

The Ruling Personality and Its Scholarly Impact during the Almoravid Era

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Abstract: This research examines the concept of the ruling personality in Islamic political thought through two main axes. First: The linguistic and terminological definition. The term "ruler" (al-mulūk) derives from the root k-m, which denotes prevention, precision, and settling disputes with truth, being the opposite of corruption. The term "personality" refers to the distinct, visible self that leaves an impact. Combining both, the ruling personality is linguistically defined as "the self whose effect appears in society through its possession of the power of governance and the right of enforcement." Terminologically, it is the individual who assumes the highest authority in the state, bears responsibility for managing its political, administrative, and military affairs, and influences the course of the state and society through his decisions, combining justice and competence while fulfilling the objectives of Sharia. Second: The historical application in the Almoravid State (453–541 AH / 1061–1147 CE). The research highlights the role of ruling personalities (Yusuf ibn Tashfin, Ali ibn Yusuf, Tashfin ibn Ali, Ibrahim ibn Tashfin, and Ishaq ibn Ali) in building a close strategic alliance with Maliki jurists. The Almoravids relied on scholars for religious legitimacy after emerging from the desert, in exchange for granting them wide influence in judiciary, fatwa, consultation, and administration. The study reviews the relationships of these princes with prominent scholars such as Abu al-Walid al-Baji, Abu Bakr ibn al-Arabi, Abu al-Walid ibn Rushd (the grandfather), Qadi Iyad, Abu al-Qasim ibn Hamdin, and others. It shows how jurists participated in decision-making, held high positions, and received material and moral support, in return for issuing supportive fatwas, consolidating the Maliki school, and confronting external (Crusader) and internal (Almohad) challenges. The research demonstrates that this alliance was a structural, interdependent one that contributed to the state's stability and scientific flourishing in certain periods, but later became part of the dynamics of its decline.

Keywords: Ruling Personality, Scholarly Impact, Almoravids, Almoravid Era, Al-Andalus, Islamic Maghreb.

Introduction

The ruling personality is considered one of the most important pillars of the political system in Islamic thought. It bears significant responsibilities in managing state affairs, achieving the interests of the subjects, protecting religion, and establishing justice. Understanding this concept therefore requires examining its linguistic and terminological meanings, which clarify the nature of the role performed by the ruling personality and its position within the Islamic political system.

In Islamic heritage, the ruler is not merely an administrative official but a central figure in whom religious and political legitimacy is embodied. He is entrusted with guiding the nation toward realizing the objectives of Sharia in civilization and stability. This concept finds clear manifestation in the historical experiences of Islamic states, particularly the Almoravid dynasty, which presented a unique model of a strategic alliance between political authority and Maliki jurists. Scholars became essential partners in decision-making and the consolidation of legitimacy.

This research aims to define the ruling personality linguistically and terminologically in Islamic political thought, then study its scientific and political impact during the Almoravid era as a historical application that illustrates how this concept was embodied in reality.

The Definition of the Ruling Personality in Islamic Political Thought

The ruling personality is regarded as one of the most essential pillars of the political system in Islamic thought, given the responsibilities it bears in managing the affairs of the state and securing the interests of the subjects. Understanding this concept therefore requires examining its linguistic and terminological connotations, so as to clarify the nature of the role played by the ruling personality and its standing within the Islamic political order.

First: The Linguistic Definition of the Ruling Personality

The ruler (al-ʿākim) is defined as one who prevents injustice and adjudicates among people with truth. The term derives from the root ʿakama, which denotes prevention, mastery, and the compelling of disputants to accept what is right — hukm (rule or judgment) being the very opposite of corruption; the ruler is thus the judge who arbitrates between disputants and prevents injustice.¹ Tracing the linguistic roots of the words "personality" (shakhṣiyya) and "ruler" (ʿākim) in Arabic lexicons, we find that the word shakhṣ (person) denotes a self-distinguished from others, whether in form or in meaning. It has been said that a "person" is anybody possessing height and visible presence,² a definition that reveals an essential dimension: the person is perceived as a manifest entity whose effect is evident within its surroundings.

As for the word ʿākim (ruler), it derives from hukm, meaning prevention, arbitration, and judgment. It has been stated that hukm is judgment and the ruler's compelling of others to accept what he deems right,³ meaning that the ruler is one who possesses the authority to compel disputants to justice and to rule in accordance with the Sharia.⁴

Combining the two connotations, it may be said that the ruling personality, linguistically, is: the self whose effect appears in society through its possession of the authority to rule and the right to compel.

Second: The Terminological Definition

The ruling personality is the individual who assumes supreme authority in the state, bears responsibility for managing its political, administrative, and military affairs, and shapes the course of the state and society through his decisions and policies, by virtue of the official powers and actual influence he possesses.⁵

The concept of the ruling personality is one of the central concepts in the study of Islamic political thought, given its direct bearing on state-building, the guidance of society, and the achievement of general stability. It is not merely a position of authority, but a leadership model combining justice and competence, entrusted with guiding the nation, ensuring the unity of the community, and realizing the objectives of the Sharia in matters of civilizational development and stability.⁶ The ruler is not viewed in the Islamic heritage merely as the holder of an administrative office, but as a pivotal figure embodying the values of legitimacy, entrusted with the responsibility of protecting religion and organizing the affairs of the people — a role affirmed by the theory of the Imamate in Islamic political jurisprudence.⁷

The Ruling Personality and Its Scholarly Impact in the Almoravid Era

1. The Almoravid Rulers' Patronage of Scholars and Jurists

The rulers of the Almoravid state sought to revive and spread anew the principles of authentic Islam according to the teachings of the Maliki school, transforming this into a systematic state policy that deeply influenced every aspect of intellectual life from the establishment of educational institutions, to the determination of which forms of knowledge were accepted or rejected, to the patronage extended to certain groups of scholars and the restrictions imposed on others.⁸

The relationship between the Almoravid state and the jurists was not merely a policy of patronage and encouragement, but a structural, strategic alliance in which the jurists constituted the state's essential legislative class, while the emirs provided the military and executive force needed to entrench the Maliki school and transform it into the law of the state and society.⁹

A unique symbiotic relationship arose between the Almoravid emirs and the Maliki jurists, each party being in urgent need of the other to consolidate its authority. The Almoravids, as a military force emerging from the desert, lacked the religious and cultural legitimacy required to govern the ancient urban societies of the Maghrib and al-Andalus.¹⁰ They found this legitimacy in the Maliki jurists, who enjoyed wide spiritual and social influence and who had grown weary of the extravagance, political fragmentation, and religious decline that had marked the era of the Taifa kings. These jurists viewed the Almoravids as a redemptive force capable of uniting the ranks, restoring the authority of the Sharia, and repelling the mounting Christian threat in al-Andalus. In return, the Almoravid emirs — foremost among them Emir Yusuf ibn Tashfin (r. 453–500 AH) and his son Emir ‘Ali (r. 500–537 AH) — granted the jurists unprecedented authority and influence. The historian ‘Abd al-Wahid al-Marrakushi¹¹ describes this reality clearly, noting that Emir ‘Ali ibn Yusuf would settle no matter throughout his entire kingdom without consulting the jurists, and that in his days they attained a standing unmatched since the earliest period following the conquest of al-Andalus. This alliance was not mere patronage but an actual sharing of power, whereby the jurists became the legislators and directors of the state's domestic and foreign policies. The importance of this juristic support is reflected in the celebrated fatwa issued from the East by Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, which upheld Emir Yusuf ibn Tashfin's right to depose the Taifa kings,¹² thereby lending his military intervention in al-Andalus a religious legitimacy that extended beyond the borders of the Islamic West.

The role of the jurists went beyond the purely religious sphere to become firmly embedded in the political and judicial administration of the state. They occupied the highest offices, particularly the judiciary and the issuing of legal opinions, and their views became decisive in the appointment and dismissal of governors and in decisions of war and peace.¹³ A number of prominent scholars embodied this juristic influence throughout the lifespan of the Almoravid state; we shall now examine the relationship between the Almoravid ruler and the scholars closest to him:

Emir Yusuf ibn Tashfin and His Interest in Learning and Scholars: During the reign of Emir Yusuf ibn Tashfin (453–500 AH/1061–1106 CE), the jurists were not merely advisers; they were the decision-makers who granted the Almoravids their mandate to rule al-Andalus.

The Most Prominent of These Scholars and Their Close Relationship with Emir Yusuf ibn Tashfin

1. Imam Abu al-Walid al-Baji (d. 474 AH/1081 CE)

He served as the voice of the Andalusian nation and the intellectual architect of its spirit of resistance. Owing to his religious standing, he was able to move between the warring Taifa kings, warning them of the perils of division and calling for an end to their disputes in order to confront the Christian advance. Although he died before the Almoravids were actually called upon for help, his reform efforts paved the way, at the popular level, for their later acceptance. Emir Yusuf ibn Tashfin held al-Baji in great esteem, owing to his standing and leadership within the Maliki school.¹⁴

2. Judge Ibn al-‘Arabi the Elder, and the Jurist Abu Bakr, His Son (d. 543 AH/1148 CE)

Judge Abu Muhammad, the father, served as a minister close to al-Mu‘tamid ibn ‘Abbad, king of Seville. Following the Almoravid conquest and the fall of the Banu ‘Abbad state, the father and his son Abu Bakr left al-Andalus in 485 AH/1092 CE, fleeing the political upheaval.¹⁵ During their journey to the East, they worked with political acumen to obtain fatwas from the great imams of the East, foremost among them Imam al-Ghazali and al-Tartushi, lending legitimacy to the rule of Yusuf ibn Tashfin and affirming his right to depose the Taifa kings for their failure to wage jihad. After his father's death in the East, Abu Bakr ibn al-‘Arabi returned to al-Andalus bearing these fatwas, presenting them as a token of loyalty and reconciliation to the Almoravid authority.¹⁶

These fatwas served as a political and scholarly lifeline for Abu Bakr ibn al-‘Arabi. Yusuf ibn Tashfin, and after him his son Emir ‘Ali ibn Yusuf, received him with the utmost honor, reflected in three respects:

1. He was not merely pardoned, but was appointed to the highest judicial office: the Almoravids placed him in charge of the judiciary of Seville, the capital and foremost city of al-Andalus. This post represented the apex of the judicial and religious hierarchy in the region.¹⁷

2. Ibn al-‘Arabi became one of the leading advisers of the Almoravid state. The fatwas he had brought back granted him unrivaled immunity and standing, so that the Almoravids came to rely on him for counsel, his voice carrying weight at the Almoravid court, to the extent that he later led major diplomatic and political missions on their behalf.¹⁸

3. Owing to his favor with Yusuf ibn Tashfin and his son, Ibn al-‘Arabi acquired immense wealth. Sources record that he became one of the wealthiest men of his time in al-Andalus, living a princely life in Seville, possessing estates and fortunes that enabled him to pursue teaching and the vigorous dissemination of knowledge, drawing on his wealth and influence.¹⁹

3. The Jurist Abu Muhammad ibn Rizq (d. 477 AH/1084 CE)

He was among the leading jurists of Córdoba who perceived the early Christian threat, and his opinion was decisive in favor of appealing to the Almoravids for aid. Sources indicate that he was among those who wrote to Emir Yusuf ibn Tashfin, urgently pressing him to cross the strait to the relief of al-Andalus. His early death in 477 AH, however, prevented him from witnessing the fruit of his efforts; his role was thus confined to intellectual and political groundwork, and he did not live to see the actual Almoravid crossing at the Battle of al-Zallaqa in 479 AH.²⁰

4. The Jurist Imam al-Ghazali (d. 505 AH/1111 CE): Although he never lived in the Maghrib nor visited al-Andalus, his religious and political influence on the Almoravid state was immense. Emir Yusuf ibn Tashfin relied, in lending legitimacy to his rule and to his deposition of the Taifa kings, on the fatwas of the great imams of the East, foremost among them the ʿujjat al-Islām al-Ghazali. This fatwa was not issued at the direct request of the Almoravid emir himself; rather, it was scholars of al-Andalus, such as Judge Abu Bakr ibn al-ʿArabi, who sought it out during their journeys to the East, bringing it back to Yusuf ibn Tashfin in support of his authority and urging him to establish justice.

Although the two men never met, mutual esteem and reverence bound them; Emir Yusuf ibn Tashfin took pride in al-Ghazali's fatwa, regarding it as a religious mandate for governing the Islamic West. Al-Ghazali, in turn, was so impressed by the biography, justice, and jihad of Ibn Tashfin that he set out from the East intending to visit him in the Maghrib; but upon reaching Alexandria, news reached him of the emir's death, and he turned back without completing his journey. This mutual regard laid the foundation for a new era, as the reign of his son, Emir ʿAli ibn Yusuf ibn Tashfin (500–537 AH/1106–1143 CE), came to represent the golden age of juristic influence, during which the state reached the height of its civilizational and geographical expansion. Emir ʿAli was deeply pious and inclined to consult scholars, to the point that it became customary in his state that no matter, small or great, in politics, administration, or war, would be settled without referral to the juristic consultative council — placing the direction of the state and effective authority in the hands of the jurists.²¹

5. Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Rushd al-Jadd (d. 520 AH/1126 CE): He is considered the most powerful juristic and judicial figure during the reign of Emir ʿAli ibn Yusuf. His relationship with the emir was not merely that of a judge to a king; he was the foremost strategic adviser and the principal guide of official Almoravid juristic thought.

Emir ʿAli ibn Yusuf's influence upon this scholar was considerable: he granted him wide political and administrative authority by appointing him "judge of the community" (qāḍī al-jamāʿa) in Córdoba in 511 AH. Nor did the emir stop there; he lent Ibn Rushd's fatwas sovereign and executive force, relying on him in the gravest matters touching the security of the empire and its jihad campaigns. This absolute influence was reflected in the emir's immediate response to Ibn Rushd's military fatwas — such as his decision to encircle the cities of al-Andalus with walls, and to deport the treacherous Mozarab Christians from al-Andalus to the Maghrib — demonstrating that the emir made the jurist an actual partner in managing the highest affairs of the state.²²

6. Judge ʿIyad ibn Musa al-Sabti (d. 544 AH/1149 CE)

He represented the intellectual and religious arm of Emir ʿAli ibn Yusuf across the lands of the Maghrib and al-Andalus. He enjoyed the emir's absolute trust, reflected in his appointment as judge of the most important cities — first Ceuta, then Granada. ʿIyad was the foremost defender of Almoravid legitimacy

against the rising calls of the Almohads, regarding Emir 'Ali's rule as the Sunni bulwark of the Maliki school.

The appointment of Judge 'Iyad to these sensitive posts was not a mere administrative assignment, but an embodiment of the close alliance between political authority and religious legitimacy. The tragic end of Judge 'Iyad affirmed the depth of this intellectual and political loyalty: after the collapse of the Almoravid state, he refused to abandon his position or submit to the authority of the new Almohad rulers, and led the revolt of the people of Ceuta against them in fulfillment of his allegiance — a stance that ultimately led to his exile to Marrakesh, where he died, reportedly assassinated, in 544 AH, paying with his life and his security for his adherence to the legitimacy of the Almoravid state.²³

After settling in al-Andalus, Ibn al-'Arabi became one of the pillars of the scholarly renaissance embraced by Emir 'Ali ibn Yusuf. The emir made use of Ibn al-'Arabi's prestige and learning to regulate the judiciary in Seville and to spread religious education in support of the state's stability and the consolidation of its legitimacy in the face of intellectual rivals.

Ibn al-'Arabi exemplified the scholar patronized by the state of Emir 'Ali ibn Yusuf, whose learning and prestige were put to good use, making him one of the pillars of the scholarly renaissance the emir supported in order to consolidate the state's legitimacy.²⁴

7. Abu al-Qasim ibn Hamdin (d. 521 AH/1127 CE)

Judge of Córdoba and one of the most influential figures at the Almoravid court. He inherited judicial leadership from his father and represented the head of the conservative Maliki current on which Emir 'Ali ibn Yusuf relied to preserve the religious identity of the state. His influence reached such a degree that he shaped public opinion in Córdoba in support of the emir's decisions, standing firmly against any alien intellectual trends that threatened the stability of the school.

The influence of Emir 'Ali ibn Yusuf upon him was clearly reflected, both morally and materially. On the political and moral side, the emir gave him free rein in the judiciary and administration and granted his rulings and positions absolute immunity, making his word binding and obeyed in both palace and street alike, until he became, in effect, the actual ruler of Córdoba. On the material side, the emir lavished gifts and vast sums upon him, granting him a life of great wealth and a standing rivaling that of the emirs and senior army commanders — making him a fundamental pillar benefiting from the close alliance between the authority of the jurists and the Almoravid state.²⁵ He was among the great scholars of hadith and jurisprudence with whom Emir 'Ali surrounded himself. Despite his inclination toward asceticism and teaching, the emir sought his blessing and learning, and al-Sadafi contributed to forming the generation that would later administer the state's scholarly affairs — among them his student, Judge 'Iyad.

Emir 'Ali ibn Yusuf held Abu 'Ali al-Sadafi in high esteem and reverence. Al-Sadafi was martyred at the Battle of Cutanda while urging the people to jihad under the Almoravid banner.²⁶

Emir Tashfin ibn 'Ali ibn Yusuf, died 539 AH/1145 CE

He assumed rule at an extremely critical period in the history of the Almoravid state, as it faced the mounting threat of the Almohads. Despite the brevity of his reign — roughly two years — and his preoccupation with campaigns in the field, he inherited the juristic consultative council established by his father, and continued to rely on senior scholars to consolidate his military and religious legitimacy.

The Most Prominent Scholars Who Played a Role During His Reign, and Their Relationship with Him

1. Judge ‘Iyad ibn Musa al-Sabti (d. 544 AH/1149 CE)

Judge ‘Iyad was the principal pillar of Tashfin ibn ‘Ali's legitimacy in the Maghrib. Theirs was not merely a judicial relationship; ‘Iyad was the popular mobilizer who rallied the people of Ceuta and the surrounding regions to defend the state against the Almohads. ‘Iyad enjoyed a lofty standing with Tashfin, who consulted him on how to confront the call of al-Mahdi ibn Tumart, both doctrinally and politically.

During the reign of Tashfin ibn ‘Ali, Judge ‘Iyad represented a line of intellectual and practical resistance, leading a movement against the Almohads in fulfillment of his Almoravid allegiance; Tashfin regarded ‘Iyad as the religious guarantee for the continuation of his family's rule.²⁷

‘Iyad enjoyed great standing with Tashfin, who relied on him to legitimize his war and confront Almohad claims from a juristic and political standpoint, regarding him as the Sunni Maliki bulwark protecting the legitimacy of continued Almoravid family rule.²⁸

2. Abu Bakr ibn al-‘Arabi al-Ma‘afiri (d. 543 AH/1148 CE)

Ibn al-‘Arabi continued, during the reign of Tashfin ibn ‘Ali, to serve as a major authority in al-Andalus and the Maghrib. As unrest intensified, Tashfin relied on Ibn al-‘Arabi's scholarly prestige to calm internal conditions in al-Andalus and ensure the continuation of popular support for the Almoravids against local uprisings and the Almohad advance.

Under Tashfin ibn ‘Ali, Ibn al-‘Arabi represented the link between military authority and the Maliki scholarly milieu; the state patronized him and made good use of his learning and prestige to consolidate legitimacy in a time of turmoil.²⁹ Among his works:

1. al-‘Awasim mina al-Qawasim.
2. Ahkam al-Qur'an.
3. ‘Aridat al-Ahwadhi Sharh Sunan al-Tirmidhi.
4. Qanun al-Ta'wil.³⁰

He held teaching and fatwa-issuing sessions in Seville and Córdoba, gathering around him a large number of students and jurists; his gatherings became among the most prominent scholarly circles of the late Almoravid era.

The office he held: Judge of Seville under the Almoravids, one of the leading Maliki jurists and state advisers in matters of religious law.³¹

What he received from the state:

5. Appointment to the judiciary.
6. Honor and proximity to the Almoravid court.
7. Moral support and official standing that enabled him to fulfill his scholarly role.³²

3. Abu al-Walid ibn Rushd al-Jadd (d. 520 AH/1126 CE)

Although Ibn Rushd al-Jadd died before Tashfin formally assumed power, his fatwas and his approach to purposive jihad (al-jihad al-maqasidi) constituted the constitution that Tashfin ibn 'Ali followed in his attempt to reunite the fragmented state. Tashfin considered himself a disciple of the approach established by Ibn Rushd al-Jadd during the reign of his father.

Ibn Rushd al-Jadd was among those who shaped the juristic policy that endured into the reign of Tashfin ibn 'Ali, helping to strengthen the state's reliance on the jurists as a source of political and military legitimacy.³³

Positions he held in the Almoravid state: Ibn Rushd al-Jadd held several senior official positions, the most prominent being:

8. Judge of the community (qadi al-jama'a) in Córdoba, the highest judicial office in al-Andalus.
9. Grand mufti of the Maliki school in al-Andalus.
10. Member of the juristic consultative council of the Almoravid state.
11. He served as a reference for Emir 'Ali ibn Yusuf ibn Tashfin (500–537 AH/1106–1143 CE) in religious and political matters.

He was the greatest jurist of al-Andalus in his time, and the ultimate authority in matters of legal opinion and adjudication,³⁴ and the Almoravid state granted him funds and gifts, as he received the emoluments of his judicial office, in addition to the honors and gifts associated with the post of judge of the community.³⁵

Ibn Rushd al-Jadd did not write propagandistic works for the Almoravid state, but he authored juristic and judicial works that the state relied upon in its judiciary and legal opinions, among them:

12. al-Bayan wa-l-Tahsil wa-l-Sharh wa-l-Tawjih wa-l-Ta'lil fi Masa'il al-Mustakhraja.
13. al-Muqaddamat al-Mumahhidat.
14. Fatawa Ibn Rushd.
15. Mukhtasar ma Laysa fi al-Mukhtasar.

These works were relied upon by Almoravid judges and jurists in adjudication and the organization of legal rulings, making them the official juristic reference of the state. Ibn Rushd al-Jadd was not known for literature or poetry as the poets of al-Andalus were, but rather for his scholarly and juristic gatherings.

Among his most notable activities:

16. Holding teaching circles in the Great Mosque of Córdoba.
17. Overseeing juristic debates among Maliki scholars.
18. Receiving students and judges to study jurisprudence under him.
19. Participating in the scholarly gatherings attended by the senior jurists of the Almoravid state.³⁶

4. The Jurist Abu Ja'far ibn Hamdin (d. 541 AH/1146 CE)

He was judge of Córdoba and one of the most influential jurists in al-Andalus during Tashfin's reign. His relationship with the Almoravids was one of strategic alliance: while Tashfin was preoccupied with fighting the Almohads in the Maghrib, it was Ibn Hamdin who steered affairs in Córdoba and maintained loyalty to the Almoravids, before matters later grew turbulent.

The Maliki jurists under Tashfin ibn ʿAli formed an integral part of the state's political apparatus, and Ibn Hamdin represented the strength of the jurists in al-Andalus, on whom Tashfin relied to preserve the unity of the ranks.³⁷

Tashfin's relationship with these scholars was one of existential necessity; the state was collapsing militarily, and the scholars alone were capable of granting Tashfin the moral legitimacy to continue fighting the Almohads, who claimed the mantle of the Mahdiyya. Tashfin was accordingly deeply deferential toward them, constantly requesting fatwas exposing the error of his opponents' doctrine.

Among the offices he held:

- 20. Judge of Córdoba.
- 21. One of the leading Maliki jurists in al-Andalus.
- 22. One of the juristic advisers whom the Almoravid authority relied upon in general matters.³⁸

By virtue of holding the judicial office and being one of the state's leading scholars, he enjoyed the emoluments and salary associated with his judicial post, as well as the marks of honor and patronage accorded to senior jurists of the Almoravid state; the sources, however, do not record specific sums allotted to him by name.³⁹

Not many works are attributed to Ibn Hamdin that have come down to us, compared with Ibn Rushd al-Jadd or Ibn al-ʿArabi; he was better known for his judicial and juristic standing and his participation in public life. The sources record his role in issuing legal opinions and adjudication more than they record any literary output. Ibn Hamdin held juristic and scholarly gatherings in Córdoba, attended by students and jurists, which contributed to the spread of the Maliki school and enhanced the standing of scholars within Andalusian society. He also took part in the juristic councils associated with the judiciary and the issuing of fatwas, which enjoyed the patronage of the Almoravid state.⁴⁰

Emir Ibrahim ibn Tashfin (d. 541 AH/1147 CE)

It is important to clarify the context of his reign: he assumed the emirate under exceedingly dire circumstances, as a boy who had not yet reached puberty, and his rule lasted barely two months, in the year 540 AH/1145 CE. Owing to this brief span and the turmoil afflicting the state under the blows of the Almohads, no new class of advisory scholars emerged during his reign; he remained dependent on the remaining men of his father Tashfin ibn ʿAli and his grandfather ʿAli ibn Yusuf.

The most prominent scholars who witnessed this critical period, and who had a position or role connected to the end of the Almoravid state during his reign:

1. Judge ʿIyad ibn Musa al-Sabti (d. 544 AH/1149 CE)

Although his greatest influence had been during the reign of his grandfather ʿAli ibn Yusuf, Judge ʿIyad remained, under Ibrahim ibn Tashfin, the spiritual and legal symbol of Almoravid resistance. He represented the supreme authority attempting to fix allegiance to the Almoravids in the hearts of the people in the face of the advancing Almohad tide, regarding the continuation of the rule of the House of Tashfin — including Emir Ibrahim — as necessary for the preservation of the Sunni school.

Judge ʿIyad remained loyal to the House of Tashfin even under the harshest circumstances, regarding them as protectors of the Maliki school; this steadfast loyalty to the Almoravid emirs later caused his persecution by the Almohads and his exile.⁴¹

Offices he held:

23. Judge of Ceuta under the Almoravid state.
24. Judge of Granada for a period.
25. One of the leading Maliki jurists and religious advisers of the state.
26. Counted among the most prominent juristic authorities relied upon by Emir ʿAli ibn Yusuf ibn Tashfin in religious and judicial matters.⁴²

2. The Jurist Abu al-Qasim ibn Hubaysh (d. 584 AH/1188 CE)

He witnessed the final years of the Almoravid state, living through the upheavals under Ibrahim ibn Tashfin and Ishaq ibn ʿAli. He represented the class of scholars who sought to preserve the scholarly heritage amid political collapse, and later moved to al-Andalus.

Ibn Hubaysh grew up in the last days of the Almoravids and witnessed the weakening of their state under Emirs Ibrahim and Ishaq; he was among the scholars who carried the banner of the school and of hadith during that difficult transitional period.⁴³ The sources do not record that he held major political or judicial offices such as those held by Judge ʿIyad or Ibn Rushd al-Jadd; rather, he was known for teaching in al-Andalus, for Qur'anic recitation and hadith transmission, for overseeing scholarly circles in mosques, and for engaging in authorship, copying, and instruction.

Among his most important works:

27. Kitab al-Gharibayn fi al-Qur'an wa-l-Hadith.
28. Sharh Alfaz al-Muwatta'.
29. al-Tanbih ʿala al-Awham al-Waqi' a fi al-Kutub.
30. Works on language and the exegesis of unfamiliar hadith terms.⁴⁴

He held circles for the transmission of hadith and teaching in al-Andalus, and a number of students and hadith scholars studied under him.⁴⁵

3. The Jurist Abu Bakr ibn al-ʿArabi al-Maʿafiri (d. 543 AH/1148 CE)

While Emir Ibrahim ibn Tashfin faced imminent collapse in Marrakesh, Ibn al-ʿArabi still represented scholarly and political authority in al-Andalus, particularly Seville, striving to preserve stability and protect society from the chaos resulting from the weakness of central authority in the Maghrib.

During that period, Ibn al-ʿArabi served as the intellectual bulwark seeking to prevent the collapse of Andalusian society as Almoravid authority faltered under its last emirs, and he remained loyal to the state's course until his death near Fez.⁴⁶

Since Ibrahim ibn Tashfin was proclaimed in Marrakesh while the state lay dying, the relationship between him and the scholars was a defensive one:

- The scholars: attempted to establish his legitimacy as a symbol of Sunni Maliki stability.
- The boy-emir: had no real power of his own; his uncle Ishaq ibn ‘Ali actually managed affairs, and it was he who succeeded him swiftly in a desperate attempt to save the capital.

Emir Ishaq ibn ‘Ali, 540–541 AH/1146–1147 CE

This was the reign that witnessed the final chapter of the state of the jurists and the fall of the capital, Marrakesh.

The relationship in this period was one of shared fate: with the collapse of the authority of the House of Tashfin, the Maliki jurists lost the protector of their school and the supporter of their influence, driving them to fight to the last in defense of the state, even to its final moments.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the ruling personality in Islamic political thought is not an absolute power detached from religious values, but a responsible leadership that combines executive authority with commitment to justice and consultation. The Almoravid era vividly embodied this model through the organic alliance between princes and jurists, which provided the state with strong religious legitimacy and a solid jurisprudential foundation. It helped revive the Maliki school and unify ranks against challenges.

Nevertheless, history shows that the success of this ruling personality depends on its ability to maintain a balance of power between the political and religious-legal spheres, and to avoid absolute dependence that may lead to state weakness when circumstances change. Studying this concept and its historical manifestations offers valuable lessons for contemporary political thought, especially regarding the importance of combining administrative competence with commitment to religious and ethical values to achieve stability and civilization.

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²Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, vol. 12, p. 25.

³al-Fayyūmī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Fayyūmī al-Ḥamawī, Abū al-‘Abbās (d. c. 770 AH), *al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr, al-Maktaba al-‘Ilmiyya*, Beirut, 1987, p. 102.

⁴Ibn Fāris, Aḥmad ibn Fāris ibn Zakariyyā, Maqāyīs al-Lughā, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 1st ed., Dār al-Fikr, Beirut–Lebanon, 1979, vol. 2, p. 111.

⁵Layla, Muḥammad Kāmil, Mu‘jam al-Muṣṭalahāt al-Siyāsiyya wa-l-Dustūriyya [Dictionary of Political and Constitutional Terms], Dār al-Nahḍa al-‘Arabiyya, Beirut–Lebanon, 1984, p. 146.

⁶Imāra, Muḥammad, al-Imāma wa-Ahl al-Ḥall wa-l-‘Aqd fī al-Fikr al-Siyāsī al-Islāmī [The Imamate and the People of Authority in Islamic Political Thought], Dār al-Shurūq, n.p., 2000, pp. 25–30.

⁷al-Māwardī, Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb al-Baṣrī (d. 450 AH), *al-Aḥkām al-Sultāniyya wa-l-Wilāyāt al-Dīniyya*, ed. Aḥmad Mubārak al-Baghdādī, Dār Ibn Qutayba, Kuwait, 1st ed., 1989, p. 15.

⁸al-Khaṭṭāb, Aḥmad al-Khaṭṭāb, "Makānat al-Fuqahā’ wa-Nufūdhuhum fī al-Dawla al-Murābiṭiyya: Muḥāwala fī al-Ta’līl al-Tārīkhī" [The Standing and Influence of Jurists in the Almoravid State: An Essay in Historical Explanation], *Majallat al-Wāḍiḥa*, no. 9, Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ḥasaniyya li-l-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyya al-‘Ulyā, Rabat, 1435 AH/2014 CE, pp. 37–110.

⁹Būlaṭīf, Khidr Muḥammad, *Fuqahā’ al-Mālikiyya wa-l-Tajriba al-Siyāsiyya al-Muwahḥidiyya fī al-Gharb al-Islāmī* [The Maliki Jurists and the Almohad Political Experience in the Islamic West], p. 242.

¹⁰Author unspecified, "Tārīkh Dawlat al-Murābiṭīn wa-Ḥaḍaratihā 447–541 AH/1055–1147 CE," *Majallat Awraq Thaqāfiyya*, 27 November 2021, awraqthaqafya.com.

¹¹Abd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī, *al-Mu‘jib fī Talkhīṣ Akhbār al-Maghrib*, p. 125.

¹²Jusūs, al-Sulta al-Murābiṭiyya al-Ramzī wa-l-Mutakhayyal [The Almoravid Authority: Symbol and Imaginary], p. 46.

¹³Abbās, Iḥsān, *Tārīkh al-Adab al-Andalusī: ‘Aṣr al-Ṭawā’if wa-l-Murābiṭīn* [History of Andalusian Literature: The Age of the Taifa Kingdoms and the Almoravids], 5th ed., Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1978, p. 78.

¹⁴Ibn Bashkuwāl, Khalaf ibn ‘Abd al-Malik (d. 578 AH), *al-Ṣila fī Tārīkh A’immat al-Andalus*, ed. Jalāl al-Asyūṭī, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, Beirut, 2008, vol. 1, p. 112.

¹⁵For details of the departure of Ibn al-‘Arabī and his son following the fall of the Banū ‘Abbād, and their obtaining the fatwas of al-Ghazālī and al-Turtūshī in support of the Almoravids, see: al-Maqqarī al-Tilimsānī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb min Ghuṣn al-Andalus al-Raṭīb*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās, Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1997, vol. 2, pp. 27–29.

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- ¹⁷See: Ibn Bashkuwāl, al-Ṣila, ed. Jalāl al-Asyūṭī, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2008, vol. 1, p. 243; and also: Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt al-A‘yān wa-Anbā‘ Abnā’ al-Zamān, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās, Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1971, vol. 4, pp. 296–297.
- ¹⁸See: Ibn Bashkuwāl, al-Ṣila, pp. 296–297.
- ¹⁹al-Dhahabī, Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’, ed. Shu‘ayb al-Arna‘ūt, 3rd ed., Mu‘assasat al-Risāla, Beirut, 1985, vol. 20, p. 199.
- ²⁰‘Iyād, al-Qāḍī ‘Iyād ibn Mūsā (d. 544 AH), Tartīb al-Madārik wa-Taqrīb al-Masālik, ed. Sa‘īd Aḥmad A‘rāb, Maṭba‘at Fuḍāla, Morocco, 1982, vol. 8, p. 128.
- ²¹al-Marrākushī, ‘Abd al-Wāḥid, al-Mu‘jib fī Talkhīṣ Akhbār al-Maghrib, Cairo: al-Maktaba al-‘Asriyya, 2006, p. 145.
- ²²al-Qufri, ‘Alī Muḥammad Shāyī’, “al-Safārāt wa-l-Mu‘āhadāt fī ‘Aṣr al-Murābiṭīn 479–540 AH/1086–1145 CE,” Majallat Jāmi‘at al-Ḥaḍāra li-l-Dirāsāt al-Insāniyya, no. 1, 2024, p. 88. For more on his positions and judicial influence, see: Ibn Bashkuwāl, al-Ṣila, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2008, vol. 2, p. 205.
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- ³⁴Inān, Dawlat al-Islām fī al-Andalus, vol. 4, p. 102.
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