



# The Andalusian Family Customs and Lives of People in Poetry Divans 422-484 A.H./ 1031-1091 A.D.

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**Abstract.** This study explains the life of the Andalusian family in the era of the Sects Kings in Andalusia (422-484 AH / 1031-1091 AD) with all the elements of Andalusian society and its categories that formed it at that time, from Muslims, Christians and Jews. This study provides concentrated and accurate information regarding the nature of the daily life and livelihood of Andalusian families during that period of the rule of the Sects Kings. The reader learns from the study the details of life that form the lifestyle of each individual, and also explains the customs and traditions followed by them, in addition to researching the conditions and situations of those people with the issues that capture their interest and care. All of this was extracted from the Andalusian poems that were recorded in the poetry collections that were said by their owners during that era.

**Keywords:** Andalusian Family, Lives, Poetry Divans.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As is known to all, the family is the nucleus of society and the foundation of the state, and it has great importance in their construction, formation and survival. It is the main and essential reason for the cohesion, unity and strength of society. The more the family and its members are cohesive, civilized, strong and righteous, the better the society will be, and the state will be stronger and more advanced. The opposite is true, if the family is afflicted with weakness, corruption and deviation, the state and its society will be weak, divided and a target for enemies. Therefore, officials and rulers must care for the family and take care of it and its members for the benefit of the country and its people. This is what is found in the nature of the daily life of the Andalusian family and its members during the rule of the Sects kings in Andalusia. We must get to know those families that formed the foundation of Andalusian society at that time with all its sects.

In light of the ambiguity surrounding the conditions and circumstances of the Andalusian family due to the lack of information and narratives documented for it, whether in written books or historical documents during the rule of the Sects Kings, and at a time when the researcher and those interested in this matter cannot obtain accurate and complete information from those sources that documented the life of the Andalusian family, its circumstances, and the basics of its living in a brief manner, we had to work harder and search deeply and with focus in other sources that dealt with the Andalusian family at that time. We found our goal and objective in obtaining that incomplete and unknown information through the Andalusian poems that were recorded in the poetry collections by their owners and which were said on their tongues, as we were able through that abundant amount of poems to reach accurate, clear, and abundant information about the nature of the life of the Andalusian family during the rule of the Sects Kings. This research that discusses the details of the daily life and livelihood of the Andalusian family and its members, in addition to learning about customs and traditions, and the things that form the daily lifestyle.

## 2. THE ANDALUSIAN FAMILY

### 2.1. Customs and Lives of People in Poetry Divans 422-484 A.H./ 1031-1091 A.D.

There is no doubt that every family in any society practices its own customs and lifestyle, especially with regard to their lifestyle, their internal situation, the way they deal with each other, the ties that strengthen and reinforce their relationships, the responsibilities assigned to each individual, and their rights and duties towards each one of them. Thus, a single family has its own functions and its own complex structure. Since the family is the cornerstone in the formation and emergence of society, and is considered the basic unit that constitutes it and its values, families in general have known inherited customs and shared lifestyles among themselves and their members, which naturally formed their daily lifestyle and approach.

In Andalusia during the era of the Sects, Andalusian families, like other families that made up Arab and Islamic societies, shared many customs and traditions that shaped their lifestyle and way of living. Although Andalusian poetry during that period does not reflect the life of the Andalusian family, the personality of its members, and their lifestyle in an accurate and prominent manner except rarely, we can, through the few references that were made in the poetic passages about the customs of the Andalusian family and the lives of its members, point out here the most prominent of them, which gives a complete picture as much as possible about those customs and the lifestyle of Andalusian individuals in their families and households. One of the first of these

customs is (cleanliness), which is considered one of the most important customs known in Andalusian society and which Andalusian families and all their members practice as a way of life that they have adopted and inherited from generation to generation. They are, therefore, the most careful of God Almighty's creation regarding the cleanliness of what they wear and what they spread, and other things related to the cleanliness of their bodies, clothes, and appearance. Their intense concern for cleanliness was such that a person among them would only have his daily sustenance, which he would fold up while fasting, and buy soap to wash his clothes with, and he would not appear in it for an hour in a miserable state in which he would appear ugly, and the eye would be repelled by it. Whoever abandons this habit is considered to be disobeying them, and deviant in their view [1].

In this way, cleanliness, the habit of purification and elegance, and keeping the house clean and fragrant in the purest form became a prominent feature of the Andalusian family and all its members. However, this concern for cleanliness on their part explains to us this great care in establishing public and private baths that reveal to us a bright aspect of Andalusian social life [2]. The truth is that wherever there were Islamic population centers in Andalusia during the era of the Sects and even the eras before it, there was one or more baths. This is what we saw with the Muslims' interest in baths in city planning, and the statistics that reached us about the number of baths established in Andalusian cities from the era of the governors until the era of the Caliphate (95-422 AH / 714-1031 AD) which indicated huge numbers of them, spread in most of its regions and districts. For example, in the city of Cordoba alone there were approximately three hundred baths, and it was said six hundred, or nine hundred [3], while Almeria contained an estimated five hundred baths [4], and Seville was also full of baths that spread in most of its villages, as it had approximately eight thousand villages, most of which were full of baths [5].

This naturally confirms the great care taken to preserve this tradition, which became a distinctive social phenomenon in Andalusia, the effect of which later reached all of Europe [6].

This is why we notice that the interest in building and constructing baths in Andalusia was encouraged by the local authorities according to special standards and criteria that kept pace with the era in which they were established, due to their close connection to people's lives and health. In addition to being a place for purification and cleanliness, they were also a place for them to meet and socialize with friends, as they often chatted and got to know each other there. Among what can be cited in this regard is this poem that Ibn Quzman [7] documented for us, depicting his condition as he cared about his cleanliness and the cleanliness of his body and clothes, and was keen to appear elegant and tidy in his clothes despite his difficult circumstances:

---

For the lover to return charming  
White shirt and clean shoes  
A washed head and a light soul

---

Another indication of the Andalusians' concern for cleanliness and attention to their appearance and clothing is the saying of one of the poets about the people of Xatib:

---

Yes, Shatiba is the place where travelers meet.  
A town whose times are magic

---

For a young man who has traveled a long time  
And wetness poured down his tail [8]

---

In these verses, we find that the poet is pleased with this city for its magnificence and extreme cleanliness, and the cleanliness of its people. Its times are magical, its breeze exudes fragrance and goodness, and its people, due to their great concern for cleanliness, have radiant and white faces.

In fact, the Andalusian family's custom of caring about cleanliness in general, such as cleanliness of the body, clothing, bedding, and home, can only be understood through the poems that were written about the Andalusian baths that poets referred to in their poems in praise and description. Ibn Zaydoun [9] describes to us one of the baths in the palace of King Al-Mu'tamid Ibn Abbad, who allowed him to enter it, saying:

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Your satisfaction with us before purification is purifying  
If there were no baths, they would warm us up.

---

Your closeness is more fragrant than incense  
Overflowing with exploding dew water

---

Ibn Zaydoun documented in these verses of poetry the character of King Al-Mu'tamid Ibn Abbad, the interest of the Andalusian kings in cleanliness and their great concern for it, to the point that they perfumed the baths with musk, incense and ambergris, and were keen to equip them with all the necessary and luxurious equipment, so they were creative in their manufacture and were skilled in their construction and were unique in their equipment [10], due to its importance to them, and it also appears from the last verse of poetry that the habit of bathing was daily for this king.

For all this, we find the repeated mention of baths in the poems of poets, who described them in detail, described their comfort and luxury, and mentioned their details and their beautiful arrangement, as came in the words of the poet Ibn Khafajah [11] while he was intending to go to one of the baths to wash himself:

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 Welcome to the home of fire

 Built for the righteous and the wicked
 

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Here, the poet describes to us the bathhouse that he goes to in order to clean his body and enjoy its facilities with his friends. He also confirms to us that the habit of bathing was deeply rooted in everyone, the best of people and the worst of them, which proves to us the care that the people of Andalusia took during the era of the Sects with regard to their cleanliness and appearance.

Another indication that the Andalusian family was interested in cleanliness in general was the interest in the baths, some of which were crowded, with no room to sit, as in the words of the poet Ibn Hamdis, who described a crowded bath, saying:

---

 And a bad bath and air tents

little water, much crowding

There is no need to sit down to do so

 Nor to sit with it from standing [12]
 

---

Since the people of Andalusia were keen on public cleanliness, whether in homes or streets, they used oil and candles for lighting instead of traditional torches that emit a lot of smoke, leading to the blackening of what is around them, especially in winter. Evidence of this is the statement of the poet Al-As`ad bin Balita (d. 440 AH / 1049 AD) documenting, by describing oil, saying:

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 And oil, no matter how wide its mouth is, is always gushing forth  
 As if it were gold in a sword

 The tongue of fire ran over the water  
 Or a flash of lightning in the dark sky [13]
 

---

Due to the great care Andalusian families took to cleanliness in its various aspects, we find that some poets who encountered at certain times the filth of some neighborhoods and residential complexes, criticized them and criticized their people as well. This state of uncleanness and filth was a reason for satirizing and denouncing them, which is what we find in the poet Abu al-Hasan al-Husri al-Qayrawani (d. 488 AH / 1095 AD) who denounced the city of Valencia because of the abundance of fleas and mosquitoes in it as a result of the abundance of dirt and filth. Thus, he referred by warning the elite of the people from the rulers, and its people who were known for their concern for public cleanliness, especially since Valencia was famous for its cleanliness and moderate air, saying:

---

 Valencia is too small for me  
 Fleas dance in it

 And my ambiguity was removed from me  
 On the singing of mosquitoes [14]
 

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Another Andalusian family custom that distinguished their lives and lifestyle was the use of amulets and charms as a form of care for infants and young children, and their care and protection from all kinds of harmful influences that they believed in, such as envy, the evil eye, and superstition. Many of them were known to place amulets and charms on children after they were weaned, which is what Ibn Zaydoun [15] told us about when he said:

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 The purpose of pampering is to reduce the fruits of youth  
 As long as the naive one is repelled by love

 Intoxicated with the sweetness of bliss  
 His good deeds did not last long in amulets.
 

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An example of this is the saying of the minister and poet Ibn Labun (who was alive in the year 486 AH / 1094 AD):

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 That faithful one whose amulets are tied

 When weaning, according to Ibn Sirin's dream [16]
 

---

It seems that the parents' placing of amulets and charms on their children continued even after childhood, which is clear to us from the poetry recited by the King of Almeria, Al-Mu'tasim Ibn Sumadih, on the death of one of his concubines:

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 When the heart became saddened by its blackness  
 I rode my horse to amuse it

 And broke every seal of its resolve  
 And I said to the sword: Be one of my amulets [17]
 

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Another custom that Andalusian poetry recorded for us was the custom of (phlebotomy) as a type of concern for health and bodily safety and prevention of diseases. It seems that this healthy custom was widespread among everyone, rulers and people, which is what Ibn Zaydoun [18] documented for us in his poem in which he congratulated King Al-Mu'tadid Ibn Abbad (433-461 AH / 1042-1069 AD) on phlebotomy, saying:

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 Congratulations for praising the outcome of phlebotomy.  
 Oh, how strange that a phlebotomy scalpel

 To Allah we owe the most beautiful thanks and praise  
 I received it, it did not turn away from the limit
 

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And who is in charge of bleeding your right hand? How could he not?	The waves of the sea terrify him at most tides.
In the same context, one of the poets of the Sects era said about this custom, likening it to	
I came to you, bringing my heart with me	My blood from my eyes to my arms [19]

Another custom rooted in Andalusian families was the custom of (circumcision), and their custom was to celebrate and hold food feasts. Although some jurists and doctors saw the necessity of the circumcision process after the child had grown up and was able to bear the pain, and the most appropriate time for that was between the ages of seven and ten [20], the people of Andalusia during the era of Sects were accustomed to circumcising their children on the seventh day after birth, to relieve them of future burdens, in addition to the speed of the child's recovery. We find all of this in the poetry of the poet Al-Sumaiser, who criticized their custom, saying:

O you who are blaming and excusing I don't like excuses except	And the ignorant is his critic When his owner grows old [21]
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Among the other customs that Andalusian families practiced were their customs and practices in (death). Among their customs in this and its consequences, whether in burial or preparing the funeral, was spreading the news of the death of the deceased throughout the city and its villages so that strangers would know about it before relatives. Ibn Quzman [22] pointed to this, confirming it after he received news of the death of one of his friends, saying:

Until Rofqa came and said to me, "Hurry up." Your news spread, east and west
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It seems that death was an obsession for the Andalusians, who always remembered it, so they prepared for it and anticipated it. Many customs and traditions were associated with it, which they followed and applied. Some people would write a will and prepare a shroud, and sometimes they would recommend the place where they wanted to be buried. Among the things that came in this meaning is the saying of the poet Ibn Shuhayd [23], who wrote his will to his friend, the jurist Ibn Hazm, when he was afflicted with illness and weakness, and felt that his health was gone, and that his end was approaching. Thus, he said, recommending that he not be forgotten and deprived of the prayers of loved ones and friends and their visits to him in his grave:

Who will inform Ibn Hazm on my behalf? Don't forget to mourn me if you lose me	A hand in my troubles and distress And remember my days and the virtue of my creation
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And Ibn Zaydoun said [24]:

We have a lesson in others, but we When death becomes the palace of every long-lived person	We are deceived by the desires of wishes, so we are deceived Whether life is long or short
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And Ibn Khafajah [25] also said in the same matter:

The drink of wishes, if you only knew, is a mirage The soul of a human being is nothing but a prey	And the reproach of the nights, if you understood the reproach A dove's eagle hovers over it.
---	---

And Ibn Quzman said, recommending the place of his burial and what follows from that:

And if I die, my approach to burial will be I sleep in the vineyard between the eyelids [26]
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Among their customs on the same subject is that on the day of a person's death, the people of the neighborhood rush to help the family of the deceased and stand by them financially and morally, which is what Ibn Quzman [27] indicated, confirming by saying:

He is excused, so he is excused and more .Everyone seeks refuge in God in times of adversity
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Despite the terror and severity of death, and the pain and cruelty of separation, the custom of patience in the face of trials was present and common among the people, as those afflicted were patient in their affliction in those situations, and complied with the judgment and destiny of God Almighty, content with the soul that befell them of trial. This is what Ibn Zaydoun [28] tells us, recommending good patience in the face of trials and tribulations, with which the reward from God Almighty is doubled, as he said:

It is time, so be patient for the one who brought time into being.	It is the characteristic of the righteous to be patient in such situations.
You will be patient with the patience of despair or the patience of reward	Do not burden the face that has a burden.

And in the same meaning, Ibn Hamdis said [29]

So be patient, for the reward is only for the patient	Throughout time, time has never been without trouble
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Another custom known to Andalusian families and their members is the custom of carrying the coffin on the shoulders and walking with it to the cemetery to bury it. This task is carried out by family, friends and even strangers. In this regard, the poet Ibn Shuhayd [30] said, mourning his friend, Judge Abu Hatim Ibn Dhakwan:

And when he refused to do anything but endure the journey	We gave him the necks of the noble as mounts
The most beautiful coffin is carried around him.	They went far away to the afflicted, bringing them closer

And Ibn Hamdis said [31] in his elegy for his aunt:

I wish I had seen your coffin when it walked	Around him: Neither my family nor my friends are barefoot.
--	--

Andalusian families also used to mourn the dead, tear their clothes, scratch their cheeks, and slap themselves. These manifestations were widely prevalent among various classes of Andalusian society, despite their being forbidden by Islamic law [32]. King Al-Mu'tamid Ibn Abbad referred to this in his poem in which he wept for his two sons, the princes Al-Ma'mun (d. 483 AH / 1090 AD) and Al-Radi (d. 484 AH / 1091 AD) when they were killed by the Almoravids (447-542 AH / 1056-1147 AD). He said, describing and recalling their mother and sisters in both tragedies:

They say patience, but there is no way to patience. We see their flowers in a funeral every night	I will cry and cry for the rest of my life They eagerly scratch the face of the full moon in the middle [33]
--	---

And so came the saying of the poet Ibn Khafajah [34], confirming the prevalence of the custom of tearing clothes among many Andalusian families and households:

How many tearings from her pockets with joy	She tore her clothes off after him, grieving him.
---	---

In the same context, the poet Ibn Abd al-Samad said in a poem in which he mourned King al-Mu'tamid ibn Abbad, emphasizing the custom of tearing clothes when a death calamity occurs, saying:

Rend your garments and renew your sorrows.	Continue your longing, O sons of Abbad [35]
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Another custom that is common among the Andalusians and their families is their gathering around the grave after burying the deceased, crying over him, wailing, mourning and screaming. They also used to rub their faces in the dirt of the grave and spit on it in remorse and regret. What can be mentioned in this regard is the saying of the poet Ibn Hamdis [36] in mourning for his aunt, as he explicitly referred to that custom that was widespread among the Andalusians at that time:

So I spread my cheeks over your grave in mercy	My eyes cover her with dust, with their eyelashes
--	---

Among their customs on the same subject is the custom of mourning, which used to take place after forty days had passed since the death, when the family, relatives, loved ones and friends would attend, renewing their visit to the deceased in his grave and crying over him, in addition to praising him and talking about his deeds and virtues, to immortalize him and his memory. Among what was said about it is the saying of the poet Ibn Shuhayd [37], asking that his eulogy not be forgotten:

Don't forget to mourn me if you lose me	And remember my days and the virtue of my creation
---	--

The poet Ibn Abd al-Samad said when he attended the funeral of King al-Mu'tamid Ibn Abbad by the people of Agmat after performing the Eid prayer in the year 488 AH / 1095 AD. He stood at his grave and recited:

King of kings, do you hear me and I respond	Or have I accustomed you to listening?
---	--

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I come to you in this land, submissive

I took your grave as a place of chanting [38]

---

There is another custom that Andalusian families had that was unique to them from the rest of the Islamic countries, which is that they used to wear white clothes in mourning and grief instead of black clothes, unlike the people of the East who used to wear black. What can be mentioned in this regard is the saying of the poet Abu al-Hasan al-Husri, who referred to this custom, saying:

---

If whiteness is the garment of sadness

Didn't you see me wearing the whiteness of my gray hair?

In Andalusia, that is correct.

For I am grieved for the youth [39]

---

It was also referred to by the poet Ibn Shatir al-Saraqusti (who was alive in 488 AH / 1095 AD) [40] who said, wondering:

---

I didn't know for what reason

Thus, it became clear to me that the one who saw was right.

whiteness has become the clothing of every afflicted person

Wearing white on the intentions of the beloved [41]

---

And so did the poet Abu Bakr Ibn Al-Qabtarna, who said in mourning for his wife:

---

My heart is in conflict with you out of grief

So it turned black with grief and white with sadness [42]

---

In the same context, one of the poets of the Sect era, who was a contemporary of the poet Abu al-Hasan al-Husri [43], expressed the same idea, which is the custom of the Andalusians wearing white in mourning for their dead, even though the people of the East wear black. He said:

---

Oh people of Andalusia, have you become aware?

You wore white in your funerals

With your kindness to something amazing

And you came from it in a strange guise [44]

---

Another thing that existed among some Andalusian families and that they believed in and practiced at specific times was the phenomenon of (predicting the unseen). This phenomenon is old and has spread its roots deep into history. It was a common and widespread human practice in different places and times, as most previous nations knew it [45], so it was learned and practiced on a wide scale, whether through astrology in its various forms and methods, or through intuition and conscious reading of events. Over time, these actions became a familiar belief that formed part of the culture of peoples [46].

The phenomenon of predicting the unseen has many important and dangerous motives, foremost of which is escaping from painful reality in many cases, in search of new things that work to alleviate its stressful effects, and give people happiness and reassurance, and restore their confidence in themselves and their own abilities, and strengthen their will, and strengthen their resolve [47]. In addition, the struggle for power and political competition made astrology a popular market at that time, so interest in astrologers increased, and their predictions were listened to until they became the deciding factor in many situations. What indicates the existence of this phenomenon and its spread among some Andalusian families and their members is the saying of one of the poets, criticizing it, reminding them that only God Almighty knows the unseen and the future:

---

What God has decreed is the most victorious

God has fulfilled the hope of mankind

He called God to witness against himself

Not what the calculator calculates

And no hope is disappointed with him

That he repents from your ignorance [48]

---

It is worth noting that the phenomenon of prediction spread more among the ruling circles, especially kings, princes and senior state officials, especially in the times preceding the entry into battles, and revealing the danger that threatens the authority, in order to prepare for it, and mitigate its potential effects, as happened with King Al-Mu'tamid Ibn Abbad, as he often sought the help of his famous astrologer Abu Bakr Al-Khawlani, especially when he was engaged in battles and invasions. When the Muslim armies in Andalusia with their ally Prince Yusuf Ibn Tashfin (456-500 AH / 1065-1106 AD) were preparing to fight the Battle of Zallaqa in 479 AH / 1086 AD, King Al-Mu'tamid ordered his astrologer Abu Bakr Ibn Yahya Al-Khawlani to take the horoscope of the time and look at it, and he found it, according to what the principles of that craft require, the most suitable horoscope, and the happiest position for him, so King Al-Mu'tamid [49] wrote to Prince Yusuf with these verses:

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May you be blessed with a conquest

Your sword belongs to Allah

Within it lies the imminent victory

Anger at the religion of the cross

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### 3. CONCLUSIONS

1. The Andalusian family during the era of sects, whether Muslim, Christian or Jewish, was distinguished by

the strength of cohesion and family and familial bonds among all its members.

2. The deep influence and impact among all Andalusian families (Muslim, Christian and Jewish), as some of them influenced each other, and this is a natural thing since they were the sons of one country and one society at that time, so the influence between them was in the lifestyle, customs, traditions and way of life.

3. The study concluded that peaceful coexistence among Andalusian families and all their members, as the majority of them lived in an atmosphere of respect, understanding, friendliness and peace, which ultimately led to peaceful coexistence and religious tolerance among all.

4. Emphasizing that the common destiny and common goals are what greatly linked Andalusian families during that period of Muslim rule in Andalusia. 5. Many of the customs, traditions and daily practices in the life of the Andalusian family and its members are acquired and inherited, and some of them were due to the influence and impact between the classes of society at that time.

6. The study revealed the importance of cleanliness for the Andalusian family, as it was considered one of the most important customs known in Andalusian society and practiced by all Andalusian families and their members, so it became a lifestyle that they adopted and inherited from generation to generation, so they are the most concerned societies with the cleanliness of what they wear and what they bedding.

7. Circumcision and bloodletting are among the most common customs that Christian families acquired from Muslim families, as they saw its importance to them and their health, so they practiced it and adopted it.

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- Ibn Shatir al-Sarqasti: He is Abu Zaid Abd al-Rahman ibn Shatir al-Sarqasti, a great jurist and imam, who had great virtue, abundant literature, and abundant poetry. He was one of the great men of his time and the most prominent in his craft. He had to withdraw for unknown reasons. Ibn Dihya, al-Mutrab, p. 129; al-Imad al-Asbahani, Khuraydat al-Qasr, 2/192.
- Ibn Dihya, al-Mutrab, p. 80; al-Maqri, Nafh al-Tayyib, 4/109.

Ibn Dihya, al-Mutrab, p. 154.

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Al-Maqri, Nafh Al-Tayeb, 3/440.

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