

Hamza' S City Between The Rise And The Development Through The Middle Age

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Abstract:

This text deals with the origins of the historical city of Hamza (resently Bouira) during the Middle Ages, starting from the fourth century of the Hijri calendar, which corresponds to the tenth century AD. It is based on the main geographical sources and the accounts of geographer-travellers who either visited the city or passed on information from reliable geographers who did. It also looks at the early historians who recorded the origins of the city and its civilisational development.

The article also examines how scholars and jurists from the city contributed to its influence on neighbouring cities as well as more distant regions, whether in the Islamic Maghreb, Andalusia, or even the Islamic East. In essence, this article is a historical and geographical study of Hamza (Bouira) and its role in a civilisation marked by a dynamic interplay of influences, especially given that the Middle Ages were marked by political and military events, as well as numerous conflicts between states and emirates. Despite these challenges, the city of Hamza maintained a significant presence and cultural impact, as evidenced by geographical and historical sources.

Keywords: City of Hamza, place, knowledge, scholars, geographers, historians, Berber tribes.

Introduction:

Numerous geographical travellers and historians have extensively discussed the city of Hamza (Bouira) under various names such as Hamza, Souq Hamza, Haa'it Hamza and others. These references come from people who either visited the region or reported information from other

sources who passed through or lived in the city. They include Al-Yaqoubi, Al-Bakri, Ibn Hawqal, Al-Maqdisi, Yaqut al-Hamawi, and many others.

A- Statements by geographers :

1- This geographer, Ahmad ibn Abi Ya'qubIshaqJa'far ibn Wahb ibn Wadih, commonly known as Al-Yaqoubi, who died in 284 AH (897 CE). He is known for his significant contributions to describe regional geography and is famous for his travels in the regions he documented. He interviewed the inhabitants of various regions about their lands, customs, territories and rulers, and his method involved rigorous verification and cross-referencing of accounts, resulting in books that are incredibly detailed and spare no detail. His most famous work, "Kitab al-Buldan", remains one of the oldest and most reliable geographical sources, largely due to its exceptional precision¹.

In this passage, Al-Yaqoubi mentions Hamza in reference to the cities of the central Maghreb. He says. He states: "... and I have described it as the city of Azab, where governors reside. From there to Mekhaza... And when we leave Azab travelling westwards, we reach a people known as BanuBarzal, who are the Zenata merchants. This town was ruled by Hassan ibn Suleiman ibn Hussein ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib, may God be pleased with him. It is the first city, and in his hands, there was a city called "Haz." Its inhabitants are a people from the ancient Berbers known as the "BanuYirnyan" from the Zenata tribe. Moreover, there are cities beyond it, inhabited by the Sanhaja and Zawawa, known as the Barans, who engage in building, farming, and herding. The city of Haz² is the eponymous place, and there is a journey of three days between it and the closest settlement, Amal Adnat³.

¹- Abdul QaderBubaya, *The Encourager in the Sources of Moroccan and Andalusian History*, 1st edition, Algeria, Dar Kawkab Al-Ilm, 1432 AH/2011 CE, page 15.

²- Ahmad ibn Abi Ya'qub ibn Wadih, the well-known writer known as Al-Yaqoubi, "Kitab al-Buldan," Brill Publishing, Leiden, 1820 CE, pages 121-122.

³- From Al-Yaqoubi's statement, two possibilities emerge: The first is that Haz was a city closer to what is now known as Ain Bsama, or perhaps the same city, or it might be its ruins because Al-Yaqoubi himself refers to the closest cities as "Souq Hamza." This aligns with what the geographer Al-Idrisi later mentioned: "Near Haz in the vicinity of the Raml Sand not far from Ashir, and the

2- Another geographer who mentioned the city of Hamza or Souq Hamza is Al-Bakri, who passed away in the year 487 AH (1094 CE). His book "Al-Masalik wal-Mamalik", in particular the section entitled "The Book of the Maghreb in Mention of the Lands of Africa and the Maghreb", is one of the most important geographical sources. Although he did not leave his homeland in Andalusia, his information is highly reliable. He drew extensively from geographical sources that are now lost or no longer exist, and his work is known for its exceptional precision in describing the regions of the Maghreb, in particular.

His Hamza city description:

He says: "You exit from the city of Ashir to Shu'bah, which is a village, and from there to a strait between two mountains, and it flows into every place inhabited by the al-Aqrar Qarha tribes. From this point, you carry on to the plains, and there is a city called Hamza, founded by Hamza ibn al-Hasan ibn Suleiman ibn Hussein ibn Ali ibn Hasan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib, may God be pleased with him. Hasan ibn Suleiman is said to be the one who entered Morocco, and he had sons named Hamza, Abdullah, Ibrahim, Ahmed, Mohammed and al-Qasim, all of whom left descendants who continue there."⁴

He then goes on to talk about his city, Hamza, and describes its fortifications, saying "It is a city surrounded by walls and a moat". The use of water moats is not common in subsequent cities but is a distinctive feature of desert oasis towns. The presence of these moats around Hamza (Bouira) can be attributed primarily to the ample water supply. He mentions that "it has fresh water wells" because it was inhabited by the Sanhaja, and the inhabitants of the city used the well water for drinking and for irrigating the adjacent lands, since the city is located on a plain, which distinguishes its agricultural abundance⁵.

distance between them is about two stages." He also stated, "It is now in ruins," referring to the 6th century of the Hijra.

⁴- Abu Ubayd Abdullah ibn Abdul Aziz ibn Muhammad al-Bakri al-Andalusi, Morocco in Describing African Lands and Morocco, edited and supervised by Hamah Allah al-Salam, 1st edition, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, Lebanon, 2013, page 149.

⁵- In an interview with the French historian and archaeologist Jean Pierre Laporte during a field study, he mentioned that it is highly probable that the city called "Hamza," or the one founded by

In order to further pinpoint the location of Hamza or Souq Hamza, we continue with our geographer Al-Bakri, who states: "From Hamza, one can travel to Blyas (which is in a great mountain)⁶.....From Blyas, one can travel to Marsa al-Dajaj. The city of Marsa al-Dajaj is surrounded by the sea on three sides and is enclosed by a wall that extends from the western to the eastern bank. This is the entrance to the city and its markets. The central mosque in the city is also within this wall and has a single gate. The city has a harbour, although it is not considered safe due to its narrowness and the shallowness of its waters⁷.

Al-Bakri further extends his discourse to cover other cities, providing titles such as the road from Al-Qairawan to Marsa al-Dajaj. he makes reference to the city of "SouqHamra" and provides insights into its population. He notes that it is inhabited by the Katamiyyin, (and it's possible that the Katamiyyin referred to by Al-Bakri are the Zuwawa, as according to Ibn Khaldun, they are one of the sub-tribes of the Katama tribe.)..Within it, Al-Bakri mentioned: "And tribes from Katama in the east of the city." He then revisits the discussion of the city in his narrative, describing the road that connects Marsa al-Dajaj to the city of Hamza⁸. In the middle of this road lies the city of Abu Junad⁹.

3-And this is another geographer, Ibn Hawqal, who died in 380 AH (990 CE). He travelled extensively, visiting both the East and the West, as well as parts of Europe, over a period of thirty years. He provided detailed information, especially on the economic, social and cultural aspects. He also described the urban development of the Islamic Maghreb

Hamza ibn al-Hasan, may be the same as the city of "Ain Bsama" today or in its vicinity towards Bouira. This is especially because the geographer Al-Yaqoubi mentioned that the city that served as a market for Hamza was not the same as Hamza itself, as it was customary to establish markets outside the city. From this, he inferred that there might be two cities, one being Hamza and the other being Souq Hamza.

⁶- We have not been able to precisely identify the city of Blyas today.

⁷- According to some archaeologists, the only city between Algiers and Dellys that fits the description of Marsa al-Dajaj today is "KafMatifou" or "KabMatifou." It is surrounded by walls and has access to the sea, which aligns with what Al-Bakri mentioned about its port not being secure. However, there have been recent excavations that link it to the city of Zamouri.

⁸- Al-Bakri, the previous source, page 150.

⁹- Perhaps it is the city of KabGenat today.

very well. How could he not, since he was an eyewitness who documented his descriptions with maps?

He described the city as follows: "And it extends from M'sila on the opposite side of the river, on the left is a road that leads to Ibn Mamah, and another road that slopes up and leads to Tamskida, Ashir, SouqKran, Milyana. Between SouqKran and the river is the town of Hatt Hamza, which is on the other road leading to Setif. It can be read parallel to the bottom of the picture¹⁰".

4- Another significant Arab geographer, Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr al-Razi al-Muqaddasi, who died in 387 AH (997 CE), discussed Hamza in his book "Ahsan al-Ta'asim fi Ma'rifat al-Aqalim". This book is essentially a condensed account of his extensive travels, services to kings, and interactions with judges. also drew on the work of earlier geographers, correcting some of their errors and meticulously refining and improving their work.

Al-Muqaddasi visited the whole of Morocco and documented the areas and events he witnessed. His description of Andalusia is brief: "Souq Hamza is a city on the coast¹¹. Its buildings are made of brick, and they drink from a river and springs¹².

5- Among the geographers who mention Hamza is Yaqut¹³ al-Hamawi, who died in 626 AH (1228 CE). Yaqut was a geographer who was captured in the Roman territories and later brought to Baghdad. After his release, he began to travel to different regions and wrote a comprehensive geographical encyclopaedia. His work is not only a geographical reference, but also a historical and literary work. Yaqut translated the names of the cities he visited, including the city he called Hamza..In it, he said, "It is written

¹⁰- Ibn Hawqal al-Nisibi al-Baghdadi al-Mawsili, Page 67.

¹¹- The publisher of the book, Leyden 1909, in the second edition, corrected in the margin and stated in Latin:

"Quae bona est descriptio urbissuq 'hamza' quille quae non adiacet mai, probalilter in utroque corticelacuna est, et excidit nomen it soc restotienetumsit."

And Hamza market is a city in their construction of clay and drinking from rivers and springs, Marsa al-Dajaj is a city on the sea, page 228".

¹²- Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr al-Muqaddasi, the well-known Syrian geographer also known as al-Basri, in his book "The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions".

¹³- Yaqut al-Hamawi, page 302.

with a 'fathah' on the first letter, then a 'sukun', followed by 'zay'. He continued, "Al-Bakri said..." and added, "It is attributed to Abu al-Qasim Abd al-Malik ibn Abd Allah ibn Dawud al-Hamzi al-Maghribi. He was righteous and heard from Abu Nasr al-Zayni in Baghdad and from Abu Ali al-Tustari in Basra. He narrated to Abu al-Qasim al-Dimashqi". Yaqut mentioned that Abu al-Qasim al-Dimashqi said, "Suk Hamza is another city in Morocco, a walled city inhabited by the Sanhaja. It is also attributed to Hamza ibn Hasan ibn Suleiman and is closer to the first¹⁴".

B-The historians' statements:

1- Among the historians who have discussed the city of Hamza, we find Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Hammad ibn Isa ibn Abi Bakr al-Sanhaji¹⁵, who passed away in 626 AH / 1228 CE. He was a Moroccan historian from the Sanhaja tribe who visited various regions of Morocco and al-Andalus. He held high positions, including that of a judge, which allowed him access to documents and regular contact with scholars, historians, and geographers. He left us his work entitled "B'Akhbar Muluk Bani Umayyawa Siraatihim", a study of the Fatimids who ruled Morocco during the third and fourth centuries of the Hijri calendar.

Ibn Hamad talked about his account of the third Fatimid Caliph Ismail al-Mansur, who ruled from 334 AH to 341 AH: "...Isma'il stayed in Msila for some time, equivalent to years (this is a poetic expression to describe his great achievements in Msila),,Isma'il went down to a part of the Snahajah region, to a secret place for Tariq al-Fata, and then went to the fortified city of Hamza. There he shared the wealth and lavished gifts, Ziri ibn Menad, the commander of Snahajah's forces, joined him and warmly welcomed him. He honored him with grandiose attire and gave him royal perfumes and treasures that words cannot describe. Ismail also provided lavish gifts to all the Snahajah people, and in return, he won their hearts, purified their intentions, and improved their beliefs. He left the fortified city of Hamza and

¹⁴- It appears from the words of Yaqut al-Hamawi that the city of Souq Hamza he mentioned, stating that it is closer to the first city, reinforces the idea that both cities, as suggested by al-Yaqubi before him, coexisted and were closely situated.

¹⁵- Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Hammad ibn Isa ibn Abi Bakr al-Sanhaji, "News of the Rulers of the Banu Umayyad and their Biographies," p. 69.

then descended into the valley of La'la' (south of Msila) in a similar fashion¹⁶.

2-Among the historians who delved into the topic of Hamza al-Nuayri was Al-Muhibbi, who died in 733 AH. He was a Tammimi Al-Qurashi historian known for creating one of the most significant encyclopedias of the eighth century of the Hijra. His work spans approximately thirty volumes or sections, and our particular interest lies in the twenty-second, twenty-fourth, and twenty-sixth volumes. He is the historian who relied on primary sources, some of which are currently lost.

He talks about Hamza in the sixth section when discussing the construction of the city of Ashir. He describes how Ziri made the decision to construct the city and arranged for builders and carpenters to come from Hamza¹⁷, M'Sila, and Tibna. Ziri sent a messenger to Qa'im bin Al-Mahdi, asking for skilled craftsmen and provided a substantial amount of iron and other necessary materials to facilitate the city's construction. Construction continued until the city was completed.¹⁸

As Al-Nuwayri also mentions, he refers to Hamza in a different context when talking about the wars of Zanata. He says: "Zanata had ruled over the inhabitants of this region since the time of the Banu Al-Aghlab, then its power increased in the days of the Mahdi and the Qa'im. When the Qa'im heard that Ziri had built this city, he thanked God and said: "It is better for us to be neighbours with the Arabs than with the Berbers."¹⁹

¹⁶- Among the names associated with the town of Hamza and its vicinity, in addition to Souq Hamza, we find "Hait Hamza," a term used by Ibn Hammad and other historians and geographers. It is not precisely clear where the name "Hait" originated from.

¹⁷- And evidence that Hamza existed and was built before Ashir in the year 324 AH.

¹⁸- Shihab al-Din al-Nuwayri (p. 88).

¹⁹- We understand from al-Nuwayri's words, in the words of al-Qa'im bi-Allah, the Fatimid Caliph, that he prefers proximity to the Berbers, even though both Zanata and Sanhaja, the people of Ashir, are Berbers. Perhaps due to the alliance between Sanhaja and the Fatimids, or maybe based on his belief that Sanhaja had Arab origins, as one of the genealogies mentioned by scholars.

He helped and supported him, and then Ziri went to Tabana, Al-Masila and Hamza. He moved the inhabitants²⁰ of these regions to the city of Ashir. It grew and became an impregnable fortress that could only be attacked from the east, and it was protected by ten men (in his words)²¹.

3-Among the historians who have mentioned the city of Hamza is the historian of Morocco, Abd al-Rahman ibn Khaldun²², in his work "Al-Ibar". He was an erudite traveller who held important positions and had access to official documents. He was also known for his innovative approach to criticism, verification and authentication of information, which made him a trustworthy historian.

Hamza mentioned when talking about the dynasty of Al-Hammad in the castle, one of the kings of Sanhaja. He said: 'When Hamad became independent in Achir and El M'sila in 387 AH during the reign of Bades ibn Al-Mansur Al-Ziri. Then he fought against Zenata in 395 AH in the central Maghreb against the Maghraouas tribe and the Benilfren. In 398 AH, Hamad planned the city of the castle on Mount Kutama, a mountain in Algeria. Ibn Khaldun says: "And he transferred the inhabitants of El M'sila and Hamza²³ to him (Hamad), i.e. to the castle, and destroyed their towns²⁴. He also transferred the Grawa from the Maghreb and settled them there.

-Scholars from the Land of Hamza and their Impact on Civilization:

During the Middle Ages, the land of Hamza was known for producing a significant number of scholars and jurists who

²⁰- Perhaps he means here 'the faces of the people,' meaning the most skilled, those who are artisans, soldiers, and others.

²¹- The same source, al-Nuwayri, page 89.

²²- The same source, himself.

²³- It can be understood from the words of historians, especially al-Nuwayri and Ibn Khaldun, that there was an initial evacuation of the residents of Hamza in the year 324 AH by Ziri ibn Menad to rebuild and prepare his city, M'sila. Then, there was a second evacuation of the people of Hamza and their settlement in the Qal'ah (the fortress of the BeniHammad) in the year 398 AH.

²⁴- Ibn Khaldun's account of the destruction of the city of Hamza confirms and clarifies the difficulty that archaeologists have faced in precisely identifying the city of Hamza or Souq Hamza. This has led their studies to be characterized by suspicion or approximation.

gained wide recognition in the eastern and western regions. Among them we can mention:

A - Abu al-Hasan Yahya al-Zawi (d. 628 AH / 1231 CE): He travelled to the Levant and settled in the land of Sham, specifically in Damascus. There he met scholars and jurists from whom he gained knowledge and later received permission to teach. He then continued his journey to Egypt, where he became famous for his teachings²⁵.

B - Muhammad ibn Omar ibn Ali al-Malikshi (d. 740 AH / 1339 CE): He grew up in the land of Hamza, where he learnt the Qur'an by heart. He then moved to Bejaïa and settled there to learn from its scholars. Continuing his scholarly journey, as was customary for jurists, he went to the Levant. After a period in Egypt, he travelled to the Hijaz, where he studied under Muhammad al-Saraj and Abu Muhammad al-Dalasi. He finally settled in Mecca, where he performed the pilgrimage²⁶.

C - Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Hamad ibn Isa ibn Abu Bakr al-Sanhaji (d. 628 AH / 1230 CE): His full name was Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Hamad ibn Isa ibn Abu Bakr al-Sanhaji, and his origins can be traced back to the land of Hamza. While his exact date of birth is unknown, he died in 628 AH / 1231 CE at the age of about eighty. He received his initial Qur'anic education in the land of Hamza from Qasim ibn al-Nu'man ibn al-Nasir ibn Alanas. He continued his studies with Abu al-Abbas Ahmad ibn Mubashar and learned from Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr al-Hamzi. He then moved to the fortress of Bani Hamad and later to Bejaïa, Algiers and Tlemcen, where he studied under Qadi Ibn Abd al-Haq al-Tlemcani. His journey continued to Morocco, where he studied with Abu Zar al-Khashni, and from there he decided to travel to Al-Andalus, settling in Seville with the jurists Abu al-Hasan ibn Zarqun and Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Suqr. He then became a judge on the Green Island. After a fruitful journey of teaching and scholarship, he returned to Morocco and died in Marrakech in 628 AH".

²⁵- Ammar Hilal, *Algerian Scholars in Arab and Islamic Countries in the 19th and 20th Centuries (3/14 AH)*, University Press Office, Algeria, 1995, p. 249.

²⁶- Al-Hafnawi, the same source, vol. 1, pp. 173-174.

Among his notable teachers are Maimun ibn al-Firdawi, the Sufi Abu Madin, and Abu Ali al-Misili²⁷. Abu Ali al-Mashdali, Mansur ibn Ahmad ibn Abd al-Haq (d. 731 AH/1331 CE), after studying under his father in his hometown, travelled to the Levant and Egypt to further his education. He studied under Al-Az ibn Abd al-Salam and learned from Shams al-Din al-Isfahani, as well as Sharaf al-Din ibn al-Sabki²⁸.

"He received his education under the guidance of Abdul Rahman ibn Ahmad al-Waghliji (d. 786 AH/1384 CE). His teachings had a great impact and many Moroccan students benefited from them. Their numbers increased to such an extent that some researchers have even suggested that virtually all the scholars of the ninth and tenth Hijri centuries were influenced by his teachings. His contribution was instrumental in establishing an educational institution that could rival those in Tunisia and other Moroccan cities²⁹. It's worth noting that Ahmed ibn Idris al-Hamzi (who died after 760 AH/1359 CE) may have moved to Tunisia and taught there. This possibility is supported by Ibn Arfa's biography, which indicates that Ibn Arfa himself "learnt from him"³⁰.

Some scholars from Hamza moved between cities in the Maghreb and Tunisia. Among them was Ibrahim ibn Fa'ed ibn Musa ibn Hilal (857 AH/1453 CE), who studied with the scholars of his time, including Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Uthman, al-Abli, Abu Abdullah al-Qalshani, Abdul Wahid al-Garyani, Abdul AaliFaraj, Abu Zaid Abdul Rahman, and Abu Abdullah ibn Marzuq³¹.

Yahya ibn Abdul Rahman ibn Muhammad (d. 862 AH/1458 CE) migrated to the Levant and settled in Alexandria. On his journey, he took some students from Sfax, Gabes and Tripoli

²⁷- Al-Ghbarini, the previous source, page 192. *Harakat Ibrahim*, an introduction to the history of science in the Muslim West until the 9th century AH / 15th century CE, Dar al-Rachad al-Haditha, 1st edition, volume 1, Casablanca, Morocco, 2000 CE, page 281.

²⁸- Al-Tanbukti (Ahmed Baba, d. 1036 AH / 1627 CE), *Kifayat al-Muhtaj li-Ma'rifat Man Laysa fi al-Dibaj*, Study and Verification by Muhammad Mati, Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Vol. 1, Vol. 2, Morocco, 2000, pp. 247-248.

Ibn Qunfudh (Abu al-Abbas Ahmed, d. 810 AH / 1407 CE), *Al-Wafayat*, Edited and Annotated by Adel Noyehed, Dar al-Afak al-Jadidah, 4th Edition, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983, p. 344.

²⁹- Mas'udMazhoudi and others, the same reference, p. 128.

³⁰- Al-Tanbukti, the same reference, Vol. 1, pp. 92-93.

³¹- The same source, Vol. 1, pp. 164-165. Al-Hafnawi, the same reference, Vol. 2, pp. 6-7.

in the west, then entered Cairo. He also performed the Hajj and visited Jerusalem, Damascus and Aleppo before settling in Cairo. There he taught, researched and wrote, benefiting many. He died in Cairo³².

Salem ibn Ibrahim ibn Isa al-Sanhaji (d. 873 AH/1468 CE) moved from his hometown of Mchdalah to Bejaia and then to Tunis. He later left Tunisia and was captured by Christians, where he remained in their captivity for some time. During this time he engaged in theological discussions with their bishops, eventually defeating them and securing his release. He then travelled to the Levant and heard from scholars in the Hejaz, Egypt and Damascus.

Similarly, the scholar, exegete and hadith expert Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn Mukhluf al-Tha'alibi (d. 875 AH/1471 CE) from the region around the city of Hamzah first moved to Bejaia, where he studied³³ under its scholars. He then travelled to Tunis to learn from the associates of Ibn 'Arfa. He then moved to the Levant³³⁴.

His works:

Ibn Hammad al-Sanhaji wrote many works covering a wide range of subjects. Abu al-Abbas al-Ghobriny mentioned him under the title "Al-Dariyah" as a scholar who excelled in acquiring knowledge beyond what was included in his known programme³⁵. He wrote works in literature, poetry, jurisprudence and history.

In the field of Maliki jurisprudence, Al-Sanhaji provided a commentary on the book "The Expert in the Benefits of the Rulings" written by his teacher Abd al-Haqq al-Ishbili. In the field of hadith, he provided an explanation for the book "Arba'in Hadithan" (Forty Hadiths). In the field of literature, he wrote works such as "Ujala al-Mawdi' wa 'Ulalat al-Mushe'" and a commentary on Abu Darda's poem "Al-

³²- Amar Hilal, the same reference, p. 270.

³³- Adel Noyehed, Dictionary of Algerian Figures, 4th Edition, published by the Cultural Foundation, 1983, p. 196.

³⁴- Al-Hafnawi, the previous source, Vol. 1, pp. 63-65. Makhoulf (Abu al-Fadl Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Omar ibn Ali ibn Salim al-Tunisi al-Maliki, d. 1360 AH / 1941 CE), "Shajarat al-Nur al-Zakiyah fi Tabaqat al-Malikiyah," Vol. 1, Al-Matba'ah Al-Salafiyyah, Cairo, 1349 AH, pp. 264-265.

³⁵- Al-Ghabrini, the previous source, p. 190.

Azdiyya". This poem is particularly known for its consistent use of the letter "alif".

Ibn Hammad was also noted for his ability to compose beautiful poetry. This led the author of "Dictionary of Algerian Cities" to describe him as a poet and literary figure known for his excellence in descriptive and elegiac poetry. He wrote elegies, including one mourning the fall of his hometown, Al-Qal'ah, after it was conquered by the Almohads and then devastated by the Arab Banu Hilal. This forced its inhabitants to emigrate to cities such as Bejaia and Al-Qairawan and to scatter to other regions³⁶. In one of his poetic compositions, he laments the palaces and ruins of Al-Qal'ah, including the palaces of Princess Blara, Al-Manar, Prince Hamād and Al-Kawkab. The historian Abd al-Rahman al-Jilali³⁷ has preserved a verse from this poem and described it as follows:

Where are the newlyweds, without drawings or decorations?

Look and you'll see nothing but the plain and the mountain.

And the palace of Bilara has suffered loss and devastation,

Where is the splendour that once adorned it?

The palace of the Caliph, where is the palace among the ruins?

Except the weeds, and in them a lament.

Nothing pleases me now, after I've gone a certain way,

And I find no more joy in it.

And Kokb al-'Allama told without being aware of it,

While Kokb witnessed change and transformation.

And the palace of "Hamad" has disappeared,

Without a trace, without a mark, without a sign.

The accounts of "Al-Manar" have now become mere echoes,

But they are stories that flow through the narrative.

³⁶- Same source.

³⁷- Al-Jilali, the previous reference, p. 115.

The traveller, Al-Tijani³⁸, adds a few lines of Ibn Hamad's poetry to illustrate the palace of Al-Manar. He said:

See the crowns of Al-Manar, high and mighty,

Decorating the blossoming tall palms".

It's as if the domes and balconies, the most honourable,

Were stars shining brightly in the serenity of homes.

The verses of Ibn Hammad Al-Sanhaji's poetry demonstrate his exceptional skill in vivid description and his ability to weave beautiful and expressive words, reflecting his keen sensibility. They link him to his strong attachment to his hometown, Kala, and his deep sense of belonging. The aforementioned verses are only a small part of a longer poem, according to the historian Saad Allah, which belongs to a collection of poems, as confirmed by the researcher Adel Nouihed³⁹. Unfortunately, the complete collection is missing.

As for his contributions to history, we've identified four works attributed to him, which we'll discuss later. They are

A- The book (Reports on the MubukBani 'Ubayd and their history).

B- The book (The Necessary Summary of the History of the Kings of Sanhaja in Ifriqiya and Bejaia).

C- A summary of the history of Al-Tabari's (The History of Nations and Kings), who lived in the 9th century.

D- A programme in which he mentioned his teachers and the readings he received from them.

Conclusion:

We can draw the following conclusions:

1. The city of Hamza played a prominent role in the intellectual movement and had a significant and influential impact on the neighbouring cities and regions.

³⁸- Al-Tajani Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Abdullah, (The Journey of Al-Tajani), Edited by Hassan Hassani Abdel-Wahab, Dar Al-Kitab Al-Arabi (The Arab Book House), Libya Tunisia, 1981, p. 117.

³⁹- Nouihed, the previous reference, p. 1231.

2. The city of Hamza gave birth to scholars and jurists who achieved great renown between the 4th and 7th centuries. Notable figures from this period include Ibn Hammad, a polymath who excelled in both the dissemination and acquisition of knowledge, as well as in various fields such as hadith, literature, poetry, jurisprudence and history.

3. Ibn Hammad made significant contributions to historical writing, as he authored works related to ruling dynasties. Among these, his books (The Chronicles of the Kings of the Bani 'Ubayd and Their Biographies) and "(The Essential Chronicle in the History of the Sanhaja Kings in Ifriqiya and Bejaia).

4. Hamza also produced other scholars such as Ibn Qurqul, Muhammad bin Umar bin Ali al-Malikshi, Abu al-Hasan Yahya al-Zawawi, Muhammad bin Umar bin Ali al-Malikshi and many others. They enriched the intellectual and cultural life of the Maghreb and the Islamic East, and their influence is still felt today.

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