

Al-Yahṣubī

Abū Marwān ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Masarra ibn Khalaf
ibn al-Faraj (or ibn Faraj ibn Khalaf) al-Yahṣubī
al-Shantamarī

DATE OF BIRTH 1077-78
PLACE OF BIRTH Possibly in Santa María del Algarve
(Portugal)
DATE OF DEATH 28 October 1157
PLACE OF DEATH Cordova

BIOGRAPHY

According to Ibn al-Zubayr, al-Yahṣubī was a descendant of Abū l-Ṣabāḥ, an Arab emir and one of the first conquerors of al-Andalus. Although the sources do not indicate with certainty whether Santa María del Algarve was his birthplace, they confirm that he lived in Cordova.

Al-Yahṣubī had a thorough education in Hadith and Islamic law, as is confirmed by his works and the books he transmitted. These are all recorded in Ibn Khayr’s *Fahrasa*.

The sources give conflicting versions of the positions held by al-Yahṣubī. Whether or not he was a leading *qāḍī* in Cordova (see El Hour, *La administration judiciaire*, p. 40), he was certainly a very important jurist-consult in the city. He probably died in October 1157, though Ibn al-‘Imād gives the month as September, and al-Ḍabbī places his death in the year 1158-59.

MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Primary

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Ibn al-Abbār, *Al-mu‘jam fī aṣḥāb al-qāḍī l-imām Abī ‘Alī al-Ṣadafī*, ed. F. Codera, Madrid, 1885

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- Al-Wansharīsī, *Al-mi'yār al-mu'rib wa-l-jāmi' al-mughrib 'an fatāwā Ifriqiyya wa-l-Andalus wa-l-Maghrib*, ed. M. Ḥajjī et al., 13 vols, Rabat, 1983, iii, p. 388

Secondary

- R. El Hour, *La administración judicial almorávide en al-Andalus. Élités, negociaciones y enfrentamientos*, Helsinki, 2006
- J.M. Vizcaino, art. 'Ibn Masarra al-Yaḥṣubī', in *Enciclopedia de la Cultura Andalusí*
- F. Meier, 'Ṭāhir aṣ-Ṣadafī vergessene Schrift über westliche heilige des 6./12. Jahrhunderts', *Der Islam* 61 (1984) 14-90
- F. Pons Boigues, *Ensayo bio-biográfico sobre los historiadores y geógrafos españoles*, Madrid, 1898, p. 224

WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Al-radd 'alā al-Naṣārā, 'Refutation of the Christians'

DATE Before about 1120

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

The work has not survived. Meier, 'Ṭāhir aṣ-Ṣadafī vergessene Schrift', offers some information about the circumstances in which it was written, though without mentioning sources. It appears that, in a battle against the Christian forces of the north, al-Yaḥṣubī fell from his horse and was captured, but he was then saved by fellow Muslims through God's miraculous intervention. When his Jewish personal secretary

asked him how he came to be saved, he responded with this work in the form of a letter.

Given these facts, it is likely that the letter would have been written between about 1110 and 1120 at the latest, for if al-Yaḥṣubī was born before 1080, he would not have been a fighting man much after his fortieth year. The refutation was well-known throughout the Maghrib and al-Andalus during the al-Yaḥṣubī's own lifetime.

SIGNIFICANCE

The circumstances of writing help to reconstruct some of the contents of this letter. There is no doubt that al-Yaḥṣubī explained how God had saved him from the Christians. This miraculous and divine act would have led him to conclude that Muslims have truth on their side and Christians only falsehood.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

Risālat mīzān al-ṣidq al-mufarriq min ahl al-bāṭil wa-ahl al-ḥaqq, 'The balance of truth which separates the people of wrong from the people of right'; *Qaṣīda dāliyya fī ma'ānī Risālat mīzān al-ṣidq al-mufarriq min ahl al-bāṭil wa-ahl al-ḥaqq*, 'Poem rhyming in d about the meanings of The balance of truth which separates the people of wrong from the people of right'

DATE Between about 1120 and 1157

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

The work is not extant. Its title indicates that it clarified the difference between Muslims, who represent right (*ahl al-ḥaqq*), and Christians, who represent wrong (*ahl al-bāṭil*). Ibn Khayr says that it was an answer to a letter sent by some Christian bishops, in which case it may have dealt with precise points as well as general principles. Its

poetical form may have added to the impressiveness of its arguments that its author no doubt wanted to create.

SIGNIFICANCE

It is difficult to say what this was.

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES —

Rachid El Hour