The Intellectual Developments During the Almohad Dynasty (1130-1269)

†Fadila Grine and ‡Bensaid Benaouda

†Department of Islamic History and Civilization, Academy of Islamic Studies, Universiti Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
‡Department of General Studies, International Islamic University Malaysia, P.O. Box 10, 50728 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Abstract: Much has been written however without specific focus about the acclaimed Mahdi Ibn Tumart (1080-1130), the theological doctrine of Almohads and their tireless efforts to extinct Malikism in the Maghreb. Such a development and Ibn Tumart’s claim of Mahdism caused Almohads’ contributions to be totally or partially obscured while Almohads shows significantly prosperous intellectual life. This research examines the background of the intellectual developments during Almohad Dynasty and their influence on advancing learning and scholarship. This inquiry not only helps highlight the effects of earlier dynasties on Almohads’ intellectual life but also repositions the distinct theological character of Almohads in the process of intellectual and legal development in the Maghreb.

Keywords: Almohads · Ibn Tumart · Maghreb · Malikī · Mahdism

INTRODUCTION

Despite its far geographical distance from the capital of the Islamic Empire, the Muslim West (Maghreb) had shown great deal of political and intellectual resonance with the changes in the East (mashriq). Such a resonance was made possible through the integration of Berbers’ socio-cultural experience and tribal religiosity. Most prominently historical Muslim schools and movements, whether orthodox or heterodox, have made their long voyage to the West to adopt new fertile lands with new cultivators. That was probably because the Muslim West provided a safe haven for persecuted thoughts away from the central power of the caliphate. The new adaptations however, supplied a fresh extension evolving often to a counterbalanced political and intellectual clash with the central authority of Baghdad over religious and political legitimacy and also developed new forms of religious interpretation in search for a locally branded representation of Islam in the Muslim West.

The Almohads Dynasty was established in the Maghreb. Its boundaries extended from Tripoli in the East, Pacific Ocean on the West coast, to contemporary Senegal in the South and had also extended to Muslim Spain. This dynasty was established on Shi’ite foundations similar to the Zaydis or the Fatimite doctrine, as is evident in the poetry of Almohads which is similar to any other Shi’ites. In the year of (1147AC), under the leadership of Abū al-Mu’mín bin ‘Alī, the Almohads took control of the entire Far Maghreb as well as all of North Africa and Spain (Andalus), giving birth to one of the greatest empires on the west coast of the Mediterranean sea since the Roman Empire. It was Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Tumart (485H-524H), called the Mahdi, who established the Dynasty of Almohads.

IBN Tumart’s Reforms: Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad Ibn Tumart (1080-1130) learned under al-Mubarak bin al-Uayyaf. He took the Uṣūl from al-Shī ṭābī’ī [1]. Imām Dhahabī describes Ibn Tumart’s early stages of learning as follow: “Most of what Ibn Tumart advocated included the articles of beliefs (al-‘Ulūm al-‘Ilmīyyāt) according to Imam al-Askhārī. The people of Maghreb despised the discipline of scholastic theology (‘Ilm al-kalām). It is reported that on one occasion, the Governor of Fez called upon all local Malikī jurists for debate with Ibn Tumart. They unfortunately failed [2]. Ibn Tumart noticed the incompetence of the jurists in theology and won the debate. As a result, the Governor, in view of the jurists’
recommendation, banned Ibn Tumart altogether from Fes. Ibn Tumart headed toward Murrakesh where Ibn Tashfin confronted him with another group of Maliki jurists. This time, Ibn Wuhayb the Philosopher [2] realized the intelligence of Ibn Tumart and threat and thus advised the governor to assassinate him. TÊj Din SubkÊ (d. 771 A.H./1369 C.E.) narrates similar account but further argues that the jurists’ failure to confront Ibn Tumart in Murrakesh was because of their incompetency in debate and also because of Ibn Tumart’s treatise on beliefs (‘AqÊida) was in Berber language. According to Ibn Khaldun, Maliki Jurists disliked Ibn Tumart because of his Ash’arite beliefs, his critiques of their stagnant observance of the doctrine of the Salaf and his condemnation of their anthropomorphism (tajÊdar) [3].

According to DhahabÊ, Ibn Tumart taught members of the tribe of MalmÊda, exorted them to enjoin good and forbid evil and revere the Mahdi (The Messiah). As soon as he acquired power however, he immediately proclaimed himself to be the expected Mahdi and traced his lineage back to Ali bin Abi Talib. The MalmÊda pledged allegiance to him. Ibn Tumart provided his disciples with a learning guide entitled ‘A‘az mÊl Yullab” (The Most Cherished Wish) in which he adhered to the opinions of the MuÊtazzilites and the Ash’arites and showed some inclinations to ShiÊism. Ibn Tumart organized his disciples as follows: the first ten recognizing them as Almohads (al-MuwallidÊn) including those who accepted his claim, the second group of fifty called the believers (al-MuÊminÊn) who were the assurance that none equals them in faith because of their firm belief, who shall kill the DajÊl and who will lead Jesus in prayer [1]. Ibn Tumart’s early days in MalmÊda began with public allegiance and fight against anthropomorphism. Following MalmÊda’s allegiance, Ibn Tumart was given the title “Mahdi”. Ibn Tumart declared fight on all those who rejected his authority from MalmÊda themselves [3].

Ibn Tumart is described as righteous and pious and only revealed his intention in Mahdism (Messianism) upon a growth of support [4]. Ibn Khaldun views Ibn Tumart as man of piety, religion and knowledge. His major problem was nonetheless his inclination to the doctrine of the ImÊmîmîte and his belief in the impeccability of the Imam [3]. SubkÊ argues that Ibn Tumart developed a theological image of Mahdi first and then choose the right time to introduce his personal qualities as a match for the prototype of Mahdi. Ibn Tumart also claimed infallibility [4]. According to Ibn Khaldun’s narrative, Ibn Tumart grew up in love with Islamic learning for which he traveled to the East in (500 A.H./1106 C.E.) Ibn Tumart set his journey in Cordova and then to Alexandria. He performed pilgrimage and traveled to Iraq where he studied under the guidance of famous scholars. It is also reported that Ibn Tumart met AbÊ YaqÊub bin Yüsuf and some other famous Ash’arite scholars and that he learnt from them and adopted their rational methods of argumentation to support the doctrine of early generations (‘a‘aÊ‘id al-salaf). Ibn Tumart is reported to have adopted their method of interpreting allegorical texts in the Quran and Hadith. This was done when scholars in the Maghrib completely rejected religious interpretations (taÊwÊl) because of them being strict adherents to the doctrine of the Salaf in their condemnation of religious interpretation (taÊwÊl) [3]. Many intellectual disciplines greatly flourished during the era of the Almohads as show in the state’s approach to scholarship and the learning. We shall highlight some of those achievements to demonstrate the nature of the period.

The Golden ERA of Almohads: The Almohads excelled in most intellectual areas of learning and literary disciplines and have had noteworthy traits that distinguish them from the rest of other dynasties in the Maghreb. They showed a reverent attitude to Islamic learning and scholarship. Their educational reform however, was significantly affected by their unique interpretation of what “right knowledge” that should lead to human salvation (al-najÊî). It was during the period of the third Almohads’ caliph AbÊ YaÊqÊub bin Yüsuf bin Abdul MuÊmin bin Ali nicknamed Abu Yusuf who upon appointment to the office underwent through examination of rulers, judges, state servants and others; and organized his state in light of the need of time and context. Abu Yusuf was also known for his zeal for scholarship and for his great respect for religious scholars. Al-TurkbûkÊ describes him as being great in learning and scholarship and that his major interest was in the study of the QurÊÊn and al-MuÊ‘tazî. Abu Yusuf is reported to have instructed some religious scholars to compile IadÊîth according to chapters of Islamic law from the major IadÊîth sources. In fact Abu Yusuf himself taught the public the new IadÊîth collections and personally followed up on the memorization of IadÊîth. Abu Yusuf also showed preoccupation with the comfort of students of Islamic learning, particularly those learning the discipline of IadÊîth. It is reported that on one day, in the presence of all Almohads, AbÊ Yüsuf said: “Oh Almohads, you are tribes! He who faces a problem will seek assistance from his respective tribe. Those students have no support except myself. I am then their refuge in all of their
problems. To me come their complaints and to me they do refer." The Dynasty of Almohads, especially during the reign of Abd al-Mu'min (1130-1163) and Abê Ya'qêb (1184-1199) witnessed significant number of learning circles of discussion in the various areas of scholarship; these circles were attended by prominent scholars and men of letters.

According to al-Mu'ah, the Almohads established schools, built learning institutions, invited notable scholars, proposed the writing of books, held debates and competitions and held several scholarly meetings. Murrikishê argues that Almohads pioneered the development of the compulsory education, invented the free learning and developed learning curriculums. Their keen interest in spreading Islamic knowledge was shown through the use of Berber language, hence reviving translation. For example, they have translated many works in philosophy and set for it salaries, gifts, stipends, transportsations, estates and positions. This is quoted by al-Zayyê at the al-Rawla al-Sulaymiyyah of al-Fatî. The Almohads recruited well-known scholars from Andalus, Qayrawân and other Muslim centers to the degree where Fes was described as the collector of the scholarship of Qayrawân and Cordova as mentioned by al-Murrikishê. Murraksh became the capital city of scholarship and was named the Second Baghdad. Other cities also witnessed similar progress including Tangeris. [5] The emigration of Arabs and residents of Andalus to the Maghreb has significantly increased until the Maghreb was characterized by its Arabic character whereby Arabic language became prevalent. [6]

The State and the Learned Men: From the very beginning, Almohads planned their religious reforms within a broad geographical context to include control and sovereignty of the whole Muslim world including the Maghreb. Their start was in Taymilal and their developing of effective religious nucleus that evolved to a military power defending Ibn Tumar’s ideology, perhaps led them to the secret key for their foreseen Islamic kingdom. Inviting religious and intellectual elites to the new Almohads state was broadly adopted and might have been viewed as effective as waging war against armies and states. This is strongly evident in Almohads’ invitation of scholars and learned men in almost every discipline. Their direct attention was on recruiting experts of ilm al-NaDar (knowledge of logic) whom they call students of the city (jalabat al-lâlar). Al-Murrikishê for instance cites the names of some of those scholars like Abê al-Qêsin ‘Abdul Râmân Malqê (509 A.H./1115 C.E.-581 A.H./1183 C.E.), Abu ‘Abdullah Mohammad Malqê (known by Ibn Fakhkhê) (511 A.H./1117 C.E.-590 A.H./1191 C.E.), Abu ‘AbduALLah Mihrâb (505 A.H./1111 C.E.-591 A.H./1192 C.E.), Abu al-Hassan Nadjibatal-iâshê (521 A.H./1127 C.E.-595 A.H./1196 C.E.), Abu Bakr Muhammad bin ‘Abdul Aziz al-iâshê (554 A.H./1159 C.E.-606 A.H./1209 C.E.), Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn ad-djêmân (558 A.H./1162 C.E.-614 A.H./1217 C.E.). [6]

The Almohads followed the tradition of their ancestors in their discussion of religious and intellectual issues. This, as described by many chroniclers, engaged the intellectual elites in the presence of the ruler. Murrikishê himself was attached to the intellectual circle of Amir Abu Zakariyya bin ‘Abdul Mu’min. Those meetings usually started with introducing new visiting scholars, followed by a discussion of religious issues and sometimes provided a forum for disciplinary actions against heretic people. For Murrikishê, those official meetings required certain protocols and in case of failing to abide by these rules, participants may be expelled [6]. Almohads’ students (jalabat al-muwalida) were privileged to attend the ruler’s meeting. In those special intellectual meetings, the ruler would raise religious questions for discussion. Those students used to recite the Qur’an and ad-dêth and also to read Ibn Tumar’s guide in both Berber and Arabic language [2]. Murrikishê describes Abê Ya’qêb (558 A.H./1163 A.C.-579 A.H./1184 A.C.), the caliph as a learned man [2] and a very keen person to collect books from Andalus and Maghrib and who constantly searched for religious scholars especially those with the expertise of ilm al-naDar. He succeeded in gathering around him a significant number of scholars never gathered before him [2].

Those gatherings were usually held in the presence of the Caliph for the sake of discussion, argumentation and debate. Besides scholars and men of letters from the Maghreb, there were also visiting scholars invited personally by the Caliph like Ibn Tufayl the Philosopher and some other scholars. Guests were well received and hosted. Those gatherings involved the discussion of many disciplines. Each circle was dedicated to a particular discipline and often began with problems subject for examination. They were also highly organized even in their sitting protocol. For example, the Caliph’s order requires the Khadjêb (preacher), the Qêbi al-jamê’a (the Judge of the Community), the head of the physicians, prominent scholars and other scholars according to their ranks and positions. All attendees were serious and discipline [2]. One of the most notable meetings of
scholarship was that of Zakariyya Yalîf bin Yusuf bin Abd al-Mu'min which attended by 'Abd al-Wadîd al-Murrîkîshî, the author of al-Mu'jam and the poet Abî Îsâ'îq al-Zuwayyîfî [2].

**Madrasas (Institutions of Learning):** 'Abd al-Mu'min established madrasas in Murrakshî and assigned Ibn Rushd to the task of their organization to. He also set a school for training civil servants (madrasat al-muwadâdDâffûn) [7], the Royal school, the Marine and the school for scouts (madrasat al-Kashîshîwâl) [3]. According to Ibn Fall Allah al-'Umarî (d. 749 AH) in his Masâlik al-Abîlînî, “the most prominent of those schools had contained many shelves of books. There was another school dedicated to Imam Abî al-'Abbâs al-Sabîlî [1].” Almohâds established students’ lodges and hostels and dedicated large endowments for their food, drink and cemeteries. There were also the kadîlîb (primary schools) and learning in mosques. The author of al-'udâl al-Mâshîyâh mentioned the names of Almohâds’ schools and describes the memorization of the Muwalla of Imâm Malik as an obligatory part of their curriculum [7]. Al-Mamnûnî however argues that Almohâds built up three different Madrasas. He supports his conclusion by al-Wazzânî’s description in which he says: “Far from there, there exists another beautiful palace used as a Madrasa for children of the caliph and his family. The Madrasa has wonderful windows with colorful glass and several libraries around the hul. [8]” It appears however that Leo Africanus (al-Wazzânî) might be referring to a certain learning institution serving the royal family offering various learning disciplines. It is not clear however what age groups of students and what was the school’s higher learning level. Sources are silent about this question including Africanus himself.

According to Murrîkîshî’s description of Almohâds’ governor, Abu Yusuf did not provide any special attention to Madrasa. According to him, Abu Yusuf upon return from Ishbîhîyâh, instructed the building of a castle with palaces near the river. Abî Yûsuf was in fact keen in construction and in the restoration of almost all palaces and cities [2]. Assuming the existence of these Madrasas and that they shipped Murrîkîshî, we found none of these in the reign of the Merinids. The second school is located in the capital city of Murrakshî in the Qasabah. There was a third school located in the old town of Murrakshî. This is drawn from Ibn 'Abd al-Barr’s statement in the Tamkhîd in which he indicated that Murtalîf, one of later Almohâds’ rulers, endowed the fourth volume of Kitâb al-Tamkhîd to all interested to read it for Muslims in Madrasat al-Ilm. Muhammad ‘Abdul 'Azîz argues that the school of Almohâds (madrasat al-muwadâdDâffûn) provided its students with administrative education and training so as to meet the administrative needs of the state [9]. The second, according to Ibn Zarî, was the royal school for Almohâds' Princes so as to isolate them from troubles while the third was in Rabat dedicated to navy studies.

Some scholars however, argue that Almohâds never knew the idea of madrasa; this is based on the fact that historical sources do not provide us with proper account on madrasas during their period. It is argues that if such madrasas really existed, they would have survived in following periods. The evidence that none of these buildings existed in later time stand as strong argument that they simply did not exist [9]. Almohâds’ contribution to the Mosque of the Qarawiyîn, however, represents a strong indication of their interest in religious life and learning. Their contribution focused on expansion and decoration as recorded by 'Abd al-Hâfîz al-Tuzi in his study of the Mosque of Qarawiyîn. The opinion that Almohâds have indeed built schools (madrasas) however appears to be more consistent with their religious doctrine for they achieved significant religious and intellectual reforms, alongside their plan to subjugate their rivals through all means including madrasas. Assuming the hypothetic existence of those schools, they probably operated for strict purposes or were set initially differently.

C. Libraries (Khazî’in al-kutub): It was the common practice of rulers to devote attention in the collection of books, sources and manuscripts. This was a royal tradition in the reign of Almohâds. Books represent the backbone of religious learning whether associated with Mosques, palaces or madrasas. Building libraries and bookstores was then the common practice of rulers and princes. Abî Yûsuf Ya’qûb bin-Marsur (579 A.H./1184 A.C.- 595 A.H./1199 A.C) for instance is reported to have established an enormous library. Establishing libraries and bookstores was not restricted to rulers only but was also undertaken by generous people from among the Muslim public such as Abu al-Hasan 'Ali bin Mohammad al-Ghûtîfî described in Jihdalat al-Iqâtîbîs (308) and Shi'at al-Oilah (300) as a lover of books and who collected a large collection of books including the most precious sources. He bequeathed them on people of learning. Libraries represented a principal landmark in Murrîkîshî where Yusuf established fantastic and large libraries [10].

---

258
Traditional and Rational Sciences (Ulûm ‘aqilîyyah Wa-naqîliyyah)

Maliki Doctrine of Law: From the very beginning, Ibn Tumart declared a religious revolution undermining the position of Maliki scholars on allegorical verses and the dogmatic approach of the Maliki doctors of law to legal reasoning. These principals have led Almohads rulers to clearly set their objectives: banishing Maliki legal sources and replacing them with Ibn Tumart’s methodology and the direct and authentic reference to the Quran and the Sunnah. The devastating historical discard of Maliki textbooks was eye-witnessed by Murrakishî who reports this event as follow: “During Ibn Tumart’s time, knowledge of the law (‘ilm al-Fîrî) became extinct and the jurists were scared. Ibn Tumart has even gone to the extreme when he ordered some of books of Maliki jurisprudence to be set on fire. Some of those books included the Mudawannah of Sahînî, Kitâb Ibn Yânus and the Nawàdir of Ibn Abî Zayd, and its abridge, al-Tahdhîb of al-Barîdî and al-Wâlîâta of Ibn âbîh. Murrâkishî argues that loads of Maliki books were put to fire. People were cautioned against indulging in ‘Ihm al-Ray’ (reasoning) and punishment was set against its people [2].

Abu Ya‘qûb exhorted residents to disregard all of Ibn Tumart’s books and to preoccupy themselves rather with the direct study of texts of the Qur’ân and Iiadîth, to keep away the books of the Maliki legal doctrine. Ibn Tumart also instructed scholars of Iiadîth to collect traditions of the Prophet Mohamed from major hadith collections like Qâ'ilîth of Bûkhâîrî, Muslim, Tirmîdîhî, Muwaîla, Sunan Abî Dîwûd, Nasîhîhî, al-Bazzîrî, Musnàd Ibn Abî Shaybah, Sunan al-Dरqhîhîhîhî and Sunan al-Bayhâqîhî. Such a selective approach to Iiadîth essentially intended to cover the various chapters of Fiqh. Hadith experts had no choice but to comply with the instruction. Ibn Tumart urged citizens of the Maghreb to memorize the new Hadith collection, with the hope, as stated by Murrakîshî, to abolish the legal doctrine of Malikism altogether from the Maghrib and the exclusive adherence to the literal interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah. [2] This would be viewed as a state compulsory religious education to execute Almohads’ religious reform agenda at various social levels [6]. The study of these compilations in both Berber and Arabic languages also represents a further bilingual instruction during Almohads.

It was apparent that the religious learning during Almohads highly favored scholars and students of Iiadîth. This was the agenda of the state on order to reinforce their ideology through dissemination of fear including extinguishing of Maliki textbooks and threatening Maliki jurists. Those reforms could not win over because Malikism was already deeply rooted during Almoravids and if totally abolished, that would mean to the residents of the Maghrib a serious violation of a basic constituent of religious and historical identity[11]. The Almohads’ intellectual reform did not proceed in a vacuum; it rather carried Almoravids’ legacy yet at a larger scale, (i.e.) they built on Almoravids’ intellectual heritage while keeping their loyal adherence to Ibn Tumart’s principal philosophy. The overall assessment of both Le Tourneau and Terrasse of Almohads’ contributions is that Almohads took over and on a large scale have completed the work of Almoravids, by prolonging and accentuating the symbiosis between Spain and Barbary, they gave time for the institutions, the arts and crafts of Moorish Spain to take root in the town of the Maghrib. [11]. Ibn Tumart realized the need for an alternative that satisfy the requirements of legal reasoning and hence re-formulated the interpretation of the law on the basis of traditions, which may viewed as a close position to the Uahîrites. The efforts of Almohads to neutralize the Malikî doctrine of law and to revive free reasoning based on revelation however, was doomed to failure. This was apparent in later developments associated with the Almohads where Ibn Tumart’s religious doctrine was left out and where Islamic law during their reign did not make significant developments.

Islamic law prospered and grew in two dimensions: Almohads’ rulers, especially Ya‘qûb al-Manhîrî, admired the Uahîrite School of law. Ya‘qûb for instance used to describe great scholars as being dependent on Ibn Hazm. It was Ya‘qûb who set the Maliki books to fire and made Ijîhîd a strict requirement in the deduction of legal rulings from the sources of the Quran and the Sunnah, consensus and analogy. Among the prominent and original Uahîrite jurist Abî al-Hassan al-Balunîhî al-Fârîhî (d. 605AH). This period also witnessed many critical writings such as Ibn Qâfîshîhî who wrote about a book entitled ‘al-wârîm wa al-wârîm al-wârîm al-wârîm’ kutub al-Iklîm. [12] Most Maliki jurists were strict adherents to the Maliki Madîhib. Some of those who could not compromise their legal position included the most learned jurists like the judge of Fes Isâa bîn Ibrahîm al-Ghurârî al-Dâwâîhî al-Mujâbbîhîhî (d. 609) and ‘Irinîhî al-Murrâkîshîhî (d. 637AH) and many others. According to Murrâkîshîhî, Yusuf and Abûl Mu’mîn both inclined to the use of opinion in Islamic jurisprudence and that the idea of opinion goes back to Ibn Tumart as stated by Murrâkîshî. In his explanation of the ‘ulul, al-Khálîbîhî
reports that Ibn Tumart rejected the books of legal opinions and taqlīd and instead adhered to the Uahrite School of law as cited in al-Mīṣīr of al-Wansharīsī. Ya’qūb threatened all those engaged with the Madhab of Malik. Many were subjected to harsh punishment, killing, lashings and other disciplinary measures just to prevent them from reading sources of Malikī law (kutub al-furūʿ). [7]

B. Quran Exegesis and Ḳāḍī: Almohads showed a great interest and dedication to Tafsīr and the invitation of Quran exegetes. During their time, Tafsīr prospered. There were some famous Quran exegists such as ‘Abd al-Jalīl al-Anfūsī (d. 608) who wrote sixty volumes on Mushkil al-Qurān wa al-Sunnah, Abdullah bin Ali bin Abī al-Anfūsī al-Fārābī (d. 662) who abridged the Kashshāf of Zamakhsharī while disposing off some Muʿtaṣilite notions. Yusuf was a master of Quran recitation. Al-Mansur himself certified some scholars in areas of good versifications (arūf) and the art of recitation of the Quran (iqnād) and points of articulation (makhkhar al-ṣūr). [12]

Almohads hosted a number of ʿIḍāth experts from Andalus to teach in the Maghreb with local muladdīths. Students of ʿIḍāth gained unparalleled status during the reign of Abū Yaʿqūb. [2] Many of Almohads’ rulers were themselves muladdīths and memorizers of ʿIḍāth. For instance, Yusuf ibn Abī al-Muʿāmin committed the collection of Bukhārī and Muslim to memory. Yaʿqūb memorized many ʿIḍāth texts. Prince Ibrahim bin Yusuf bin Abū al-Muʿāmin also memorized and narrated ʿIḍāth. [2]

Among the most famous muladdīths during the time was Abū ʿAbdullāh al-Oqīlī al-Fāsī who was described in the Taʿkīmīlah as a narrator of ʿIḍāth and one who memorized the texts of ʿIḍāth with an understanding of ʿIḍāth defects (ʿilal) and a knowledge about the narrators of ʿIḍāth and their biographies. [1]

Philosophy: Philosophy and philosophers flourished during Almohads. The King of Italy Frederick II, used to send his questions on philosophy to Ibn Sabʿīn (d. 669) in Sebta. The Caliph al-Mansur also admired philosophy and invited Ibn Tufayl and treated him highly [2]. Ibn Tufayl also invited Ibn Rushd and other philosophers to revive the philosophical writings and to make the texts of philosophy readable and simple. The Almohads’ reign witnessed a flourished era of philosophy and distinguished philosophers. Governor Yaʿqūb for instance is described in al-Muʿjab as wholeheartedly interested in learning and collecting books and treatises on philosophy. According to Murrakhī, Yaʿqūb collected many philosophical works, learnt medicine (al-ibb) and collected a library similar to that of the Ummayyad Caliph al-Mustanṣir bi-Allah [2].

Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Tufayl, a student of Abu Bakr Ibn al-Ωīgh (Ibn Bajjah) and the author of several philosophical treatises on nature (al-mulâθa qiyāt) and divinity (al-tālīḥīyya) was a close friend of Abū Yaʿqūb the ruler with whom he stay days in his palace [2]. It is reported that Abū Yaʿqūb once complained from one of Aristotle’s philosophical passage, probably for its ambiguity or poor translation and urged Ibn Rushd to summarize those books to render them simple and readable by the public. It was then when Ibn Rushd decided to abridge the works of Aristotle [2].

The approach of Almohads to philosophy seems to be inconsistent as it includes a wide array of irreconcilable standpoints. This is demonstrated in Muqarrīn’s account of Ibn al-Ωīgh, a philosopher from Iṣḥāqīyyah murdered by al-Muʿāmin for indulging in philosophy. Muqarrīn also notes that the discipline of philosophy was unpopular in Andalus and that philosophers were incapable to reveal it in open and choose rather to conceal their works. [10,13]

Le Tourneau however, confirms Almohads negative attitude to philosophy and argues that unlike historians or philosophers, jurists and theologians were abundant and acclaimed [14]. There was also another group from Cordova that complained to Abu Yusuf and accused Ibn Rushd in his abridges of quoting ancient statements implying Jupiter was one of their Gods. Following a public hearing, Ibn Rushd was humiliated and expelled from Cordova. Abu Yusuf then ordered philosophy to be abandoned and all books of philosophy other than medicine, mathematics and astrology to be burned. But when Abu Yusuf returned to Murrākīsh he however left all that and began to learn philosophy. [2]

Scholastic Theology (Iltim Al-kalūm): As mentioned earlier, both Muʿtaṣilim and Shiʿism have had an impact on Ibn Tumart’s theological and intellectual shaping. Al-Muʿāmin Abū al-Salīmī wrote al-ʿAqlī da al-Burhānīyya, an exposition of Ibn Tumart’s “al-Murshida”. [15] Iltim Al-Kalīm was first restricted in the Maghreb but later appears to be strongly endorsed especially in the time of Ibn Tumart. Ibn Tumart adhered to the school of Ashʿarī arism except on questions of the divine attributes (al-ilmīt al-ilmīyya). He adopted the opinion of Muʿtaṣilim on this issue. Theology was given due attention because of the question of Mahdīsm which was
later forced upon Muslims and reached a point where some wrote about the Almohads’ guidance (al-hidējah al-muwa'idātīyyah) supported by corroboration of the texts of the Quran. Ibn Tumart’s theological position reached a high status during Almohads; it soon started to fall because of the dissemination of learning and the rejection of caliphs and princes of Ibn Tumart’s infallibility (‘ilm). Idrīs al-Ma’mūn used this for instance cursed Ibn Tumart from the pulpit of Al-Mansur Mosque and wrote to the rest of the country to immediately abolish the conduct and heresies of the Mahdi.[1]

**Mysticism (Tawawwuf):** According to Murākhsîh, there were many pious and ascetic people in Ibn Tumart’s time. This might have enhanced the spiritual and religious life in the Maghreb. Murākhsîh states: “During Ibn Tumart’s time, pious, ascetics and hadith experts were notable and celebrated. Ibn Tumart himself used to invite people of piety and seek their supplications and was very generous to them.” Similarly, Almohads’ spiritual life was manifested in the preservation to a copy of the Quran claimed to be compiled by the third Muslim caliph, Uthmān. Ibn ‘Affāt. The Almohads used to carry this copy of the Quran in their voyages. Interestingly enough, Ibn Tumart wrote his own copy of the Quran, which was integrated later in Almohads’ Quran tradition.[2]

**History and Historiography (al-siyār) flourished during the Almohads.** Abu al-Abbas Ahmad bin Muhammad Al-‘Azī al-Lahmī (d. 633) and Abī al-Khaṭīb al-Kalbī known as Ibn Jamāl (d. 633) were among the first to write on the Sirah. Al-Lahmī wrote al-Durra al-Munaddam fi Mawlid al-Nabī al-Mu‘addam while Ibn Jamāl wrote the Tanwīr fi-Sīrat al-Sīrāj al-Munīr. There were other writings on the siyār.[6] There was also significant increase in writing about genealogy, biographies, indexes and history of kings and places. These include al-Mu‘jam fi Tārīkh al-Maghrib. Al-Idrīsī represents the prominent geographer of the time (d. 562). He began his explorations and travels when he was a child. He studied the characteristics of countries. The King of Sicily Roger asked him to draw a world map. Al-Idrīsī carved countries with their names on a silver plate of three meters and a half length and a width of one meter and a half. He also authored the Nuzhat al-Mushīq fi-Ikhtīrāq al-Aṣīq and some other works.[6]

- This era also witnessed a number of geographers and travelers.

**Muhaddism in Crisis: Decay of Almohads:** Had Ibn Tumart not condemned Almoravids, Ma’mūda might not have adopted his doctrine favorably. Once the Almoravids departed, new ingredients should have nurtured Ibn Tumart’s doctrine instead. Both Maliki jurists and Muslim scholars in the Magrib condemned Ibn Tumart’s heresy. Ibn Tumart probably never anticipated revolt would arise from his own supporters. Le Tourneau argues that all sources agree that Ma’mūn abolished Almohad’s doctrine, in here he quotes Ma’mūn official letter: “You know that we have suppressed error and published truth, that there is no other Mahdi other than Jesus the Son of Mary, who alone is entitled the right of Mahdi. That is why we have abolished Almohads’ innovation and have dropped out the word “infallibility.” Our lord Mansur intended to announce these facts but did not find the occasion to do so.”[16] He further states: “All chroniclers argue that, by virtue of his order, the name of the Mahdi Ibn Tumart and title “The Infallible” were censored on Friday prayer as well as on coins. Likewise some Berber words which used during Friday prayer were eliminated.”[16] Le Tourneau continues “What then remained of the spirit of Almohads movement? Nothing. Since it was around the idea of the Mahdi and his impeccability that the Almohads’ movement had been founded.”[16] As an example of these developments, it is reported that soon after the return of the ruler from the Battle of Alcoraz 1195 C.E. Shaykh Abu Bakr Hāfīz from Andalus led a delegation to his welcome. The ruler after inquiring about the general conditions of the country, its judges and state representatives; asked Abu Bakr about his conditions and then asked him what knowledge he has learned. Abu Bakr replied that he read Ibn Tumart’s writings. The ruler then stared at him angrily and said that student of knowledge should not answer likewise and should have said instead he read the Book of Allah, some of the Sunnah, then he could say what he wanted to say.[2]

According to Le Tourneau, few reasons led to the decline of Almohads. One of them is Yusuf al-Musta‘īnīr, the fifth Almohads caliph who was neither a strong nor a talented leader. He almost never left Marrakesh either because he was not aware of his responsibilities and of the various threats beginning to rise.”[16] Muslims’ failure in the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa was also another detriment to Almohads’ power. This according to Le Tourneau brought Almohads to ruin.[16] Another important reason was the inability of the Ma’mūeda tribes
to keep the conquered population in a state of compliance and never engaged them in the administration of the dynasty empire [16]. Terrasse believes that the tribe of Mal礫ida underwent a triple decadence, military, political and moral. Anarchy reigned in the office (makhzan), factions appointed, divested and often murdered the Sultans. While the empire was all over scattering to pieces and required devotedness of all, unworthy descendants of the great Almohads leaders quarrel like mean, greedy peasants over what remained of the state and the revenues of the last provinces still under their rule” [11].

Le Tourneau argues that the Mustafir’s reign is characterized by two series of events that show the deep transformation the Almohads Empire had already undergone. First, the young caliph who was under the influence of his viziers. Second, the rise of Merinids. There on the border, Ban 敗 MerEns led an unusual existence, grazing their cattle between the Fijig region and the middle valley of the Me奔a River: an obscure tribe of medium size, very jealous of its freedom [11]. According to most chroniclers, the Battle of al-‘Uq Eb (610H/1213CE) represented a turning point in the history of Almohads. It was in this battle that al-NEllir died and was succeeded by Yusuf, a young son immature to understand the duties and responsibilities of the state. This was a disadvantage to Almohads’ Makhzan, added to the irresponsible attitude of the ruling members at that particular time. All these resulted in a serious and manifest weakness of Almohads [3]. Terrasse Henri sees the crisis of Almohads yet from another angle, he states: “The religious actions of the Almohads led to a dead end; the Almohads reform, despite all the efforts of the dynasty, had failed. Malikism rapidly took over control of the official Islam while the devotion of masses was for the saints, alive or dead. The Almohads did nothing to arrest this impulsion of Sufism which, in Morocco, already assumed the aspect of Maraboutism.” [11]

CONCLUSION

It was the Almohads’ great contribution to the revival of sciences and the building of learning institutions that caused the city of Murrakish to acquire the title of the second capital of learning in Morocco. The history of Almohads dynasty shows how learning and scholarship flourished and how the intellectual freedom attracted an increased number of scholars despite the heterodox beliefs of the founder Ibn Tumart who not only resisted Malikism but claimed Mahdism, Imamship and impeccability. Yet while this study has shown the cultivated nature of Almohads, particularly in learning and scholarship, it has also indicated that it was the Asha’arite dogma and the Malikite school of law that the Maghreb was continually fond of and that irrespective of the unfavorable political conditions, it continually strived to re-install them in the body of religious and cultural body of the nation.

REFERENCES

13. Ibn Hazm, Ibn Sa'id, and Shaqadi, 1968. Fa'îl il-
Andalus wa-AhlihE, Compiled by ÛElah ÛEn
etude economique et sociale d'une ville de l'occident
al-Umm an Asami al-Kutub wa-al-Funan. Beirut:
Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah.
16. Le Tourneau, R., 1969. The AIMohad Movement in
North Africa in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries.