco Polo" was a valuable source which comprised historical information of the century.

Afanasy Nikitin, a Russian traveler who lived a little later than Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta, was an extraordinary person. His original work, "The Journey Beyond Three Seas" was written in four languages and Nikitin completed his diary of the journey with a prayer to God.

Unlike the two above-mentioned travelers, Afanasy Nikitin was a real trader, and his work "The Journey Beyond Three Seas" was written as a biographical diary.

### *Main body*

Ibn Battuta's period was indeed a great time for the historical exploration of the East. Between two centuries, from the second half of the 13th to the mid-fifteenth it was a time of great geographical discovery, with numerous unrivaled geographical and historical trips to Asia. To some extent it was triggered by some objective reasons. Certainly, first of all, it was caused by two large groups, located in a large area, Arab-Muslim in the west and Mongol in the east.

In the middle of the 13th century, ambassadors of papa arrived in the Mongolian capital, Karakorum. In the last decade of the 13th century, Marco Polo's splendid travels gained a great fame. At the same time the Italian monk Giovanni Montecorvinno, the Nordica of Pordenone in 1322-1328 visited China. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, caste ambassadors led by Ruy Gonzalez Clavijo visited Middle East and Central Asia. In the second half of the 15th century, Tver merchant Afanasy Nikitin made three famous seaside trips. The same period was followed by two great trips by two Chinese from the East - Zheng He of China and Ibn Battuta from Morocco for 28 years.

Without any hesitation one can say that Ibn Battuta ranks first in the list of medieval travelers in terms of distance. He travelled about a hundred and twenty thousand miles on land and water during his travels. He often travelled most of these distances accompanied in deserts and loaded caravans. He traveled to countries from the fortieth latitude of the north latitude to the tenth of the southern latitude.

Ibn Battuta's comparison with Marco Polo is not accidental. There are many similarities between them. They both travelled to the major Asian countries at that time. Marco Polo died in 1324, one year before the beginning of Ibn Battuta's journey. Instead of writing their memories, both travelers shared memories after returning home. Being ordered by his king the Moroccan traveler told his impressions about the trip to Asia which lasted 24 years (1271-1295). The listener was his friend Rusichano. In order to not getting bored, venetian traveler did the same thing. Marco Polo's journey lasted about seventeen years, while Ibn Battuta's journey lasted about twenty-eight years. Information about their visits to different countries often coincides with each other, or they complement each other. Sometimes they oppose each other. Marco Polo had lived in China for

<sup>1</sup> Henning R. Nevedomie zemli (The unknown land). Moscow, 1962. Vol 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibragimov N., Mukhtarov T. Ibn Battuta – Musulmanskii Marco Polo (Muslim Marco Polo) - Scientific and analytical information. TIU Publishing House. No. 4, 2007, B.24.

many years and knew the country very well as well as understanding the people. He had been to a number of neighbour countries such as Burma, India, Ceylon, Tibetan, Japan. Finding friends was not difficult for him. He always learned about the customs and traditions, flora and fauna of the area. Especially riding his horse, Marco Polo observed many patterns of the Chinese cultural development. He was the witness of money made from paper, postal service of the empire, and the heating quality of the coal. The last fact was unknown to European people. Also he learned about other cultural progress. He spoke about his experiences on the way to China, and these impressions were not deeply mentioned. Information about other areas in his book was a description of what he had heard from strangers, most of which was not based on concrete evidence. As for his Moroccan counterpart, he mentioned the facts which he had seen on his own. In foreign languages, he only mentioned stories about "historical travels" and the lives, miracles of the holy people. In Muslim countries, that is, during most of his journey, he was able to properly evaluate what he saw and heard. Being in China for a short time, he did not understand the peculiarities of the country. If we call Marco Polo a traveler by the territory of the Mongol khanates, we can call Ibn Battuta as «the narrator of the whole Muslim world."

So, we can understand the superiority of the Moroccan traveler when comparing Ibn Battuta's travels with Marco Polo's book. Because he traveled three times more than Marco Polo and was parts of the world as well as having journey the seas of three oceans.

The authors differ greatly in their nature. This is evident in their way of telling stories. Marco Polo tells stories he has seen or heard. During the storytelling, Ibn Battuta experienced the events which he had seen or heard once more. As well as expressing his impressions, he also regains his emotions as a result of these events. Every reader who reads his statements will be delighted when it comes to the beautiful and luxurious cities and the bazaar, and he will be sad when reading about the poor and desolate countries, and sometimes even smiling at the simplest stories about miracles. He is not jealous of the words, especially when he describes events that amaze him. The Moroccan tourist, who values beautiful things, makes separate, accurate and figurative comparisons. "The city is unique in its beauty and grandeur. It is a place of meeting people from different places, shelter for the weak and strong," he writes of Cairo, and at the same time the city is scary and cheerful, accountable and wasteful, is unscrupulous and noble, rich and poor, simple and famous<sup>3</sup>.

Ibn Battuta's direct and direct perception of things around him is more like that of Legendary Nikitin. Moroccan and Tver merchants, both tourists, are keen to travel, but have returned to their homeland for their genuine homesickness. Suffice it to remember that Afanasy Nikitin complains of irreligion and superstition in India and Ibn Battuta in China. They both undoubtedly describe their epoch, the worldview and imagination of that period.

Nikitin also writes in detail about Hindu religious traditions. He tells the story in «The Journey Beyond Three Seas»: when a Russian merchant traveled to India trying to sell his horse to Chuner Khan. When he learned that Nikitin was Russian, he urged him to convert to Islam, be Muslim! If you accept Islam, I will give you back your horse and a thousand gold coins. If you do not believe in our religion and do not believe in Muhammad, (pbuh) I will not give you a horse and a thousand gold and you will lose your head," the Khan said. A man who accidentally crossed there found him and saved him from death.

This case shows that in India there is a growing awareness of religion among oppressors.

Ibn Battuta in his guide describes in detail the following religious issues in China:

People in China are unbelievers, and they worship idols and burn dead people like Indians. The Chinese king is a Mongol descendant of Genghis Khan, so every Chinese city has a Muslim

<sup>3</sup> Ibragimov N., Mukhtarov T. Ibn Battuta – Musulmanskii Marco Polo (Muslim Marco Polo) - Scientific and analytical information. TIU Publishing House. No. 4, 2007, B.24.

towns and lives separately. They have their own mosque for Friday and other prayers, and the Chinese honor and respect them.<sup>4</sup>

It follows that while India experienced interfaith contradictions and conflicts, the Muslim and non-Muslim populations of China flourished with mutual respect.

"He is regarded as a worthy pilgrim or experienced trader, or an official in various Muslim countries," R. Henning wrote, "but Ibn Battuta was also a true researcher. He enthusiastically absorbed all his impressions and left us a very detailed, even true geographical treasure. Ibn Battuta saw three times more countries than Marco Polo..."<sup>5</sup>.

Ibn Battuta does not set any scientific goals when traveling. First and foremost, his unrestrained interest in the living conditions of people in other countries was ruled. In addition, this interest was directed towards a specific area, that is, only Muslim countries. Considering that Islam was a part of Asia at that time, and to some extent North West and East Africa, and the dominant ideology of states ranging from the Atlantic to the western border of China, Ibn Battuta traveled extensively and in Asia. and it has been said that Africa has gone through all Muslim countries.

Ibn Battuta's interest in this area, and his travels are of great importance to modern science. For example, in his work we see interesting comparisons of the rules of Islam adopted in different countries. This comparison was made by a person who adheres to Muslim beliefs. This is especially evident in the comparisons of Muslim law (jurisprudence) and judgment. On the other hand, the methods of governance, administrative courts and political governance are clearly demonstrated. Ibn Battuta, who is well acquainted with the rules of Orthodox Islam, understands immediately deviations from the religious rules adopted in Maghreb and Egypt. In a word, everything related to the Muslim religion cannot be overlooked. Usually, he prioritizes stories about saints and sacred places, etc. From these stories we find important biographical information about various historical figures.

In addition, it is important to include rituals, customs and celebrations in the work. Ibn Battuta, for example, says that while in Cairo, city dwellers love to have luxurious holidays. She says that she also attended one of these days of celebrations. The city was decorated with various fabrics and flags at these festivals, thanks to the healing of the broken arm of the Egyptian Sultan. It is also important to mention the Muslim rituals related to the pilgrimage to Mecca.

In all the author's statements, people play a major role, except for other medieval travelers. According to the famous Polish orientalist A. Zayonchkowski, the motto of Ibn Battuta in the travel coincides with the Arabian proverb: "The neighbor first, then the house, then the first one."

The Travel Guide describes some aspects of the social system of the Orient. In describing each state, Ibn Battuta emphasizes on the specific duties of the head of state, his relatives, judges and officials. It also provides information about the various groups and segments of society and their relationships. As a foreigner to these countries he critically evaluates the various forms of social and political systems.

Information on the social system of the Eastern states is also complemented by extensive material covering the economic situation of these countries. As an experienced trader, Ibn Battuta focuses on trade-related and non-trivial matters, including importing and exporting goods, communication routes and distances between cities, markets and seaports. He was even interested in the prices of goods, the money in circulation, and the population's need for certain goods.

<sup>4</sup> Ibragimov N. Ibn Battuta. Travel Guide. "Tukhfat an-nuzur fi garoib al-amsor va ajoib al-afsor" - T.: Sharq (West), 2012. p.598.

<sup>5</sup> Henning, R. (1962). Nevedomie zemli (The unknown land. ) (p.200). Moscow, Vol. 3.

Finally, it is worth noting that another important aspect of Ibn Battuta's travels is the study of the history of the Oriental culture, first of all its architecture. Due to the Muslims' interest in sacred sites, he describes in detail the mosques and other shrines. The tour also tells stories about palaces, castle walls and common buildings, cities. Such details are very useful in envisioning medieval cities or individual monuments of that time, and many scholars cite examples from his book.

Ibn Battuta's Travel Guide also serves as an interesting literary monument and an important source for learning Arabic. Extracts from this work are still included in the textbooks of the Arab schools for general secondary education, such as Reading, Literature, and Higher Education. Not because of the popularity of the Travel Guide, but because of its literary potential, to be precise, because of its very simple and natural language style.

In Ibn Battuta, in particular, there are no nomadic terms (paraphrase, peripheral) that are typical of the late medieval literary style, that is, they do not have anything or a person's own name, but a character and character. In some places, the text of the Journey is found in the form of nomadic words, but when we examine them carefully, they are living expressions and we find that Ibn Battuta accepted them as they were. In this regard, we see that Ibn Juziyya worked wholeheartedly in describing the stories narrated by Ibn Battuta. Ibn Juziyya preserved the specifics of his story and treated them with caution. That is why the author's personality, which is far from traditional literary circles, and is suppressed by the dominant literary models, is very skillful.

#### *Conclusion*

There are a number of comparable features in the travels of Ibn Battuta and contemporary travelers such as venetian traveler Marco Polo and the trader Afanasy Nikitin. Reliable information about the nature, agriculture, population of medieval eastern cities and countries was given in Marco Polo's "Travels of Marco Polo"<sup>6</sup>, Afanasy Nikitin's "The Journey Beyond Three Seas"<sup>7</sup> and Ibn Battuta's "Tukhfāt an-nuzzor fī garoib al-amsor wa ajoib al-afsor" ("Travelogue")<sup>8</sup>. They provided with geographical information about the countries they visited. Each work is important not only for history, ethnography and geography, but also for literary roles. Through a book narrated by the impression of a medieval Arab trader, we see and feel the landscape of that time.

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<sup>6</sup> K.I. Kunina "Marco Polo. Puteshestvie" – L., 1940 Vstuplenie. «Marco Polo i ego kniga».

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