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Ibn al-Khatib

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Ibn al-Khatib, known as Lisān al-dīn, 1313-1374, was the greatest Muslim writer of Granada and the last great intellectual, writer, and statesman of Muslim Spain. Son of a Granadine court official, he received an excellent education. He was vizier of Yūsuf I from 1349 to 1354, and continued, with one interruption, under Yūsuf's son Muhammad V. Among his friends and pupils was Ibn Khal-dūn, who was present for a period in the court. Ibn Zamrak, the poet and secretary of Muhammad V whose verses adorn the walls of the Aihambra, was also a pupil of Ibn al-Khatib. In A.H. 773 (1371 or 1372) Ibn al-Khatib was accused of heresy, and fled to Morocco. He was imprisoned in 1374, and killed by hired assassins in prison while an investigative commission studied the charges of heresy and disloyalty to Muhammad V. Ibn Zamrak was accused of complicity.

Ibn al-Khatib's linguistically and stylistically sophisticated works are numerous. He is remembered primarily as a historian, and wrote extensively on the history and geography of the kingdom of Granada. His *al-Ihāta fī ta'rīkh Gharnata*, an encyclopedia of Granadine history, has yet to be completely published or translated. Ibn al-Khatib is the first Arabic historian to write on Andalusian history in its entirety, and his works are the principal sources for important periods of the history of Nasrid Granada. He also wrote extensively on Islamic history in general, travel, government, medicine, philosophy, and mysticism, and he is the author of many muwashshahas and other poems. We lack an adequate understanding of the significance of Ibn al-Khatib, who was well known and respected, though not always liked, by his contemporaries. The extensive treatment of him by al-Maqqarī in *Nafh al-Tib* has not been translated. Much of Ibn al-Khatib's writing remains unpublished. The Escorial has an important collection of his manuscripts.

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