CHAPTER III

THE SOURCES OF IBN AL-ATHIR'S HISTORICAL INFORMATION

"Pre-Islamic Section"

Al-Mubtada Section:

In *al-Kamil* Ibn al-Athir begins with a discussion of why it was necessary for the author to write a balanced history of Islam. He then describes how the fixation of date came into vogue in Islamic history. Suggestions made by leading companions of the Prophet in this respect, have been reported by the author. The ideas put forward by Caliph 'Umar have also been discussed. He suggested that the date of the migration of the Prophet should be accepted as the beginning of the Islamic era. Thereafter, Ibn al-Athir deals with time and defines it. "Time means the hours of the day and night." Other definitions of time are also reported. But there was difference of opinion with regard to the length of the period from the beginning of the world up to the time of Hijra. On the authority of Ibn 'Abbas, Sa'id b. Jubayr favoured 7000 years, while Wahb Ibn Munabbah believed it to be 6000 years. The Greeks, Zoroastrians and the Jews calculated 5992, 3139 and 4642 years respectively as the

intervening period. Al-Biruni gives a detailed table pertaining to the age of the world based on the different astronomical systems. Al-Mas'udi also quotes some of these systems.

Ibn al-Athir has taken most of the traditions from Al-Tabari, but he has omitted his elaborations on the philosophical conception of time, because the latter adopted a scholastic approach towards the interpretation of time. He argued whether time was created? if so, was it created first or something else preceded it? The answers to all these questions were given by al-Tabari, Ibn al-Athir thought it irrelevant to the subject of history, so he reasonably drops them.

 Ibn al-Athir then turned attention to the problem of the Creation. He describes different views held by the Jews and the Christians which were more or less adopted by the commentators of the Qur'an. When God finished with creating the Pen (al-Qalam), he turned towards other things, such as the creation of the Delicate Vapour. But Ibn al-Athir differed with al-Tabari. Taking a logical attitude he says that when the Pen was first

6. Ibid., Vol. 1/37.
created, then it must be followed by the Creation of a tablet to write upon (al-lauh al-mahfuz). So, in his opinion the second thing created was the protected tablet. Ibn al-`Athīr’s criticism is perhaps based on a tradition stated on the authority of Ibn `Abbas. It narrates that God first created the Protected tablet and then the Pen. Kasaʾi perhaps drew this tradition from Wahb’s Kitab al-Mubtada. Since this view, apparently, contradicts the view expressed in the Bible, and moreover some traditions recorded by many learned authorities are found to be in disagreement with this view; a reasonable answer has to be sought in some other sources. The Bible states "In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth." Here Heaven means ‘to be high.’ This is the meaning in the expression "the heaven and the earth or the upper and the lower regions." But if we include the Pen and the Protected Tablet among the first things which God created, then the discrepancy between the creation of the Heaven and the Earth narrows down. However, the question still remains unsolved. Al-Tabari, the commentator of the Qurʾan widely depends upon the Jewish thought in his Tafsīr. The Jews were themselves divided on the question of the Creation, etc. The Ribbis were not unanimous in their commentaries of the Bible. What was created first? The Heaven?

1. Abd allāh al-Kasaʾi, Qasas al-`Aabiya, p. 6.
or the Earth? The school of Shammai maintains the priority of the Heaven and quotes verses from Genesis 1,1, to support its contention, on the other hand the school of Hillel holds the opposite view. It believes that the earth is prior to the Heaven. Each school provides arguments and tries to substantiate its claims by various reasons. As a result of this kind of theological discussion, a vast literature was produced such as the Talmud and the Midrash. A part of this literature permeated the pre-Islamic Arabia. There is no weight in the view that Arabia, at the time of the prophet or before him, was in seclusion. On the contrary, sufficient historical evidence of tremendous importance, has proved that the Arabian peninsula had always been in close contact with the neighbouring regions Syria, Babylonia and Ethiopia. A study of the geographical places mentioned in the Old Testament and the Talmud, not only points out to the ancient relation between the Israelites and the Arabs, but also suggests that the Jews did not forget their ancestral home from where they migrated and came to Arabia in subsequent centuries. Professor Horovitz stresses this point in his learned article, he says that "Jewish inhabitants of Hijaz were largely agriculturists and this perhaps speaks for their having been Jews by race, whose ancestors had brought the agricultural experiences acquired in Palestine with them to the

1. The Bible, Genesis, 2-4.
2. A. I. Katsh, Judaism in Islam, p. 22.
Oasis of Hijaz. The Jewish population of Tema and Madinah, had regular relation with Palestine and Babylonia which provided a medium for religious and cultural exchange between the Jews and the Arabs. Thus the Jewish thought quite deeply and persistantly penetrated Arabia. The conception of monotheism expressed in the Jahiliyah poetry clearly confirms this influence. It is why the Prophet Muhammad was offered the whole hearted support by the Jews who later turned hostile.

After the death of the Prophet Muhammad his eminent companion, in their effort to know about the past Prophets mentioned in the Qur'an and the nation to whom they were sent, came to confide more and more in the knowledge of the Jewish convert scholars. By the help of these scholars, a good portion of the oral and written traditions of Judaism passed over to the great commentator like Ibn 'Abbas, popularly called the Hibral al-Ummat.

This background can easily determine the origin of contradictory statements which flooded the Islamic literature in its initial stages. The differences about the priority of the creation found in the Muslim traditionists and commentators are indeed traceable in the Jewish literature.

After the question of Creation, Ibn al-Athir narrates the succession of nights and days and repudiates the view of Tabari

2. Ibid.
who, on the authority of Ibn Sahl quotes in his history together
with other traditions a long story. Ibn al-Athir rejects this
story on rational ground and expresses distrust the chain of
the transmitters.

The Semitic conception of the Creation of man has been
neglected in al-Kamil. Adam and Eve were given birth by the
will of God. The whole story of the lives in the Heaven, the
disobedience of divine will is followed by the description of
the Persian conception of man's creation. A certain Kumart
is supposed to be Adam. This view is held by most of the Persi
scholars, but some of them regard him the son of Adam and Eve.
The fall, its causes and where they first landed have been
described by Ibn al-Athir. It also covers the narrative of
Adam's progeny.

Ibn al-Athir describes the birth of Sheth, the son of
Adam, and the death of Adam. A brief account of quarrels among
his children Yarid and his son Enoch the first Prophet, have
been recorded by the author. Nuh, Ibrahim, Ishaq, Ismail and
Ayyub have been given a considerable space. The famous contro-

2. Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil, Vol.1 The Bible, Genesis, I, 11,
p.3-5. The Holy Quran, Part I, s.11, p.24-26.
3. Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil, Vol.1 Hamaza al-Asfahani, Tarikh
Al-Thalabi, Ghurar Akhbar Muluk al-Furs, p.1
5. Ibid., Vol. 1/27.
6. The Holy Bible, Genesis, Ch. X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XVII.
versy among the Muslims and Christians; whether Ibrahim sacrificed Ismail or Ishaq, has been reported in detail. Many traditions supporting either view have been cited and it has been noted that the companions of the Prophet were divided on this question.

The episode of the Prophet Yusuf, the son of Yaqub, has got an interesting narrative. On the death of Yusuf, his body, according to his wish was taken to Syria and was buried in his family graveyard. After it the stories of Shu'aib, Khizir and Musa have been described. Musa died at the age of one hundred and twenty. After Musa, God sent a host of Prophets in the family of Yaqub. Among them Yasin, Ilyas, Dawud and Sulaiman are well known to the history of Islam. Sulaiman's brilliant rule and the grandeur of his court are of special interest to the Muslim historians. Sulaiman died at the age of fifty three after the death of his famous wife, the queen of Sheba.

The Queen of Sheba who is for the first time mentioned in the Old Testament, with a very great retinue visited Solomon in Jerusalem, on hearing the fame of his wisdom. She was, as

2. The Bible, Genesis Chapt. XXXVII; The Holy Qur'an, Surat Yusuf, Section, 1-11
3. Bible states that Josef took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you and you shall carry my bones from hence" Genesis. L.56, Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil, Vol. 1/45,46.
4. Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil, Vol.1/58,68; The Bible, Denieronomy XXXIV, p. 213. "And Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died."
5. Geographical Dictionary of the Holy Scripture, p.310 for detailed study see article on Saba, Ency. of Islam, Vol. IV, p. 3-17.
it is thought, one of the rulers of Sabeans who inhabited South-West part of the Arabian Felix, near the modern province of Yemen, bounded by the Red Sea on the West and the Indian Ocean on the South. But the queen has been described by Josephus as the ruler of Egypt and Ethiopia. This view certainly goes against the evidence which lead us to the contrary opinion. Had she been a ruler of Egypt and Ethiopia, it would have been most difficult for her to reach Jerusalem. R.A. Arrowsmith points out the fact that the dangers of a journey from Meroe to Jerusalem must have been so great and manifold, compared with those attending the route from Arabia to the Jewish capital, traversed as the latter was by numerous carvans, that it seems unlikely any monarch would have made an attempt, it appears, therefore, more probable, the famous Queen of Sheba, came from the South part of Arabian Felix, whose inhabitants have a tradition to that effect. What Josephus holds requires further investigation, only then one can reach more appropriate conclusion. It is interesting to note that the story was equally popular among the early Abysinians.

A tribe called Habash migrated to Abysinia after whom Abysinia was named. It suggests that the Yemanids were in close relation with Ethiopia, and that, perhaps, their political

power extended through Ethiopia to Egypt also. Another point deserves to be mentioned that in the tenth or eleventh Century B.C. there were frequent invasions of Abysinia by the Arabs, and Soloman's reign usually synchronises with 992 to 952 B.C. It is possible that during these times the Sabeans established a colony in Abysinia which they named after Saba. Since Josephus is of the opinion that the queen of Sheba was from Ethiopan Saba, it seems that she was the same who being originally from South Arabia, held the hegemony of Ethiopia as well. The two different Saba, one in Arabia and the other in Africa the latter being a colony from Arabian Saba, as Ludol long ago pointed out, has, perhaps created confusion in the mind of Josephus which has led him to think that the queen primarily belonged to Ethiopan Saba.

In this regard, two more points may be mentioned here. The name Bilqis is not mentioned in the Quran and the Old Testament. The question is: From where this appellation came into Arabian literature? It cannot be a Creation of the Arab mind. They preserved perhaps what they found from their contemporary nations. It would be appropriate here to call attention to the description of the ruins of a temple called Mahram Bilqis' by an Arab explorer, in the land of Sheba. It suggests that the Arabs did not fabricate the name Bilqis.

1. The Holy Quran, VII, p. 983.
2. O'Leary, Arabia before Muhammad, p. 88.
Possibly it was the corruption—quite comprehensible in Arabic version of Naukalis, as Josephus calls his queen of Sheba whom he regarded as the ruler of Egypt and Ethiopia.

The marriage of Sheba with Sulaiman mentioned by our author is not stated in the Quran. The story in this form was perhaps of later production even its origin is not Arabic. It came into Arabic literature through Jewish medium. It goes back to the Greek word, which points out to the story of the marriage of Solomon and the queen of Sheba. There is no doubt that the Arab mind also contributed a number of stories to the already invented tales grown up around the queen which Tabary and Kamil have preserved.

After Sulaiman, Israelites received severe blow from Bukhtnasr (a corruption of Nebuchadrezzar who ruled between 604 to 561 B.C.), The Governor of Babylonia. He massacred the population and looted the city. Those who were left were made captives and were distributed among the Generals. Tales have been narrated about the personality of Bukhtnasr and the cause of his attack on Palestine. But the identification of Bukht-

2. Wendell Philips, Gataban and Sheba, p. 108.
3. Ency. of Islam, VI/720, Article on Bilqis.
with Nebuchadrezzar of the Bible and the Talmud is fairly understandable.

The Sira, or al mubtada, section of Al-Kamil, in which the stories of prophets have been narrated, reveals deep Jewish and Christian influences over Islamic thought and literature. Arabs have been in close contact with Jews and Christians of Syria, Babylonia, Abyssinia and Najran. And it is also a fact that Arabs and Jews belonged to the same stock - that is to say to Sam b. Nuh. When Islam became the dominant religion of Arabia, the Jews and Christians also embraced the new faith in large numbers. Their conversion paved the way for exchange of religious information. This is fairly evident in commentaries of the Holy Qur’an and in the Sira section of Arab histories.

The commentary of the Holy Qur’an and Mubtada literature were two important branches of Islamic learning which were developed in the first century. Since Islam made a obligatory on all its followers to believe in those prophets who preceded Muhammad, it was quite natural that the noted companions took keen interest in knowing about the times and teachings of other prophets. They received the informations from the new converts from Judaism like Abdullah b. Sallam, K'ab al-Ahbar, and Wahb

2. Every man's Talmud. p.23
3. O'leary, Arabia before Muhammad, p. 143.
b. Munabbah. Abdallah, who died in Medinah in 43 A.H. had a wide knowledge of Judaism which is confirmed by the Qur'an itself. He gave a lot of information about the ancient prophets. Ibn 'Abbas narrates a considerable number of traditions on his authority. Kitab al-Ma'arif and Tarikh of Tabari have preserved them in their pages.

K'ab al-Ahbar was considered among one of the greatest Jewish scholars in Yemen. He was converted to Islam in the reign of Abu Bakr and came to Medinah when Umar was the Caliph. The companions and others received a good stock of knowledge about the ancient prophets from him. He died in 32 A.H./the reign of Umar. These two scholars lived in intimate contact with the learned class of Medinah. Their knowledge, especially, of Israelites have been accepted by the commentators and by those interested in the history of the early prophets.

Abdullah b. 'Abbas, the most learned among his contemporaries and the authority on several subjects, consulted these two scholars whenever he needed. His commentary on the Holy Qur'an in which he utilised Jewish and Christian sources, substantiate the view that he had wide knowledge of the early prophets. It is quite reasonable that he acquired this knowledge from those

who were accessible to him like Abū al Jalād, K'āb al-Aḥbār, Abd'allāh b. Sallām and Wahb b. Munabbah. Ibn 'Abbas did not leave a single book behind him but he attracted a large number of students around him, who after his death spread out in Iraq, Syria and Hijaz. A list of them is preserved by Ibn al-Athīr in his Usud al-Ghāba. They transmitted Ibn 'Abbas's informations pertaining Ayyam, his commentary on the Qur'ān and his Hadīth to the younger generation. A number of his disciples have been quoted in the history of Al-Ṭabarī. Ibn Qutaiba also narrates many traditions, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas, in his Kitab al-Ma'arif.

Wahb b. Munabbah 34-116 was one of the main sources for the history of early prophets. He was of Persian origin sent to Sana by Kisra. His knowledge of the antiquities, scriptures of the Jews and Christians was widely accepted. According to a tradition, he wrote two books named 'The Stories of Prophets' and 'The Stories of Saints'. It is also reported that he lived with Ibn 'Abbas for thirteen years. The traditions, relating to the lives of prophets which have been narrated by most of the transmitters of Kitab al-Tabagat Marif and Tarikh al-Tabary

3. It is said that he was of Jewish origin. He claimed to have known Greek, Syriac and Himerite languages and could read ancient scriptures well. Al-Zerkly, Al-‘Alam Vol. 9/150. Ibn Sad, Al-Tabagat Ibn Sad, Vol. 5/343.
on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas throw light on the dependence of Ibn 'Abbas on his Jewish disciples.

The Sira section of Islamic history incorporated materia from commentaries on the Qur'an and thus reflects the influence of above mentioned sources. Wahb's Kitab al-Mubda, or Kitab al-Mubtada, or Mubtada al-Khalq was extensively transmitted by Abd al-Munim b. Idris b. Sanan b. daughter of Ibn Munabbah. He died in 228 A.H. Al-Tha'labi in the preparation of his book The Stories of the Prophets, used this book. Al-Tabary utilized Kitab al-Mubda; through Ibn Ishaq. Although Ibn Ishaq's full text was not copied by Ibn Hisham, it was preserved by Ibn Ishaq's disciples in full. The copy which Ibn al-Athir possessed belonged to Yumus b. Bukair.

Ibn al-Athir, when he narrates the history of prophets, used many sources. Besides Tabary's history and his great commentary on the Qur'an, Ibn Ishaq's Sira and Dinavary's Kitab al-Ma'arif also served as the main sources for Ibn al-Ath

Did Ibn al-Athir utilize the Holy scriptures which were translated into Arabic? We have strong evidence to believe that the Jewish and Christian scriptures had been translated into

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4. Ibn Nadim, Al-Fihrist, p. 94.
Arabic. They were quite current even in the early period of the Umayyad's reign. Ahmad b. Abdallah b. Sallam translated several Jewish scriptures into Arabic which were preserved in the library of Mamun. Muhammad b. Ishaq utilized them. After Ahmad, many competent translators flourished in the beginning of the third century. Among them Feymi, Ibn Bahraz, Qainun and others may be mentioned. Abdallah b. Muslim b. Qutaiba (213-276 A.H.) the author of Kitab al-Mawarif utilized the Torah. Where he discusses the questions of creation, the beginning of mankind, and the histories of the prophets is a convincing evidence that the author had access to the Arabic version of Torah. Mas'udis quotations from Torah and other Jewish and Christian scriptures further support the view that there was Arabic version of Torah. In this historical perspective, if we consider the possibility of Ibn al-Athir's direct access to the Arabic version of Torah, it would not be considered a baseless hypothesis because sometimes, he writes second form of the verbs such as Qala Ahl al-Torha or Dhama Baz Ulama al-Yehud w al-Nasarah (بَلَّا أَخْلَصَ أَهْلَ الْتُّرَاخَةِ وَذَيَّنَ عَلَىَ النّاسَ مِنَ الْيَهُودِ وَالْمَسْرِحِيَّينَ) this way of quoting the authority, like his great predecessor.

Al-Tabary, may be taken that Ibn al-Athir might have trusted
upon oral and written traditions equally. But the chances of
utilizing the written sources are more weighty. The way, he
narrates the events, compared with Al-Tabary also substantiates
the view.

The above discussion presents a historical background and
shows how the Mubtada literature developed. It provides a brief
survey of the original sources which were utilized by later
Muslim historians. Ibn al-Athir, in fact, extensively transcried the Mubtada account from the history of Al-Tabari. But
it is to be noted that one of the major sources of Al-Tabari,
in this connection, was the Sira of Ibn Ishaq. Al-Tabari has
everously copied from the Sira which was definitely in poss­
esion of Ibn al-Athir. Therefore one can say that Ibn al-
Athir has not copied from the history of Al-Tabari but from
the Sira, common to both of them. This opinion carries appa­
rently, some weight but if Al-Kamil is carefully studied the
opinion no longer remains valid because Ibn al-Athir states that
he has not left out even a single tradition or account recorded
by Al-Tabari.

2. Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil, Vol. I/1-6, 6-9, 9-10, 10-15, 15-17,
   17-22, 24-26, 27-29, 29-40, 40-44, 44-56, 58-71, 72-83,
   85-93, 102-111.
   Al-Tabari, Tarikh al-Rusul wal-Muluk, Vol. I, 8-17, 29-78,
Pre-Islamic Arab Section:

The history of those peoples who first inhabited Arabia is open to serious discussion. After the Great flood, Arabia became the Cradle of all the Semitic nations. The children of Sham flourished there. Ethnologically all the Arabs are, it is one of the views, the descendants of one of the sons of Nuh.

The popular division of Arab Genealogy falls into two categories. The Arab considers that his forefather was Ibrahim. But this view is applicable only to the Northern Arabs who were descendant of Ismail. The other Section called Yeqtanis or "Qahtanis" is other than the Ismailites, and the third section which is technically called Arab al-Baida, or, Arab al-Ariba are extinct tribes. Ibn al-Athir mentions the regions where they settled. The time of their migration was not known to the succeeding generations. The only thing which Arabs preserved was the memory of the extinction.

Thamud settled in Hajer between Hijaz and Syria. Hajer was not the name of a region, it was a city which was the capit of Thamud, now called Madain. Ibn al-Athir does not mention

2. Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil, Vol.1/29. They are identified with Ad, Thamud, and Amalik from time to time, they left their home and settled into the fertile lands of Babylonia, Syria and Egypt.
the time of the final collapse of Thamūd.

Another tribe is Jurhum. We have little information about it. It is mentioned in connection with Ismail who married a girl of this tribe, from whom the children of Ismail learnt Arabic language and were distinguished as Arab al-Maariba. ² We are not informed of the early history of Arab al-Ma'ariba and its genealogical line is also disputed. Ibn al-Athir does not provide detailed information in this respect. A brief account of some of the kings of Jurhum is recorded by Yaqubi. ³ They must have been in power before the settlement of Ismail. Because at the time of Ismail and after him the political power and social supremacy went to the house of Ismail. Jurhum had lost its glory, and in later period, they were probably made captive by Bukht-Nasr and were taken away to Anbar. But again some tribes returned to Hijaz and regained their power. The rule continued upto a considerable period and was finally lost to the children of Ismail.

Two more extinct tribes, Tasm and Jadis, are mentioned by Ibn al-Athir who records some information about them. But a serious mistake is, continuously, reported in this connection not a single historians points out how Tasm and Jadis, if they

2. Ibid., Vol.1/36.
5. Ibid., Vol. 1/122.
were grandchildren of Sama, could have been contemporary of Hasan b. Tubba, the king of Yemen. For, the period of Tubba does not exceed 115 B.C., while the former are considered to have been in the third millennium.

The most important section of Arab Community is the descendant of Yeqtan, known to the Arabs as Qahtan. The Old Testament mentions thirteen sons of Qahtan among whom three are known to the Arabs. Yarah, 'Yarab', Hazarmut and Saba. A tradition relates that first of all Yarab came to Yemen and inhabited it. But we do not possess further information about his reign and dynasty. Our historian is silent on this.

Very famous branch of Qahtanids is Saba of which Arab historians give little information. Saba was the grandchild of Yarab. His name is generally reported as Abu Shams. But Ibn al-Athir mentions only Saba while Mubarrad, in his Treatise names him Amir Saba.

Arab historians are silent about the period in which Sabeans acquired power. Ibn al-Athir is not helpful here. In this connection, his comment on Bilqis genealogy provides:

2. Hazarmoot's time and the place where he established his rule is still called Hazarmoot situated on the east of Yemen on the cost of Arabian Sea. His descendants were later merged into the Kinda tribe. Ibn Khalladun, Tarikh Ibn Khalladun, Vol. 2/53.
sufficient ground for doubts. He does not differentiate between Saba and Tababia. He takes both of them as one.¹

We do not find the names of Moluk Himiar in Al-Kamil,² Immediately after Saba, the author comes to Harith al-Raith, the founder of Himair dynasty. We find another name Yasir, the heir of Bilqis.³

The second section of Hmayrit kings who are known as the Tababia in history, is of considerable importance. Ibn al-Athir gives detailed information about some of the important kings. The last Hmayrit king Dhunavas was defeated by the joint forces of Qaiser and Abysinian king, led by Ariat.⁴

Ibn al-Athir narrates the Lakhamids of Iraq and the Ghasasina of Syria. The Lakhamids who were descendants of Azad, migrated to Hyra from Yeman and they ruled for many centuries. The last king was Ayas b. Qubas al-Tai from whom the power passed over to a persian Governor. At last, in the

3. Ibid., Vol.3/94.
4. But Yasir Yahmain, is a later king who lived in the third century A.D. and several hundred years after Sabaeans.
reign of Abu Bakr, Khalid b. Walid annexed Iraq to Islamic territory. Ibn al-Athir mentions the name of the Persian Governor who, after Ayas, ruled over the kingdom. But he was forced to hand over the rule to the last ruler Al-Nasr al-Mundhar. The Arabs of Syria who were originally from Yemen made the region, between Syria and Arabia their home land at a quite early date. They were later called Qasasina and their rule over the area continued for many centuries. The Roman power always extended its help whenever it was sought by the Ghasasina. The last ruler of Al-Jafna was Jubla b. Aaiham who embraced Islam, but later renegated and left the province. The total number of rulers of this house counts thirty five. All of them ruled six hundred and sixteen years.

Ibn al-Athir based his information mainly on Tabari but he is very brief. Few names in this connexion are reported by Al-Tabari. But Ibn al-Athir is much elaborate along with their accounts. He mentions contemporary history of other nations.

In describing the Ayyamal Arabs, Al-Kamil is more illuminating and rich in material. Compared with Ibn al-Athir Tabari does not provide even a brief information about the Ayyam. Ibn al-Athir notes with surprise that Tabari has totally ignored this portions of Arab history.

The sources of which both the historians relied seem to be not much different. For Al-Tabari utilized Ibn Ishaq's Sira which contained the traditions of Wahb that we find preserved in Kitab al-Tijan. Wahb was the main source of south Arabian tradition. There is a convincing evidence to the effect that Ibn Kalby's treatises served as original sources of Pre-Islamic history. Ibn Nadim has preserved a valuable list of his works copied by Abu al-Hasan b. al-Kufi.

Ibn al-Athir found a vast literature on Ayyam al-Arab. But, since he does not mention the authorities, it is very difficult to trace out all the sources except a few. It is to be noted that our author was a great scholar of genealogy. His work - Kitab al-Lubāb, a compendium of Kitab al-Ansāb of Sam'ani, is a rare authority which speaks of the wide knowledge of the author and of his mastery over the subject. Another authority, Ibn Kalaby, is only once quoted by our author.

This survey leads us to hold the view that Ibn al-Athir had an access to the original works of Ibn al-Kalbi whom he so frequently quotes. Muhammad b. Muthanna has written two hundred treatises on several topics only few of them have survived.

1. Ibn Nadīm, Al-Fihrist, p. 140-141.
3. Ibn Khallakān in his Wafayat brings into notice several of his works and especial praise and admiration have been accorded to the Jamhara. Wafayat, Vol.3/4.
Ibn Nadim has given a list of his works. Another scholar and transmitter of Ayyam al-Arab is Mu'azzal b. Muhammad b. Yala b. Amir Azzabbi. Ibn al-Athir mentioned him. When Ibn al-Athir needs grammatical explanation he quotes noted grammarians like Al-Khalil. Another source which was consulted by the author is Molūkal Ard of al-Asfahānī. We find this book quoted on page 117, Vol. I.

A considerable space has been allotted to Ayyam al-Arab in Al-Kamil. The sources of his information for the Ayyam go back to the two great scholars of Ayyam; Hisam al-Kalbi and Abu Ubaida.

Abu Ubaida Mamar b. Muthanna, a famous grammarian and an authority on Ayyam al-Arab was born in 110 A.H. and died between 208 and 213 A.H. He has written a number of books on Ayyam, and total number of his books is about two hundred. The important books on Ayyam, as mentioned by Ibn Nadim, Ya'qūt al-Hamavi and Ibn Khallakān, are no more than half a dozen. But

3. Ibid., Vol. 1/262.
one of these books entitled Kitab al-Ayyam is not mentioned by Ibn Khallikan and Yaqut al-Hamavi while two other books Kitab al-Ayyam Asaghir and Kitab al-Ayyam al-Kabir are not mentioned by Ibn Nadim.

Ibn al-Athir has taken his informations mainly, from Abu Ubaida's books. He describes battle-days on the authority of Abu Ubaida's Kitab al-Ayyam al-Arab, which is not extant now. But its extracts can be seen in the pages of Al-Kamil and Al-Muzhir of Al-Suyuti. Ibn al-Athir has utilized the books of other historians like Ibn Ishaq and Ibn al-Kalbi. The latter is quoted in connection with Yum al-Kalab. We find a book named Kitab al-Kalab which is listed among the books written by Ibn al-Kalbi on the subject. The reference made to Ibn Ishaq in connection with Yum Shab-Jabla is no doubt, taken from Kitab al-Mubtada - a section of Ibn Ishaq's Sira.

The major portion of Pre-Islamic Arab history, however, has been copied from the history of Tabari. The information pertaining to the descendants of Sam, the narratives of Thamud and Jurham have been copied from Tarikh al-Rusul of Tabari.

1. Ibn Nadim, Al-Fihrist, p. 54.
5. Ibid., Vol. 1/197.
The accounts of Tasm and Jadis have also, in part, been transcribed from the history of Tabari. But Ibn al-Athir has furnished additional information in this connection of which Akhbar Ubaid b. Shariya may be considered as one of the sources. The accounts of Qahtan, of the settlement of the Arabs in Hira and of Jazimat al-Abrash have been narrated on the authority of Tarikh al-Tabari, but the complete story of Ashab al-Kahf is not mentioned by Tabari. Ibn al-Athir has taken it from other source. The Shamsun and the Jarjis are narrated on the authority of Tarikh al-Tabari, but the account of Khalid b. Sanan al-Abasi is not recorded by Tabari. Ibn al-Athir has copied it from other source. Ibn al-Athir has recorded the accounts of Muluk Hiymiar under the heading of Ayyam Qubadh. Though most of the informations are, to a great extent, similar with those recorded by Tabari, but the additional information furnished by Ibn al-Athir has been copied from other than Tarikh al-Tabari, Ibn al-Athir, for his additional accounts, quotes Ibn Ishaq and Ibn al-Kalbi which suggests that our historian has drawn the informations directly from the books of Ibn Ishaq and Ibn al-Kalbi. The stories of Dhu Nuwas, Ashab al-Ukhdud, Ashab al-Fil, the conquest of Yemen by Abrah, and reoccupation

1. Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil, Vol. 1/122-123. Shariya
of Yemen by the king of Himayiar have been copied from the history of Tabari. The happenings of Dhu Qar, the list of the kings of Himayiar after Umar b. Hind and the event of the appointment of Mruzan as a governor of Yemen have also been recorded in Al-Kamil on the authority of Tarikh al-Tabari.

Persian Sections

The Arab historians, generally, divide Persian history into four categories such as Bashdadian, Kianian, Ashghanian and Sasanids. Our author observes this classification. He puts each dynasty under a separate heading. But Al-Tabari, though he follows the dynastic continuation yet the separate dynasties and their description under each specific heading is not followed by him. We find some distinction he attaches to the second and fourth dynasties. Muluk al-Ashghan whom

3. Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil, Vol. 1/131-132. Hamaza al-Ashfaiani, Tarikh al-Ary, p.8-7. Al-Biruni, Athar al-Bagia, p.102-132. Masudi roughly divides the Persian history into two parts - Furus al-Ula and Furus al-Thania; under the first category, he puts Bashdadian and Kianian and envisages third category between the first and the second and calls it Muluk al-Tawa or Ashghanian. He calls the Sasanides Furus al-Thania. Al-Masudi, Muruji al-Dhahab, Vol. 2/105-245; Al-Tanbih wal-Ishraf, p.85-99. Ibn QutaiBa ignores this popular division. He simply describes the accounts without division. Kitab al Matarif, p.320-330. Mutahhar b. Tahir al-Maqdasi, who belongs to a little later period of Al-Tabari, also does not divide the Persian history into four parts but the words Pashdadh or Feshdadh suggest that he knew the popular division and the terms. Kitab al-Bada wal Al-Tarikh, Vol.3/138. Al-Thalbi who utilized the book of Al-Maqdasi in his great history ( .. does not observe the above mentioned four classes. But it does not mean that he was not aware of the division because Hamza has already used the terms and the book was accessible to Al-Thalibi.
sometimes he calls Muluk al-Tawaif, comes under the third dynasty. The Sasanids come under the heading of Muluk al-Furs.

Ibn al-Athir first describes Persian history in the same order which Al-Tabari has followed. He narrates the events up to the third category of the Persian dynasty interwoven with the histories of other nations. The first one hundred pages of Al-Kamil Vol. I follow the general pattern of recording the events which Al-Tabari and other historians had already set.

But afterwards Ibn al-Athir summarizes the first three sections under separate titles "الفترة الثالثة الإشغانية"، "الفترة الثانية الكنانية"، و "الفترة الأولى الفشذائية".

This classification was originated, perhaps by the Persian themselves. Because this order was copied along with the material from the books translated into Arabic from Pehlvi. Mas'udi and Hamaza derived it from the translations. Ibn al-Athir certainly utilized not only the books of Hamaza, Masudi, but also several other important historians.

The fourth dynasty, the Sasanides, runs parallel with the histories of neighbouring nations like Yemenides Iraqis and Romans. Like his great predecessor Al-Tabari, Ibn al-Athir deals this period in detail. He has allotted a considerable portion of the first volume to this period.

After furnishing the information Al-Tabari leaves to the reader to decide the authenticity and the merit of the accounts, But contrary to him Ibn al-Athir adopts critical attitude when he treats his material. For example, the first two categories of the Persian history are not precluded from his critical comments. He considers that this portion is not historical. It is full of 

1. خرافات الفرس

Such comments have not been made by Al-Tabari or Masudi. Apart from bringing into lime light Ibn al-Athir's critical sense of history this criticism also reflects upon the cultural conflicts which ran high between the Arabs and the Persians. He writes thus

Although Al-Tabari, Masudi, Asfahani, Biruni and others, have not openly criticised the Persian history, yet all of them were conscious of its defects.

When our author reaches the Sasanid, the differences about the reign of each king and related events come to an end. It is due to the fact that the sources which they have utilized were of historical nature and they did not have much different

1. Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil, Vol.1/23. A modern scholar E.G. Browne mentioning four dynasties, comments "The two first are entirely unhistorical, belonging, as we have already said, to the mythology of Avesta and the common Indo-Iranian legends. E.G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, Vol.1/1:


Ibn al-Athir quotes a tradition on the authority of Ibn al-Kalbi who states that during the time of Tahmurath, the fast was first observed. This statement is not recorded by Al-Tabari, while Asfahani mentions it. Does Ibn al-Athir derive this information from the book of Hamaza? Probably not because Hamaza does not quote the authority. His information is based on eight copies of Kitab al-Siar al-Muluk, about which he has mentioned so much in his book. Al-Masudi and Al-Thalabi do not help us in this respect. Since, later historians do not mention the chain of the authorities, and it is Ibn al-Athir who mentions it, though occasionally, one can hold with a certain amount of confidence, that Ibn al-Athir directly utilized the book of Ibn al-Kalbi.

Hisham b. Muhammad b. Saib al-Kabi 204 or 206 A.H. was one of the greatest scholars of Ansab, Akhbar, the Pre-Islamic history and the history of his own time. He was an undisputed authority on the history of Hira, Iraq and Yemen. He took keen interest in the Persian history of which Ibn Nadim gives testimony. He mentions some of his books concerning the Persian history, among which Kitab al-Muluk al-Tawai, Kitab Akhz Kisr

4. Ibid., p. 7.
Rehn al-Arab, Kitab Adi b. Zaid al-Abadi and Kitab Haiy al-Zahhaq deserve mention. The last book Kitab Haiy al-Zahhaq invites especial attention because the statement under discussion has been probably drawn from this book. The title of the book suggests that it was not only concerned with Zahha but it might have included some events about Tahmurath too. We do not find much difference of time between Zahhaq and Tahmurath. Ibn al-Athir's access to Ibn al-Kalbi's Kitab al-Haïy al-Zahhaq or Khabr al-Zahhaq, and other books is not to be doubted.

Another point upon which Ibn al-Athir and Tabari differ is Jamshid's policy regarding the administration of justice under which he ordered for several rings to be mintted and to get them engraved upon different words. For instance, he allotted a ring for war upon which the words of compassion and clemancy were engraved. Tabari does not mention this tradition. Masudi and Hamaza, Maqdasi and Al-Thalabi are completely silents about this tradition. Ibn Miskwah preserves this piece of information in his book. Perhaps Ibn al-Athir copied it from the history of Ibn Miskwah.

1. Ibn Nadim, Al-Fihrist, p. 96.
Another possibility is that Ibn al-Athir might have utilized the original sources whence his predecessor drew his information. Ibn al-Muqaffa's translations might have helped him. Ibn al-Muqaffa has translated "Khvadhaynamagh" or Khavadainamak into Arabic.

This translation became popular under the names Kitab Siaral Ajam or Kitab Siar Muluk al-Furs among Arab scholars. We find that a number of books such as Kitab Siar Muluk al-Furs, Tarikh al-Muluk al-Furs, Kitab Siin Muluk al-Furs, Kitab al-Tarikh Bani Sasan were current in the fourth century A.H. Hamaz who mentions the names of the translators and Al-Thalabi who lived in the fifth century A.H., have frequently used Ibn al-Muqaffa's translations. Ibn al-Athir furnishes much more detailed information than Tabari does. Al-Thalabi mentions other important works like Ainnamak, or Kitab el-Ain or Ainnamach which were brought to his notice. Ibn al-Muqaffa prepared their Arabic versions from Pehlvi. Al-Thalabi's reference to the book persuades us to think that he utilized not only Kitab Siar al-Muluk of Ibn al-Muqaffa, but many others original works. The

original copy of Sirāl Mulūk might have been lost and the copy which Al-Thalabi possessed would have been a new one prepared on the basis of the original text. Professor Zotenberg, in his preface to the history of Al-Thalabi, holds that "Thaalibi, pas plus que Dainamari, Tabari, Masudi, N'a utilise directment le Khodainamch d'Ibn al-Muqaffa. Sa principale source a ete un texte remaine de la version Arabe de Khodainameh." But Noldeke holds the view that Dinavari directly utilized the book.

Al-Thalabi died in 429 A.H. exactly one hundred 26 years before the birth of Ibn al-Athir. This period is not so remote that we may reasonably think that the book would have disappeared from the great libraries of Baghdad. It is quite possible, therefore, that during his visit to the city Ibn al-Athir might have used the book.

The absence of one or the other events from Tarikh al-Rusul, Muruj, Muluk al-Ard, Kitab al-Bada w al-Tarikh and Akhbar al-Furs indicates the selective attitude of the authors who derived informations from the same source. If we accept the hypothesis that Ibn Qutaiba, Al-Tabari, Hamaza, Masudi and Thalabi utilized Khodainamch, and that if a later historian, who relied on the above mentioned historians, differs from them

1. H. Zotenberg, Ghurar al-Akhbar al-Furs, Preface, XLIV
on certain points, we may assume with confidence that the same original source is also utilized by the later historian, because Ibn al-Athir has quoted much more extensively than the others in certain respect. Thus it can be believed that Ibn al-Athir utilized Kitab Siar al-Muluk.

We can also keep in our mind that a number of translations of Khodainamch made by Muhammad b. Jaham al Bermaky, Zadwah b. Shawah al-Asfahani, Muhammad b. Bahram b. Mitlar al-Asfahani and Hisham b. Qasim al-Asfahani were current in the fourth century. The names of these books are identical but their contents varied according to the views of the translators. Perhaps some were compilations and others were compendiums. Thus the information furnished by them varied with each other and sometimes they were even conflicting. This happened because the original books in Pahlvi which supplied the materials were themselves at variance. Thus the same defect crept into Arabic versions.

Another important variation between Tabari and Ibn al-Athir is noticeable in the following pages. Ibn al-Athir narrates how the king of China met Alexander and how subsequent events led them to fight. Tabari omits this, so does Maqdasi.

But Al-Thalabi records the events, which is incomplete with some uniformity in words.

...
The agreement between the statements of both the historians leads us to think that probably Al-Thalabi was the source of Ibn al-Athir.

Alexander once thought of killing all the Persian prince and the sons of nobles so that they might not become a threat to his heir and the people of Greece. On this he sought the advice of his teacher, Aristotle, but the latter opposed him. Tabari does not mention this story, while it is mentioned by Miskawaih. Thus, probably he was the source. Al-Maqdasi has also preserved the story. But it is hardly possible that Ibn al-Athir would have taken it from Maqdasi's history.

The apophthegms of Philosophers expressed on the death of Alexander invites our especial attention. Tabari, Hamaza and Maqdasi have not recorded them. Nor has Ibn Miskawaih. Yaqubi is the first to record them. Next is Masudi who gives a fuller account in the Maruj. Ibn al-Athir is the third. But although the texts of apophthegms produced by them almost agree, their numbers differ. This discrepancy has been noted by Zotenberg in a statement which runs as follows. "Les apophthegmes des philosophes sur la mort, 'd Alexander (P.450 et Sui) Sont, pour la plupart, differents des sentences qu' on lit dans la Schanameh le plus grand nombre se trouvent reproduit, sauvant

textuellement, mais différemment disposés, dans les chroniques
d' Eulychius (T.I.P. 289) de yaqubi (T.I, p.162 et Suiv) de
Masoudi (T.I, 251 et Suiv) d' Ibn al Amid Ahmad al-Makin
(Ms Arabe de la Bibliothèque nationale N.294, fol 134 v et
Suiv) et d' Ibnal Athir, (T.I, p.203 et Suiv).1 The difference
in the content and the number of apophthegems found in the
books of Thalabi, Masudi, and Ibn al-Athir leads us to think
that Ibn al-Athir had access to the sources which the others
utilised. Yaqubi's refers to this event which is also somewhat
different from those of above mentioned historians. He mention
that Aristotle invited all the assembled sages to pronounce
their apophthegms on the occasion.2 Thalabi also mentions
Aristotle.3 However, the diversity in the number and the
content in the accounts offered by the historians does not even
help us to infer that they might have utilized each other's
books. in this respect.

The invasion of Sabur on Sowad Iraq is briefly recorded
by Tabari. But he does not mention the couplets of Luqait al-
Ayadi while Ibn al-Athir does.4 Yaqubi and Ibn Miskawaih too
do not mention these couplets. Although, Thalabi does not
mentions exactly the same couplets, from the available material

1. Zotenberg, Al-Thalabi, Ghurar al-Akhbar Furs, p. XXXIV
3. Al-Thalabi, Akhbar al-Furs, p. 450.
in his book, we can infer that he was aware of the stanzas. The only source which helps us in this regard is Masudi. He records these stanzas in his Muruj. But the number of couplets and comments of Ibn al-Athir indicate another source whence, both the historians probably derived their materials. Ibn al-Athir highly praises the whole Qasida.

The information furnished by Ibn al-Athir regarding Qubadh varies with Tabari. Here Ibn al-Athir severely criticize Tabari for his lack of historical analysis and judgment. Our author quotes Ibn Ishāq and several others, for contradicting the facts provided by Tabari. Yaqubi, Masudi and Maqdasi narrate this period very briefly. But al-Thalabi and Miskawaih devote many paragraphs on Qubadh. The materials which both the historians furnish differ in both quantity and quality. Since Ibn Miskawaih, Thalabi and Ibn al-Athir, produce different informations, the source on which they based their knowledge seems to very rich in details. Probably it was Kitab al-Taj, of Ibn al-Muqaffa, a general book on several muluk. We find

a frequent number of references to the book in \textit{Uun al-Akhbār} of Ibn Qutaiba. This book supplied the information to the historians. If they had utilized each other's book the similarity would have been inevitable.

A little difference can be observed in the various accounts of the reign of Anū Sharwān given by Tabari and Ibn al-Athīr, while Tabari deals with this reign he quotes a number of verses, which have not been reproduced by our author. On the other hand Ibn al-Athīr quotes some stanzas from Umar b. Kalthūm and Imrā al-Qa'is which have not been mentioned by Tabari. The story of Muzdak, though briefly touched, is differently narrated by Ibn al-Athīr. This indicates that Ibn al-Athīr gathered his information from sources other than Tarikh al-Tabari. Yaqūbi, Masudi and Dīnawarī are not his sources. Maqḍasi and Al-Thalābī perhaps were. For both particularly Al-Thalābī have discussed at length Anū Sharwān as an ideal king. But the general account given by Ibn al-Athīr is, to a great extent, more similar to that of Tabari than to that of Tajārib. Ibn Miskawāih omits most of the informations about Anū Sharwān. He omits some aspects of his reign, for example the story of Saif Zi Yazen, the conquest of Yemen and the affair of elephant.

But as a whole Ibn al-Athir has copiously transcribed the material from the history of Tabari. A thorough comparison between the two texts in this connection shows great identity. The list of the Muluk al-Ashghān recorded by Ibn al-Athir is taken from the source other than Tarikh al-Tabari, because it is completely different with that of Tarikh al-Tabari.

**Greek and Roman Section:**

Judging on the basis of the account which Ibn al-Athir and other Arab historians give regarding the history of Greece and Rome on the one hand and of Persian history on the other we may say that their knowledge of the former is superficial limited and mainly based on secondary sources. It seems that due to some reasons they were little interested in Greek and Roman history. Whatever material we have on the subject in these books is mainly because such informations could not have been avoided in such books on general history.


Most of the accounts of the Romans and Greeks have been drawn from Persian and Jewish sources. To give an instance the tradition which states the genealogy of the Greeks as mentioned by some Arab historians, goes back to Wahb b. Munabbah. Tabari describes the statement on the authority of his Shaikh Muhammad b. Sahl. Ibn al-Athir copies the same.

Another tradition which traces the genealogy of the Romans through Yafith has been reported by Ibn al-Athir.

The major feature of the account of the Alexanderian invasion of Persia, China and Tibet has been transcribed by Ibn al-Athir from Tarikh al-Rusul of Tabari. Tabari briefly narrates the events, Ibn al-Athir gives more detailed information. The additional material which we do not find in the history of Al-Tabari suggests that there were other sources which Ibn al-Athir must have utilized.

It has been narrated that after conquering the countries of East and West, Alexander proceeded further towards the North where he found certain nations who happened to be the neighbours of Yajūg and Majūg. The people entreated Alexander's help against Yajūg and Majūg which was liberally granted to them.


With the help of his army and the natives, Alexander constructed the famous Iron barrier to which the Qur'ān refers too. This story has not been recorded by Yaqubi, or Masudi or Maqdasi. Biruni, however, devotes some pages on Alexander which provides better information than those offered by Ibn al-Athir and Tabari. It is quite possible that Ibn al-Athir might have consulted Akhār al-Tīwal as he was acquainted with its author.

Another historian Al-Thalabi records a number of stories which grew up around the figure of Alexander. Although Dinawari mentions the story of Yajug and Majug, but he fails to furnish Alexander's penetration into the dark region, his search after the Nectar, his failure and the success of Khizar reaching there. Al-Thalabi's narratives not only covers these legends but also a number of others.

The figure of Alexander after his death, had been a subject of especial interest in the east as well as the West. He became a legendary figure among the Jews and Christians. A number of mythical stories were created in Alexanderia, the city which was founded by Alexander himself. These legends had borrowed much from the Greek sources. "All the versions are

4. Dinawari, Akhbar al-Tīwal, p. 31-41.
derived, mediately or immediately, from the Greek originals which circulated under the name of Callisthenes. The Greek pseud Callisthenes (otherwise Aisopos) we possess in these recensions, based all upon a book produced in Egypt in the third century A.D. But this book itself was a farrago of heterogenous elements—pieces of genuine, history, ancient stories once told in Babylonia of Gilgamesh or Etanna; literary forgeries of the days soon after Alexander, like the oldest part of the (Testament of Alexander) and variations according to the bent of different time and peoples. In the Persian version Alexander (Iskander) became a son of Darius, among the the Muhammadan he turned to Prophet, not against idols; the Pen of Christian monks made him an ascetic saint. The book under the false name of the author was translated into Latin in the third century. Translations were subsequently made into the most European languages. Further Yusuf Ali states "Alexander was focus of Christian and Jewish learning for some centuries. The Christians, also made Alexander a saint. The Jews carried Alexander's cycle into the East, The legendary tales had culminated into the Sikandernama of Nizami Gangvi. These stories and so many others passed through Jewish and Persian medium in Arabic literature. Ibn al-Athir, may have probably known the author.

of *Sikander Nama* because he dedicated his excellent literary work to Izz al-Din Masud the Atabâk of Mulaq whose house Ibn al-Athir was attached.\(^1\)

The Holy Quran which speaks of Dhu al-Qarnain stirred the imagination of Muslim scholars. The commentators tried to identify Dhu al-Qarnain. The Jews who were converted to Islam supplied them with all the legends which Jewish literature had preserved. Babylonia, Hera and Yeman may be considered as the defusing centres of the tales. Tafsir literature which contain a good amount of these legends served as a rich source for the historians.\(^2\)

The additional informations of Ibn al-Athir which we do not find in the history of Tabari requires an extensive inquiry. Probably Tabari drew most of his information about Alexander, from the book of Ibn al-Kalbi. Ibn Nadim mentions some of the books of Ibn al-Kalbi.\(^3\) It is difficult to say anything about the contents of these books as they are not available to us. But it can be guess that Tabari transcribed these stories from *Kitab al-Tawaf*. Probably the same book was the source of our author.


\(^3\) Ibn Nadim, *Al-Fihrist*, p. 96.
Historians mention that Alexander was the son of Darius whose mother was the daughter of Phillip of Mecidon. She was forcibly handed over to Darius and later became his wife. But Darius divorced her due to her bad breath while Alexander was in her womb. She was sent back to Mecidon. There is another story that when Darius was defeated in the battle field, he was captured. And at the very verge of his death, he entreated Alexander to marry his daughter Roshnak, and to punish his murderers. These entreaties were granted.

Another interesting story preserved by the historians is that Alexander conquered China and Tibet. This is also a fiction. The whole Asia Minor on the Mediterranean coast in the West, the extreme limit to Jaxurat in the North, and Texila in the North East, where on the bank of Beas the Autumn, the army refused to go further, were the limits of Alexander's conquest.

Ibn al-Athir gives a list of Alexander's successors. This is different from that offered by Tabari. Al-Tabari

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5. A.R. Burn, Alexander the Great and Hellenistic Empire, p. 22.
reports that a king, named 'Batlimus Donus' who ruled for seventeen years succeeded him. But Ibn al-Athir does not mention him. Likewise Yaqubi, Masudi and Hamaza have not mentioned him. Ibn al-Athir probably checked this with other authorities and dropped his name. The number of Batlimus varies with the historians. Yaqubi mentions seven while Al-Tabari eleven, Masudi thirteen, Hamaza twelve and Ibn al-Athir ten. Hamaza and Masudi, with slight difference almost agree upon the names.

Masudi's information is extremely important as in search of historical knowledge he visited most of the ancient cities and libraries. During his journey, he met several Christian scholars interested in Greek and Roman histories. He acknowledges that the differences in reign, names and numbers existed even in the original books.

Ibn Nadim records the names of some books, without mentioning their authors. They were translated into Arabic. Masudi might have utilized them. Hamaza copied the accounts from a book written or translated by Habib b. Bahraz a Matran of Musul.

The list of the Roman kings produced by Ibn al-Athir has been transcribed from Tabari but the informations about them have been copied from other sources, a fact which has been admitted by Ibn al-Athir himself. Ibn al-Athir writes that many historians except Tabari recorded the events. Under the heading, ذكر ملوك الروم وهم ثلاث طبقات الطبقة الأولى الصائرون which clearly suggests that he has drawn his informations from several authorities like Sina Muluk al-Ard, Kitab al-Majisti, Jawama, Kitab Aflatun fi al-Syasat, Nihayat al-Iqdam, Kitab al-Milal a al-Niha and others.

The first few links in the genealogy of the Romans recorded by Ibn al-Athir coincide with those of Hamaza. But

2. Hamaza, Tarikh al-Ard, p. 76.
other accounts have been taken from other sources because Hamaza furnishes only with the list of kings. Yaqubi, after describing the first category, which coincides with that of Tabari, supplies some accounts which were, however, not utilize by Ibn al-Athir.

The division of Muluk of Rome into three classes has been made by Masudi and Biruni. Ibn al-Athir also followed this division. The accounts which we find in Kamil and Muruj are so much at variance that it is difficult to believe that Ibn al-Athir would have derived his information only from Muruj. He might have taken some accounts from Muruj but most of his information are based on other books such as Kitab al-Majisti of Batlimus.

An important scholar and astronomer Abu Mashar Jafar b. Muhammad al-Balkhi (272 A.H./886 A.D.) has written a book entitled Kitab al-Uluf. Brockelmann calls it Kitab al-Adwar wal Uluf. The manuscript of this book is still preserved in the Bibliothèque national of Paris. Ibn Said al-Andlusi and Ibn al-Qifti have praised his veracity. From the references made by Hamaza it may be inferred that the book abounded in

3. Ibn Nadim, Al-Fihrist, p. 262-63. Its first translation was made by the order of Yehya b. Khalid b. Bermaki, after it several translations were made.
historical material. Al-Masudi had seen the book and utilized it. Al-Tabari, perhaps also got access to it. The possibility of Ibn al-Athir's access to the book is very strong.

Another source of great importance to Ibn al-Athir consisted of oral traditions. Like a true historian, he widely travelled all over the Islamic world and met different types of scholars who supplied him with informations of historical value. Where he deals with the reign of (لُقْبُهُ الْبَرَّة, ملك الروم الانتصارة) he mentions about his visit to Jerusalem and records the information he received from a group of people. It shows that he gives importance to the oral accounts in this connection.

The second category of Roman kings is called by Ibn al-Athir (ملك الروم الانتصارة). The accounts given by him of the conversion of Qustintin does not agree with that of Yaqubi.

The third category of kings who ruled after Islam has been considered equally important. But the names and accounts of each king given in Kamil, Muruj and Yaqubi vary considerably.