

Al-Khazrajī

Abū Ja'far Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Ṣamad ibn Abī 'Ubayda
(‘Abīda) al-Khazrajī al-Ṣā'idī al-Anṣārī al-Qurṭubī

DATE OF BIRTH 1125-26
PLACE OF BIRTH Possibly Cordova
DATE OF DEATH 1187
PLACE OF DEATH Fes

BIOGRAPHY

As his *nisba* al-Qurṭubī indicates, al-Khazrajī appears to have been born in Cordova. He died in Fes, after living in Granada and Bijāya. He received a complete education in the Islamic sciences, especially Prophetic traditions, and he studied with the most learned scholars of his day. In his turn, he taught many students, who transmitted traditions from him.

Among the scant details we have about al-Khazrajī, al-Marrākushī says that he went blind, and that he was taken prisoner in Toledo in the year 1145-46, during the struggle for Cordova between the Almoravid governor Ibn Ghāniya and Abū Ja'far ibn Ḥamdīn.

MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Primary

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Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila li-Kitāb al-Ṣila*, ed. F. Codera, Madrid, 1887-89, no. 223

Ibn 'Abd al-Malik al-Marrākushī, *Al-dhayl wa-l-takmila li-kitābay l-Mawṣūl wa-l-Ṣila*, ed. Muḥammad Bencherifa, 2 vols, Beirut, 1971, i/1, pp. 239-41

Ibn Farḥūn, *Kitāb al-dībāj al-mudhhab fī ma'rifat a'yān 'ulamā' al-madhhab*, 2 vols, Cairo, 1976, i, pp. 215-16

Al-Tunbuktī, *Kitāb nayl al-ibtihāj bi-tatrīz al-Dībāj*, Beirut, s.d., p. 59

F. Pons Boigues, *Ensayo bio-bibliográfico sobre los historiadores y geógrafos arábigo-españoles*, Madrid, 1898, pp. 176-77

Secondary —

WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Maqāmi‘ al-ṣulbān wa-marāti‘ (rawāti‘) riyāḍ (rawḍat) ahl al-īmān, ‘Mallets for crosses and provender in the meadows of the faithful’,
‘Mallets for crosses’

DATE Mid-1140s

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

Al-Khazrajī’s *Maqāmi‘ al-ṣulbān* was written when the author was around 20 years old (though al-Sharfi thinks that perhaps it was written by one of his pupils).

The text, which belongs to the broad genre of polemics (*radd*), was written by al-Khazrajī during his two years of captivity in Toledo in 1145-46/1147-48. The book comprises an attack on Islam by a Visigothic priest of Toledo (*qissis min al-Qūt*) and the answer from al-Khazrajī after he had left Toledo and was heading back towards Islamic territory.

The Christian attack contains a defense of Christian teachings, life, morals and scriptures, and a series of accounts of miracles among the Christians, followed by an attack on the Islamic version of paradise and against the spread of Islam by force, ending with a call for the conversion of Muslims to Christianity.

Al-Khazrajī’s reply includes a refutation of the Christian beliefs in the divinity of Jesus, his Incarnation, crucifixion and redemption, and the Trinity. This is followed by a comparison between Islamic law, Jewish law and the law of the Gospel, together with a defense of the inimitability of the Qur’an and the mission of Muḥammad, which he argues is supported by predictions in the Bible. He shows that Jewish and Christian scriptures have been corrupted, and argues against the Christian’s criticisms of jihad, polygamy and the abrogation of the Bible, concluding with his own criticisms about the false miracles claimed by the Christians.

SIGNIFICANCE

Al-Khazrajī’s work is important not only because of its refutations of Christian doctrines and practices, but also because of the Christian’s letter it preserves. This letter attests to Mozarabic attitudes towards Islam.

MANUSCRIPTS

- MS Tunis, Al-Maktaba al-Waṭaniyya – 14472 (16th century)
 MS Istanbul, Maktabat As‘ad Effendi – 6/4 (18th century)
 MS Istanbul, Topkapi Sarayi – R 506/3 (possibly 18th century)
 MS Istanbul, Aḥmet III – 1863 (19th century)
 MS Istanbul, Aya Sofiya – 2367 (19th century)
 MS Tunis, Al-Maktaba al-Waṭaniyya – 8983 (19th century)
 MS Tunis, Al-Maktaba al-Waṭaniyya – 13659 (19th century)
 MS Tunis, Al-Maktaba al-Waṭaniyya – 18545 (19th century)
 MS Tunis – private copy belonging to Muḥammad al-Shādilī
 (19th century)

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

- Muḥammad Shāma, *Bayn al-Islām wa-l-Masiḥiyya: Kitāb Abī ‘Ubayda al-Khazrajī*, Cairo, 1979 (faulty edition)
Maqāmi‘ al-ṣulbān, ed. ‘A.-M. al-Sharfī, Tunis, 1975
 F. de la Granja, ‘Milagros españoles en una obra polémica musulmana (el “Kitāb maqāmi‘ al-Ṣulbān” del Jazra‘ī)’, *Al-Andalus* 33 (1968) 311-65, pp. 327-59 (Spanish trans. of five fragments)

STUDIES

- O.R. Constable (ed.), *Medieval Iberia. Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish sources*, Philadelphia PA, 1997, pp. 143-47
 T.E. Burman, *Religious polemic and the intellectual history of the Mozarabs, c. 1050-1200*, Leiden, 1994, pp. 36, 63-64, 67, 70, 83, 253 n. 4, 321 n. 2, 347 n. 7
 S.K. Samir, ‘Maqāmi‘ al-Ṣulbān li-Aḥmad Ibn ‘Abd aṣ-Ṣamad al-Ḥazrajī (519/1125-582/1186), éd. critique par ‘Abd al-Mağīd ash-Sharfī, Tunis, 1975’, *Islamochristiana* 6 (1980) 242-54 (review)
 M. de Epalza, ‘Notes pour une histoire des polémiques anti-chrétiennes dans l’Occident musulman’, *Arabica* 18 (1971) 99-106, p. 104
 de la Granja, ‘Milagros españoles’
 Abdelmagid Turki, ‘La culture arabo-musulmane et la Péninsule Ibérique’, *Revue Tunisienne de Sciences Sociales* 2 (1965) 67-88, pp. 81-82 and n. 8

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