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# PATRIMONIO ANDALUSÍ

## CULTURA, DOCUMENTOS Y PAISAJE

CHRISTINE MAZZOLI-GUINTARD (ED.)



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## ÍNDICE

PRELIMINAR Y APUNTES HISTORIOGRÁFICOS <i>Christine Mazzoli-Guintard</i> <i>Universidad de Nantes, UMR 6566-LARA</i> .....	9
IBN ḤAZM OF CORDOBA ON THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE CONDUCIVE TO SALVATION <i>Camilla Adang</i> <i>Tel Aviv University</i> .....	25
PAISAJE ISLÁMICO POST-ANDALUSÍ. ¿UN PATRIMONIO CLANDESTINO? <i>Luis F. Bernabé Pons</i> <i>Universidad de Alicante</i> .....	53
EL <i>NIṢĀB AL-AJBĀR WA-TAḌKIRAT AL-AJYĀR</i> (S. XV), UNA GUÍA DE MANUTENCIÓN ITINERANTE PARA POBRES Y ASCETAS DEL OCCIDENTE AL ORIENTE MUSULMÁN <i>Antonio Constán-Nava</i> <i>Universidad de Valencia</i> .....	71
DE NUEVO SOBRE EL CADIAZGO ANDALUSÍ EN EL PERIODO ALMORÁVIDE: REFLEXIONES SOBRE EL CADIAZGO DE BADAJOZ <i>Rachid El Hour</i> <i>Universidad de Salamanca</i> .....	91
LUGARES DE <i>RIBĀT</i> Y OTROS RELACIONADOS CON ELLOS EN EL MAGREB: INFORMACIONES DE AL-WARRĀQ (S. X) Y DE AL-BAKRĪ (S. XI) <i>Francisco Franco-Sánchez</i> <i>Universidad de Alicante</i> .....	107
IBN BURD AL-AKBAR (CA. 338-418/949-1027) Y EL ACTA OFICIAL DE RECONOCIMIENTO DE ‘ABD AL-RAḤMĀN <i>SANCHUELO</i> COMO SUCESOR DEL CALIFA HIṢĀM II. ESTUDIO Y TRADUCCIÓN <i>Mourad Kacimi</i> <i>Universidad de Valencia</i> .....	171

<p>APROXIMACIÓN A UNA GEOGRAFÍA SINÓPTICA DE AL-ÁNDALUS: EL <i>TAQWIM AL-BULDĀN</i>  DE ABŪ L-FIDĀ' (M. 732/1331)  <i>Miguel Ángel Manzano Rodríguez</i>  <i>IEMYRhD - Universidad de Salamanca</i> .....</p>	197
<p>MALLORCA EN LA <i>CRÓNICA ÁRABE DE LA CONQUISTA DE MALLORCA</i>: PAISAJES MATERIALES  Y EMOCIONALES DE UNA CIUDAD EN GUERRA (1229). REFLEXIONES PRELIMINARES  <i>Christine Mazzoli-Guintard</i>  <i>Universidad de Nantes, UMR 6566-LARA</i> .....</p>	217
<p>FUENTES JURÍDICAS Y SU CONTRIBUCIÓN AL ESTUDIO DE LA TEOLOGÍA RACIONAL  ISLÁMICA (<i>KALĀM</i>): A VUELTAS CON LA AUTORIDAD RELIGIOSA DE LOS AŞ'ARÍES EN  LAS <i>NAWĀZIL</i> DE IBN AL-ĤĀY'Ī (CÓRDOBA, M. 529/1134)  <i>Delfina Serrano Ruano / Mohamed Necir</i>  <i>ILC, CSIC / Universidad de Constantina II (Argelia)</i> .....</p>	243
<p>APÉNDICE GRÁFICO  <i>Paisaje islámico post-andalusí. ¿Un patrimonio clandestino?</i> .....</p>	265

PRELIMINAR Y APUNTES HISTORIOGRÁFICOS

CHRISTINE MAZZOLI-GUINTARD

*UNIVERSIDAD DE NANTES, UMR 6566-LARA*

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No podía imaginar, cuando participé por primera vez en la colección de “Estudios Árabo-Islámicos de Almonaster la Real”, hace ya casi veinte años, que se iba a desarrollar una serie de publicaciones con trayectoria tan larga y con temáticas tan amplias como renovadoras y que conseguiría el máximo reconocimiento, en tanto que colección editorial, con la obtención del sello de calidad CEA/APQ. No puedo dejar de manifestar, pues, mi más sincera enhorabuena y mi profundo agradecimiento al Ayuntamiento de Almonaster, que no duda en asumir, junto con la Editorial Universidad de Sevilla, la publicación de los volúmenes de esta colección desde hace tantos años. Tampoco debemos olvidar que, tras los imprescindibles e incondicionales apoyos de las instituciones, están los seres humanos: esta colección existe y sigue merced al empeño, a la constancia y a la incansable labor de su directora, la profesora Fátima Roldán Castro, de quien somos deudores los autores que publicaron –¡y publicarán!– los resultados de su investigación en los volúmenes de la colección almonasterense.

Los “Estudios Árabo-Islámicos de Almonaster la Real” participan en el conocimiento y en la difusión de temas numerosos y variados relacionados con el mundo árabo-islámico, en particular el andalusí, temas que quedan reflejados, por poner algunos ejemplos, en los siguientes títulos de la colección: *Espiritualidad y convivencia en al-Andalus*, *La mujer musulmana en la historia*, *El cielo en el Islam*, *La imagen y la palabra en el Islam*, *Paisajes, espacios y objetos de devoción en el Islam*, *Las artes del Islam. Danza y música, cine y caligrafía*, seguido de *Vidrios, marfiles, metales, cerámica y tejidos*. El volumen publicado ahora versa sobre *Patrimonio andalusí. Cultura, documentos y paisaje*, y lo componen nueve artículos con temas diversos, que abarcan la teología, el sistema judicial, la *rihla*, el *ribāt*, los paisajes tanto urbanos

como rurales de la península ibérica, desde la extensa ciudad de Mallorca hasta las pequeñas aldeas de Capaimona o de Yátova. Por otro lado, en su mayor parte, las épocas de la historia del Occidente islámico están presentes, desde el siglo X y hasta el siglo XVII, última etapa de la historia de los moriscos. Y, por fin, los documentos analizados, sobre todo obras de autores andalusíes, desde el brillante y celeberrimo polígrafo que fue Ibn Ḥazm hasta autores menos famosos y conocidos como fueron Ibn Burd al-Akbar o Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ, incluyen también obras de autores del Oriente, así Abū l-Fidā', o documentos de la cultura material, como las pequeñas iglesias, mezquitas cristianizadas, de las provincias de Alicante o Valencia. Ahora bien, todos los artículos reunidos van unidos por dos hilos conductores que queremos subrayar aquí: la historia cultural, por un lado; las líneas nuevas de estudio de los documentos, por otro lado.

La historia cultural, que permitió al historiador seguir ampliando su campo de investigación y, al mismo tiempo, desarrollar nuevos métodos de análisis, con la integración de la antropología cultural, “s’affiche comme une histoire renouvelée des institutions, des cadres et des objets de la culture”<sup>1</sup>. El análisis del cadiazgo de Badajoz en época almorávide, que nos ofrece Rachid El Hour<sup>2</sup>, se inscribe en esta historia renovadora de las instituciones: Badajoz, que fue capital de la potente taifa de los Banu al-Afṣas<sup>3</sup>, perdió importancia en época almorávide y el análisis propone, desde la historia de la institución judicial, sugestiva hipótesis para explicar este declive. El rey al-Mutawakkil b. al-Afṣas (1067-1096) procuró conservar su libertad hacia el poder almorávide, pactando con Yūsuf b. Tāšufin, pero sin dejar de tratar con Alfonso VI, lo que tuvo como consecuencia que Badajoz fue castigada por los almorávides para evitar un episodio de rebelión o un pacto con el enemigo. De la época almorávide, o sea los años 1094-1147, solo se conocen dos

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<sup>1</sup> P. Poirrier, “Histoire culturelle”, *Dictionnaire de l'historien*, C. Gauvard y J.-F. Sirinelli (dirs.), París: PUF, 2015, 332-335, c. 333.

<sup>2</sup> R. El Hour, “De nuevo sobre el cadiazgo andalusí en el periodo almorávide: reflexiones sobre el cadiazgo de Badajoz”, 91-106.

<sup>3</sup> Sobre esta potente taifa, véanse *Bataliús, el Reino Taifa de Badajoz: Estudios*, F. Díaz Esteban (ed.), Madrid: Letrúmero, 1996 y *Bataliús II. Nuevos estudios sobre el reino taifa*, F. Díaz Esteban, Madrid: Letrúmero, 1999.

cadíes; el segundo y último murió en 1105, es decir que los almorávides privan la ciudad de cadiazgo para que no hubiese en ella personajes destacados, capaces de negociar con un poder cristiano peninsular. La historia del cadiazgo de Badajoz en época almorávide elaborada por Rachid El Hour es, más allá de la mera historia de la institución judicial de Badajoz, historia política de ésta, historia urbana en suma.

La historia cultural permite, claro, el estudio de las más elaboradas formas de la cultura, bien se trate de obras literarias –siendo sus tan diversas producciones representadas en este volumen por la teología, la crónica, el libro de viaje, la descripción geográfica–, bien se trate de documentos oficiales, actas de la cancillería o dictámenes jurídicos emitidos por juristas en relación con casos legales. Mourad Kacimi<sup>4</sup> lleva a cabo una edición crítica del acta de sucesión de parte de Hišām II en favor del hijo de al-Manšūr, *Sanchuelo*: el acta fue elaborada por Ibn Burd al-Akbar (949-1027), secretario al servicio de los ‘āmíries y luego de los príncipes cordobeses de la *fitna* hasta 1024. Encargado de la cancillería, Ibn Burd redactaba actas en nombre del gobernante: así actuó en nombre del califa Hišām II, siendo el acta de reconocimiento de Sanchuelo como sucesor del califa el más destacado de sus escritos. Hasta la fecha existían dos traducciones al español de esta acta, ambas realizadas en base a una única versión transmitida por un cronista árabe. La novedad del estudio de M. Kacimi reside en la colación de las siete versiones transmitidas por los letrados árabes, desde Ibn Bassām (m. 1142) hasta al-Maqqarī (m. 1631), para llegar a una edición crítica del documento. Evidencia el excelente estilo literario del texto, con el empleo de la prosa ornada, y también el perfecto respecto de las formas del acta jurídica, que se nota en los modos de designación de los protagonistas: para tener forma oficial, el documento lleva, al final, los nombres de los testigos, cuya lista varía según el letrado que transmitió el acta. También estudia M. Kacimi la estructura del discurso y subraya el empleo de la retórica: Ibn Burd domina a la perfección las técnicas discursivas

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<sup>4</sup> M. Kacimi, “Ibn Burd al-Akbar (ca. 338-418/949-1027) y el acta oficial de reconocimiento de ‘Abd al-Rahmān *Sanchuelo* como sucesor del califa Hišām II. Estudio y traducción”, 171-195.

y desarrolla progresivamente la serie de argumentos destinados a convencer y a imponer la elección de Sanchuelo como sucesor del califa, a pesar de su carácter altamente controvertido.

Delfina Serrano y Mohamed Necir<sup>5</sup> dan a conocer una fetua del famoso jurista Ibn al-Ḥāỵy (1066-1134), cadí mayor de Córdoba, que murió asesinado cuando ejercía la judicatura suprema, fetua relativa a la legitimación de la teología aš'arí que, en época almorávide, representaba la ortodoxia en materia de teología y creencia. Más allá de la cuestión debatida en la fetua, la correcta opinión acerca de la autoridad religiosa de los teólogos de la escuela aš'arí, donde el jurista reproduce y confirma lo que habían dicho sobre el tema sus predecesores, Ibn Rušd e Ibn al-‘Awwād, la fetua permite esclarecer las circunstancias de la muerte de Ibn al-Ḥāỵy. Según narró Ibn al-‘Abbār (m. 1260), murió asesinado Ibn al-Ḥāỵy porque privó al heredero de un *imām* del cargo de su padre y, al mismo tiempo, de la casa asignada a su padre; plantean los investigadores la posible implicación de los sufíes en el homicidio, frente a la firme defensa de la sunna que llevaba a cabo el cadí. Delfina Serrano relaciona el asesinato de Ibn al-Ḥāỵy con otro magnicidio, el asesinato de Juliano de Médicis, y subraya con sumo acierto, utilizando los planteamientos de la antropología cultural, las coincidencias entre ambas muertes violentas: tanto en Córdoba en 1134 como en Florencia en 1478, las víctimas estaban indefensas, rezando en el templo mayor de potentes ciudades, y tenían la cabeza inclinada; ambos personajes representaban la autoridad suprema y la gente que presencié el homicidio reaccionó de la misma manera, cerrando las puertas del lugar sagrado, para evitar la huida de los asesinos e identificarlos. La historia cultural, a través del estudio de una fetua en apariencia de poco interés, ya que reproduce de forma resumida la argumentación presentada por autores anteriores, permite confirmar la rivalidad intelectual entre dos grandes sabios cordobeses, Ibn al-Ḥāỵy y su predecesor Ibn Rušd al-Ŷadd, y al mismo tiempo, permite una nueva lectura de un hecho político de gran transcendencia, el homicidio del cadí mayor de Córdoba.

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<sup>5</sup> D. Serrano y M. Necir, “Fuentes jurídicas y su contribución al estudio de la teología racional islámica (*kalām*): a vueltas con la autoridad religiosa de los aš'aríes en las *Nawāzil* de Ibn al-Ḥāỵy (Córdoba, m. 529/1134)”, 243-264.

Quizá sea Ibn Ḥazm, celeberrimo polígrafo del siglo XI, uno de los mejores representantes de la cultura sabia andalusí: Camilla Adang<sup>6</sup> analiza aquí un texto menos conocido de este autor, una epístola titulada *Risālat al-Taljīs li-wuḡūh al-tajlīs* (“Epístola concisa sobre los caminos hacia la salvación”). En esta *risāla*, conocida desde 1920 y analizada por Miguel Asín Palacios en 1930, Ibn Ḥazm contesta a preguntas que le están haciendo compañeros suyos, que pertenecen al *madhab* *zāhirī*, escuela que rechaza el *qiyās* y se opone al *taqlīd*. C. Adang propone el periodo 1039-1049 como fecha de redacción, cuando Ibn Ḥazm estaba en Mallorca y pudo difundir su enseñanza *zāhirī*. Contesta a preguntas sobre las actitudes que permiten conducir a la salvación y los saberes que es menester profundizar; subraya C. Adang que en vano se buscará en esta epístola mención de las ciencias clásicas, ya que están ausentes de la *risāla* la filosofía, la lógica, la astronomía, la cosmología o la geometría, sino que bastan las ciencias filológicas para entender la palabra de Dios revelada en el Corán y que inspiró la manera de actuar y las palabras del Profeta Muḥammad. Según Ibn Ḥazm, cada musulmán tiene que conocer parcialmente el Corán, ya que el conocimiento es *farḍ kifāya*, deber colectivo: solo es necesario que un número suficiente de creyentes conozcan los textos sagrados para enseñar a los demás.

Entre las formas sabias de la cultura andalusí, está el *Kitāb al-masālik wa-l-mamālik*, tratado geográfico-histórico redactado por al-Bakrī (1029-1094), sabio que comparte con Ibn Ḥazm el haber vivido durante el periodo de la fitna y de las taifas. Francisco Franco-Sánchez dedica un amplio y exhaustivo estudio a los lugares de *ribāṭ* en el Magreb, presentes en la obra de al-Bakrī<sup>7</sup>: este letrado fue un sabio áulico de la corte almeriense, tras haber vivido en Córdoba donde pudo consultar los archivos del palacio omeya para redactar su tratado. Sobre todo, al-Bakrī compuso el *Kitāb* compilando a cronistas y geógrafos, en particular al-Warrāq, que escribió en Córdoba, en el tercer cuarto del siglo X, un

<sup>6</sup> C. Adang, “Ibn Ḥazm of Cordoba on the pursuit of knowledge conducive to salvation”, 25-51.

<sup>7</sup> F. Franco-Sánchez, “Lugares de *ribāṭ* y otros relacionados con ellos en el Magreb: Informaciones de al-Warrāq (s. X) y de al-Bakrī (s. XI)”, 107-170.

tratado de geografía ahora perdido. Para cada uno de los 28 lugares de *ribāṭ* presentes en el *Kitāb*, F. Franco-Sánchez nos propone una traducción, a partir de la nueva edición del tratado de al-Bakrī, seguida por un estudio semántico del término *ribāṭ* y de toda la terminología relacionada con este vocablo; el estudio filológico se abre a la historia social, con el examen de aquellos que acudían al *ribāṭ*, y a la historia económica, con análisis de la repercusión del *ribāṭ* sobre la economía local, ya que la romería anual (*mawsim*) estaba acompañada de un mercado.

El *Taqwīm al-buldān* de Abū l-Fidā (m. 1331) es otro célebre tratado geográfico-histórico, debido esta vez a un sabio de Oriente, nacido en Damasco, que desempeñó un papel político como gobernador de Ḥamāh, además de su labor erudita. Miguel Ángel Manzano Rodríguez realiza un estudio novedoso, ya que esta obra no ha llamado la atención de los investigadores para el estudio del Occidente islámico, quizá por su representación, poco habitual, mediante tablas sinópticas<sup>8</sup>. M. Á. Manzano Rodríguez aborda cómo la obra de un letrado de la época mameluca evoca los paisajes de al-Andalus: están dominados por ciudades, presentadas con sus recursos y con especial atención hacia las estructuras defensivas; hay que buscar la razón de ser de esta mirada en el papel desempeñado por la frontera, y por tanto por la arquitectura de la defensa, tanto en al-Andalus como en Oriente, es decir que la mirada del letrado es la de un gobernador que conoce perfectamente los sistemas defensivos.

También pertenece el género ‘crónica’ a las formas sabias de la cultura: el *Kitāb tārij Mayūrqa*, redactado por Ibn ‘Amīra al-Majzūmī (1186-1260), que narra la conquista de Mallorca en el año 1229, poco ha recibido la atención de los investigadores. Propongo aquí un estudio preliminar de esta obra, dedicado al paisaje de una ciudad en guerra, paisaje visual de una ciudad destruida por los tiros de los almajaneques y construida por los asediados que elevaban una barbacana para sustituir la muralla derrumbada<sup>9</sup>. No cabe esperar de la crónica datos novedosos

<sup>8</sup> M. Á. Manzano Rodríguez, “Aproximación a una geografía sinóptica de al-Andalus: el *Taqwīm al-buldān* de Abū l-Fidā’ (m. 732/1331)”, 197-215.

<sup>9</sup> C. Mazzoli-Guintard, “Mallorca en la *Crónica árabe de la Conquista de Mallorca*: paisajes materiales y emocionales de una ciudad en guerra (1229). Reflexiones preliminares”, 217-241.

sobre el paisaje fortificado de Mallorca, que dio a conocer la investigación desde hace unos cincuenta años, siendo fundamental al respecto el papel de la arqueología, sino que procura la obra datos sobre una sociedad urbana en guerra, con movilizaciones para defender la ciudad y obligación colectiva de defensa de la misma.

Junto a las más elaboradas formas de la cultura, incluso las destinadas solo a una élite entre los musulmanes –según opinaba Ibn Ḥazm–, la historia cultural permite también integrar elementos menos prestigiosos y prácticas de la parte más humilde y numerosa de la sociedad: los patrimonios mudéjar y morisco de la Comunidad Valenciana presentados por Luis Bernabé Pons<sup>10</sup>, que carecen de carácter monumental y no pertenecen a la etapa andalusí, más conocida y de más prestigio, adolecen de conocimientos todavía imprecisos y, al mismo tiempo, de falta de atención mediática. En efecto, a pesar del fuerte desarrollo de la historiografía sobre mudéjares y moriscos, siempre quedaron en segundo plano los estudios relativos a esa etapa de la historia, que no favorecen, claro, las condiciones políticas y económicas de esas sociedades que les impidieron construir edificaciones monumentales. Subraya Luis Bernabé la necesidad de valorizar un patrimonio en parte olvidado, cuando no ha sido destruido, de tal forma que es hoy día un patrimonio ‘clandestino’, como lo califica acertadamente: es tarea pendiente y urgente estudiar, poner en valor y dar a conocer el patrimonio tanto inmaterial como material de las sociedades mudéjares y moriscas, siendo las mezquitas transformadas en iglesias sus elementos más visibles; así, en la zona de Valldigna la ermita de Santa Anna, del siglo XV, antigua mezquita de la Xara, o la mezquita de Chelva, o también la iglesia de los Santos Reyes de Yátova. Si hay que estudiar este patrimonio, es necesario también hacerlo visible para sacarlo definitivamente de la clandestinidad, utilizando los métodos de la nueva museología, que permitirán integrarlo en la *public history*<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> L. Bernabé Pons, “Paisaje islámico post-andalusí. ¿Un patrimonio clandestino?”, 53-70.

<sup>11</sup> D. Poulot, “Patrimoine”, *Dictionnaire de l'historien*, 521-524, c. 523.



Los estudios desarrollados por Antonio Constán-Nava sobre la obra de *rihla* de Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ, que profundiza en este volumen para perfilar algo más la personalidad del autor y las finalidades de la *rihla*<sup>12</sup>, evidencian el dinamismo de los mudéjares en la producción de un patrimonio escrito, cuya clandestinidad es de sobra conocida. Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ, mudéjar de la región valenciana, es un letrado nacido en el último tercio del siglo XIV, que viajó por el mundo islámico sin volver a su patria chica y redactó una guía para viajeros, con indicaciones sobre los lugares donde se podía comer y los espacios de devoción, sepulcros de santos y *zāwiya*-s, donde se podía rezar y beneficiarse de la santidad del lugar. Por otro lado, A. Constán-Nava introduce en su estudio las perspectivas nuevas de la historia de las emociones, examinando qué temía Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ: evidencia las emociones fuertes y las sensaciones de miedo que nacían de ciertas visitas a las tumbas, según narra Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ. Así, a propósito de la tumba de Hud el enviado, en el Yemen, escribe el viajero: “cuando entras en ella, el miedo y el terror se apoderan de ti. Si lo tocas con tu mano, te da la sensación de que todavía sigue vivo”. Subraya Constán-Nava que el mayor miedo del viajero era padecer el hambre: de Trípoli, recuerda Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ “una ciudad en la que anida el hambre y la escasez. [Sus habitantes] solo comen a la hora de la cena. [... al huir de ese país, dijo]: ‘Estas personas ni están vivas entre los vivos, ni son muertos entre los muertos. La única diferencia que existe entre el vivo y el muerto es que unos comen y los otros no’. Me llevé [la impresión de que es] un país dominado por el miedo y el hambre”. Tal y como indica A. Constán-Nava, “morir de sed es la muerte más horrible que haya presenciado Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ y uno de los padecimientos más temidos”<sup>13</sup>.

La historia de las emociones es, en efecto, una de las vías de investigación dinámica y reciente de la historia cultural, como es también la historia del cuerpo<sup>14</sup>: recibió un impulso decisivo de la antropología

<sup>12</sup> A. Constán-Nava, “El *Niṣāb al-ajbār wa-tadkirat al-ajyār* (s. xv), una guía de manutención itinerante para pobres y ascetas del occidente al oriente musulmán”, 71-90.

<sup>13</sup> A. Constán-Nava, “El *Niṣāb al-ajbār wa-tadkirat al-ajyār* (s. xv)”, 88.

<sup>14</sup> Solo mencionaré la reciente obra de G. Vigarello, *Histoire de la fatigue. Du Moyen Âge à nos jours*, París: Le Seuil, 2020. Sobre la historia del cuerpo, J. Le Goff y N. Truong, *Une histoire du corps au Moyen Âge*, París: Éd. Liana Levi, 2003.



cultural, muchos años después de las iniciativas de los historiadores de los *Annales* en favor del estudio de la vida afectiva y del artículo pionero de Lucien Febvre<sup>15</sup>. Entre las aportaciones de la historia de las emociones, están las críticas de la teoría de Norbert Elias sobre el proceso de civilización y la racionalización de los comportamientos, y la idea de que los códigos culturales determinan las manifestaciones y las interpretaciones de las emociones<sup>16</sup>. El miedo, al cual alude A. Constán-Nava, y que ha suscitado ya investigaciones por parte del medievalismo<sup>17</sup>, merece más atención por parte del arabismo; la riqueza de datos del corpus documental ha sido todavía poco explorada y podría beneficiarse de estudios lexicográficos y semánticos<sup>18</sup>: el estudio preliminar del *Kitāb tārīj Mayūrqa* permite evidenciar que, en una ciudad en guerra, la emoción más difundida fue el miedo, que se instaló progresivamente y pasó del estupor, asombro extremado, al terror pánico, miedo muy intenso. Preguntado sobre quién tenía miedo, Ibn ‘Amīra al-Majzūmī indica que tanto la ‘amma como la jāšša experimentaron el temor, muy lejos de la idea difundida de que nuestros antepasados de la Edad Media no sintieron miedo<sup>19</sup>.

Si los trabajos reunidos en las páginas que siguen contribuyen a la historia cultural del Islam, otro hilo conductor los une, la preocupación por el documento y las líneas nuevas de estudios de este material recogido, estudiado, analizado por el historiador para proponer hipótesis

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<sup>15</sup> L. Febvre, “La sensibilité et l’histoire. Comment reconstituer la vie affective d’autrefois?”, *Annales d’histoire sociale* 3 (1941), 5-20; P. Nagy, “Les émotions et l’historien: de nouveaux paradigmes”, *Critique* 716-717 (2007), 10-22.

<sup>16</sup> J. Plaper, *The History of Emotions: an Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015; P. Nagy y D. Boquet, *Sensible Moyen Âge. Une histoire des émotions dans l’Occident médiéval*, Paris: Seuil, 2015; N. Hochner, “Le corps social à l’origine de l’invention du mot ‘émotion’”, *L’Atelier du Centre de recherches historiques* [En ligne], 16 (2016); A. Corbin, J.-J. Courtine y G. Vigarello (dirs.), *Histoire des émotions*, Paris: Seuil, 2016-2017.

<sup>17</sup> J. Delumeau, *La peur en Occident (XIV<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Paris: Hachette, 1978; S. Sadaune, *La peur au Moyen Âge*, Rennes: Ouest-France, 2013.

<sup>18</sup> B. Rosenwein, “Worrying about Emotions in History”, *The American Historical Review* 107-3 (2002), 821-845.

<sup>19</sup> Según J. Delumeau, *La peur en Occident (XIV<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, en la Edad Media hubo menos conciencia de los peligros y menos miedo que hoy día (p. 21).

sobre el funcionamiento de las sociedades del pasado. Hablar en términos de documentos y no de fuentes es revelador de un cambio muy profundo de la manera de actuar de los investigadores: indica, pues, la preocupación y el interés hacia la historia de los manuscritos y hacia la concepción de las obras en el medioevo.

La palabra ‘fuente’ designa, en efecto, el manantial de agua que brota de la tierra y, de allí, significa el principio de algo; en nuestro caso el momento original y de nacimiento de la obra, o también designa a la persona que proporciona información, y se supone ésta de primera mano, claro<sup>20</sup>. El término genérico ‘fuente’, enraizado en la historiografía desde el siglo XIX, hizo olvidar las transformaciones sucesivas, copias y ediciones, experimentadas por los documentos desde su concepción en la Edad Media: con ‘fuentes’, olvidamos los filtros que se interponen entre la génesis de la obra, en el medioevo, y el análisis de ésta, en el siglo XXI. Los documentos elaborados por los sabios del medioevo fueron copiados tanto en la Edad Media, cuando el califa mandaba a sabios a Oriente en busca de manuscritos<sup>21</sup>, como en épocas más recientes, así cuando los arabistas europeos del siglo XIX viajaron al Magreb en busca de manuscritos. El copista pudo añadir, quitar o cambiar palabras, de manera voluntaria o no. Basta con poner un ejemplo: el itinerario fluvial del Guadiana que, en el *Libro de Roger* de al-Idrīsī, va desde Calatrava hasta el Atlántico, pasando por Mérida, Badajoz y Mértola, empieza cerca de Calatrava. El río sale de prados que están por encima de la ciudad y pasa cerca de Yāna, población no identificada, evidente étimo del hidrónimo, y que, según los manuscritos, era *qal’a* o *qarya*<sup>22</sup>.

Es necesario, pues, seguir haciendo la historia de los manuscritos árabes, llevando a cabo una verdadera arqueología de éstos: la

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<sup>20</sup> L. Kuchenbuch, “Sources ou documents? Contribution à l’histoire d’une évidence méthodologique”, *Hypothèses* 7 (2004), 287-315.

<sup>21</sup> M.<sup>a</sup> J. Viguera Molins, “L’Escorial, le rêve d’une bibliothèque universelle: le cas des manuscrits arabes”, A.-M. Cocula y M. Combet (eds.), *Château, livres et manuscrits (IX<sup>e</sup>-XXI<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Bordeaux:Ausonius, 2006, 23-39.

<sup>22</sup> Al-Idrīsī, *Opus geographicum*, fasc. 5, ed. E. Cerulli *et al.*, Napoli-Roma: Istituto Univesitario Orientale di Napoli-Istituto Italiano per il medio ed estremo Oriente, 1975, 550.

investigación reciente ya ha proporcionado gran riqueza de datos, en particular con los trabajos impulsados por M.<sup>a</sup> Jesús Viguera desde hace veinte años<sup>23</sup>. En el volumen que el lector tiene entre sus manos, el estudio de la fetua de Ibn al-Ḥāỵỵ que dan a conocer Delfina Serrano y Mohamed Necir ilustra la imprescindible historia de los manuscritos: en efecto, la fetua solo figura en una de las copias del manuscrito utilizadas para la edición que publicó al-Yūsufi en 2018, edición novedosa, basada en cuatro copias del manuscrito, mientras que hasta esta fecha se consideraba única la copia conservada en la *Jizānat al-waṭā'iq* de Rabat. A propósito de al-Bakrī, recuerda Francisco Franco-Sánchez cómo se pasó de la edición del Barón de Slane, elaborada en 1857 en base a cuatro manuscritos, a una nueva edición, en base a diez manuscritos, publicada en 1992 por Adrien P. Van Leeuwen y André Ferré, llegando a una edición crítica más próxima a la obra original. De la misma manera, se presenta aquí la historia del *Kitāb tārij Mayūrqa*: mientras al-Maqqarī (m. 1632) compiló dos páginas de la crónica, ésta fue considerada como perdida hasta el descubrimiento, en 2001, de una copia del manuscrito en una biblioteca particular de Argelia, lo que permitió editarlo y traducirlo.

Entre las tareas pendientes, indica M.<sup>a</sup> Jesús Viguera, hace falta un corpus exhaustivo de las actas oficiales insertas en crónicas, lo que permitiría conocer “las estrategias de esas conservaciones indirectas [...] los retoques y manipulaciones de los documentos transcritos en crónicas”<sup>24</sup>. En este volumen, Mourad Kacimi contribuye a este esfuerzo, ofreciéndonos una edición crítica del acta de sucesión del califa Hišām II en favor de Sanchuelo, a partir de una minuciosa colación de las siete versiones del acta, compiladas en obras literarias desde el siglo XII hasta el siglo XVII. Evidencia M. Ángel Manzano Rodríguez otra tarea que habría que llevar a cabo, a saber realizar nueva edición y traducción del *Taqwīm al-buldān*

<sup>23</sup> M.<sup>a</sup> J. Viguera Molins, *Los manuscritos árabes en España: su historia y la Historia*, Madrid: RAH, 2016.

<sup>24</sup> M.<sup>a</sup> J. Viguera Molins, “Documentos en crónicas árabes”, *Documentos y manuscritos árabes del occidente musulmán medieval*, N. Martínez de Castilla (ed.), Madrid: CSIC, 2010, 189-202, c. 200. Véase también M.<sup>a</sup> J. Viguera Molins, “À propos de la chancellerie et des documents nasrides de Grenade (XIII<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècles)”, *Oriente Moderno* LXXXVIII (2008), 471-483.

de Abū l-Fidā': por increíble que parezca, todavía tenemos que consultar la edición que publicaron en 1840 J. T. Reinaud y W. Mac Gukin de Slane, y la traducción al francés que editó J. T. Reinaud a partir del año 1848.

Por otro lado, es menester conocer las formas y maneras de escribir de los letrados del medioevo para analizar de forma adecuada sus obras: redactaron a veces a lo largo de una temporada larga, poniendo de nuevo la obra en el telar<sup>25</sup>; redactaron sobre todo empleando las complejas técnicas de la compilación, que van de la copia literal hasta modificaciones importantes, omisiones o añadidos, tal y como evidenció Luis Molina<sup>26</sup>. Estas modificaciones son el reflejo del filtro, meramente historiográfico y también ideológico, que puso de manera consciente o involuntaria el letrado, y que se encuentra tanto en las obras literarias como en las transmisiones de documentos oficiales<sup>27</sup>: para conocer las técnicas de escritura empleadas por el sabio, son imprescindibles los estudios lexicográficos y semánticos, ya que el vocabulario es revelador de una sociedad y permite aproximar el sistema de representación del mundo que utilizaba el letrado<sup>28</sup>. Sobre este aspecto de los estudios de los documentos, nos proporciona Francisco Franco-Sánchez un detenido examen de la terminología relacionada con el *ribāṭ* en la

<sup>25</sup> A. Bourahalla, "El *Markaz al-Iḥāṭa*, un resumen inexplorado de la gran obra de Ibn al-Jaṭīb", *Saber y poder en al-Andalus: Ibn al-Jaṭīb (s. XIV)*, M.<sup>a</sup> D. Rodríguez Gómez, A. Peláez y B. Boloix Gallardo (eds.), Córdoba: El Almendro, 2014, 17-28, indica que la redacción de la *Iḥāṭa* se llevó a cabo a lo largo de varios años.

<sup>26</sup> Véanse en particular L. Molina, "Técnicas de amplificación en el Muqtabis de Ibn Hayyan", *Talia dixit, Revista Interdisciplinaria de Retórica e Historiografía* 1 (2006), 55-79; *idem*, "La 'historia de los omeyyas de al-Andalus' en los *Masālik al-abṣār*", *Al-Qanṭara* XXVI (2005), 123-139; *idem*, "Talut y el judío. Análisis de la evolución historiográfica de un relato", *Al-Qanṭara* XXXII (2011), 467-491.

<sup>27</sup> Ver, por ejemplo, cómo fue manipulado el texto de la *bay'a* de Hišām II en M.<sup>a</sup> J. Viguera Molins, "Documentos en crónicas árabes" o cómo fue manipulado el tratado de Tudmīr en C. Mazzoli-Guintard, "Le Pacte de Tudmīr dans l'œuvre géographique d'al-Ḥimyarī: la mémoire de la conquête et de la paix", *Historiografía y representaciones, III Estudios sobre las fuentes de la conquista islámica*, L. A. García Moreno, E. Sánchez Medina y L. Fernández Fonfría (eds.), Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2015, 405-423.

<sup>28</sup> M. Bloch, *Apologie pour l'histoire ou métier d'historien*, París: A. Colin, 1993, 167-178.

obra de al-Bakrī: subraya cómo el precepto religioso (*ribāṭ*) ha pasado a denominar el lugar donde se podía realizar el deber religioso, de ahí la gran diversidad de formas de los espacios donde se podía hacer el *ribāṭ*, en un edificio fortificado, *ḥiṣn*, *burý* o *qaṣr* por ejemplo, o en un edificio sin defensas, así una mezquita o un *maḥras*. Al subrayar las formas tan diversas de los lugares de *ribāṭ* a partir de un estudio lexicográfico, F. Franco-Sánchez contribuye a renovar el antiguo modelo historiográfico del *ribāṭ*, elaborado a partir de las fortalezas de planta rectangular conservadas en Túnez y paradigma del *ribāṭ*<sup>29</sup> hasta que empezaron, en el año 1984, las excavaciones del *ribāṭ* de Guardamar de Segura.

En fin, los nueve artículos reunidos en este volumen pretenden aportar un granito de arena a la historia cultural y profundizar en la diversidad de los paisajes urbanos, rurales, espirituales, materiales que componen la inmensa riqueza del patrimonio andalusí, evidenciada por la diversidad de los temas, de las épocas y de los documentos analizados, desde la cultura más sabia hasta elementos de la cultura popular.

Castillon-la-Bataille, 31 de julio de 2021

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<sup>29</sup> Véase ese modelo en J. Chabbi, “Ribāṭ”, *Encyclopédie de l’Islam*, Leiden: Brill, 1995, VIII, 510-523.



IBN ḤAZM OF CORDOBA ON THE PURSUIT OF  
KNOWLEDGE CONDUCIVE TO SALVATION\*

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**Abstract:** This contribution presents and discusses the section on different types of knowledge from an epistle by the Muslim polymath Ibn Ḥazm of Cordoba (d. 456/1064) entitled *Risālat al-Talkhīṣ li-wujūh al-takhlīṣ* (“Concise epistle on the ways towards deliverance”). Presumably addressed to Ibn Ḥazm’s fellow-Zāhirīs, the epistle emphasizes the importance of cultivating the sciences conducive to a proper understanding of the Qur’ān and the *ḥadīth*, while warning against deviating from these two revealed sources and relying on the unverified opinions (*ra’y*) of individual Muslim scholars. While in other tracts of his work Ibn Ḥazm also discusses the Greek sciences and the partial usefulness of some of them, what he presents here is a purely Islamic curriculum.

**Keywords:** Ibn Ḥazm, Zāhirīs, rational knowledge, revealed knowledge, philology, legal theory, Qur’ān, *ḥadīth*, *ra’y*.

**Resumen:** Esta contribución presenta y discute la sección sobre diferentes tipos de conocimiento de una epístola del polígrafo musulmán Ibn Ḥazm de Córdoba (d. 456/1064) titulada *Risālat al-Talkhīṣ li-wujūh al-takhlīṣ* (“Epístola concisa sobre los caminos hacia la liberación”). Presumiblemente dirigida a compañeros zāhirīs de Ibn Ḥazm, la epístola hace hincapié en la importancia de cultivar las ciencias que conducen a una comprensión adecuada del Corán y el *ḥadīth*, y, al mismo tiempo, advierte contra la desviación de estas dos fuentes reveladas y confía en las opiniones no verificadas (*ra’y*) de eruditos musulmanes individuales. Mientras que, en otros tratados suyos, Ibn Ḥazm también discute las ciencias griegas y la utilidad parcial de algunos de ellas, lo que presenta aquí es un plan de estudios puramente islámico.

**Palabras clave:** Ibn Ḥazm, zāhirīs, conocimiento racional, conocimiento revelado, filología, teoría jurídica, Corán, *ḥadīth*, *ra’y*.

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## INTRODUCTION

Anyone who has ever read more than one or two works by the well-known Muslim polymath Ibn Ḥazm of Cordoba (d. 456/1064), not including *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma*, which is in a category of its own, will have noticed that the author has a tendency to repeat his arguments, not seldom verbatim<sup>1</sup>. Thus we find his rants against *taqlīd* (reliance on the views of an earlier authority) and *qiyās* (reasoning by analogy) not only in works whose titles specifically indicate his opposition to these ways of finding the law, such as *Ibtāl al-qiyās wa-l-ra'y wa-l-istiḥsān wa-l-taqlīd wa-l-ta'līl*, but also in other works on legal theory like *al-Iḥkām fī uṣūl al-aḥkām*, partly summarized in *al-Nubdha al-kāfiya*, as well as in the section on *uṣūl al-fiqh* in what is otherwise a work of substantive law (*furū'*), namely *al-Muḥallā*, and even in some of his poetry. The situation is no different with regard to Ibn Ḥazm's categorization of the different branches of knowledge, some of which he deems indispensable whereas others can or *must* be dispensed with. Besides works whose titles indicate that the topic in hand is related to defining knowledge, such as *Marātib al-'ulūm* ("The categories of the sciences") or *al-Taqrīb li-ḥudūd al-manṭiq* ("Approximation to the definition of logic"), we find discussions of the relative value of different sciences and types of knowledge (or lack thereof) also in two epistles whose more general aim is to guide the believer to eternal bliss in the hereafter, namely *Risālat al-Tawqīf 'alā shāri' al-najāt bi-khtiṣār al-ṭarīq* ("Epistle explaining the

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<sup>1</sup> On the author and his immense oeuvre, see C. Adang, M. Fierro and S. Schmidtke (eds.), *Ibn Ḥazm of Cordoba. The Life and Works of a Controversial Thinker*, Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2013.

path to salvation in a short way”) and *Risālat al-Talkhīṣ li-wujūh al-takhlīṣ* (“Concise epistle on the ways towards deliverance”). Whereas *Marātib al-‘ulūm* has been studied in depth by Salvador Gómez Nogales, Hussein Monés (Ḥusayn Mu’nis) and especially Anwar G. Chejne<sup>2</sup>, and *al-Taqrīb li-hudūd al-mantiq* has been the object of several studies by Rafael Ramón Guerrero and others<sup>3</sup>, relatively little attention has been paid so far to the sections dealing with knowledge and the sciences that we find in the two less-known epistles<sup>4</sup>. In the present contribution, I wish to draw attention to Ibn Ḥazm’s discussion of the disciplines most conducive to salvation in his *Risālat al-Talkhīṣ li-wujūh al-takhlīṣ*<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> H. Monés, “Clasificación de las ciencias según Ibn Ḥazm”, *Revista del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos* 13 (1965-’66), 7-15; S. Gómez Nogales, “Teoría y clasificación de la ciencia según Ibn Ḥazm”, *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos* 14-15 (1965-’66), 49-73; A.G. Chejne, *Ibn Ḥazm*, Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1402/1982. *Marātib al-‘ulūm* is also discussed, along with other Andalusí works on the sciences, in M. Forcada, “Ibn Bājjā and the Classification of the Sciences in al-Andalus”, *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 16 (2006), 287-307 and G. Martinez-Gros, “Classification des nations et classification des sciences. Trois exemples andalous du V<sup>e</sup>-XI<sup>e</sup> siècle”, *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 20 (1984), 83-114. A section of the work is translated in F. Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage in Islam*, trans. E. and J. Marmorstein, London-New York: Routledge, 1992, 58-61.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. R. Ramón Guerrero, “Aristotle and Ibn Ḥazm. On the Logic of the *Taqrīb*”, in C. Adang, M. Fierro and S. Schmidtke (eds.), *Ibn Ḥazm of Cordoba. The Life and Works of a Controversial Thinker*, 403-416; *idem*, “El arte de la lógica en Córdoba. El libro ‘al-Taqrīb li-ḥadd al-mantiq’ de Ibn Ḥazm”, *Revista del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos* 29 (1997), 163-180; *idem*, “El prólogo del *Taqrīb li-ḥadd al-mantiq* de Ibn Ḥazm de Córdoba”, *Qurtuba* 1 (1996), 139-155; A. Chejne, “Ibn Ḥazm of Cordova on Logic”, *Journal of Oriental and African Studies* 104,1 (1983), 57-72; J. Lameer, “Ibn Ḥazm’s Logical Pedigree”, in C. Adang, M. Fierro and S. Schmidtke (eds.), *Ibn Ḥazm of Cordoba. The Life and Works of a Controversial Thinker*, 417-428.

<sup>4</sup> Recent publications on the less-known epistles are C. Lange, “Ibn Ḥazm on Sins and Salvation”, in C. Adang, M. Fierro and S. Schmidtke (eds.), *Ibn Ḥazm of Cordoba. The Life and Works of a Controversial Thinker*, 429-453, which analyses *Risālat al-Talkhīṣ* and Tornero’s translation of *Risālat al-Tawqīf*; see Ibn Ḥazm de Córdoba, *El libro de los caracteres y las conductas y Epístola sobre el establecimiento del camino de la salvación de manera abreviada*. Edición y traducción del árabe de E. Tornero Poveda, Madrid: Siruela, 2007, 49-62.

<sup>5</sup> On the various writings by Ibn Ḥazm referred to in this introductory section, see J. M. Puerta Vilchez, “Inventory of Ibn Ḥazm’s works”, in C. Adang, M. Fierro

THE *RISĀLA*

The epistle under discussion here is one of the *Rasā'il* included in manuscript Şehid 'Ali Paşa no. 2704 held by the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul, which was (re-) discovered in the 1920's by Hellmut Ritter and described in detail by Miguel Asín Palacios in his 1934 article "Un códice inexplorado del cordobés Ibn Ḥazm", which also contains a summary of the epistle<sup>6</sup>. As is only proper in a *Risāla*, Ibn Ḥazm replies to a series of questions that were posed to him, at least, that is the impression he conveys. While David Wasserstein believes that this is a mere topos and that all the correspondents addressed in Ibn Ḥazm's epistles are fictitious<sup>7</sup>, more recent research has demonstrated that at least in some of his *Rasā'il* Ibn Ḥazm is in fact replying to actual queries he received<sup>8</sup>. It is not inconceivable, therefore, that the excellent brethren he mentions in the opening lines of *al-Talkhīṣ li-wujūh al-takhlīṣ* as well as throughout the entire epistle were indeed concerned Muslims—Zāhirī Muslims, to be more precise—who were eager for guidance in a period of great turmoil and believed that Ibn Ḥazm, who sensed a vacuum in religious leadership, might be able provide it. The Zāhirī *madhhab* had been conceived by Dāwūd b. 'Alī al-Iṣfahānī (d. 270/884) in Baghdad and soon spread throughout the Muslim world, including al-Andalus. Among the most salient features of this school of Islamic thought were its rejection of *qiyās* and opposition to *taqlīd*. According to the Zāhirīs, the only sources from which legal rulings could legitimately be derived were the Qur'ān and reliable prophetic traditions in their apparent or

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and S. Schmidtke (eds.), *Ibn Ḥazm of Cordoba. The Life and Works of a Controversial Thinker*, 683-760, nos. 130, 37, 38, 92, 80, 96, 69, 123, 131, 120.

<sup>6</sup> M. Asín Palacios, "Un códice inexplorado del Cordobés Ibn Ḥazm", *Al-Andalus* 2 (1934), 9-13. In the manuscript the epistle takes up fols. 235a-253a.

<sup>7</sup> D. Wasserstein, *The Rise and Fall of the Party-Kings: Politics and Society in Islamic Spain, 1002-1086*, Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1985, 202-203.

<sup>8</sup> S. Kaddouri, "Identificación de un manuscrito andalusí anónimo de una obra contra Ibn Ḥazm al-Qurtūbī (m. 456/1064)", *Al-Qanṭara* 22,2 (2001), 299-319; C. Adang, "Restoring the Prophet's Authority, Rejecting *Taqlid*: Ibn Ḥazm's 'Epistle to the One Who Shouts from Afar'", in D. Ephrat and M. Hatina (eds.), *Religious Knowledge, Authority, and Charisma. Islamic and Jewish Perspectives*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2014, 54-55.

literal sense (*ẓāhir*), as well as the absolute consensus of the Prophet's Companions and the earliest generations of Muslims to the extent that it reflected the directives of the revealed sources. Ibn Ḥazm, who extended these principles to theology, is the only *Zāhirī* to have left a substantial oeuvre<sup>9</sup>. That the intended readership of the epistle discussed here are his fellow *Zāhirīs* is suggested among other things by the words of praise for his much lamented teacher Abū l-Khiyār Mas'ūd b. Sulaymān b. Muflit, with whom Ibn Ḥazm had taught at the Great Mosque in Cordoba from which they were both evicted in or around the year 419/1028 because of their subversive *Zāhirī* teachings<sup>10</sup>. As Ibn Muflit died in 426/1035, this is the *terminus post quem* of the work's composition, well after the final collapse of the Umayyad caliphate, which occurred in 422/1031, and the rise of the Party Kings (*mulūk al-ṭawā'if*). It is quite possible that the epistle was composed during Ibn Ḥazm's ten-year stay (431/1039-440/1049) in the isle of Majorca, where he was free to spread his *Zāhirī* teachings until his apparent defeat in a series of disputations with the

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<sup>9</sup> See I. Goldziher, *The Zāhirīs. Their Doctrine and their History. A Contribution to the History of Islamic Theology*, ed. and trans. W. Behn with an Introduction by C. Adang, Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2008; R. Gleave, *Islam and Literalism. Literal Meaning and Interpretation in Islamic Legal Theory*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012, Chapter 6: Zahirism, Literalism and Ibn Ḥazm; A. Osman, *The Zāhirī madhhab (3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> Century). A Textualist Theory of Islamic Law*, Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2014; A.M. Turki, "al-Zāhiriyya", *Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition*, s.v.

<sup>10</sup> Adang, "Restoring the Prophet's Authority", 50-53. On Ibn Muflit and his expulsion from the mosque, together with Ibn Ḥazm, see al-Marwānī, *Qiṭ'a min Kitāb 'Uyūn al-imāma wa-nawāzīr al-siyāsa*, eds. B.A. Ma'rūf and Ṣ.M. Jarrār, Tunis: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1431/2010, 65-66, who is quoting the information from an unnamed work by the Andalusī historian Ibn Ḥayyān (d. 469/1076), probably *al-Matīn*, which has not come down to us. Al-Marwānī, citing Ibn Ḥayyān, adds that while no one of any importance attended Ibn Muflit's funeral, because the Mālikī legal scholars hated him for his attachment to *Zāhirism* (literally: *madhhab Dāwūd*), the common people came out in droves and spoke very highly of him. For several days they visited his grave and they mourned for him a long time. The text is included and discussed by M. Asín Palacios in vol. 1 (136-139) of his *Abenḥázam de Córdoba y su historia crítica de las ideas religiosas*, Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1927-1932, 5 vols. (reprinted Madrid: Ediciones Turner, 1984).

eminent Mālikī scholar Abū l-Walīd al-Bājī (d. 474/1081) made him decide to return to the Andalusī mainland<sup>11</sup>.

The real or fictitious queries Ibn Ḥazm addresses in this moralistic epistle are the following:

(1) Which types of behaviour are most likely to lead to salvation? (2) What is the best way for a sinner to obtain God’s forgiveness? (3) Which branches of knowledge should one pursue and what is the proper intention with which one should pursue them? (4) Which of the supererogatory devotions is most excellent: prayer, fasting, or almsgiving? (5) Does God answer people’s supplications? (6) How should one relate to oppressive rulers who violate the laws of the *sharī‘a*? (7) How can one avoid consuming anything that is of doubtful origin? (8) What are the various degrees of major sins? The question that interests us here is the third one in the list: about the pursuit of knowledge. In what follows, I shall present the epistle’s section on knowledge and finish with some conclusions. It will be seen immediately that what Ibn Ḥazm presents here, unlike in the other works referred to above, is a very traditional curriculum in which no mention is made of the so-called rational sciences, apart from a brief reference to medicine (*ṭibb*) and arithmetic (*ḥisāb*) whose usefulness he accepts. Whereas in the other works he draws a sharp distinction between rational or Greek sciences (*‘ulūm al-awā’il*) –whose usefulness is limited to this world (*al-dunyā*)– on the one hand, and revealed science (*mā jā‘at bihi al-nubuwwa*) on the other, here the division is between the revealed texts and the sciences that facilitate their understanding on the one hand, and the books of jurisprudence produced by the schools of law (*madhāhib*) on the other. Although on the whole I closely follow Ibn Ḥazm’s text, I have at times taken the liberty to paraphrase his arguments<sup>12</sup>, albeit

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<sup>11</sup> Lange, on the other hand, assumes that the epistle dates to the final stage of Ibn Ḥazm’s life, which was spent at his family’s estate near Niebla; see his “Ibn Ḥazm on sins”, 430.

<sup>12</sup> For this reason I have usually dispensed with quotation marks. I omit the eulogies that in Islamic texts follow the names of God, the Prophet Muḥammad, his Companions and a select number of prominent Muslims.

without suppressing the repetitions, which are a stylistic feature with which he attempts to get his message across.

*THE TEXT*<sup>13</sup>

[161] At the beginning of the section on the pursuit of knowledge, Ibn Ḥazm first reproduces the queries he received –assuming that he did indeed receive such queries:

You asked about the pursuit of knowledge, and whether the philological sciences (*ādāb*), by which you mean grammar, lexicography and poetry, are types of knowledge to be pursued, about the wish to occupy yourselves with the transmissions of the seven well-known Qur’ān reciters<sup>14</sup> according to the differences in their wording and opinions, about reading *ḥadīth*, and legal questions.

He replies as follows:

As for occupying oneself with the transmissions of the seven well-known Qur’ān reciters, reading *ḥadīth* and pursuing knowledge of grammar and lexicography: indeed, studying these sciences is a duty that is incumbent upon the Muslims collectively<sup>15</sup>, in the sense that if

<sup>13</sup> *Risālat al-Talkhīṣ li-wujūh al-takhlīṣ* takes up 143-184 in vol. 3 of *Rasā’il Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī*, ed. I. ‘Abbās, 4 vols., Beirut: al-Mu’assasa al-‘arabiyya li-dirāsāt wa-l-nashr, 1981. The relevant section is found on 161-172. I have indicated the corresponding page numbers in my text.

<sup>14</sup> The reference is to the seven variant readings of the Qur’ān declared acceptable by Ibn Mujāhid of Baghdad (d. 324/936); see his *Kitāb al-Sab‘a fī l-qirā’āt*, ed. Sh. Ḍayf, Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1972 and the discussion in C. Melchert, “Ibn Mujāhid and the Establishment of Seven Qur’anic Readings”, *Studia Islamica* 91 (2000), 5-22. The seven readers referred to by Ibn Ḥazm are the Damascene Ibn ‘Āmir (d. 118/736), the Meccan Ibn Kathīr (d. 120/737), the Basran Abū ‘Amr (d. 154/770), the Medinan Nāfi‘ (d. 169/785) and the Kufans ‘Āṣim (d. 127/744), Ḥamza (d. 156/772) and al-Kisā’ī (d. 189/804). A comprehensive table of Qur’anic variants is included in S.H. Nasser, *The Second Canonization of the Qur’ān (324/936). Ibn Mujāhid and the Founding of the Seven Readings*, Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2021.

<sup>15</sup> *Farḍ wājib ‘alā l-muslimīn ‘alā l-kifāya*. A *farḍ kifāya* is a collective duty, the fulfilment of which by a sufficient number of Muslims exempts the others from fulfilling it, such as the funeral prayer, *jihād*, etc. The opposite is *farḍ ‘ayn*, a precept to be fulfilled

someone [162] proceeds to pursue them until he knows enough to be able to teach others in his town or village who wish to study them and to issue legal opinions at their request, the duty to pursue these sciences is lifted at that point from the others, except for that which is singled out for each and every person. For what every person is obliged to memorize from the Qur'ān is the *Umm al-Qur'ān*<sup>16</sup> together with some additional part of the Book, be it even one *sūra*, regardless which one, or whichever verse. This is an essential duty for every single person.

As for pursuing knowledge of the Qur'ān and of the different opinions of the seven readers and the vocalization and orthography of their respective readings, this is a duty imposed upon the community collectively, and of enormous credit to someone who pursues it; it will yield an ample reward in the afterlife (*ajr*). Said the Messenger of God: “The best among you is the one who studies the Qur'ān and teaches it”<sup>17</sup>; he has given orders to teach the Qur'ān, and whoever studies it does what is best. If this activity were to be lost, then the Qur'ān would vanish and be lost, and Muslims should have no part in this. Its disappearance is one of the signs of the Hour, as is the disappearance of knowledge [in general]<sup>18</sup>.

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by each person individually, such as ritual prayer, fasting, charity, and the pilgrimage to Mecca. The most detailed discussion of *farḍ kifāya* to date is A.A. Zulfiqar, *Collective Duties (farḍ kifāya) in Islamic Law: The Moral Community, State Authority and Ethical Speculation in the Premodern Period*, PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2018, which pays ample attention to Ibn Ḥazm's views on the collective duty to wage *jihād*, perform funerary rites and rescue foundlings.

<sup>16</sup> I.e. the Qur'ān's first *sūra*, *al-Fātiḥa*.

<sup>17</sup> Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Damascus-Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1423/2002, *Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān, Bāb Khayrukum man ta'allama al-Qur'ān wa-'alimahu*. In identifying the traditions from the *Ṣaḥīḥs* by al-Bukhārī and Muslim I refer to the Book (*Kitāb*) and Chapter (*Bāb*) in which they appear, rather than to the numbers of the *ḥadīths*, as these often vary from one edition to another. I have consulted the English translations of the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* listed in the bibliography. The traditions quoted are easily located through the site <<https://sunnah.com>> which provides both the Arabic of the canonical *ḥadīth* collection and an English translation.

<sup>18</sup> 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī, *Muṣannaḥ*, ed. Ḥ. al-'Azmī, 6 vols., Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1403/1983, *Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān, Bāb ta'āhud al-Qur'ān wa-nisyanīhi*, nos. 5980, 5981; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, ed. Ḥ.A. al-Salafī, 25 vols., Mosul: Maktabat al-zahrā', 1404/1983, vol. 9, nos. 8698, 8700. The transmitter,



As for the study of grammar and lexicography, this, too, is a duty incumbent upon the community collectively, as was mentioned before, because God says: “We have never sent a messenger but with the language of his own people in order to make things clear for them” (Q 14:4) and He sent down the Qur’ān unto His Prophet “with a plain Arabic language” (Q 26:195)<sup>19</sup>. Whoever does not know grammar and lexicography, then, does not know the language in which God has clarified our religion for us and in which He addressed us, Ibn Ḥazm states, and whoever does not know this does not know his religion, and whoever does not know his religion is obliged to study it. It is thus incumbent upon him to learn grammar and lexicography, and this is an obligation for the community collectively. If the knowledge of grammar were to be lost, then the understanding of the Qur’ān would be lost, as well as the understanding of the Tradition of the Prophet, and if all this were to be lost, then Islam as a whole would be lost. If someone pursues the study of grammar and lexicography with the intention thus to promote the Sharī‘a and through these disciplines to understand God’s word and the words of His prophet, and in order to ensure that others may understand it, he will have a tremendous reward and a lofty rank in the afterlife that no one should make light of, Ibn Ḥazm stresses. As for someone who pretends to possess knowledge and discernment while in fact being ignorant of grammar and lexicography: he is forbidden to issue pronouncements on God’s religion with as much as one word, and

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‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd, connects his statement on the future loss of knowledge of the Qur’ān with Q 17:86 (“If we so wished, we could certainly take away what we have revealed to you”). On the disappearance of knowledge in general, see al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-‘ilm, Bāb Raf‘ al-‘ilm wa-ḡuhūr al-jahl; Kitāb al-Istisqā’, Bāb Mā qīla fī l-zilzāl wa-l-āyāt*.

<sup>19</sup> *bi-lisān*<sup>m</sup> ‘*arabiyy*<sup>m</sup> *mubīn*<sup>m</sup>. This verse, along with Q 16:89, was taken by Ibn Ḥazm to mean that God has explained His will very clearly in His revelation, and that one should not try to read more into it than what the text, in its apparent sense (*zāhir*), says, or than what has been elucidated by the Prophet Muḥammad. See C. Adang, “‘This day have I perfected your religion for you’. A Zāhirī conception of religious authority”, in G. Krämer and S. Schmidtke (eds.), *Speaking for Islam. Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies*, Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2006, 15-48. Quotations from the Qur’ān in this contribution do not follow one single translation.



it is forbidden for Muslims to ask him to issue a *fatwā*, because he has no knowledge of the language in which God has addressed them. And since he does not know it, he cannot issue opinions based on what he does not know. Ibn Ḥazm supports this statement with a series of verses from the Qurʾān<sup>20</sup> and then continues:

[163] Whoever does not know the language in which God has addressed us, and does not know the various meanings it conveys through the different vowels in its words, and then makes statements about God’s commandments and prohibitions is in fact saying things about God that he does not know. How can someone who does not know the meaning of *ṣaʿīd* in the Arabic language issue opinions on ritual purity, and how can someone who does not know what is defined as *dhakāt* issue opinions on ritual slaughter?<sup>21</sup> How can one issue opinions on the religion if he does not know whether the word *rasūl* in إن الله بريء من المشركين ورسوله (Q 9:3) has a *kasra* (i) or a *ḍamma* (u) as a case-ending?<sup>22</sup> There are many similar instances in the Qurʾān and the Sunna, but this should suffice. Whoever pursues the study of grammar and lexicography with the intention mentioned earlier: this yields the greatest reward and the best knowledge. If someone pursues these two

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<sup>20</sup> God says: “Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge: hearing, sight and heart, all these will be questioned about it” (Q 17:36), and the Exalted One says: “Say, ‘My Lord only forbids shameful deeds, whether open or hidden, and sin and unjustified rebellion, and that you associate things with God for which He has revealed no warrant, and that you say about God that which you do not know’” (Q 7:33). And the Exalted One says: “When you received it on your tongues and spoke with your mouths things of which you had no knowledge, you thought it was an insignificant matter, but to God it was most serious” (Q 24:15).

<sup>21</sup> *Ṣaʿīd* is pure earth or dust, suitable for the *tayammum* ablution in the absence of water; *dhakāt* is the proper way to slaughter an animal for food by severing the windpipe and the gullet with one sharp cut. According to some legal scholars, the jugular vein is to be severed along with the windpipe and the gullet.

<sup>22</sup> In this particular example the different readings would result in dramatically different meanings: either “God and His Messenger (*wa-rasūluhu*) are free from obligations to the polytheists” or “God is free from obligations to the polytheists and to His Messenger (*wa-rasūlihi*)”. The latter interpretation would, of course, be unacceptable. To the best of my knowledge, it is nowhere offered as a valid reading and Ibn Ḥazm seems deliberately to present a hypothetical example so as to impress upon his readers the dangers of insufficient mastery of the language.

sciences in order to earn a living from them, this too will yield a goodly reward and is proper, but his reward is smaller than that of the first kind, though exceeding the one obtained for pursuing other professions that one can make a living with, because he teaches what is beneficial and leaves another person with knowledge. But whoever pursues these two sciences in order to promote acts of injustice, introducing oppressive tariffs, becoming adept at the imposition of uncanonical taxes and levies and speaking on behalf of iniquitous kings in words that please them and anger God will fail and perish and go out and leave under God's curse, because he is a wrongdoer, and "Surely God's curse is on those who do wrong" (Q 11:18)<sup>23</sup>.

Ibn Ḥazm now moves on to poetry (*'ilm al-shi'r*), whose practice he divides into three categories: an overwhelming and excessive occupation with poetry; an occupation with poetry that is combined with devotion to one or more religious sciences, and the use of a limited amount of poetry for commendable purposes. A person's knowledge should not be limited to poetry alone, the author argues, as is clarified in the Prophet's saying: "It is better for the belly of one of you to be filled with pus until it consumes it than for it to be filled with poetry"<sup>24</sup>. Ibn Ḥazm dislikes frequent occupation with poetry, though he adds that it is not forbidden. If someone devotes much of his attention to poetry, he will not be blamed provided he does not neglect the knowledge of his religion. However, occupying oneself with another kind of knowledge, that is, something other than poetry, is preferable, he adds. Ibn Ḥazm does not completely disapprove of poetry and even recommends it if it is kept within limits, for after all the Prophet himself would ask for poetry to be recited to him, and Ḥassān b. Thābit would recite poetry

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<sup>23</sup> Here as elsewhere in the epistle, Ibn Ḥazm criticizes unnamed party kings and their servants, often non-Muslims, who collected irregular taxes. These same kings are accused of making common cause with Christians against rival Muslim rulers in al-Andalus. This is a topic for a separate discussion.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb al-Ādāb*, *Bāb mā yukrahu an yakūna al-ghālib 'an al-insān al-shi'r*.

from his pulpit<sup>25</sup>. “Some poetry contains wisdom”, said the Prophet<sup>26</sup>. Moreover, it can be of aid in the study of grammar and lexicography. As for those who recite poetry on wisdom and asceticism, they act in a commendable way and will be rewarded. If someone recites it to censure [164] a friend or to correspond with him in verse, or to mourn a deceased brother in appropriate words, or to praise someone who truly deserves praise, this is not disapproved of and he is not worthy of blame. But as for someone who speaks in verse mocking Muslims, or flattering an undeserving person, or alluding to Muslim women in amatory poetry, he is a sinner, and God has clarified all of this in His saying “as for the poets, those who go astray follow them” (Q 26:224). (At this point we should recall that Ibn Ḥazm himself had included a lot of poetry in his earlier literary tract, *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma*, and while much of it includes sincere advice to suffering friends, quite a few of his poems are amatory in nature).

A person searching for knowledge should not make do with less than grammar and the inflexion and declension (*i'rāb*) found in the Qur'ān and the Sunna, says Ibn Ḥazm. What suffices for this purpose is *Kitāb al-Wāḍiḥ* or *Kitāb al-Zajjājī*, but if he goes beyond these and delves deeply until he masters *Kitāb Sībawayh* and the like, this is commendable and will add to his honour and his ultimate reward<sup>27</sup>. As for lexicography, the same applies, and it will suffice if one reads Abū 'Ubayd's *al-Gharīb al-Muṣannaḥ*<sup>28</sup>, but if he adds the lexicographical collections and studies them closely and frequently, this is commendable and he will be rewarded. One should transmit the

<sup>25</sup> Ḥassān b. Thābit (d. ca. 40/659), a poet belonging to the tribe of Khazraj in Medina, actively supported the Prophet Muḥammad in word and deed.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb al-Ādāb*, *Bāb mā yajūzu min al-shi'r [...] wa-mā yukrahu minhu*.

<sup>27</sup> The author of *Kitāb al-Wāḍiḥ* is the Andalusī philologist Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Zubaydī (d. 379/989); the work by Abū l-Qāsim 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Zajjājī (d. in or after 337/948) is better known as *Kitāb al-Jumal*; Sībawayh's (d. ca. 180/796) *Kitāb* is one of the most authoritative works on classical Arabic grammar.

<sup>28</sup> Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/838) is a versatile scholar who wrote on lexicography, linguistically problematic passages in the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*, taxation, and theories of abrogation.

poetry of Ḥassān b. Thābit, Ka‘b b. Mālik and ‘Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa<sup>29</sup>, and some light selections of Jāhili verse and poetry by Muslims --without reading them frequently, mind, but only to the extent necessary to perfect one’s understanding of the vocabulary of the Arabs and the articulation of their speech, the author explains<sup>30</sup>.

As for arithmetic and medicine, they, too, belong to the elevated sciences in Ibn Ḥazm’s view, and whoever studies one of these so that the people may benefit from them in the division of inheritance or medical treatment or calculating compensation due to them, is entitled to a reward. Studying them to this extent is a collective duty, for if this were to be ignored, much of the religion would be lost, like calculating bequests and portions of the inheritance, the rules governing sales, etc. Whoever pursues these sciences in order to make a living from them will be rewarded as well, whereas whoever practices them for unjust causes is a sinner and worthy of blame.

As for the science of *ḥadīth*, this is a collective duty, not imposed on each and every one, in keeping with God’s saying “The believers should not all go out together; out of each group of them, a party should go out in order to gain understanding of the religion and to admonish their people when they return to them, so that they may beware” (Q 9:122). Now, there is no way to gain understanding of the religion except by knowing the provisions of the Qur’ān and the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, distinguishing the sound from the faulty, the abrogating from the abrogated, what is agreed upon from what is subject to disagreement; this is the most excellent activity that a person can apply oneself to, the most powerful way to gain reward and most guaranteed to erase one’s sins. [165] In order to underscore this point Ibn Ḥazm quotes a *ḥadīth* he

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<sup>29</sup> Like Ḥassān b. Thābit, Ka‘b b. Mālik (d. in or after 50/670) and ‘Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa (d. 8/629) are Khazrajī poets who supported Muḥammad.

<sup>30</sup> Additional works on lexicography and grammar and collections of poetry are recommended by Ibn Ḥazm in *Marātib al-‘ulūm*, which represents a more ambitious curriculum.

was told by Qāḍī Ḥumām b. Aḥmad<sup>31</sup> with an *isnād* going back to Abū Mūsā, according to which the Prophet said:

“The likeness of the guidance and knowledge with which God has sent me is like abundant rain falling on the earth, some of which was sandy and absorbed the water so it brought forth herbage and grass in abundance; another part [of the soil] was firm and held the water and God caused people to benefit from it, so they drank and they used it for irrigation and cultivation. Yet another part of it was a river bed which neither held the water nor brought forth herbage. This is like the person who understands God’s religion and who benefits from that which God has sent me with and who learns and then teaches [others] and like the person who does not pay attention to it and does not accept God’s guidance with which I was sent”.

Ibn Ḥazm addresses his “pure brethren” (*ayyuhā al-ikhwa al-asfiyā*), and explains: if only this *ḥadīth* had reached us and no other, it would have sufficed us, for it encompasses all categories of people. The first part of the earth, which sprouted herbage and grass, represents the ones who understand the meanings of the Qur’ān and the *ḥadīth* and who practice their religion according to them and teach them to others; the second part, which held the water so that the people could drink from it and use it for irrigation and cultivation: they are the *shaykhs* who transmitted *ḥadīth* to us, dedicated themselves to it and recorded it. They made sure it reached us, and we took it from them, says the author. And even if they themselves had no profound understanding of it, they conferred upon us a tremendous gift, for they were the cause of our knowledge, they are our partners in everything we recorded and learned because of what we received from them. The third part stands for those who opposed the Prophet, those who did not pay attention to

<sup>31</sup> Qāḍī Ḥumām b. Aḥmad ← ‘Abd Allāh b. Ibrāhīm al-Aṣīlī ← Abū Aḥmad al-Jurjānī ← Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Firabrī ← Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī ← Muḥammad [b. al-‘Alā’] ← Ḥammād b. Usāma ← Burayd b. ‘Abd Allāh ← Abū Burda ← Abū Mūsā ← the Prophet. See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-‘Ilm, Bāb Faḍl man ‘alima wa-allama*. Ibn Ḥazm’s informant Abū Bakr Ḥumām b. Aḥmad (d. 421/1030) acted as Qāḍī in Evora, Santarem, Lisbon and other towns in the West of the Peninsula under the ‘Amirids and a succession of ephemeral Umayyad caliphs.

his message and did not accept it when they heard it; they did not take an interest in it and did not pursue it, just like that river bed through which the water courses: just like it enters, it leaves. O my brothers in God, Ibn Ḥazm exhorts, whoever among you is able to be like the first, sandy part, should strive to be so. Would that some of us could be among those whom the Messenger of God praised in this *ḥadīth*! And if one is not granted this, let him be of the hard soil that holds the water; perhaps God will cause you and us to benefit from it. And if any of our fellows should die who was in the habit of searching for and recording the traditions of the Prophet and who attended study sessions, I pray, on my own behalf and yours, that God may protect those of us who are left behind from becoming like the river bed which neither holds the water nor sprouts herbage, says Ibn Ḥazm, thus stressing once again that one should strive to obtain and transmit knowledge so as to avoid its being lost, for its loss will mean the end of Islam whereas its spread will bring about the salvation of the individual and the community alike.

After discussing the kind of knowledge that is absolutely indispensable for the success and very survival of the Muslim faith and community, Ibn Ḥazm now turns to the kind of knowledge that is best avoided, namely *ra'y*, which I define here as personal opinions of prominent Muslims, including religious scholars, that are not rooted in the sacred scriptures or in the consensus of the first generations of believers.

[166] As for the books of *ra'y*, says Ibn Ḥazm: know that it is not allowed to read them in the sense of unquestioningly accepting their contents and basing one's religious beliefs on them, and what God says concerning this suffices: "You who believe, obey God and obey the Messenger, and those in authority among you. If you are in dispute over any matter, refer it to God and the Messenger, if you believe in God and the Last Day" (Q 4:59). Now, whoever believes in God and the Last Day is forbidden to refer anything on which there is disagreement to the sayings of 'Ā'isha or Umm Salama or Abū Bakr or 'Umar or 'Uthmān or 'Alī or Ibn Mas'ūd or Mu'ādh or al-'Abbās<sup>32</sup>, who are the

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<sup>32</sup> All these persons are counted among the Prophet's Companions. 'Ā'isha and Umm Salama are two of his wives; Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān and 'Alī are among the

most excellent members and scholars of the Umma, so how then should one turn to the sayings of Abū Ḥanīfa or Sufyān or Mālik or al-Shāfi‘ī or Aḥmad or Dāwūd or Abū Yūsuf or Muḥammad [al-Shaybānī] or Ibn al-Qāsim<sup>33</sup>, because whoever refers that disputed matter to something other than the Qur’ān and the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet has deviated from what God has commanded us in the above-mentioned verse<sup>34</sup>. And whoever does not do as God has commanded him, has disobeyed God and His Messenger, and is deserving of the most repulsive adjectives, as he has not judged according what God has revealed, and “those who do not judge according to what God has revealed are sinners” (Q 5:47).

Ibn Ḥazm now adduces a series of Prophetic and Companion *ḥadīth*, all of which according to him condemn the reliance on *ra’y*. The Prophet said: “Knowledge will not be removed by being wrested from the hearts of men, but it will be removed by the disappearance of scholars, for if no scholar remains, the people will take ignorant leaders who will issue legal opinions based on their views (*ra’y*), going astray and leading astray”<sup>35</sup>. And ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr transmitted: “The affairs of the Children of Israel were in order until the sons of the captives from among the

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first believers and were to become the first four caliphs, and Ibn Mas‘ūd and Mu‘ādh are prominent early Muslims. For al-‘Abbās, who is Muḥammad’s uncle and a late convert, we should perhaps read Ibn al-‘Abbās (d. 68/686). This Companion who, unlike his father, was of scholarly disposition, is regarded by many as the father of Qur’ānic exegesis. Despite their elevated standing and their closeness to the Prophet, the Companions are not to be taken as independent sources of authority, in Ibn Ḥazm’s view.

<sup>33</sup> Abū Ḥanīfa, Mālik b. Anas, Muḥammad al-Shāfi‘ī and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal are the eponyms of the four remaining Sunni schools of law; Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī was the initiator of the Zāhirī *madhhab*; Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad al-Shaybānī were the most prominent students of Abū Ḥanīfa, just like Ibn al-Qāsim al-‘Utaqī was for Mālik. Sufyān al-Thawrī had his own circle of disciples, which is often regarded as a precanonical school.

<sup>34</sup> On Ibn Ḥazm’s interpretation of this verse, see Adang, “This day have I perfected”, 28-30.

<sup>35</sup> Ḥumām b. Aḥmad ← ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī al-Bājī ← Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Malik b. Ayman ← Aḥmad b. Muslim ← Abū Thawr Ibrāhīm b. Khālid al-Kalbī ← Wakī‘ b. al-Jarrāh ← Hishām b. ‘Urwa ← his father ← ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr ← the Prophet. Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb al-‘ilm*, *Bāb kayfa yuqbaḍu al-‘ilm* has a slightly different version with Mālik transmitting from Hishām b. ‘Urwa and Ismā‘īl b. Abī ‘Uways from Mālik.



nations became numerous and uttered their views (*ra'y*), going astray and leading astray”<sup>36</sup>. [167] The Messenger of God said: “God will not wrest away knowledge after He has given it to you, but He will remove it by taking the scholars unto Himself along with their knowledge, so there will remain ignorant people who will be consulted and who will issue opinions according to their own *ra'y*, thus going astray and leading astray”<sup>37</sup>. This, now, is the proper meaning of *ra'y*, says Ibn Ḥazm; that is: personal views issued by people without knowledge, which causes them to err and to lead others astray.

Know, he continues, that this unquestioning adoption of opinions did not occur at any time in the period of the Companions nor in that of the Successors, nor even in that of the Successors of the Successors, and these are the periods that were singled out for praise by the Prophet; rather, this innovation occurred only in the fourth generation which is criticized in the words of the Prophet, and one won't find any man in the three preceding periods who relied on the authority of a Companion or a Successor or a leading scholar, accepting whatever he said, just as he said it, or grounding his religious beliefs on it and issuing *fatwās* to the people based on it. By God, Ibn Ḥazm admonishes his readers, woe to your souls, do not stray from what was practiced by all the Companions, from the first one to the last, but follow them, and follow the Successors, from the first one to the last, for there was no disagreement among them as to the need to avoid *taqlīd*, to follow the rules of the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, to transmit it and to practice one's religion according to it. And avoid that which occurred in the blameworthy period which deviates from the previous consensus, and after more

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<sup>36</sup> Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḥ Ibn Abī Shayba*, eds. Ḥ. al-Jum'ā and M. al-Laḥīdān, 16 vols., Beirut: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1425/2004, *Kitāb al-ḥifāḥ*, no. 38588, with some slight differences.

<sup>37</sup> Ḥumām b. Aḥmad ← ‘Abd Allāh b. Ibrāhīm ← Abū Aḥmad and Abū Zayd al-Marwazī ← Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Firabī ← Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī ← Sa‘īd b. Talīd ← Ibn Wahb ← ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Shurayḥ and another transmitter ← Muḥammad Abū l-Aswad ← ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr ← ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar ← the Messenger of God. Ibn Ḥazm comments on the reliability of the earliest transmitters and states that although the wording of the two traditions he received from Ḥumām is different, this does not disqualify them, as the meaning is one and the same.



than 250 years after the death of the Prophet, for every innovation is error, and I have already advised you and conveyed to you what I see as my duty, Ibn Ḥazm reminds his readers, and now it is up to you<sup>38</sup>. It has been reliably transmitted that the Prophet said: “Religion is sincerity, religion is sincerity, religion is sincerity”. They said: “With regard to whom, Messenger of God?” and he replied: “With regard to God, His Messenger, the leaders of the Muslims and their common folk”<sup>39</sup>.

Ibn Ḥazm emphasizes that it is only allowed to read books of *raʿy* from one perspective, namely searching for that on which the leading scholars were in agreement, following this and going no further, because in the above-mentioned verse (Q 4:59) God has ordered us to obey those in authority among us, and so we should know what the scholars are disagreed upon and to contrast it with the Book of God and with the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet; any of their sayings that are supported by the Qurʾān and the Sunna transmitted from the Messenger of God we accept, but everything else we should abandon, [168] if we believe in God and in the Last Day, says the author. It is from this perspective that Muslims should read the books of *raʿy*, not from any other. Whoever reads them from this point of view will be rewarded and he will greatly benefit from them. As for someone who reads these books with a view to taking his religion from them without contrasting them with the Qurʾān and the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet is a sinner because of his disobedience of God’s orders, and because he did not judge according to what God has revealed. Whoever thinks, moreover, that it is licit to exchange that which he knows to have been soundly transmitted from the Prophet for

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<sup>38</sup> Elsewhere Ibn Ḥazm identifies the year 140/757-8 as the time when the rot set in; this date, which coincides with the last decade of Abū Ḥanīfa’s life, is seen by the author as a turning point. From this stage onwards, scholars began to prefer their own *raʿy* to the stipulations of the Qurʾān and the Sunna, and their disciples now took their own masters, rather than the Prophet, as models to be emulated. By the year 200/815-6, he adds, this reprehensible innovation had spread over the entire Muslim world; see Adang, “This day have I perfected”, 32-33.

<sup>39</sup> A somewhat different version can be found in Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ed. M.F. ‘Abd al-Bāqī, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘ilmiyya, 1412/1991, *Kitāb al-Īmān, Bāb Bayān anna l-dīn al-naṣīḥa*. The word *naṣīḥa* is usually translated as “sincere advice”, but this is less suitable in the above *ḥadīth*.

the saying of someone else is an unbelieving polytheist and apostate from Islam whose life and possessions may legitimately be taken. Ibn Ḥazm continues: It was transmitted to us that the Prophet said: “Everyone will enter paradise, except those who refuse”. He was asked: “Messenger of God, who will refuse?”. And he said: “whoever obeys me, will enter paradise, and whoever disobeys me, has refused”<sup>40</sup>. Ibn Ḥazm adds: Do not think that I say these things lightly; God forbid that I should say anything not said by God and His Messenger themselves. God has said: “But no, by your Lord, they will not believe in truth until they make you [Muḥammad] judge in all matters of dispute between them, and find no resistance in their souls to what you decide, but accept it fully” (Q 4:65). And the author declares: By God, I do not trust anyone who makes someone other than the Messenger of God the judge in matters of his religion. And know that what I say was the view of al-Shāfi‘ī, Mālik and Ishāq b. Rāhwayh<sup>41</sup> as well, says Ibn Ḥazm. He relates that he heard that someone asked Mālik: “O Abū ‘Abd Allāh, what do you say about a man who was told: ‘The Prophet said so and so’, and who then replied: ‘But did Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī say so?’”, at which Mālik said: “In my view he should be given an opportunity to repent; if he does, well and good, but if not, he should be killed”. Ibn Ḥazm also heard that al-Shāfi‘ī one day mentioned a *ḥadīth* from the Prophet, and that someone asked him: “O Abū ‘Abd Allāh, do you accept this *ḥadīth*?”, to which al-Shāfi‘ī replied: “You! Did you perhaps see me coming out of church wearing a *zunnār*?<sup>42</sup> You hear me relaying a *ḥadīth* from the Prophet and you ask me if I accept it!? How could I not accept it? If it has been soundly transmitted from the Messenger of God, it is my belief and my view (*fa-huwa dīnī wa-qawlī*)”. In order further to impress upon the readers of his epistle the importance of following the

<sup>40</sup> Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb al-I’tisām bi-l-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna*, *Bāb al-iqtidā’ bi-sunan rasūl Allāh*.

<sup>41</sup> Abū Ya‘qūb Ishāq b. Rāhwayh (d. 238/853) was a famous *ḥadīth* scholar; see on him S. Spectorisky. “*Ḥadīth* in the Responses of Ishāq b. Rāhwayh”, *Islamic Law and Society* 8,3 (2001), 407-408.

<sup>42</sup> The *zunnār* is a distinctive belt to be worn by members of the protected non-Muslim communities (*dhimmīs*).

Prophet and no one else, Ibn Ḥazm quotes the following saying by Ibn Rāhwayh: “Whoever curses the Messenger of God, or deliberately skips the ritual prayer until the time for its performance has lapsed, without a valid excuse, or rejects a sound tradition that goes back all the way to the Prophet, is an unbeliever and a polytheist”. Ibn Ḥazm now refers to a comment ascribed by one of his partisans (*aṣḥābnā*) to Mālik’s disciple Ibn al-Qāsim--who in al-Andalus was venerated almost as much as the eponym of the Mālikī school himself-- to the effect that he would not allow the sale of books of *ra’y*. When he was asked about this, he said that he did not know if their contents were true or false. He did allow the sale of copies of the Qur’ān and books of *ḥadīth*, because they contain the truth. So how can an ignoramus who does not fear God assume [169] that Mālik b. Anas and Ibn al-Qāsim enjoined the people to accept their personal opinions when both of them admitted that they did not know if the opinions that they issued on the basis of their *ra’y* were true or false? But more damning things are known to have been told, namely that on his deathbed Mālik expressed a wish to be lashed for every matter on which he had issued an opinion on the basis of his *ra’y*, this despite the fact that Mālik did *not* rule on the basis of his *ra’y*. Such were the excellent imams in past times; they clearly rejected *ra’y*, but God leads astray a nation that bases its religion on such views.

In the discussion that closes the paragraph on the sciences in *Risālat al-Talkhīṣ* (170-172), Ibn Ḥazm impresses upon his addressees the importance of sincere intentions in embarking on the quest for knowledge, in answer to the second part of the third query mentioned in the introductory comments above. If one reads the sciences with the aim of attaining renown or a position of leadership in this world, this is surely an evil way. The author quotes several *ḥadīths* from the canonical collections to illustrate this point. Ostentation and hypocrisy are to be avoided at all cost. If one pursues knowledge, this should be in order to get closer to God, not to men. One should ask oneself at every step whether his motivation is to please God or rather to please himself, by seeking the appreciation and attracting the admiration of others. The danger lurks not only in the so-called secular sciences, whose benefit is

largely limited to this nether world in which we dwell but briefly, then, but even in the pursuit of religious knowledge<sup>43</sup>.

#### SOME CONCLUSIONS

Although in his other works Ibn Ḥazm provides a relatively detailed discussion of the *'ulūm al-awā'il*, rejecting many of them as being useful and relevant only in this world without being conducive to salvation, while accepting some which do have a certain importance for the religion, the epistle introduced here makes no mention whatsoever of these classical sciences. One looks in vain for discussions of philosophy, logic, astronomy, cosmology or geometry. Instead, Ibn Ḥazm almost exclusively emphasizes the *ādāb*, the philological sciences which form the very key to understanding God's will as revealed in the Qur'ān and through the inspired sayings and acts of the Prophet Muḥammad. Practice of the religion should be based solely on these two sources. Whoever bases his religious beliefs and practice on the views of fallible individuals, even those who were closest to the Prophet, rather than following the directives of the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* is regarded by the author as an unbelieving polytheist and an apostate from Islam whose life and possessions are forfeit. This is of course a very extreme position to take, and it only served to alienate Ibn Ḥazm further from the religious establishment in al-Andalus, which was largely dominated by *ra'y*-minded Mālikīs who must have been infuriated by the fact that he adduced critical comments by Mālik and his almost equally venerated disciple Ibn al-Qāsim.

Apart from the fact that they seem to be Zāhirīs, what else can we say about the intended readership and the aim of this *risāla*? For one thing, because of the absence of any reference to the classical sciences one gets the impression that the people Ibn Ḥazm addresses here are less

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<sup>43</sup> This point is made also by the Mamluk historian and biographer al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) in his *Bayān zaḡhal al-'ilm*; see C. Adang, “‘We have become the laughing stock of all reasonable people.’ On a little-studied tract by al-Dhahabī on the state of knowledge”, in D. Pielow and Y. El Jamouhi (eds.), *Lehrer und Schüler: Festschrift Sebastian Günther*, Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2021 (in press).

educated than the readership of the other epistles in which the pursuit of knowledge is discussed and which refer to Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Andromachus, Ptolemy, Hippocrates, Galen and Dioscorides, but this is merely an impression; the relative lack of sophistication, if one may call it that, may just be a function of the epistle's agenda. After all, what his correspondents asked for is for Ibn Ḥazm to provide guidance on the straight path to salvation, and few if any of the classical authors mentioned just now could have contributed to this goal in any meaningful way. It is only by conscientiously following the revealed sources that pitfalls can be avoided and salvation attained. Virtually all the sciences whose pursuit Ibn Ḥazm recommends are those that render these sacred sources accessible and understandable. His requirements of individual Muslims, however, are minimal. He insists that everyone should know some Qur'ān, namely the *Fātiḥa* and some additional verses or *sūras*, but seems to content himself with the pursuit of knowledge as *farḍ kifāya*: if a sufficient number of Muslims –here apparently his *Zāhirī* addressees are intended– acquires the necessary knowledge to teach others and to instruct them in their religion, the duty to pursue this learning is lifted from the others, though their basic individual duties remain incumbent on them. This is surprising, since in his work on legal hermeneutics, *al-Iḥkām fī uṣūl al-aḥkām*, Ibn Ḥazm argues that *ijtihād* is not the privilege of religious scholars, but that everyone, male or female, free or slave, down to the simple shepherd, should make an effort to find the law in the revealed texts<sup>44</sup>. However, he does appear to expect his addressees to take responsibility and to make an effort, since their personal reward in the afterlife and the survival of the entire community depend on the preservation and spread of religious knowledge, as is illustrated to good effect by the imagery of the fertile soil versus the river bed.

Ibn Ḥazm was not, of course, the first Muslim author who wrote about the different categories of sciences –having been preceded by the philosopher al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) and, closer to his own time, the physician-philosopher Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), among others– nor was he to be the last or most prolific one. The famous legal scholar,

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<sup>44</sup> Discussed in Adang, “This day have I perfected”, 40ff.

theologian and Sufi Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) related to the classification of sciences in several works, which have drawn considerable scholarly attention<sup>45</sup>. Although at first glance there would seem to be some similarities between Ibn Ḥazm's views and those of al-Ghazālī<sup>46</sup>, for example with regard to the division into sciences whose practice constitutes a *farḍ 'ayn* and those that are a *farḍ kifāya*, a systematic comparison is needed to establish if and to what extent the Andalusī author's views had an impact on al-Ghazālī's outlook and on his division of the sciences into blameworthy (*madhmūma*) and praiseworthy (*maḥmūda*) ones<sup>47</sup>. This, however, would exceed the scope of the present contribution.

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<sup>45</sup> See on these works A. Treiger, “Al-Ghazālī’s Classifications of the Sciences and Descriptions of the Highest Theoretical Science”, *Dīvān – Disiplinlerarası Çalışmalar Dergisi* 16/30 (2011), 1-32, with references to earlier scholarship, including O. Bakar, *Classification of Knowledge in Islam. A Study in Islamic Philosophies of Science*. Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1998, which discusses al-Fārābī, al-Ghazālī and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311).

<sup>46</sup> Chejne, *Ibn Ḥazm*, 15-16, 103-106, points to certain similarities between Ibn Ḥazm’s classification and that of al-Ghazālī.

<sup>47</sup> Al-Ghazālī knew and praised a work by Ibn Ḥazm on the divine names; see Puerta Vélchez, “Inventory”, 687, no. 7. It is not far-fetched to think that he was familiar with other works by the author.

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