

# Manuscript Copies Of Ibn Battuta's "Travelogue"

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**Received:** 15 October 2025; **Accepted:** 08 November 2025; **Published:** 11 December 2025

**Abstract:** The research explores the manuscript copies of Ibn Battuta's travelogue, a significant historical source documenting the medieval Islamic world's cultural, political, and geographical diversity. By analyzing the various manuscripts – their origins, variations, and historical contexts – the study sheds light on the transmission and preservation of knowledge in the Islamic world. This work also addresses the challenges of textual inconsistencies and the impact of such variations on historical interpretations. Ultimately, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the manuscript's significance in historiography and their contribution to global historical studies.

**Keywords:** Ibn Battuta, travelogue, manuscript studies, Islamic historiography, textual variations, medieval history, cultural transmission, historical analysis.

**Introduction:** The legacy of Ibn Battuta, one of history's most renowned travelers, continues to captivate scholars and enthusiasts worldwide. Born in Tangier, Morocco, in 1304, Ibn Battuta embarked on a journey spanning over three decades, covering vast regions of the Islamic world and beyond. His travels encompassed North Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, Southeast Asia, and parts of China and Sub-Saharan Africa. His detailed accounts, compiled in the renowned "Rihla" (The Journey), provide a rich and invaluable glimpse into the societies, cultures, and political landscapes of the 14th century.

Manuscripts of Ibn Battuta's "Rihla" have been preserved and transmitted through centuries, with numerous copies and translations surfacing in various parts of the world. These manuscripts serve as critical primary sources for understanding not only Ibn Battuta's travels but also the broader historical and cultural context of the regions he visited. However, the dissemination of these manuscripts has introduced variations in content, style, and accuracy, leading to scholarly debates regarding their authenticity and origins.

This study delves into 30 manuscript copies of Ibn Battuta's "Rihla", exploring their provenance, physical characteristics, linguistic features, and historical significance. By analyzing these manuscripts, we aim to uncover insights into the transmission of Ibn Battuta's

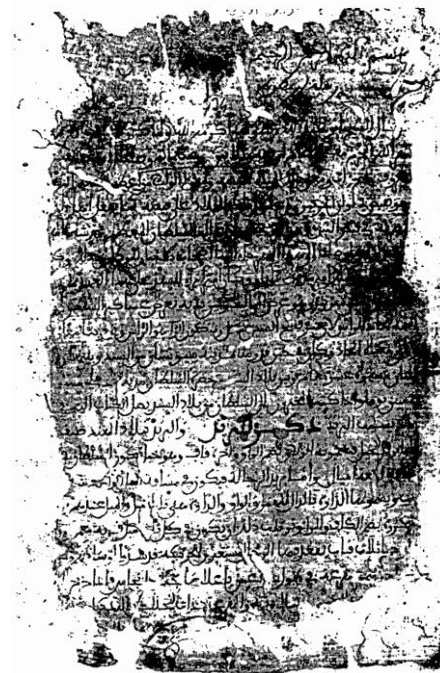
work, the scribes and scholars involved in its preservation, and the impact of these manuscripts on historical and cultural scholarship. The research also highlights the challenges of working with diverse and fragmented manuscript traditions, emphasizing the importance of critical methodologies in manuscript studies.

Through this exploration, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of Ibn Battuta's "Rihla" as a historical artifact and a literary masterpiece, shedding light on the intricate processes of manuscript preservation and the enduring legacy of one of history's most extraordinary travelers.

## Manuscript of Qarawiyyin Library:

The text discusses a manuscript stored in the Qarawiyyin Library in Fez, cataloged as No. 561. It highlights the significance of Fez as an important cultural and historical location related to Ibn Battuta's journey.

The manuscript is considered one of the key references for researchers studying Ibn Battuta's travels. However, it appears that only a part of the manuscript exists, as the first section of Ibn Battuta's travels is missing. The existing portion begins with dates corresponding to the Islamic calendar, indicating that the preserved section likely pertains to the later stages of his travels.



"Manuscript of the Qarawiyyin Library, No. 561 – The first folio of the second journey."

The author expresses regret over the loss of many valuable manuscripts from the Qarawiyyin Library and

raises questions about the whereabouts of the complete version of this manuscript.



"The last folio of the manuscript of the Qarawiyyin Library"

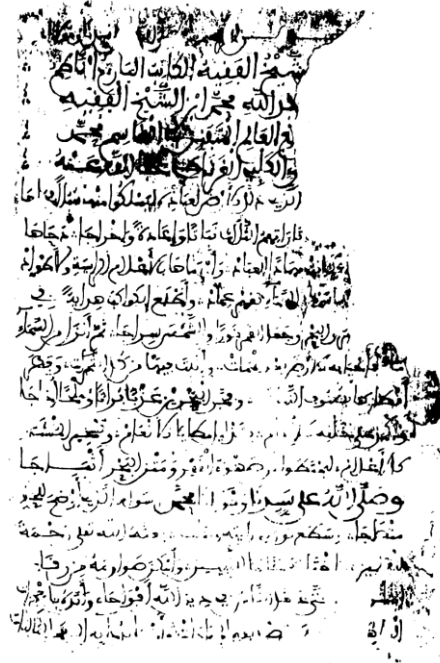
The manuscript cataloged as No. 561 appears to belong to the second part of his journey, which excludes the first section of his travels. The earliest available text begins from the month of Muharram (Islamic calendar),

four years and thirty-seven weeks after he reached the known landmark of Wadi Sind. This specific manuscript consists of 110 folios, with a uniform format of 25 lines per page, measuring 27 x 18 cm.

**Manuscript of Al-Khazānah al-Ḥasaniyyah (3), No. 8488:**

This manuscript includes the first journey and consists of 229 folios (each folio containing two pages), with 19

lines per page and dimensions of 22 x 16.5 cm. It is written in a beautiful, bold Maghrebi script. The manuscript is bound with a red cover, but its content is not arranged in proper order! Despite its damage and wear, some parts have been patched and restored.



"The first folio of the manuscript from the Royal Library (Al-Khazānah Al-Ḥasaniyyah), number 8488, is considered to be at the forefront of documented copies and was perhaps written in the handwriting of Ibn Juzayy."

This copy, in my view, cannot be considered the source for correct copies of the manuscript. It is long and disorganized, and although some parts are missing, it does contain valuable content. For example, we find Ibn Battuta's account of the conflict between the Shia and the Sunni on page 111, as well as six pages describing Shiraz. Furthermore, there is a discussion of Bukhara on page 176, and Ibn Battuta mentions a small city in Southeast Asia.

As for the introduction attributed to the copy, it is falsely assigned to Ibn Battuta. The beginning of the book states: "The author, the honorable Sheikh Muhammad al-Kilbi al-Gharnati (may Allah have mercy on him), known as Abu al-Qasim Muhammad..." This attribution is incorrect.

This copy, like many other manuscripts, does not carry an exact date. It concludes with Ibn Battuta's

description of his arrival in India, where he mentions how they reached its lands and met its kings.

**Manuscript of Al-Khazānah Al-Ḥasaniyyah No. 3631:**

This is the third manuscript of the first journey, consisting of 205 folios, with 16 lines per page, and dimensions of 17 x 14 cm. It is written in a clear Maghrebi script, with many tears along its edges.

The first page contains the following text: "Said Sheikh Imam Abu al-Abbas Sidi Ahmad Ibn Battuta, may Allah have mercy on him." The manuscript appears to have been copied in early Muharram in the year 1242. The first page also bears the phrase "By Allah's permission!"

The manuscript is dated to Ramadan in the year 1194 and is confirmed to be an exact copy of the promised text, starting and ending completely.



"Manuscript No. 3631 from the Royal Library, which is titled Ibn Battuta, Ahmad, and nicknamed Abu al-Abbas."

#### **Manuscript of Al-Khazānah Al-Ḥasaniyyah No. 8218:**

This is part of the first journey, consisting of 151 folios, with 17 lines per page, and dimensions of 26 x 14 cm. It is written in clear Maghrebi script with severe tears and a beginning that starts mid-content, only from the meeting in the second journey.

It mentions Ibn Battuta's words: "By Allah's permission, I journeyed through the world, and He blessed me to see its marvels". The text emphasizes the mercy and hope in Allah's guidance, ending with praise for Allah and prayers for admission to Paradise.

#### **Manuscript of Al-Khazānah Al-Ḥasaniyyah No. 356:**

This is a manuscript missing its transcription. It consists of two volumes: the first has 209 folios, while the second has 158 folios, with 33 lines per page, and dimensions of 26 x 18 cm.

The text ends with the following: "The first journey ended in Muharram in the year 125..." The date was written using numerical symbols, with a later entry continuing the manuscript from "the middle of the sacred month of Muharram". The script is written in the same clear Maghrebi style.

#### **Manuscript of the Public Treasury (9) No. 2399/d:**

This is the second journey from the manuscript collection, which originally belonged to the royal treasury. Therefore, it is marked with the letter "Ka". It consists of 360 pages, written in 19 lines per page, with dimensions 24 x 18.

This copy appears to be mixed, similar to the previously mentioned manuscript No. 8488, with the first part missing, as is common with most manuscripts. However, the clear gaps in its content, which seem intentional, align with references to Ibn Battuta's visit to Andalusia. The subject of this visit attracted the attention of the orientalist Professor Lévi-Provençal, who was a friend of Sheikh Abdul Hayy Al-Kattani. It is not far-fetched to assume that the Sheikh sent these Andalusian-related pages to him and did not retrieve them, contrary to what was done in the case of the manuscript connected to Ibn Al-Zubayr.

This manuscript closely resembles manuscript No. 8488 in the Hassani Treasury in terms of layout, documentation, and correction, relying on the original version. Some of the marginal notes suggest they were written by Sheikh Al-Kattani, may Allah have mercy on him.





This manuscript is limited to the second journey and is considered one of the finest copies, dating close to the author's era. The beginning, middle, and the first page are well-preserved.

#### Manuscript of the Wazzan Treasury No. 31:

This copy contains both journeys of the travelogue. I first encountered it during the summer of 1941 when I visited the Wazzan Treasury for the first time. It belongs to the judge of the city, the jurist Ibn Jalloun, may God have mercy on him. I noted it down in my records at the time, and it remains documented in my notes.

The first journey begins after the basmalah with the following:

"The righteous imam, the virtuous jurist Abu Abdullah Ibn Ibrahim At-Tanji, also known as Ibn Battuta, may God have mercy on him, stated..."

This copy was among some of the treasures of the Wazzan family, owned by Muhammad bin Abdul-Jabbar bin Ali bin Ahmad, and later passed to his son, Muhammad. It then entered the mosque's treasury with other manuscripts.

The second journey ends with the date of copying being

the year 1211 AH. The manuscript consists of 201 pages, the first 77 are single pages (each with a front and back), and the rest are fully written pages measuring 19 by 17 units.

#### Manuscript of the Marrakech Treasury No. 412:

This elegant copy contains both journeys in a single volume. The scribe finished copying it on the night of Friday, the 1st of Jumada Al-Awwal in the year 1158 AH.

The manuscript has minor damage on its first pages and was completed during the reign of Sultan Moulay Abdullah. He is buried at the Sidi Ahmad Al-Sabti Mosque in Marrakech, where he passed away in the year 601 AH.

**Its pages number 248**, lined with 24 lines per page, with dimensions of 28 × 18, according to the index of manuscripts of the Ibn Youssef Library in Marrakech, which was curated by the late esteemed scholar Al-Siddiq Bel-Gharbi, may God have mercy on him.



This manuscript was copied during the reign of Sultan Moulay Abdullah bin Ismail and is located in the library of Ibn Youssef College, No. 412, first page.

The text provides a detailed description of a manuscript in the National Library of Paris, cataloged under numbers 2289 and 910. Here's a summary:

Manuscript Description:

- The manuscript, and what follows it, is part of the collection of the French National Library (formerly royal). It carries the old label Royale.
- Distinction: The primary advantage of this version lies in its completeness and accuracy, except for some digressions (dabāja) in the opening and its deviation from the original handwriting.
- Attribution Issue: There are claims that the introduction, supposedly authored by Ibn Battuta, is actually not by him, as evidenced in the script. Scholars like Defrémery and Sanguinetti excluded these sections

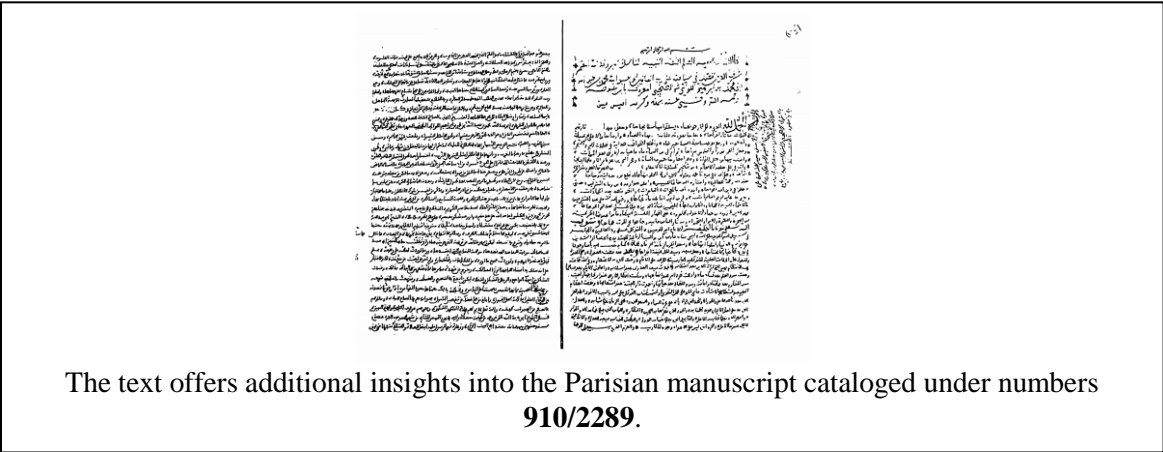
from their analysis of the manuscript.

Catalog Details:

- It is listed under the numbers 2289 and 910 Sup, with a descriptor Arabe, distinguishing it among Arabic and Oriental manuscripts in the library.

Annotations in the Manuscript:

1. The first travel account concludes with a note dated the 1st of Muharram (Hijri year unspecified). This corresponds to 1766 (Gregorian), authored by Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Qasim.
2. The second travel account closes with the phrase: The second travel account ends, a humble effort by Muhammad ibn Ibrahim, may God cure him of all ailments. This note is dated the 11th of Safar, 1180 AH.



The text offers additional insights into the Parisian manuscript cataloged under numbers 910/2289.

Key Details:

- The manuscript is recognized as one of the most complete and accurate copies.

- **Observations on Script:** It is noted that the handwriting in the digressions (dabāja) differs from the rest of the text. This raises questions about authorship

or contributions.

- **Introduction Attribution:** The introduction (muqaddima) is associated with Ibn Battuta, yet there is evidence suggesting it is not his work, aligning with doubts from earlier scholars.

This section presents descriptions of three Parisian manuscripts from the Bibliothèque Nationale under the numbers 2287, 2288, and 2290/908.

#### Manuscript No. 2287 / 909:

- **Ownership and Characteristics:** Originally owned by a French individual, the manuscript includes references to an additional catalog number 909 Sup.
- **Structure:** Comprises 206 sheets, each containing 28 lines, with measurements of 20x30 cm.
- **Contents:**
  - o Lacks the first and second chapters (safar).
  - o Includes a chapter titled “زهرة النواظر وبهجة” “المسامع والنواظر”.

#### Manuscript No. 2288 / 911:

- **Condition:** A fragmented manuscript missing portions of the original text, leading to potential alterations and changes.
- **Structure:** Includes 160 sheets with 27 lines per page.
- **Contents:**
  - o Features the second chapter labeled as “الدر” “الفوفية من رحلة ابن بطوطة”.
  - o Missing historical references and chronological dates.

#### Manuscript No. 2290 / 908:

- **Features:**
  - o Focuses exclusively on the first chapter (safar), primarily including its titles and page numbers.
  - o References the year 1134 (mid-12th century) for events and places it under the rule of the Al-Makhzani dynasty.

- **Structure:**
  - o Contains 108 sheets, written in 31 lines per page.
  - o Includes marginal notes.

#### Manuscript of the National Library in Paris No. 2291: 907-

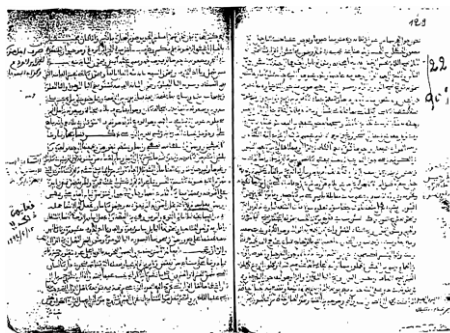
This manuscript contains the second version of the journey and is known through a manuscript belonging to Tolaibro (Delaporte), as written in French on the back of the first page. Its owner, a French Orientalist, worked in several positions, particularly in Arab countries such as Egypt, Libya, Algeria, and Morocco.

1. The manuscript work dates back to the period of Sultan Mawlai Suleiman (1206–1238 AH), as it mentions meetings in the autumn of 1828 at the home of Kaye (Kaï), who returned from Tétouan. He accompanied the French consul, Lamorinière, to Meknes, where they were received by the Moroccan Sultan Mawlai Abd al-Rahman.
2. Then, in the city of Suriya, the document mentions how it became an important area when Colonel Delary (De Larue) was sent to Meknes in 1836 during the reign of Sultan Mawlai Abd al-Rahman to present France's protest against Moroccan actions. The French consul entrusted Muhammad al-Tayyib al-Biyad with following up on the negotiations with the French delegation.

It is suggested that when Ibn Battuta's journey was copied, this second version became widely available, as copies of it were made since the time of King Muhammad III, making it a cultural treasure significant to Morocco's heritage.

The catalog of the National Library notes that the author of the manuscript, Al-Barron Sylvester, added parts to it that distinguish this copy from others. For instance, a distinct phrase not found in other versions appears in the text:

“In Safar 757, we learned that God is aware of its writers”.



"Paris Manuscript 907/2291 – Known by the French diplomat (Delaporte), who obtained it at an early age. It is said that it might have been written by Ibn Juzayy."

This unique statement points to the significance of this particular copy.

In conclusion, we believe that this version may be one of the oldest parts of the journey to reach us, despite some grammatical and linguistic errors suggesting that the scribe was not Ibn Battuta himself. The writing style differs from Ibn Battuta's known handwriting, leaving us to speculate that it was written after his time.

#### **Manuscript of Dar al-Kutub, Tunisia No. 5048:**

This manuscript was found in Ain al-Makan (Ain al-Maqna) and is in good condition, described as a fine copy. It is noted that it belonged to Ahmad Bey, ruler of Tunisia, who valued it highly. The manuscript's completion is dated to the end of Ramadan in the year 1256 AH (November 1840).

The scribe who wrote the manuscript ended it with a Moroccan style, adding the name "Jadeed" (new) to the journey title. This suggests it might be a new title for Ibn Battuta's work: "The Precious Pearl from the Journey of Ibn Battuta".

The manuscript owner focused on geographic descriptions of some locations, referencing sources like Futuh al-Masalik wa al-Mamalik or al-Maqamat al-Shirshiyah. The manuscript consists of 263 pages with measurements of 27 × 19 cm.

#### **Manuscript of Madrid, which Dozy relied upon:**

This version attracted the attention of the Dutch Orientalist Reinhart Dozy. He mentioned it in his book *The Detailed History of Muslim Spain* (*Histoire des Musulmans d'Espagne*). Dozy obtained this version from the collection of De Gayangos, who had borrowed it from the library of the Spanish Royal Academy of History (Real Academia de La Historia).

Dozy notes, "This book's text... is from the elegant copies translated by Father Simón to French." However, Simón's translation only hints at the original manuscript's content.

The version in question contains two parts of Ibn Battuta's journey:

- The first part spans 331 pages.
- The second part covers 245 pages, with the text beginning in clear Moroccan handwriting on page 13, following a traditional style.

It includes the phrase:

"The noble Sheikh, Abu Muhammad Abdullah bin

Muhammad bin Ibrahim al-Lawati al-Tangi, known as Ibn Battuta, may Allah have mercy on him".

The journey ends with a date specifying the end of Ibn Battuta's travels, along with prayers for forgiveness for him and his parents. The note concludes with the statement:

"May Allah forgive him, his parents, and all Muslims". The text of the journey was finalized in 1726 AD / 1138 AH.

#### **Manuscript of the Academy of Sciences in Lisbon, No. 1254 A:**

This manuscript, which researchers frequently discuss, was acquired by Father José de Santo-Antonio Moura from the city of Fez during a mission to Morocco and transferred to Lisbon in 1797 AD (1211 AH). Part of it was translated into Portuguese, and it was inspected at the Academy of Sciences in Lisbon in January 1993.

Importantly, this manuscript's introduction is attributed to its owner, Ibn Juzay, and was copied in the Marinid era. The manuscript mentions events in the year 1045–1046 AH (1635–1636 AD), during the reign of the Saadian dynasty, specifically under the rule of the Sultan Ahmed al-Mansur al-Dhahabi.

The manuscript's significance lies in its connection to Ibn Battuta's travels. However, researchers note the importance of verifying its content, as some versions attribute the work to Ibn Juzay, Ibn Battuta's scribe, while others emphasize different aspects, including the references to his travels and legacy.

#### **Manuscript of Sheikh Hamouda:**

There is a manuscript belonging to Sheikh Hamouda, previously a notable Islamic scholar in Constantinople (Algeria). It was copied on 22 Shawwal 1160 AH (October 17, 1747 AD) and referenced by French researchers Briand and Sankinski in their introduction to the translated version of the journey. They also included this manuscript in their analysis of Ibn Battuta's legacy.

#### **The Aissi Manuscript:**

This manuscript was gifted by Tunisian researcher Professor Habib al-Aissi, the owner of the Islamic West Library in Beirut. It is a photographed copy of the travel manuscript, divided into different journeys. Its first part spans 14 pages, while the second part consists of 21 pages. The total content reaches 356 pages, providing significant insights into the journey's historical and cultural aspects.





"The first page of the manuscript by Habib al-Aissi notes the absence of attributing the introduction to Ibn Battuta."

### Manuscript of the Waqf of Taymur, Egyptian Library, Copy (1):

- Microfilm number: 17732, copy (1).
- It bears the date: Monday, the 8th of Rabi' al-Awwal, 1091 AH (equivalent to 1674 AD), indicating that it was written six years after the death of al-Bilouni.
- It consists of 197 pages, with 19 lines per page, measured at 24 cm.

### Another Manuscript from the Waqf of Taymur, Copy (B):

- This second copy was completed by its scribe,

Al-Islamobuli, 15 months after Shawwal 1272 AH.

- At the bottom, a note states: "Copied from a copy in the handwriting of the virtuous Sheikh Muhammad Al-Barizi".
- It was written by Barsem Suleiman Al-Fayoumi, dated 17 Shawwal 1279 AH (June 15, 1874 AD).
- The scribe, Al-Faqir Nasr Al-Muhairi, participated and completed it under the supervision of the palace of Hazrat Haj Ahmed.
- This copy contains 146 folios (two pages per folio) with 21 lines per page, measuring 22 cm x 12 cm.



"Another manuscript from the collection of Al-Bayluni, copied on 15 Shawwal 1272 AH... The first folio of the manuscript, according to what appears, is from Copy (B)."

### Manuscript of the Vatican No. 1601:

- This third copy was attributed to Al-Bayluni, written in the early months of the year 1184 AH.
- It contains 112 folios, with 15 lines per page, measuring 20 cm x 14 cm.
- It was acquired through the Papal Chair with the help of Monsignor Jacques.

### Manuscript of Al-Qayrawani No. 4063:

- This copy is dated 17 Sha'ban 1210 AH.
- It was written by Al-Faqir Muhammad bin Ahmed Al-Azhari Al-Shafi'i under the supervision of Sheikh Suleiman Al-Fayoumi.
- The note at the beginning of the manuscript indicates that the date of Ibn Battuta's journey was authenticated on the margins by Sheikh Nasr Al-Muhairi, then later dated 1223 AH.

- The manuscript contains 72 folios (two pages per folio), with 21 lines per page, measuring 20 cm x 14 cm.
- It is noteworthy that this manuscript contains a unique introduction and title that distinguish it from other versions.
- Its origin remains unclear since it dates back to the 13th century AH, and researchers continue to seek its original source.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigates the manuscript copies of Ibn Battuta's travelogue, which document his extensive travels across Africa, Asia, and Europe during the 14th century. By scrutinizing these manuscripts, the research reveals significant insights into the cultural and intellectual currents of the medieval Islamic world. It highlights the role of travel literature in transmitting knowledge and preserving history. Moreover, the study emphasizes the challenges of textual inconsistencies and the necessity for careful historiographical interpretation. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of Ibn Battuta's legacy and the manuscripts' relevance to both historical and modern contexts.

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