

twelfth-century authors. Like Ibn Khāqān and Ibn Bassām, Ibn al-Imām travelled extensively throughout al-Andalus collecting his material, and provides vivid accounts of his encounters with the poets whose works he anthologises.

Ibn al-Imām's anthology is lost. A shortened version of the work, preserved in Meknès, Maktabat Ibn Ghāzī, MS 1366, has been edited by Ḥayāt Qāra (*al-Muqtaḍab min Kitāb Simṭ al-jumān wa-siqt al-adhhān*, Casablanca 1423/2002), adding all the quotations found mainly in Ibn Sa'īd's *Mughrib* (at least 35 passages) and al-Maqqarī's (d.1041/1632) *Nafḥ al-ṭīb*. Ibn al-Imām's *Simṭ al-jumān* was praised both for its beautiful prose and for the fine selection of works it contained.

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## Ibn Jubayr

Abū l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad **Ibn Jubayr** al-Kinānī, was born in Játiva (Arab., Shāṭiba), in Valencia, in 540/1145

(or perhaps the previous year), and died in Alexandria in 614/1217. Famous for his poems and, above all, for his travelogue (*riḥla*), he is representative of those Andalusian scholars of his era who were deeply rooted in their Arab identity but rallied whole-heartedly to the Berber Almohad cause.

Ibn Jubayr belonged to an Arab family of the tribe of Kināna, whose ancestor, 'Abd al-Salām Ibn Jubayr al-Kinānī, must have settled in al-Andalus with the army of Balj b. Bishr in 123/741. His father was secretary (*kātib*) of the chancery and *wazīr* in Valencia, at the time of the fall of the Almoravid government in 540/1145, before he retired to Játiva. There, Ibn Jubayr received an education in the traditional religious disciplines and belles-lettres (*adab*) and distinguished himself early for his poetic talent. This enabled him to begin a promising career in the Almohad chancery, first working as secretary to the Almohad governor of Ceuta, Abū Sa'īd 'Uthmān, a son of the caliph 'Abd al-Mu'min (r. 524–58/1130–63), then serving various governors of Granada, of 'Uthmān's family, to whom he dedicated many panegyrics.

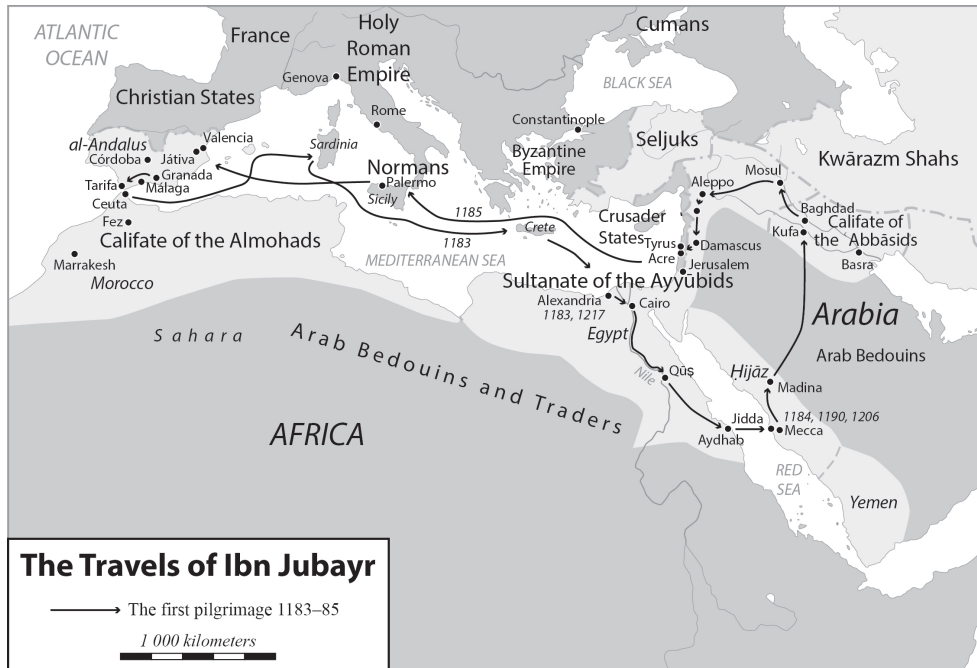
In 578/1182–3, he made a first trip to the East, during which he performed the pilgrimage to Mecca. He was accompanied by a friend, Abū Ja'far Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad al-Qudā'ī, a physician from Onda. He sailed on a Genoese ship, via Tarifa, Ceuta, Sardinia, Sicily, Crete, and Alexandria. From Egypt, he followed the usual route of pilgrims by the Nile, Qūs, and Jidda, and on to Mecca. After he made the pilgrimage in 580/1184, he joined the caravan of Iraqi pilgrims and visited Baghdad, Mosul, Aleppo, Damascus, Acre, and Tyre before embarking for al-Andalus. After a stay in Norman Sicily,

the result of a shipwreck, he completed his journey in 581/1185.

We do not know exactly why Ibn Jubayr undertook this journey. He says that he was driven by the desire to fulfil the duty of pilgrimage. A later tradition, transmitted only by al-Maqqarī (*Nafh*, 2:385–6), reports that he was forced by Abū Saʿīd ʿUthmān, the governor of Granada, to drink seven cups of wine. To expiate his sin, he abandoned the service of the governor, thus turning the journey into the beginning of a new stage in his life, dedicated to the service of God. In any case, this trip was also a journey in search of science (*rihla fi ṭalab al-ʿilm*) from Eastern teachers who are listed in the traditional inventory (*fahrasa*) that was part of his travelogue. However, his accurate description of the situation of the Crusader states in Syria and Norman Sicily, the conditions of the Muslims who lived

there, and the military operations between Christians and Muslims suggests motivations of a more political nature. The purpose of this first trip might have been to gather first-hand information about the state of the Middle East following the defeat of the Fāṭimid caliphate by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (Saladin) in 567/1171.

Back in Granada, he dedicated his life to the teaching of Prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*) and Ṣūfism (*taṣawwuf*). The poems he composed concerning the famous philosopher Ibn Ruṣhd (Averroës, d. 594/1198), however, suggest that, far from being kept from power, he was close to the entourage of the caliph Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb al-Manṣūr (r. 580–95/1184–99) and was involved in the doctrinal struggles that agitated the Almohad caliphate. In 585–7/1189–91, he made a second pilgrimage to give thanks to God for allowing the conquest of Jerusalem (583/1187)



Map 1. The travels of Ibn Jubayr.

by Saladin. On his return, he continued his education in Málaga, Ceuta, and Fez and served as a judge (*ḥakam*) in Granada and Ceuta. In 602/1205–6, following the death of his wife, ‘Ātika Umm al-Majd, daughter of the *wazīr* Abū Ja‘far Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Waqqashī, he began his third pilgrimage. After a long stay in Mecca, he settled in Alexandria, where he taught *ḥadīth* until his death.

Ibn Jubayr is most famous for having written a work that was considered the masterpiece, often quoted by later authors, of a new literary genre, the travelogue (*riḥla*). Originated by the great jurist Abū Bakr b. al-‘Arabī (d. 542/1147–8), the *riḥla* was conceived as a response to the political turmoil (*fitna*) that was then rending the Muslim community (*umma*), following the collapse of the caliphal order and the emergence of new powers, the Berbers in the West and the Turks in the East. Rooted in the revival of Islam proposed by al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), articulating science (*‘ilm*) and action (*‘amal*), with dimensions individual and collective and political and mystical, it aimed to restore the unity of the *umma* by rooting the search for this lost unity in the quest for the “centre of the world.” The centre, obscured rather than lost, was the headquarters of the caliphate, the centre of the universe, which holds the world order. The work of Ibn Jubayr aimed to establish the Almohad caliphate as the foundation of this venture of political and religious restoration, subscribing fully to the dream of universal empire led by the third sovereign of the Mu‘minid dynasty, al-Manṣūr (r. 580–95/1184–99). Abandoning the initial Maghrib-centrism of the movement, this venture was first anchored in a refocusing of the Islamic space around two poles, Mecca and Damascus. While the compulsory nature of *ḥajj* had been the subject

of controversy in the Islamic West, Ibn Jubayr’s travelogue aims to reaffirm the mandatory nature of this religious duty and attract pilgrims with vibrant evocations of the ceremonies of Mecca. From Mecca, the description of the axis of pilgrimage extends to Damascus, which became again the political centre of Islam. Damascus, first capital of the Umayyad dynasty (r. 41–132/661–750), whose heritage was claimed by the Almohads, became the new “Centre of the World,” at the expense of Baghdad, the marginalised ‘Abbāsīd capital of an “old world.” Addressing a vibrant eulogy to the glory of the Almohads and reporting the messianic beliefs of the Egyptians in the Almohad conquest of the East, Ibn Jubayr reveals the intention of the Marrakech caliphs to extend their domination to the central lands of Islam still in the ‘Abbāsīd sphere of influence—excluding the lands east of the Euphrates—and to refocus Islam on the Mediterranean and the Holy Cities of Arabia. In this reconfigured imperial space, the conquests of Saladin, a figure whose virtues are always exalted in the narrative, constitute no obstacle to this vast project. On the contrary, according to contemporary Almohad propaganda, these successes, attributed to the submission of Saladin to the Almohad caliphate, were preparing and announcing the expansion of the Mu‘minid caliphs in the East, beginning with Egypt. This plan of conquest would succeed through control of the maritime sphere. Ibn Jubayr left one of the most accurate accounts of the Mediterranean Sea and its coasts, including not only the conditions that affect sea travel but also the geopolitical situation. The conflict with William II (r. 1166–89), the Norman king of Sicily, whose range of action covered the entire Mediterranean, and the dissidence of the Banū

Ghāniya, who had taken control of the Balearic islands and were implanted in Ifīrqiya, greatly strengthened the strategic importance of the Mediterranean Sea. In addition, the Mediterranean, which extended as far as the Red Sea and the holy places of Islam, appears as the connecting space between the components of the Islamic world and therefore the main support of the reunification of the *umma*. The Almohad fleet, the most powerful of the Islamic world, was conceived as God's instrument against the Christian enemy, and the sea, the triumphal scene of the Almohads. Its domination was therefore to open the end of time, even reviving the dream of the conquest of Constantinople. But Ibn Jubayr did not merely produce a propaganda discourse: he planned a true project of *jihād*. In his description of Sicily, he often points out the fragility of the Normans' domination and their exploitation of the Muslim masses, suggesting that the Muslims would be ready, in the event of any failure of the authorities, to rise in a popular war of liberation. The island therefore appears as the first objective of an itinerary that, passing through Egypt, would end in Damascus, in contrast with the itinerary that the Umayyads had followed in the opposite direction.

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