

RAMON LLULL

I ELS DIÀLEGS
*M*EDITERRANIS

RAMON LLULL AND
THE MEDITERRANEAN
DIALOGUES



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RELATIONS BETWEEN BUGIA AND THE CROWN OF ARAGON DURING RAMON LLULL'S STAY IN THE CITY

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INTRODUCTION

In this article, we recall the importance of political, commercial and intellectual relations between Bugia (Bougie, Béjaïa, Bgayet, Buzzea) and the Crown of Aragon during the 13th and 14th centuries. After describing the scientific environment in the city during Ramon Llull's stay, we attempt to understand whether the framework and context in which the Sufism of the medieval period evolved affected any of the famous stages of the Islamo-Christian dialogue related to the city of Bugia: the influence of the thought of ibn Sab'īn and the debates of the Catalan philosopher Ramon Llull (1307).

BUGIA, CENTRE OF CONTACT BETWEEN THE MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN WORLDS

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT

Towards the mid-11th century, the political map of the Maghreb was completely turned upside down. The kingdom of the Hammadids, in conflict with the Almoravids in the west and the Zirids in the east, transferred its capital from al-Qal'a of Banī Ḥammād (near

M'sila) to Bugia. In this way, the former Saldae came to form part of history and became one of the most prosperous cities in North Africa.

First capital of an independent Hammadid state (between 1067 and 1152) and then provincial capital of the Almohad empire (between 1152 and 1230), the city of Bugia became a top-ranking commercial, scientific and cultural centre under the kingdom of the Hafsids (between 1230 and 1510). Its importance in the naval sphere reached its peak after the conquest of Sicily by the Normans in 1091. Destroyed by the Spanish in 1510, it lost its position as capital under Turkish authority.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHRISTIAN WORLD

Bugia's official and commercial relations with Marseille, Catalonia, Majorca and, finally, the Christian republics of Genoa, Pisa and Venice are characterised by the signing of peace treaties, trade agreements and treaties concerning the goods of people who are shipwrecked. The majority of these powers had their own exchanges and consulates in the city.

AL-IDRĪSĪ AND THE NETWORK OF TERRESTRIAL ROUTES

«Today, Bugia is the city in the central Maghreb. It is the capital of the country of the Banī Ḥammād. Ships moor there, caravans head there, goods arrive there by land and sea [...]. The merchants of that city maintain good relations with those of the western Maghreb, as well as with those of the Sahara and the East».

This is how al-Idrīsī, the well-known geographer of the Norman King Roger II of Sicily, highlights the place Bugia occupied in the transport and commercial networks of the central Maghreb and

beyond, towards the East, Morocco and the south. He makes a much more detailed portrait of the routes reaching Bugia at the end of the Hammadid period. He tells us that «Bugia is a pole of attraction (*qutb*) for a large number of places». He also uses this word to describe Fez (the western Maghreb) and Mahdiya (in Ifriqiya). In the division of the Maghreb into three regions, he assigns Bugia an area of influence, which he defines with a series of named places around this pole of attraction.

THE PARTICULAR FEATURES OF THE CITY

A good number of the particular features of the city have been especially important in the development of scientific activities, including:

- the presence of an important «naturalised» Andalusian community, particularly after the Almoravid penetration into Spain, in the 13th century, with the *Reconquista* (Aïssani and Valérian, 2003a);
- the exceptional development of international trade thanks to Customs concessions and security (Aïssani and Valérian, 2003b);
- the high level of religious studies of the period, beginning with the teachings of the «princes of science» (Aïssani, 2006);
- the fact that it was an essential stopping point on the route between Spain and the East, particularly for going on pilgrimage and studying (Aïssani *et al.*, 1993).

CIRCULATION OF SCHOLARS

All over the Mediterranean area, we find a large number of witnesses to the fact that Bugia was busy with scholars,

particularly in Christian countries and even in the territories conquered by the Christians (Sicily or Spain). This is the case of Taqī al-Dīn, who was received in Sicily «with honours and distinction by the head of the Christians who is given the name of emperor (*ambourour*)». Meanwhile, scholars from «everywhere» stayed in Bugia. Among these learned men we find the Iranian Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad, from Isfahan, a scholar who had been in China, India and the gorges of Armenia. However, sometimes there was a very specific reason for these stays, for example:

- the Italian mathematician Leonardo Fibonacci accompanied his father to find out about the system of numerals, the calculation methods and the commercial techniques of the Islamic countries;
- the Andalusian algebra expert al-Qurashī arrived, probably because of the *reconquista* of Spain. In this case, we are talking about an exodus;
- the Catalan philosopher Ramon Llull spent time there to «debate» (in other words, to put his knowledge and method of reasoning up against the scholars of the city);
- the «Tunisian» sociologist ibn Khaldūn arrived there for political reasons: he was appointed *hājib* («chief minister»).

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CROWN OF ARAGON AND BUGIA

POLITICAL RELATIONS

From the end of the 13th century, the Catalan sovereigns showed imperial pretensions in the Maghreb, particularly during the Hafsid sultanate. This pressure, however, increased during the wars of the first half of the 14th

century, and Bugia occupied a top rank in the diplomacy of Barcelona and Majorca. In fact, the Catalan and Majorcan sovereigns even tried to get involved in the internal affairs of the Hafsid sultanate. The rivalry between Bugia and Tunis gave them many opportunities. During the 1279 civil war in Ifriqiya, Peter II gave support to Abū Ishāq, Emir of Bugia, against Al-Watīq of Tunis. During the former's offensive against Bugia, the King of Aragon sent an expedition against Gabès with the intention of opening up a second front. But the policy clearly failed, as, once on the throne with Catalan aid, the new sultan never again accepted any kind of submission to Barcelona (Valérian, 2002).

In 1271, the King of Aragon reached an agreement with Tunis providing a legal framework for the increasingly important commercial relations between the Catalans and the sultanate. After that, the kings of Aragon and Majorca established themselves up as privileged interlocutors of the Hafsids. The treaties allowed peace to be achieved lasting almost to the beginning of the 1320s. In 1309, 1312 and 1314, agreements were reached directly with Bugia, which by that time was independent. The merchants protected by these treaties had a series of privileges: their security was guaranteed, Customs duties were fixed and, in general, this was accompanied by their own community structures to meet demand in Bugia (Valérian, 2002).

COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

Until 1310-1320 Bugia controlled a large region, attracting large numbers of merchants and obtaining great wealth from its own lands, which it exported to Europe. It took advantage of the considerable economic expansion on the northern shore of the Mediter-

ranean, particularly in the textile industries.

Like other geographers and travellers, al-Idrīsī was amazed by the lively commercial atmosphere of Bugia. «(...) People bring basic products and sell them easily. The inhabitants are rich merchants; we also find workshops and craftsmen as in no other country. (...) They store goods there and sell merchandise for large sums of money».

During the second half of the 13th century, the Catalans and Majorcans increased their presence in Bugia and the other North African ports. Those from Barcelona had already prepared the ground during the first half of the century. The first document recording a journey from Barcelona to Bugia dates from 1213.

However, Majorca quickly became the chief port of the kingdom in terms of relations with Bugia. It was one of the few Christian areas welcoming Muslims from Bugia and the Jewish merchants of that city maintained very active trading relations with the inhabitants of the Maghreb.

In 1241, Pope Gregory IX authorised the Bishop of Majorca to allow the inhabitants of his diocese to trade with Islamic countries in peacetime and even to sell them food, although he reminded him that under no circumstances could they export products that could be used to fight against Christians. The same year, there is a record of a commercial journey to Bugia. In 1247, at least three ships left for the city.

In 1276, the kingdom of Majorca became independent and two years later King James II signed a peace treaty with the Hafsids. The community of traders was large enough in Bugia to justify the appointment of a consul in 1303, as well as being assigned its own exchange. A document from 1284 makes it possible to assess the place occupied by Bugia in exchanges of goods with the island. It is a Customs

register that records all the departures of loaded Majorcan ships carrying inhabitants of the islands or their goods between 23 January and 18 March. Almost three quarters of these ships were heading towards the Maghreb. Their main destination was Bugia, with six journeys. Sometimes a ship heading for Tunis stopped at Bugia. From 1311, there were increasing numbers of sailings and, for example, in 1314, 11 ships left for that city. In 1270, the *barca* of the Genoese Aicardo Sardina left for Bugia and then for Majorca. In 1292, a merchant chartered Leonardo Spinola's ship to make a pleasure trip to Marseille and then to Majorca and Bugia.

Number of ships leaving Majorca for Bugia (1310-1410)

Period	Number of ships
1310-9	33
1320-9	12
1330-9	20
1340-9	12
1350-9	56
1360-9	48
1370-9	10
1380-9	19
1390-9	24
1400-9	57
1410-9	24

Source: Valérian, 2002.

IMPORTS: THE DOMINANCE OF TEXTILE PRODUCTS

Textile products undoubtedly predominate in imports of products from Bugia. The city received textiles from all the producing regions in the Christian world and, of course, Dār-al-Islām too. Among products imported by Bugia,

we also find cotton. Along these lines, between April and June 1395, four *guiatges* (licences) were granted to various Majorcans to carry a total of 44 sacks of cotton to Bugia. There are a large number of commercial contracts (orders or charters) speaking of cargos of cotton. To these imports of fibres for the textile industry we must add other goods also related to this activity and, more precisely, to dyeing. As an example, during the 15th century, alum and tartar (a colour fixer) were imported from Majorca.

Oil was a product imported from the Crown of Aragon. In 1242, for example, ten containers of oil were sent from Majorca to Bugia. The treaty of 1312 between Sancho of Majorca and Abū Yaḥyā Abū Bakr establishes the tax-free import of two thousand containers of oil to Bugia and, in 1316, we see that a merchant from Bugia went to Valencia to buy 60 *arrovas* of oil.

EXPORTS: THE DOMINANCE OF ANIMAL PRODUCTS

One of the products meeting the demand from European industries was wool, which was exported in large quantities until the 14th century. For example, in an arbitration tariff applied in Barcelona in 1371 we find, among the products taxed and imported from the kingdom of Bugia, wool of good or poor quality. Three years earlier, another arbitration list, this time from Majorca, establishes two different classes of wool, among other products, in the imports from the kingdom of Bugia. A Majorcan document from 1365 shows us that a Muslim from Valencia paid a tax for the import of wool from Bugia (Valérian, 2002).

Like the textile industry, the leather and lining industry underwent a great expansion in Europe during the Middle Ages, and exports from Bugia responded to this great demand. The leather

from Bugia arriving in Mediterranean ports was partly sent on to inland markets. However, we might doubt whether, as Delort states, all the leather called «Bugia» that can be found as far away as England at a late date was really the result of imports from the Bugia region or even from the Maghreb.

In the same way as with wool, we have different qualities of leather because not all leather came from the same species. It was mostly lamb skin. In European documents we find the term *bogett*, whose etymology is not in doubt and which always defines lamb's leather. We also find the terms *bogget*, *bugeye*, *bougie*, *budge* and *budye*. This term, which, in principle, designated lamb's leather imported from the kingdom of Bugia, gradually became used to define fine lamb's leather, even though it might bear no relation to the real origin of the merchandise. Along these lines, we find *bogy de spayne*. Delort quotes a study made above all in England showing that, from the end of the 14th century in north-western Europe, any product from a finished lamb that came from the south (even Romania), Atlantic Spain or England, Scotland or the Orkney islands was called *bougie* or *budge* (Aïssani and Valérien, 2003b).

In Barcelona, we find a third type of leather: *becumias*. Leonardo Fibonacci, in the *Liber Abaci*, speaks of loading leather and *becumias* in Bugia. The arbitration tariff from Barcelona from 1371 also mentions *boquines*. The translation of this term is difficult. The word *basane* is attributed an etymology that takes us to Bugia, something which, according to Dominique Valérien is a very free interpretation. Like many others, Du Cange translates it as *basane*, in the sense of soft leather. The word would therefore be derived from the Arabic *biṭāna*, which describes a treated sheepskin, or *battaniyya*, a skin that includes its wool (Valérien, 2002). In exports from Bugia

we also find other products related to the wool and leather industries: alum, «Bugia bark» (*iscorza di Buggiea*) and Bugia herbs (*erba Buggiea*).

THE WEAKNESS OF EXPORTS OF MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS

While Bugia had given its name to a type of leather it was even more important for having given its name, from the 14th century, to candles in French. This etymology, accepted everywhere, appears in the dictionary Littré, vol. I, p. 1,155, which mentions the word with a 14th-century text as a reference. The fact that we find this word as early as the beginning of the 14th century shows that exports of this product were important enough in the previous century for candles to end up adopting the name of the city where wax came from.

Majorca regularly imported wax from Bugia, as shown by the taxes that the Mudejars and Jews paid on returning from Bugia with merchandise. In 1362, two Muslims, one of whom was from Valencia, paid a tax for the wax they had brought from Bugia in Pere Garringue's ship (the first for 5 *costals*, which cost 300 pounds, and the second for 4 *ponts*, which cost 233 pounds). In 1365, we find a Majorcan Jew, Mahabub Fagrii, who arrived from Algiers with 4 *costals* of wax belonging to Abdallah Zefuni, a Muslim of Bugia. On the duty list from Barcelona from 1371 we find wax from the kingdom of Bugia.

Finally, we can specify that certain later Iberian documents show the existence of gold exports from Bugia. In 1363, Abdallah Abaraso, a Muslim from Valencia, paid a tax for the import of 190 gold doubloons from Bugia. In 1405, the Barcelona merchant Nicolau Despuig ordered material, the profits from which he reinvested in Bona (now

Annaba) or Bugia in other merchandise or in gold doubloons.

FACTORS LEADING TO SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES IN BUGIA

Scientific activities sprang from various factors (Aïssani et al., 1993):

SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS

They probably arose as a result of everyday situations:

- the practice of the Muslim religion that required the use of certain mathematical techniques: visibility of the moon at the beginning and end of Ramadan, division of inheritances, determination of the times of prayer, orientation of places of worship, etc.;
- commercial activities (exchanges and discounts), minting coins, calculating prices, loans and assignments, etc. were an important source for the creation of mathematical concepts;
- the problems of construction: agricultural surveying, architecture.

GEOPOLITICAL FACTORS

It seems that it was the scientific movement in the Maghreb began in the 8th century in Kairouan. For some time, this city acted as intellectual capital of the whole Maghreb and attracted a large number of scholars from Ifriqiya (the old name for Tunisia) which allowed the first copies of Euclid's *Elements* and Ptolemy's *Almagest*, as well as the first Muslim works on mathematics.

After the fall of Kairouan into the hands of the Banū Hilāl tribes, the scholarly elite of the city emigrated partly to Mahdia and to al-Qal'a of Banī Ḥammad, and then to Bugia. At

that time, the ease with which wise men moved around the main North African centres must be highlighted, despite the frequency and violence of the conflicts. That is why knowing the scientific dynamism of this North African context is fundamental. So, for example:

- the author at the centre of metaphysical Islamic thought, ibn ʿArabī (Murcia 1165-Damascus 1241), wrote his well-known book *Inshāʾ al-dawāʾir* in Tunis in 1201;
- in 1153 the famous Andalusian philosopher ibn Rushd (Averroes) arrived in Marrakesh. It seems that he began his well-known commentary on Aristotle with the encouragement the vizier of the Almohad sultan;
- finally, the Jewish mathematician Maimonides was at Fez, where he acquired the most essential part of his mathematical education before travelling to the East.

These cities' relations with the city of Bugia have always been very close (Aïssani *et al.*, 1993). The intelligence and tolerance of princes would play an essential role in the construction of schools, the purchase of books for libraries, financial support for copying manuscripts and, above all, the attraction of a large number of scholars, particularly from Spain.

BUGIA, CENTRE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE

HIGHER EDUCATION CENTRE

The city of Bugia was a higher education centre. People went there to complete their education, in the same way as they went to Cairo, Tunis or Tremissen. Several hundred students (many

of whom were European) gathered in the schools and the mosques where the theologians, jurists, philosophers and most important scholars of the Muslim world gave classes. The high level of mathematical studies there is shown by the advanced algebra course taught by al-Qurashī (died 1184).

STRUCTURE OF THE SCIENTIFIC WORLD

In the Middle Ages, the structure of the scientific world was indivisible from the world of the *ulemas*. Concerning the 13th century, Dominique Urvoy offers an interesting analysis based on the bibliographical work *ʿUnwān al-Dirāya* by al-Ghubrīnī (died 1315) (Al-Gubrini, 1970). This work is the most complete source on the scholars of Bugia (Aïssani *et al.*, 1993). Al-Ghubrīnī (who formed part of the scientific world of Bugia during Ramon Llull's stay in the city) specially mentions 108 famous figures from the 12th and 13th centuries (Al-Gubrini, 1970). Twenty-eight of these people are of Andalusian origin (6 from Seville, 1 from Malaga, 4 from Valencia, 4 from Murcia, 4 from Xàtiva, 1 from Cordoba, 1 from Ronda, 1 from Granada and 6 who cannot be placed). Among these scholars, we find al-Kinānī (died in the year 699 of the Hegira), al-Khazrajī (died in the year 691 of the Hegira) and ibn al-Bannā' al-Azdī (died in the year 619 of the Hegira).

Based on this work, Urvoy sketches a graph of the development of a series of common elements between them. He replaces individual relationships with groups, showing up the presence of communities appear (Aïssani *et al.*, 1993; Aïssani, 2006). We also see how a very important group is established whose members, under the influence of al-Hirrālī, take an interest in mathematics, natural sciences and the different forms of meditation: Uṣūl al-fiqh, Kalām, Falsafa, Manṭiq and Taṣawwuf.

Ibn Rābī (died in the 675 of the Hegira/1276), who is the most important member of this group, is considered «al-Ṣūfī al-Mujtahid» and attracted the admiration of ibn Sabʿīn (Aïssani *et al.*, 1993).

TRANSMISSION

Bugia had the particular feature of being an essential stopping point. In fact, more than the place of passage, it was a meeting point. But these meetings did not happen in a closed circuit; they involved common relations. This is the element that was most important in the transmission process: the transmission of knowledge of the different regions of the Muslim world (Andalusia, the Muslim West, Ifriqiya, Egypt, the East) to the Christian West, but also the transmission of European knowledge to the Islamic countries via the scholars from all these regions who passed through the city and stayed there for longer.

INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

During the medieval period, Bugia had the privilege of acting as arbiter in a type of inter-religious dialogue through events that later came to form part of the history of relations between Islam and the Christian world. The dialogue had a pre-established setting and this place was the *Bayt al-Ḥikma* («house of wisdom»), which symbolised the intellectual exchanges between Muslims and non-Muslims who lived in the city and who arrived from abroad.

All historians have stressed the particular significance given to Pope Gregory VII's famous letter to the Hammadid sovereign of Bugia, Prince Al-Naṣīr, in 1076. According to Mas Latrie, who published this archive document «never has a Pope of Rome so affectionately shown his sympathy towards a Muslim prince» (Aïssani, 2006).

BUGIA AND THE GROWTH OF NORTH AFRICAN SUFISM

During the Almohad period there were two fundamental reasons why Sufism grew so strongly in all social strata: the presence in Bugia of the best Sufi teachers and the tolerant spirit of the population. In fact, Abū Madyan stated that «more than other cities, Bugia facilitated research into what was permitted» (Brunschvig, 1940: 318).

BUGIA AND SUFISM

ABŪ MADYAN AND HIS FOLLOWERS

The city of Bugia enjoyed the presence of the most enlightened teacher of the great North African mystic movement: the *qutb* Abū Madyan (520 of the Hegira/1126-594 of the Hegira/1197). «His merit, his great success, is having made a synthesis of the various influences he had received in a way his audience could understand». According to Brunschvig (1940), «thanks to him, moderate Sufism adapted to the mentality of the North African believer, whether he was a man in the street or a scholar». The activities of his school led Bugia to occupy a leading place in Western Islam (Aïssani *et al.*, 1993; Aïssani, 2006). Among the quotations attributed to him is the following: «Our knowledge can only be used by those who bring together these four virtues: renunciation, [religious] science, trust [in God] and certainty [of faith]» (Brunschvig, 1940).

It is natural that the first place where Abū Madyan's influence should have first been felt should have been Bugia. Among the «wise men of Bugia» not even the best-known *ulemas* were outside his sphere of action: ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq al-Ishbīlī (died in the year 582 of the Hegira/1186) or al-Masīlī (died in

1185), better known by the name Abū Ḥamīd al-Ṣaghīr, because he wrote a book that has been compared with the *Ihyāʾ* by al-Ghazālī.

Abū Madyan's followers came from different regions of the Maghreb. Among his Tunisian followers we find Sīdī Dahmānī (died in Tunis in 1224) and al-Mahdāwī, who welcomed Ibn ʿArabī in Tunis and was the recipient of his *Risālat al-Quds* (year 600 of the Hegira/ 1203). Among those coming from the West, we find the famous mystic Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Qāsim al-Sijilmāsī, who also spent time in Bugia, and Tawassala ilā al-Ḥaqqāʾiq (Al-Gubrinī, 1970), follower of Abū Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, patron of the city of Salé, who also seems to have been a student of Abū Madyan (Brunschvig, 1940).

ABŪ ZAKARIYĀ YAḤYĀ

During the time of Abū Madyan and after his death, Sufism also had a very important leading figure in Bugia. We are talking about the Kabyle sheikh Abū Zakariyā Yaḥyā al-Zawāwī, born in the Banī Aïssi, who died at Bugia during Ramadan in 611 of the Hegira/January 1215. We have already highlighted his studies at al-Qalʿa. Fascinated by the various religious sciences, he became initiated in eastern mysticism. There, he found al-Mashāikh wa al-fuqahā wa al-mutaṣawwif wa ahl al-ṭarīq al-ḥaqq (Al-Gubrinī, 1970). He was a kind of perfect aesthete, an advocate of fasting who was unconcerned by the problems of the terrestrial world, as he was absorbed in thoughts of the hereafter (Brunschvig, 1940). He lived in a *zāwīyah* and he taught the *ḥadīth*, the *uṣūl* and the *fiqh* in the great mosque. It is worth stressing that, according to legend, Ibn ʿArabī went to visit him during his stay in Bugia. In his *futūḥāt* he certainly praises him a great deal.

IBN ʿARABĪ'S STAY

Ibn ʿArabī (Murcia 1165-Damascus 1241) was one of the main characters of Sufism and is considered the principal representative of Islamic metaphysical thought. There is a series of important events relating him to Bugia, a city he visited various times in about 1200 and, probably, in about 1193. He said Abū Madyan was «our sheikh and imam..., the master of masters» and he often refers to him (Brunschvig, 1940).

Ibn ʿArabī went to Bugia in the year 597 of the Hegira. Dermenghem (1954) describes for us his vision of the city when he arrived there: «One night I found myself in conjunction with all the stars of heaven; I felt united with a great spiritual joy». After having united himself with the stars, he was granted the letters of the alphabet as a spiritual marriage. This vision has been attributed to a man versed in the science of visions, who proclaimed «It is an infinite ocean, and whoever has had this vision will have the revelation of the knowledge of the most important things, the mysteries and influences of the stars, in such a way that he cannot share them with anyone of his time».

After a moment of silence, he adds «If whoever has had the vision is in this city, he can be none other than the young Andalusian who has just arrived» (*Futūḥāt*, IV) (Dermenghem, 1954).

THE ṬARĪQA BY AL-HIRRĀLĪ

Al-Hirrālī, imam of Ṭaṣawwuf, died in Damascus in the year 638 of the Hegira/1240. Brunschvig believes that his influence in Bugia «recalls, to a degree, that of al-Shādīlī in Tunis». He wrote various works about the science of figures and letters (Aïssani, 2006). It would be interesting to check whether al-Hirrālī used them in his *Ṭarīqa*, whose liturgy defines the *wird*, the *dzik* and the *ḥizb* as «the modern brotherhoods» (Dermenghem, 1954).

We know very little of al-Hirrālī's contribution: «A small but particularly penetrating light; some brief anecdotes, the memory of his death». According to ibn Taymiyya, his Sufism was based on the path of the philosophers: «Enemy at the same time of the Sufists and the philosophers». His asceticism was external and internal, without great effort or affectation. He achieved great detachment and great tranquillity of spirit (Dermenghem, 1954).

IBN SABʿĪN'S SCHOOL AND THE FAMOUS SICILIAN QUESTIONS

The philosopher and Sufi ibn Sabʿīn (Murcia 1217-Bugia 1270) is famous for having answered the philosophical questions the Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen had addressed to the Almohad Sultan Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Wāḥid II al-Rashīd. He stood out at Bugia in the *fiqh* and the *ḥikma*. It was there that he met al-Shushtarī (1213-1269), who was to become one of his most faithful followers. The *isnād* of the method of ibn Sabʿīn (*Tarīqa Sabʿīniyya*) was applied by al-Shushtarī in one of his *Qaṣīda*. It shows the relationship between Greek and Muslim culture as accepted by ibn Sabʿīn's followers. Among the transmitters are Plato, Aristotle, Alexander the Great, al-Ḥajjāj, Abū Madyan and so on.

The questions Frederick II sent to the Almohad Sultan Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Wāḥid II al-Rashīd to be passed on to his wise men, and for them to provide answers, have gone down in history under the name the *Sicilian questions*. These questions are largely related to philosophical problems such as Aristotelian logic, the immortality of the soul and the genesis of the world. Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Wāḥid II al-Rashīd passed them on to ibn Sabʿīn, then not yet 20 years old, who was in

Ceuta (Aissani, 2006). Of the Sufi's answers, we only have the version disseminated in the Muslim countries (with the help of a prologue meant to situate the text). Nor do we know whether this version is faithful to the one sent to Frederick II.

The first question, written by the emperor himself, was formulated as follows: «In all his writings, the wise man Aristotle states that the universe has existed for all eternity. No-one doubts that this is his opinion. In this case, what evidence does he provide that what he has proved is true? And, if he has not proved it, on what does he base his conviction?» (Aissani, 2006). The second question was as follows: «What is the purpose of theological science and what are the irrefutable foundations of this science, if it has any?»

The third question corresponded to one of Frederick's greatest concerns: «What proof do we have of the immortality of the soul, if it is immortal? And what does Aristotle think of this and Alexander of Aphrodisias?» Ibn Sabʿīn, who did not want to commit himself, answered «that he did not properly understand the type of soul to which Frederick referred», and asked him whether he was talking «about the vegetative, animal, rational, philosophical or prophetic soul, which was the most noble of all» (Aissani, 2006). In the fourth and final question, he asks him to explain the meaning of these words of Muhammad: «The soul of the believer rests between the fingers of the Merciful».

THE SUFIS OF THE ʿUNWĀN AL-DIRĀYA

Abū Madyan's direct tradition persisted until the 13th century. In this period, the mystic movement seemed to have preserved a moderate external appearance for a long time, with a solid intellectual basis (Brunschvig,

1940). A good number of the Sufis mentioned in this period in the work ʿUnwān al-Dirāya had great knowledge of the *fiqh*, and others distinguished themselves as mystic poets (Al-Gubbrini, 1970).

An analysis of al-Ghubrīnī's work allows us to draw some conclusions worth highlighting. Of the 108 figures mentioned, 101 are *faqīh*, and fifteen of these have knowledge of Sufism. Al-Ghubrīnī, also a Sufi and a student of ibn ʿArabī uses the term *ʿIlm al-Taṣawwuf* when speaking of this discipline, which gives us good information about the place he occupies. He differentiates the *shuʿarāʾ al-Madāʾih* [(*Madḥ al-Nabī*): al-Qalī abū ʿabd Allah ibn Mīmūn, al-Ghasānī ʿabd Munʿim, al-Yaʿmarī Abū Bakr] from the *shuʿarāʾ al-Taṣawwuf* [(mystic poetry): ibn Naḥwī, Abū Madyan, Sīdī Yaḥyā al-Zawāwī], the references for which are: *al-ihyāʾ*, by al-Ghazālī, and the *Risāla*, by al-Qushayrī. Finally, he speaks of the philosophical current (*Taṣawwuf al-Falsafī*), represented by: ibn ʿArabī, ibn Sabʿīn, al-Shushtarī and al-Hirrālī.

Meanwhile, an analysis of the work allows us to identify the Sufis originally from the Kabyle: Abū Zakariyā Staʾitī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Zawāwī Yeturghi of Banī Yetourgh (Michelet) and ibn Maṣṣūr Zawāwī Yerathni. He also makes it possible to identify Taṣawwuf's works circulating around the city: *Risālat Fadhl Makka*, by Abū Saʿīd ibn Abī al-Ḥasan al-Buṣrī; *Risālat*, al-Qushaʿirī; *Kitāb*, by Abū al-Farraj al-Jawzī (Al-Gubbrini, 1970).

INTELLECTUAL SITUATION AT THE END OF THE 13TH CENTURY

The decline of the end of the 13th century is documented by al-ʿAbdarī in his work *Riḥlat al-Maghribiyya*. Al-ʿAbdarī, who had a certain affinity with Sufism,

makes a very harsh assessment of Bugia (a city he visited in 1286): «This country contains the remains of the foundations of Islam. It is a place where the great wise men have lived... but it is undergoing a change affecting the city and the countryside. The sources of wisdom have begun to become exhausted, reaching complete extinction» (Aissani et al., 1993).

RAMON LLULL'S DEBATES IN BUGIA

The famous Catalan philosopher Ramon Llull (Palma de Mallorca 1232-Tunis or Majorca 1316), who is given the nickname of «the enlightened doctor» is known above all for his system *Ars Magna*, which attracted the attention of Leibniz.

Ramon Llull made various journeys to the Maghreb, but it is his journey to Bugia in 1307 which saw his name go down in history. In fact, it made possible the only methodical discussion between Llull and a Muslim wise man of which we have evidence. This discussion only happened thanks to the goodwill of the *ulemas*.

SITUATION OF BUGIA IN 1307

The city was in a context of temporary independence and the treaty signed five years earlier before with the young Majorcan kingdom was still in force. The intellectual life of the period seems to have been dominated by the process of restoration of Malikism, against Almo-hadism. Sufism was also developing at all social levels. Along these lines, Urvoy believes that certain «favourable elements» that were in the city decades before had disappeared.

This was precisely the period when the city of Bugia was playing an essential role in the renaissance of studies of the *fiqh* in North Africa. Among the

initiators of this renaissance, which must have been very considerable, we find «the greatest of the sheikhs», Naşir al-Dīn al-Zawāwī (1235-1335). When still a child he accompanied his father to Egypt and met the students of the Egyptian Malikite ibn al-Ḥājjib (1175-1248). According to ibn Khaldūn, Naşir al-Dīn was the first to bring the famous *Mukhtasar*, ibn al-Ḥājjib's treaty on jurisprudence, to the Maghreb.

THE «DEBATES»

Ramon Llull was in Bugia from spring to autumn in 1307. We can get quite a precise idea of this from his *Vita coetanea*, written in 1311 by one of his Parisian followers. It seems that the debate began when he declared aloud: «The Christian law is the only true, holy law, unique and pleasing in the eyes of God. The law of Muhammad is erroneous and I am prepared to demonstrate it». He asked the Mufti (official interpreter of Muslim law) «who had a great reputation as a philosopher», for a meeting of wise men to «debate».

LLULL'S WORKS IN BUGIA

The results of Llull's stay in Bugia are difficult to assess. We do not know the names of the wise men with whom he had contact or the works he produced, as, after his «disappointments», the Genoese ship that was taking him home was wrecked and he lost all his manuscripts in the storm. Despite this, in Pisa he tried to rewrite his works. One thing we can be sure of: in Bugia, Llull was able to work with absolute freedom. All witnesses confirm this, and even the traveller Charles de Peyssonnel, who visited the city four centuries later (1725), pointed out various places which Majorcan fishermen called «Ramon Llull's cave».

DISPUTATIO RAIMUNDI CHRISTIANI ET HOMERI SARACENI

The new version of this «debate» was principally designed to be sent to the Pope of Avignon to serve as a basis for a missionary project or Crusade. The *disputatio* was of interest above all to philosophers and theologians for the dispute between the Christian and the Muslim taking place in the work.

Homer mainly answers the Christian dogmas of the Trinity and the Incarnation. God, says Homer, is defined as necessity, unity, singularity, infinity, eternity, simplicity and life. He also has eleven qualities: goodness, greatness, strength, wisdom, will, virtue, glory, perfection, justice and mercy. That is, a total of eighteen principles. Llull accepts seven of them, but denies him eleven.

SUFISM AND ISLAMO-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

The stages of Islamo-Christian dialogue (ibn Sab'īn answers to the *Sicilian questions*, Llull's discussion with the wise men of Bugia and the integration of ibn Sab'īn themes arising in his *Logica nova*) have been a reason for analysis (Urvoy, 2003). Urvoy has found a series of points in common. The most visible one is that the initiative was always taken by the European. Another point in common is the presence of Sufism in all these stages. According to Urvoy, there is a degree of homogeneity in these stages because it is the same school, which comes from al-Shudhī (a *qādi* from Seville who became an errant Sufi in the Maghreb) via ibn al-Mar'a and ibn Ahla, and comes out in al-Riqūtī and later in ibn Sab'īn and his followers al-Shushtarī and ibn Hūd (Urvoy, 2003).

INFLUENCE OF THE SCHOOLS OF IBN SABʿĪN AND IBN ʿARABĪ

IBN SABʿĪN'S SCHOOL

When the biographer al-Ghubrīnī speaks of ibn SabʿĪn he states that he had various followers, which means his classes were very successful in Bugia (Aïssani *et al.*, 1993). In his classes he did not speak of Sufism, but he did when he spoke of al-Shushtarī. Ibn SabʿĪn, who is usually very critical, speaks of ibn ʿArabī in elegiac terms. It was certainly the latter's famous group that maintained various elements of his teachings. In fact, we see that half a century later this wise man once again appears in the work of the Catalan Ramon Llull.

Ibn SabʿĪn's works appear as an essential contact point between Llull and Islam. In fact, Lohr's works have shown that, from 1303, in his efforts to establish what he called the *Logica nova*, Llull finally incorporated the main elements of the logical part of *Budd al-ʿarīf* by ibn SabʿĪn.

THE INFLUENCE OF IBN ʿARABĪ

It seems that all opinions agree about ibn ʿArabī's influence. For example, according to Rashed, the figure A in the *Ars Magna* once again picks up the configuration that ibn ʿArabī had already used in his *Inshā' al-dawāʾir* (written in Tunis in 1201, just after his famous vision in Bugia).

THE DISPUTATIO

Although it is impossible to determine its relationship with the lost original, the new version of the *disputatio* (Pisa, 1308) does, however, retain traces of influence, such as the use by the Bugia wise men of words typical of ibn SabʿĪn's school. We are talk-

ing, for example, about the concept of *wujūd mutlaq*. From here, we can deduce that Llull's relationship with the intellectual atmosphere of the city lasted a long time, considering that he was ready to receive language of this kind. In fact, his thought integrates essential elements of the logical part of ibn SabʿĪn's *Budd al-ʿarīf*, a work he studied and probably complemented with his stays in Ifriqiya (Aïssani *et al.*, 1993).

INTEGRATION OF THE THEMES EMERGING FROM IBN SABʿĪN

Ramon Llull does not share the same monist view as ibn SabʿĪn. Despite this, he knows how to introduce himself into the mechanisms of Sufi thought and how to exploit them to his own advantage. In fact, this meeting took place in the field of logic, but it is not maintained only in the sphere of scholarly technique. In fact, the two wise men have much higher ambitions. As Urvoy rightly highlights, what Llull calls «new logic» takes up ibn SabʿĪn's project to establish a true «philosophical» and not merely technical logic – a theory of knowledge and not just a series of rules for reasoning correctly – in order to achieve «natural» knowledge not just of «second intentions» (the accidental causality of humans) but also «first intentions» (essential divine causality). Because of this, he drew up a list of nine «themes», ranging from God to instrumental things, established according to ibn SabʿĪn's rules, although the names were not the same. In the same way as the Arab author, Llull describes the way the intellect can be raised through the various themes to God and go back down to the particular. He calls this the method of *ascensu et descensu intellectus*, to which are added other common technical aspects (Urvoy, 2003).

There was an outstanding intellectual and at the same time spiritual meeting. It is true that their paths immediately separated, because Llull wanted to define a «trinitarian» view of the world, like the model of the Christian God, while ibn SabʿĪn thought he had to try to convert Muslim unitarianism into true existential monism. Similarly, the Catalan's work is absolutely exoteric, while the Andalusians is esoteric. Ibn SabʿĪn's and Llull's logic is, essentially, an instrument of mystical unification, but the application of this unifying trend is different for each of them: unity of divine energies for the Christian and unity of the creator's action and the passion of the created for the Sufi (Urvoy, 2003).

CONCLUSION

In his analysis, Balivet (1996) states that Ramon Llull explicitly recognises that he maintained direct relations with Muslim Sufis and received their influence. He defined the Sufis as religious men «who are most valued among them». These people, Llull specified, «who are called Sufis [...] have words of love and brief examples that give men great devotion».

In the very well-defined context of Islamo-Christian dialogue, Sufism appears as a «place for dialogue», where philosophy and theology come into contact. In their Sufi colleagues, Frederick II and Llull found excellent interlocutors with whom they could make progress.

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