

Al-Ḥumaydī

Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Abī Naṣr Futūḥ al-Azdī
l-Ḥumaydī l-Zāhiri

DATE OF BIRTH Before 1029
PLACE OF BIRTH Al-Bulayda, Majorca
DATE OF DEATH 17 December 1095
PLACE OF DEATH Baghdad

BIOGRAPHY

Al-Ḥumaydī was born on the island of Majorca, and began his education when he was only five years old. Among his teachers were Abū l-Qāsim Aṣḡagh, who taught him in 1035-36, Abū Zayd al-Qayrawānī, who taught him his famous *Risāla* and the *Mukhtaṣar al-Mudawwana* ('The abridgement of the *Mudawwana*'), and Ibn Ḥazm, who became his close friend.

During the period of his education, al-Ḥumaydī travelled widely in al-Andalus, to towns such as Seville, Almería and Valencia. Perhaps the most important event of his life was the pilgrimage to Mecca he made in 1056-57, which he was probably led to undertake as a result of the strong pressure he experienced in Majorca because of his involvement with Zāhirism. In the Middle East, he visited Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad, al-Wāsiṭ and other cities in order to pursue his education.

Al-Ḥumaydī is described as a poet, jurist and Hadith expert, but his reputation rests upon his biographical dictionary, *Jadhwat al-muqtabis* ('A firebrand for the seeker of illumination'). In all, he wrote 27 books, on aspects of Islam, social life and literature (see Rosselló Bordoy, 'Al-Ḥumaydī', pp. 266ff.).

MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Primary

Al-Ḍabbī, *Bughyat al-multamis fī ta'rikh rijāl al-Andalus*, ed. I. al-Abyārī, 2 vols, Cairo, 1989, i, p. 161

Al-Dhababī, *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*, 4 vols, Beirut, 1958, iv, pp. 1218-22

Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Kitāb al-ṣila*, ed. I. al-Abyārī, 2 vols, Cairo, 1989, ii, p. 818

Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, iv, pp. 282-84

Ibn Khayr, *Fahrasa*, ed. I. al-Abyārī, Cairo, 1989, p. 277

Ibn Saʿīd, *Al-mughrib fī ḥulā al-Maghrib*, ed. S. Ḍayf, 2 vols, Cairo, 1964, ii, pp. 467-68

Al-Maqqarī, *Naṣḥ al-ṭīb min ghuṣn al-Andalus al-raṭīb*, ed. I. ʿAbbās, 8 vols, Beirut, 1968, ii, pp. 112-15

Secondary

G. Roselló Bordoy, art. 'Al-Ḥumaydī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh', in *Diccionario de Autores y Obras Andalusíes*, Granada, i, 2002

A. Huici Miranda, art. 'Al-Ḥumaydī', in *El2*

M. Penelas, 'Textos biográficos andalusíes. Sus ediciones', *Estudios Onomástico-Biográficos de al-Andalus* 8 (1997) 53-92

A. López, 'Un nuevo manuscrito de la *Yadwat al-muqtabis* de al-Ḥumaydī', *Estudios Onomástico-Biográficos de al-Andalus* 2 (1988) 299-306

E. Térés, 'Enseñanzas de Ibn Ḥazm en la "*Yadwat al-muqtabis*" de al-Ḥumaydī', *Al-Andalus* 29 (1964) 147-78

M. Asín Palacios, *Abenḥázam de Córdoba y su historia crítica de las ideas religiosas*, 5 vols, Madrid, 1927-32, i, pp. 291-93

WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Jadhwat al-muqtabis fī ta'rikh 'ulamā' al-Andalus,
 'A firebrand for the seeker of illumination
 about the history of the scholars of al-Andalus';
Jadhwat al-muqtabis, 'A firebrand for the seeker
 of illumination'

DATE After 1056-57

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

Jadhwat al-muqtabis is a biographical dictionary of rulers, scholars and poets of al-Andalus. It includes an historical introduction to al-Andalus from the Muslim conquest up to 1145-46.

According to the accounts of its composition, al-Ḥumaydī wrote it from memory alone. He himself says in the introduction that he wrote at the request of some of his Baghdad friends to report about scholars and rulers of al-Andalus. The work can be divided into two main sections, the first dedicated to the Muslim conquest of al-Andalus and including the Umayyad emirate, and the second devoted

to biographies, which can be further divided into nine smaller sections containing a total of 987 biographies.

Apart from the terminology used for Christians (for instance *al-Rūm* in biographies 365, 499, 534, 596, 603, 615, 688, 697, 510, 534 and 688), the most important information regarding the relationship between Muslims and Christians is found in the accounts of al-Ḥumaydī's journey through the Middle East. The author describes his experience of attending debating sessions (*majālis*) between followers of different creeds and religions, among them Muslims (Sunnīs and Zāhirīs), Christians and others, at which religious representatives debated on a basis of equality.

SIGNIFICANCE

The term al-Ḥumaydī commonly uses in the *Jadhwa* for Christians from outside the area of Muslim rule is not *Naṣārā* but *Rūm* (see nos 365, 499, 510, 534, 596, 603, 615, 688, 697). It clearly means 'Christians' rather than 'Byzantines', and he employs it both for enemies with whom Muslims clash in battle and also more widely, for example in references to kings of the Christians.

Al-Ḥumaydī is startled by the debating sessions (*majālis*) he attended during his journey, because he finds people of different faiths all participating on an equal footing (see Griffith, *Church in the shadow of the mosque*, pp. 63-64, in which al-Ḥumaydī relates the experience of the 10th century visitor Abū 'Umar Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṣa'dī).

MANUSCRIPTS

MS Oxford, Bodleian Library – 464 (undated)

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Jadhwat al-muqtabis fī ta'rīkh 'ulamā' al-Andalus, ed. M.B. 'Awwād, Tunis, 2008

Jadhwat al-muqtabis fī ta'rīkh 'ulamā' al-Andalus, ed. 'A. al-Suwayfi Rūḥiyya, Beirut, 1997

Jadhwat al-muqtabis fī ta'rīkh 'ulamā' al-Andalus, ed. I. al-Abyārī, 2 vols, Cairo, 1966

Jadhwat al-muqtabis fī ta'rīkh dhikr wulāt al-Andalus, ed. M. ibn Tāwīt al-Ṭanjī, Cairo, 1952

STUDIES

S. Griffith, *The church in the shadow of the mosque. Christians and Muslims in the world of Islam*, Princeton NJ, 2008

- J.J. Hernández, 'Ibn 'Abd al-Barr en la *Ŷadwa* de al-Ḥumaydī', *Estudios Onomástico-Biográficos de al-Andalus* 6 (1994) 217-47
- Penelas, 'Textos biográficos andalusíes. Sus ediciones'
- López, 'Un nuevo manuscrito de la *Ŷadwat al-muqtabis*'
- Térés, 'Enseñanzas de Ibn Ḥazm en la "*Ŷadwat al-muqtabis*" de al-Ḥumaydī'

Rachid El Hour