

Abstract: This article is an attempt to assess the contribution of al-ʿAlḥus³ to the science of Koranic exegesis. His work is at once erudite and extraordinary original, all the more for his rare combination of a traditionalist, *salafī* religious orientation with a spiritual, *mystic* temperament of the highest order. In fact, his *tafsīr*, as this article shows, abounds with the views, dicta and mystic states of the Sufis. At first sight, then, al-ʿAlḥus³ appears to be, in both academic and spiritual terms, a paradoxical character. Hence much of the article is devoted to probing this apparent contradiction, trying to disentangle the complex strands of al-ʿAlḥus³'s thought and the influences that have contributed to shaping his religious and intellectual outlook. The comments al-ʿAlḥus³ makes on Sufis and his references to them are closely examined with a view to determine his own stance on Islamic mysticism. The article, written in a manner that draws on al-ʿAlḥus³'s own stylistic devices, aims among other things to reproduce the climate of opinion that prevailed at the time as well as the character and personality of al-ʿAlḥus³ himself. The analysis gives special attention to Ibn ʿArab³, as al-ʿAlḥus³ seems to have found in him, in many respects, a kindred spirit. Al-ʿAlḥus³ is, however, not just another bewitched admirer of Ibn ʿArab³'s. For despite the Andalusian master's dazzling command of Arabic and his verbal artistry, al-ʿAlḥus³'s perspicacity and his uncommon touch with common sense never depart him. He has both the courage and wit to criticize Ibn ʿArab³ or to fault him where he finds him errant or swept away, by a heavy dose of mystic euphoria, from the path of *sharʿ*³ or reason. His criticisms are