

Abū Bakr ibn al-‘Arabī

Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn
Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Ma‘āfirī

DATE OF BIRTH 31 March 1076
PLACE OF BIRTH Seville
DATE OF DEATH 1147-48; 1148-49; 22 July 1148
PLACE OF DEATH Magīla or Ra’s al-Mā’, Morocco

BIOGRAPHY

Abū Bakr ibn al-‘Arabī was the son of Abū Muḥammad ibn al-‘Arabī, a courtier in Seville of the Banū ‘Abbād, rulers of one of the most important of the taifa kingdoms. When he was 17, with the Almoravids threatening to overthrow the Banū ‘Abbād, he left with his father on a journey (*riḥla*) to the Middle East. He remained there for some time, and the experience created a lasting impression. He came into contact with such luminaries as al-Ghazālī (q.v.) and al-Ṭurṭūshī (q.v.) (see M. Ya‘alā, *Tres textos*).

Upon his return to al-Andalus, Ibn al-‘Arabī served as *qāḍī* of Seville for a short time under the Almoravids. This incurred the anger of the people, who were against the new rulers. They attacked his house and almost killed him.

In his later years, Ibn al-‘Arabī was part of the delegation that travelled to Marrakesh to show loyalty to the Almohad Caliph ‘Abd al-Mu‘min ibn ‘Alī. The members of this delegation were jailed for almost a year. He died on his way home, probably on 22 July 1148.

Abū Bakr is known as the author of about 120 books (see the lists in A‘rāb, *Ma‘a l-qāḍī*, and Lucini, ‘Ibn al-‘Arabī’). Their subjects cover a huge range of current social, political and intellectual concerns in Islam, both western and eastern. They include Islamic law, Hadith sciences, Qur’an, Arabic grammar, philology, history, philosophy, *kalām* and many other matters.

MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Primary

Al-Bunnāhī, *Al-marqaba l-‘ulyā*, ed. E. Lévi-Provençal, Cairo, 1948, pp. 105-6

- Al-Ḍabbī, *Bughyat al-multamis fī ta’riḫ rijāl al-Andalus*, ed. I. al-Abyārī, Cairo, 1989, pp. 125-31
- Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a’lām al-nubahā’*, 23 vols, Cairo, 1958, xx, pp. 197-204
- Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*, 4 vols, Beirut, 1958, iv, pp. 1294-98
- Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Kitāb al-ṣila fī tāriḫ a’immat al-Andalus wa-‘ulamā’ihim wa-muhaddithihim wa-fuqahā’ihim wa-udabā’ihim*, ed. ‘I. ‘Aṭṭār al-Ḥusaynī, 2 vols, Cairo, 1955, ii, p. 558
- Ibn Farḥūn, *Al-dībāj al-mudhhab fī ma’rifat a’yān ‘ulamā’ al-madhhab*, 2 vols, Cairo, 1972, ii, pp. 252-56
- Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt fī akhbār man dhahab*, 4 vols, Beirut, s.d., iv, pp. 141-42
- Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān*, iv, pp. 296-97
- Ibn Khāqān, *Maṭmaḥ al-anfus fī masraḥ al-ta’annus fī mulaḥ ahl al-Andalus*, ed. M. ‘Alī Shawābkiya, Cairo, 1983, pp. 297-98
- Ibn al-Qāḍī, *Jadhwat al-iqtibās fī dhikr man ḥalla bi-madīnat Fās*, 2 vols, Rabat, 1973-74, i, pp. 202-62
- Ibn Sa’īd, *Al-mughrib fī ḥulā al-Maghrib*, ed. S. Ḍayf, 2 vols, Cairo, 1953-55, i, pp. 249-50
- Ibn Sa’īd, *Rāyāt al-mubarrazīn wa-ghāyat al-mumayyazīn*, ed. M. Ridwān, Damascus, 1987, pp. 60-61
- Qāḍī ‘Iyād, *Al-ghunya*, ed. M. Jarrār, Beirut, 1982, pp. 66-72
- Al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭib min guṣn al-Andalus al-raṭīb*, ed. I. ‘Abbās, 8 vols, Beirut, 1968, ii, pp. 25-36
- Al-Maqqarī, *Azhār al-riyād fī akhbār ‘Iyād*, 5 vols, Rabat, 1978-80, iii, pp. 62-65, 86-95

Secondary

- R. El Hour, *La administración judicial almorávide en al-Andalus. Élités, negociaciones y enfrentamientos*, Helsinki, 2006
- M. Lucini, art., ‘Ibn al-‘Arabī, Abū Bakr’, in *Enciclopedia de al-Andalus*
- M. Ya’lā, *Tres textos árabes sobre beréberes en el occidente islámico*, Madrid, 1996
- M.I. Mashnī, *Ibn al-‘Arabī al-mālīkī al-Ishbilī wa-tafsīruhu Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, Beirut, 1991
- V. Lagardère, *Le vendredi de Zallāqa. 23 Octobre 1086*, Paris, 1989
- ‘I. Dandash, *Dawr al-murābiṭīn fī nashr al-Islām fī gharb Ifrīqiya 435-515/1038-1121. Ma’a nashr wa-taḥqīq rasā’il Abī Bakr ibn al-‘Arabī*, Beirut, 1988
- S. A’rāb, *Ma’a l-qāḍī Abī Bakr ibn al-‘Arabī wa-kitābihi Tartīb al-riḥla li-targhib al-milla*, Beirut, 1987
- V. Lagardère, ‘La haute judicature à l’époque almoravide en al-Andalus’, *Al-Qanṭara* 7 (1986) 135-228
- V. Lagardère, ‘Abū Bakr b. al-‘Arabī, gran cadi de Seville’, *Revue de l’Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 40 (1985) 91-102

- ‘I. Dandash, ‘Dirāsa ḥawla rasā’il Abī Bakr b. al-‘Arabī’, *Al-Manāhil* 9 (1977) 149-91
- M. Viguera, ‘Las cartas al-Gazālī y al-Ṭurtūšī al soberano almorávide Yūsuf b. Tāšufīn’, *Al-Andalus* 42 (1977) 341-74
- ‘A. al-Ṭālibī, *Ārā’ Abī Bakr ibn al-‘Arabī al-kalāmiyya*, Algiers, 1974 (vol. 2 of *Al-‘awāšim min al-qawāšim*)
- I. ‘Abbās, ‘Riḥlat ibn al-‘Arabī ilā l-Mashriq’, *Al-Abḥāth* 21 (1968) 59-91
- I. ‘Abbās, ‘Al-jānīb al-siyāsī min riḥlat Ibn al-‘Arabī ilā l-Mashriq’, *Al-Abḥāth* 16 (1963) 217-36

WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Al-‘awāšim min al-qawāšim, ‘Protections from catastrophes’

DATE 1144

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

This work is concerned with *kalām*, and contains often very aggressive criticisms of those with whom Ibn al-‘Arabī disagrees. He makes clear his absolute disagreement with the philosophers, emphasizing that rational thought must be in harmony with revelation, because through the Qur’an God has solved every problem and every doubt.

A detail of the book concerns a reminiscence of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s time in Jerusalem, where he encountered many debating circles. In one he remembers seeing Jewish and Christian leaders (*min aḥbār al-Yahūd wa-l-Naṣārā*) participating on equal terms with leaders of other faiths, as well as Muslims (ed. al-Khaṭīb, p. 61). If this leaves him uneasy, his recollection (pp. 94-95) that in early Abbasid times Christians and others were relied on to translate works into Arabic for Muslims makes him indignant, because in his view these translators mixed medical knowledge with their atheistic beliefs, in disagreement with the *sharī‘a*. In a similar way, he argues (p. 102) that the translators of the medical works of Galen inserted into the original text approval of eating pork, which he thinks is unsuitable for human consumption.

SIGNIFICANCE

These and other comments in the work show Ibn al-‘Arabī’s uncompromising dislike of Christians (as well as Jews and others), and his

readiness to accuse them of all kinds of malice in their distortion of the truth. He clearly considers that Muslims should not mix with Christians and followers of other faiths, and is disdainful of those who have in the past.

MANUSCRIPTS

- MS Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya – ‘Aqā’id Taymūr 621 (1843)
- MS Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya – 4 tawḥīd *sh* (1872)
- MS Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya – a.n. 22031 (date unknown)
- MS Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya – 42654 (date unknown)
- MS Tunis, Jāmi‘ al-Zaytūna – 14565 (date unknown)
- MS Tunis, Jāmi‘ al-Zaytūna – 168033 (date unknown)

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

- Ed. M. al-D. al-Khaṭīb, M.G. al-Istanbūli and M.J. Gazīb, Beirut, 2003 (from MS Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya – 42654)
- Ed. M.J. al-Ghāzī and M. Istānbūli, Cairo, 1984
- Ed. ‘A.‘A. Ṭālibī, Algiers, 1974
- Ed. M. al-D. al-Khaṭīb, Cairo, 1952 (frequently reprinted and republished)
- Ed. ‘A.‘A. al-Ḥ. ibn Bādīs (ed.), 2 vols, Constantine, 1927-28 (from the poor MS Tunis, Jāmi‘ al-Zaytūna)

STUDIES

- ‘A. Ṭālibī, *Ārā’ Abī Bakr ibn al-‘Arabī al-kalāmiyya*, vol. 2

Rachid El Hour