



➔ **Regular Research Paper – SS**

Ahi Organizations in Terms of Corporations, Corporation Associations and Business Ethics in Anatolia of the Middle Ages: An Analysis of the Ibn-i Battuta's Travelogue

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Abstract

Resources related to business generally shed light after the industrial revolution. The literature on this period before the industrial revolution is rather limited. The history of the society and the history of business affects the culture and the organization culture. In this respect, the study is very important in terms of business and organizational culture in Anatolia. Objective of this study is to examine traveler Ibn-i Battuta's two volume-work called as "Ibn-i Battuta's Travelogue" on the Ahi organization, which is considered important in terms of business activities and business associations in Anatolia between 1300-1400 AD during the middle ages and focus on work ethics and social responsibility activities performed within this period. Considering the conditions of that age, the presence of highly disciplined work ethics and social responsibility activities can be seen. As the method, document review technique, which is one of qualitative research methods, was employed. It is expected that this study will be beneficial to the academic studies that are possible in the past about the business ethics and social responsibility activities in Anatolia. Moreover, the importance of exploring the business activities in Europe is emerging in the middle ages.

Keywords: *ahi, ahi organizations, ibn-i battuta, ibn-i battuta's travelogue, anatolia*

1. INTRODUCTION

The culture of a society is highly influenced by its historical development, and at the same time the culture of the enterprise is influenced by the culture of society. It is observed that studies on verbal and written culture in Anatolia are inadequate in terms of business culture. In particular, literature related to business sheds light on the industrial revolution and its aftermath. The works and the written sources about the business activities belonging to the previous periods are very limited. However, although there are relatively few of them belonging to that period, there are important works that can illuminate the management of that period. The most prominent of these works are travels that shed light on past experiences, geography, and economies.

In this study, it was attempted to investigate the limitations of the traveler's events and situations related to the Ahi organization that they had stayed in for a while, which they encountered in Anatolia, which is one of the places where the famous Arab traveler Ibn-i Battuta





who lived in the 14th century visited and stayed. In particular, the information provided by the traveler on concepts such as business associations, business ethics, work discipline, social responsibility, which are more understandable concepts of businessmen and business associations, have been utilized.

In the study, document review technique, which is one of qualitative research methods, was employed. This study can shed light on researchers and academicians working on the history of business administration. According to the literature, pre-industrial revolution is pre-empted as very ill-defined periods in terms of business, management, management and organization. The work can be a small but important contribution to figure out these eras in terms of the field of business.

In the context of the study, next sections are organized as follows: The second section is devoted to some brief details on the method employed within this study. After that, the third section is based on general information about Ibn-i Battuta and also his Travelogue. With this section, it is aimed to give essential information to readers about Ibn-i Battuta and his Travelogue. The third section is then followed by the fourth section, which focuses on ahi organizations in the Travelogue in terms of economy corporations, corporation associations, business ethics, and also social responsibility. After this comprehensive section, which is related to main subject of the study, the paper is ended with conclusions.

2. METHOD

In this study, Ibn-i Battuta's travel book, which is called as "Ibn-i Battuta's Travelogue" and was published in 2004 in two volumes (in Kazim Taskent classic works series by Yapi Kredi Publications), was examined. This book was translated from Yapi Kredi Publications on the basis of the 1997 Moroccan edition. In the book there is a great deal of information about the economy and the economy of the period as far as it is experienced in every respect.

While visiting villages, towns and cities in Anatolia, Ibn-i Battuta gave a lot of information about the whole society life, he talked about many issues related to the people and daily life. However, within the limitations of this study, only the ahi organization in Anatolia has been selectively treated, simplified and made more understandable by taking into consideration the management of this organization, business associations, ethical behavior. The book is focused on ahi organization in especially Part 32 and between the pages: 400-444. This section begins with the traveler's entrance to Anatolia from Alanya (Alaiye in the name of Sultan Alaeddin at that time). In the study, document review technique, which is one of qualitative research methods, was employed.

3. IBN-I BATTUTA AND HIS TRAVELOGUE

There is a two-volume, Ibn-i Battuta Travelogue, which is written by Ibn-i Battuta, who is an Arab traveler lived between 1304-1368 and known in Arabic as Abu Al-Abdullah Muhammad Bin Abdullah Bin Muhammad Bin Ibrahim Tanci. Many historical sources reference to the Ibn-i Battuta Travelogue. As one of the rare people who traveled and lived in the Middle Ages, Ibn-i Battuta wrote in Anatolia, in the Arab World, in East and West Africa in India, and in the Crimea in an important part of the world, In the regions he has visited and visited, economical life and social life in cities have been mentioned in geography and in the lives of people in a significant way.

According to what we have learned from the travels, the travelers was just 22 years old, during the period of Maghreb sultan: Ebu Said Merini and on 2 Recep 725/14 June 1325 when he has



moved from Tanca for pilgrimage. Following the North African coasts, he arrives in Alexandria. Here, with the inspiration by Sheikh Burhaneddin, he wants to see some eastern countries like India, Sint, and China. He starts to his travel by moving from Alexandria to Cairo, and then to further south sides from there [Battuta, Abu Abdullah, Ibn-i Batuta travels, (A.Sait Aykut), YKB Press]. Because of the limitations of this study, only the parts of Anatolian travel related to the corporations and the ahi organizations was considered.

Ibn-i Battuta entered to Anatolia from Alanya (Alaiye as its name on that time). Traveler Ibn-i Battuta, who came to Alanya in 1333, states that this place is occupied with Turkmens and that there are Egyptian and Syrian merchants. Ibn-i Battuta also said that this city was ruled by Yusuf from Karamanoğulları.

In 1333, he boarded a Genoise ship from Lazkiye, Syria and get to Anatolia – Alanya (Alaiye). Those who are on the territory of Turkey today from Ibn-i Battuta's places; Bursa, Burdur, Bursa, Denizli, Eğridir, Erzurum, Erzincan, Gerede, Geyve, Gölhisar, Göynük, Gümüşhane, Isparta, Bursa, Adana, Aksaray, Akşehir, Aliai, Amasya, Antakya, (Cevik, Sivas, Sivas, Tavas, Tire, Yenice), which is located in Istanbul, Izmir, Iznik, Karaman, Kastamonu, Kayseri, Konya, Larende, Manisa, Mardin, Mekece, Milas, Mudurnu, Muğla, Niğde, Nusaybin, Safranbolu (Cevik, 1983).

When Ibn-i Battuta speaks of Anatolia, this country called "Bilâd-ı Rûm" is the most beautiful country in the world. While God divides his beauty among the other nations separately, he brought all of them together. Here, the most beautiful people in the world, the cleanest dressed people live and the most delicious dishes are cooked. These are the most compassionate among the creatures of God, for this reason "Abundance, abundance in Damascus (Syria)"; And compassion is in 'Rum (Anatolia)'" (Cakmakci, 2006).

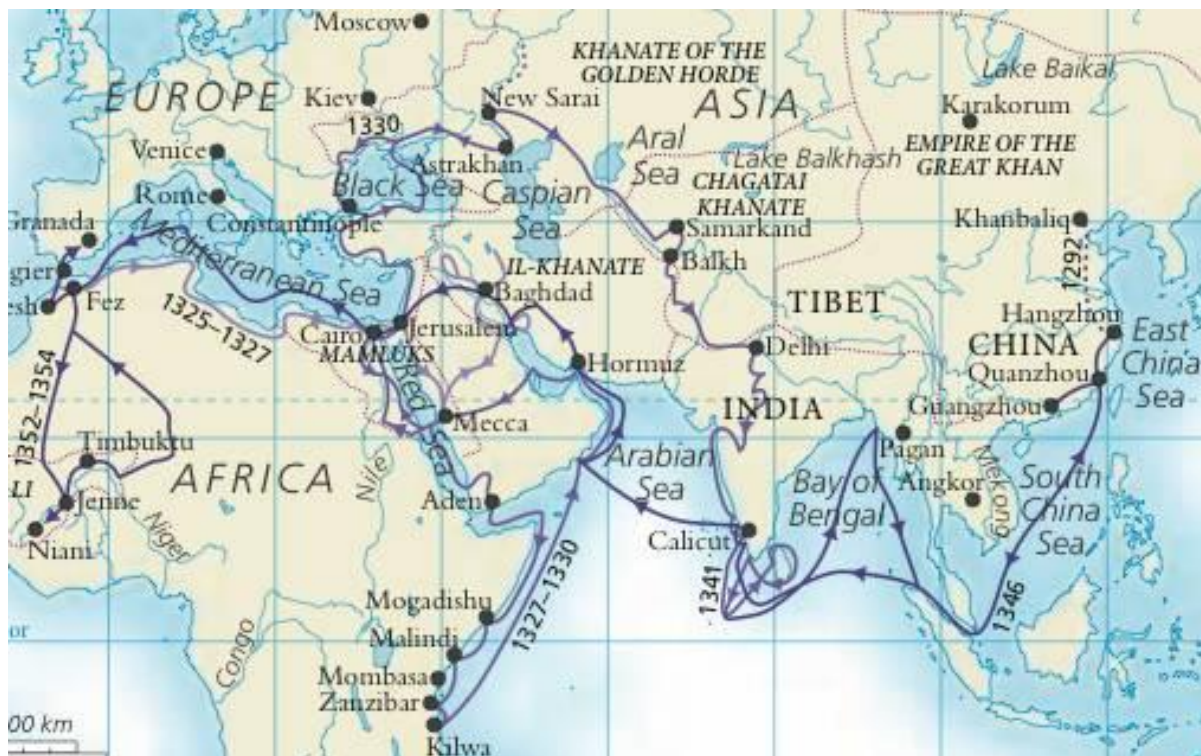


Figure 1. Map Showing Ibn-i Battuta's worldwide trips and the places where he has made recordings.

[Source: <http://neogeography.com/courses/HIST215/ibnBattutaMap.jpg> (12.10.2016)]

4. AHI ORGANIZATIONS IN IBN-I BATTUTA'S TRAVELOGUE IN TERMS OF ECONOMY CORPORATIONS CORPORATION ASSOCIATIONS BUSINESS ETHICS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

4.1. Economy and Corporations in Anatolia of the Middle Ages

As the traveler came to Anatolia, he made many observations geographically, historically and socially and conveyed them to a fluent language. At that time, businesses, small sellers, craftsmen who deal with handicrafts and meet the needs of people and, at least, foreign trade in the seaside ports, especially as a business or business operators are confronted. It does not even have mechanics, steam power, oil, industrialization and mass production. Important elements for commercial life such as electricity and telephone are not in people's life.



Figure 2. Map Showing Ibn-i Battuta's trips in Anatolia and the places where he has made recordings.

[Source: Battuta, 2004; Battuta, & Muhammed, 2010]

The traveler came to Alanya with a commercial ship called "korkora" and the ship-owner did not charge a fee from the traveler. It is understood that the people who have knowledge and the travelers are highly respected in that day's conditions. According to the traveler, the most beautiful people in the world, the cleanest dressed people live in Anatolia, and the most delicious food is cooked in Anatolia (Battuta, 2004; Battuta, & Muhammed, 2010: 400). From here it can be understood that textile, weaving, and economic life were at good level in Anatolia.

In Anatolia, there are "zaviye" (TDK – Turkish Language Society) which can be called as small 'tekke', in every settlement unit within the mentioned period. These spaces have economic and social functions as well as religious cultural functions. It is also understood that these are used as guesthouses. It is understood that the traveler frequently visited Anatolia and was welcomed there.

When speaking about Konya, Konya mentions that the city is wide and the bazaars are regular and charming, and that every craftsman is gathered at a certain place in the market (Battuta, 2004; Battuta, & Muhammed, 2010: 412).



We see that the most important of the day's daily necessities are candles, clothes, passengers for night illumination (Battuta, 2004; Battuta, & Muhammed, 2010: 414). Carpet weaving made from sheep wool has a very important place in the Anatolian economy. The traveler mentions that these carpets and rugs were exported to Syria, Iraq, India, China and other Turkic countries during the tour of Aksaray (Battuta, 2004; Battuta, & Muhammed, 2010: 414).

The traveler who speaks of Erzincan tells that the traveler is very regular and lively bazaars, the fabrics known as Erzincani are woven, the pottery is made of copper legs and candlesticks made of copper in various sizes, which is famous for copper mines (Battuta, 2004; Battuta, & Muhammed, 2010: 418).

Since the economy is based on a great deal of agriculture, the traveler often talks about the abundance of fruit and vegetable (Battuta, 2004; Battuta, & Muhammed, 2010: 415), as the traveler has mentioned in many places in the book that transportation is also provided by horses.

4.2. Corporation Associations and Ahi Organizations in Anatolia of the Middle Ages

Ibn-i Battuta speaks of the Ahis as follows; They are in every village, town and city where Turkmens who settled in Anatolia live." (Battuta, 2004; Battuta, & Muhammed, 2010: 404)" Ahi is, according to them, the man who brings together the young bachelors who gathered the man of his art and craft and who are not employed. " (Battuta, 2004; Battuta, & Muhammed, 2010: 404). They will put Ahi in their heads, and this is what is called "Fütüvvet." The man who is the leader will make a dome and equip it with the necessary materials such as carpets, rugs, lamps etc. His friends will work day by day to earn a living that will earn their livelihood. They bring the money together and give it to the other person. With this money, the needs of the 'tekke' places are met, the necessary food and fruits for the coexistence are bought. For example, if a passenger arrives in the city at the same time, they will be welcomed in the tekke. Even though they are not foreigners and guests, they all come together and sing together, sing songs, sing, and go to work next morning and return to their leader with the gains they earn after the second. They are called "fityan" [=valiants]. Their leaders are called "ahı" as we have already mentioned. I am more ethical and virtuous than I am in the world. Though the behavior of Shiraz and Isfahan societies resembles a little bit of AHI, but they show more interest and respect to the passengers. They are more advanced in love and ease than Shiraz and Isfahan.

When talking about his travels to Kayseri, the traveler mentions that there are management functions of the ahis and he says: " One of the customs of the tradition is that if the monarch is not found, he should take the control of the beasts in the city and make a kind of government. Ahi, in terms of power, tradition and hospitality treats, dresses, horses under the guests. They behave just like a ruler with their behavior, their commandments and their horseback riding. "

The meeting places of the gathering places of the business associations are quite magnificent in the conditions of the day. The traveler conveys this situation with the following conclusions: "After I had the evening prayer, this man came back again. Together, we met with a wonderful zest! This is a shining place illuminated with countless chunks of Iraqi glass furnished with the finest carpets and rugs of Anatolia. There are five 'beysus' in the living room. Beysus is a kind of three-legged candlestick made of copper. In front of this candlestick, a bright and thin lampshade like glass made of copper was opened. In the middle there is a pipe for the roving out. This tube is filled with filtered pure liquor. At the beginning of the festival there are still cups of oil filled with oil. There is also a scissor to fix it. Those who are responsible for that maintenance are called as "çerağcı". In the council, there are a group of young men on their backs with their coarse [=kaban] feet, a pair of bellies hanging a knife in the length of two cubits, a headscarf of a





woolen wool, and a pair of young men covering it with two fingers wide in length. (Battuta, 2004; Battuta, & Muhammed, 2010: 405)".

So we got to Ladik. It is called Dunguzlu here [=Donuzlu, Porgy, Denizli]. This is one of the most beautiful, largest cities in the region. There are seven great mosques, ties and gardens where the Friday prayers are held, regular flowing teas, spring waters and cute bazaars. Here in the world, unparalleled gold embroidered cotton clothes touches. The quality of the local cotton and its good spinning allow it to last for a long time. These fabrics are known as [Ladiki, Dunguzli] in the name of this place. Because of the multitude of Christian population in the city, the majority of these people are made up of Greek women. They give tax by sultana line and similar names (Battuta, 2004; Battuta, & Muhammed, 2010: 408).

4.3. Business Ethics in Anatolia of the Middle Ages

There are many examples in the Ahi organization that exemplify external auditing, Routine trades supervisors. Ahi father or chief man walked the shopkeepers at every opportunity, checking the cleanliness and the integrity of the work done. The shoemaker on the right foot of the mistaken shopkeeper was thrown down the floor of his workplace. Everybody said, "Today's the master's checker was thrown." These words mean that the master produced poor quality goods. The damage was also paid to the customer. The phrase "throwing checkers" that is used today comes from here (Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen, 2015: 15).

What are the common beneficiaries of the Labor Code and the Code of Business Conduct? Under the question, similar rules and practices were pointed out in today's business law in the Ahi organizations. The principles of Turkish Labor Law are very similar with the principles that are tried to be explained. These; Employer's liability, Employer's liability, New job search permission, Labor document, Employer's liability to pay, Minimum wage, Overwork wage, Insurance premium, Child abuse and similar provisions (Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen, 2015: 17).

4.4. Social Responsibility in Anatolia of the Middle Ages

Ibn-i Battuta was welcomed by a group of young people in every town and city he went to in Anatolia. He was welcomed until he left, and the eating and drinking, protection and accommodation needs were eliminated. As young people belonging to the ahi organization, young people who do this are fulfilling social responsibility as representing the day-to-day operations of providing and servicing accommodation services to the guests who have remained on the path of social necessity in the conditions of the day. They do not charge for their services.

The travel talks about another social responsibility activity as follows: "We have reached to the Ramadan Bairam in this town (Ladik). When we went to the mosque, we looked at the sultan's soldiers and saw that these Ahi braves were prepared with flags showing their own profession with the craftsman drums-zurna and pipes. Every artist carries the burdens of sheep, oxen, and bread he brought with him; The victims in the cemetery were scattering the poor with the bread. The Bairam process begins here from the cabinet. From there it goes to the place where prayer is performed. After we prayed, we went to the mansion with the sultan. The meal was prepared. Separate tables for Fikih scholars, sheikh, ahis, and poor, fond people had been set. On that day no rich, poor man was denied from the gate of the ruler." (Battuta, 2004; Battuta, & Muhammed, 2010: 410).





5. CONCLUSION

The scientific management and management issues, which are usually started in the 19th century, are realistic in some sense, and the study we have conducted sheds light on the fact that in the Middle Ages there are organized business and management activities in Anatolia. Today, we can say that the existing commercial organizations, the civilian and official institutions are replaced by Ahi organization in Anatolia during that period, this organization is a semi-official but locally managed organization, the society is very effective in business and commercial life. . From time to time, the business organization, businesses and employers mentioned is confronted as an institution that rewards, punishes, controls quality, regulates workers' rights, and regulates the passage of apprenticeship, mastery and mastery. In addition to all these issues, we are interested in issues such as relationships among employees, relations between employers and employees, how management should be, ethics and social responsibility. Although I have discussed the business activities mentioned in this study, especially Ibn-i Battuta, and as far as I can see, the Ahi organizations are not only so much concerned with business. All this can be uncovered requires one or more studies. There are also some issues that still need to be investigated; What are the main sources and components of such a strong business association and organization in Anatolia, where does it come from, what exactly is it organized? All of these must also be investigated.

We can say that organizational cultures have a greater impact on the way and performance of the operation of the business than expected, and that two operators with the same resources have different achievements and that they are organizational culturally different. The history of community culture and society, especially the history of business, which is the source of organizational cultures, should be examined more carefully and investigated.

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