

ATL Skills: Critical Thinking

Historical Source

– Ibn al-Athir

Ibn al-Athir though living in Iraq during the first wave of Mongol attacks, was unable to pen the events occurring eastward in Khwarizm. He writes in one passage:

لقد بقيت عدة سنوات معرضا عن ذكر هذه الحادثة استعظاما لها كارها لذكرها فأنا أقدم إليه رجلا وأواخر
أخرى فمن ذا الذي يسهل عليه أن يكتب نعي الإسلام والمسلمين

إن العالم منذ خلق الله سبحانه وتعالى آدم إلى الآن لم تبتلئ بمثلها لكان صادقا فإن التواريخ لم تتضمن ما
يقاربها ولا ما يدانيها

ولعل الخلق لا يرون مثل هذه الحادثة إلى أن ينقرض العالم وتفتى الدنيا إلا بأجوج ومأجوج؛ وأما الدجال فإنه
يبقي على من اتبعه ويهلك من خالفه أما هؤلاء لم يبقوا على أحد بل قتلوا النساء والأطفال والرجال وشقوا
بطون الحوامل وقتلوا الأجنة في بطون أمهاتهم؛ فإننا لله وإنا إليه راجعون ولا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله العلي
العظيم

“For some years I continued averse from mentioning this event, deeming it so horrible that I shrank from recording it, and ever withdrawing one foot as I advanced the other. To whom, indeed, can it be easy to write the announcement of the death-below of Islam and the Muslims...

If anyone were to say that since God (glory and power be His) created Adam until this present time mankind has not had a comparable affliction, he would be speaking the truth. History books do not contain anything similar or anything that comes close to it...

Perhaps humanity will not see such a calamity, apart from Gog and Magog, until the world comes to an end and this life ceases to be. As for the antichrist, he will spare those who follow him and destroy those who oppose him, but these did not spare anyone. On the contrary, they slew women, men and children. They split open the bellies of pregnant women and killed the foetuses...”

[Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi-'l-Ta'rikh*, pt. 3, The Years 589-629/1193-1231: The Ayyubids after Saladin and the Mongol Menace, trans. by Richards, Aldershot, 2008, p.202.]

Questions:

What is message contained in the source? **Write** three points. (3)

What does the source suggest about Mongol war tactics? **Write** one point and **develop** your response. (2)

