

The Almoravids and the Meanings of Jihad #9780313385896 #Ronald A. Messier #ABC-CLIO, 2010 #2010 #248 pages

The Almoravid dynasty was an imperial Berber Muslim dynasty centered in Morocco. It established an empire in the 11th century that stretched over the western Maghreb and Al-Andalus. Founded by Abdallah ibn Yasin, the Almoravid capital was Marrakesh, a city the ruling house founded in 1062. The dynasty originated among the Lamtuna and the Gudala, nomadic Berber tribes of the Sahara, traversing the territory between the Draa, the Niger, and the Senegal rivers. Originally West African, Berber nomads, the Almoravids emerged from what is today Mauritania to rule Morocco, western Algeria, and Muslim Spain. Over the course of the century-long lifespan of the Almoravid dynasty, the concept of jihad evolved through four distinct phases: a struggle for righteousness, a war against pagans in the Sahara to impose their own sense of righteousness, war against "bad" Muslims in Sijilmasa and the rest of the Maghrib, and finally, war against Christian infidels--the Christian kings of Iberia. The Almoravids and the Meanings of Jihad takes readers through a clear This book follows the current British system of Arabic--English transliteration, used by the Encyclopedia of Islam 3, for the majority of technical Arabic terms and Berber terms in Arabic. his volume provides an introduction to the history of the Almoravids and the Almohads, two of the most important empires of the medieval Islamic west, an area defined here as al-Andalus (southern Spain and Portugal), the Maghrib and Ifriqiya (modern Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and western Libya). The Almoravid conquest took many decades, however, and shortly after their empire had reached its fullest extent in the 1110s, their control began to be challenged in the Maghrib by the nascent Almohad movement. The Almoravids, or al-Murabitun as they called themselves, were an Islamic Berber dynasty that established an empire in Morocco and eventually took it over a wide region of Northwest Africa including modern Morocco, Western Sahara, Mauritania, and part of Algeria. The Almoravids aimed to spread the Islamic traditions throughout Northern Africa and Al-Andalus which was Islamic Spain at the time. The dynasty was initiated and first led by Yahya ibn Ibrahim from the Lamtuna tribe of the Sahara in 1040. 1062--1269, in Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000); http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/almo/hd_almo.htm; Ronald A. Messier, *The Almoravids and the Meanings of Jihad* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010). ALMORAVIDS (Arab. Al-Murabi'at; "Warrior-Monks"), confederation of Berber tribes of the Sanhajah group who lived in the Moroccan Sahara Desert. Their religious fervor and fighting capabilities enabled them to establish a formidable empire in the Maghreb and Muslim (Andalusian) Spain in the 11th and 12th centuries. Notwithstanding, perhaps the weakest aspect of Almoravid rule in Spain and the Maghreb is the fact that they were a Muslim Berber minority in charge of a Spanish-Arab empire. With the passage of time, they found it increasingly difficult to protect all their territorial possessions from the Christian reconquest, especially in the aftermath of the fall of Saragossa in 1118.