

Ibn Ḥazm

Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad ibn Saʿīd ibn Ḥazm

DATE OF BIRTH 994

PLACE OF BIRTH Cordova

DATE OF DEATH 1064

PLACE OF DEATH Manta Lisham (Niebla, Huelva)

BIOGRAPHY

Ibn Ḥazm of Cordova, one of the best-known authors of al-Andalus, was famous as a theologian, philosopher, and jurist. He was probably descended from a Christian convert to Islam, and could trace his genealogy back to a Persian *mawlā* of Yazīd ibn Abī Sufyān. His father was vizier at the Umayyad court under the royal chamberlain al-Manṣūr ibn Abī ʿĀmir (d. 1002) and his son al-Muẓaffar (d. 1008). He died when Ibn Ḥazm was 18 years old, during the political turmoil of the time.

As the son of an important official in the Umayyad court, Ibn Ḥazm was educated by leading scholars. In time, he followed his father in the service of the caliphs, and when he was 30 years old he became vizier to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān V (r. 1023-24). He experienced a succession of failures and successes in political life, including imprisonment. When the Umayyad caliphate fell in 1031, he retired from the public sphere and devoted himself to study and scholarship.

Ibn Ḥazm became the head of the literalist Zāhiri theological school around the year 1034, following the death of his master Ibn Muflit. He was one of the best known scholars of this school, whose exegetical methods brought him into violent disagreement with the most venerable Mālikī jurists. Efforts were made to silence him, and he was compelled to keep out of the way of the authorities. He died in seclusion in 1064.

Ibn Ḥazm's most valuable work, and one of the most important religious works of Islam, is the *Kitāb al-fiṣal fī l-milal wa-l-ahwāʾ wa-l-niḥal* ('Judgement regarding the confessions, inclinations and sects'). Well-known among his other works are his *Risāla fī faḍl al-Andalus* ('Epistle on the excellence of al-Andalus') and *Naqt al-ʿarūs*

(‘The bride’s freckle’). *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* (‘The ring of the dove’), his early work on love, is justly admired for its psychological and social comments.

A much shorter predecessor of the *Kitāb al-fiṣal* is *Al-uṣūl wa-l-furūʿ* (‘Principles and derivations’), a tract that anticipates the later work in outlook but contains passages that are not found in it (see Adang, ‘Some hitherto neglected biblical material’, pp. 17-18). Among these are quotations from the Old and New Testaments in support of the prophethood of Muḥammad, which are borrowed from Ibn Qutayba’s (q.v.) lost *Aʿlām al-nubuwwa* (*Al-uṣūl wa-l-furūʿ*, ed. M.A. al-ʿIrāqī et al., 2 vols, Cairo, 1978, pp. 187-95; Beirut, 1984², pp. 49-54). Ibn Ḥazm argues that, despite other biblical passages being corrupt, these have been preserved by God to provide a testimony for Muslims against the other religions. As Adang observes, it is maybe not surprising that these are missing from the *Kitāb al-fiṣal*, given Ibn Ḥazm’s intention there to destroy any credibility of the scriptures of Judaism and Christianity.

MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Primary

- Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Al-ṣila*, ed. F. Codera, Madrid, 1882-83, nos 40, 888
 Al-Ḍabbī, *Bughyat al-multamis fī taʾrīkh rijāl ahl al-Andalus*, ed. F. Codera and J. Ribera, Madrid, 1884-85, nos 1204 and 1242
 Al-Ḥumaydī, *Jadhwat al-muqtabis fī dhikr wulāt al-Andalus*, ed. M. Tāwit al-Tanjī, Cairo, 1953, p. 253
 ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī, *Al-muʿjib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-Maghrib*, ed. M. Saʿīd al-ʿAryān and M. al-ʿArabī l-ʿIlmī, Dār al-Bayḍāʾ: Dār al-Kitāb, s.d., pp 28-29, 34-36, 45-49, 55, 96, 264
 Ibn Khallikān, *Wāfayāt al-aʿyān*, iii, pp. 325-30
 Al-Dhahabī, *Kitāb tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*, 4 vols, Hyderabad, 1955-58, iii, pp. 341-45
 Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Irshād al-arīb li-maʿrifat al-adīb*, ed. D.S. Margoliouth, Leiden, 1923-31, vi/2, pp. 86-97
 Al-Qiftī, *Taʾrīkh al-ḥukamāʾ*, pp. 232-33

Secondary

- A. Ljamai, *Ibn Ḥazm et la polémique islamo-chrétienne dans l’histoire de l’Islam*, Leiden, 2003, pp. 8-40
 J. Coope, ‘With heart, tongue, and limbs. Ibn Hazm on the essence of faith’, *Medieval Encounters* 6 (2000) 101-13
 E. Ormsby, ‘Ibn Hazm’, in M. Menocal, R. Scheindlin and M. Sells (eds), *The literature of al-Andalus*, Cambridge, 2000, 237-51

- H. Daiber, *Bibliography of Islamic philosophy*, 3 vols, Leiden, 1999-2007, i, pp. 443-45
- Ibn Hazm de Córdoba, *El collar de la paloma. Versión e introducción de E. García Gómez, con un prólogo de J. Ortega y Gasset*, ed. J. Viguera Molins, Madrid, 1997, pp. 41-70
- C. Adang, *Muslim writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible. From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm*, Leiden, 1996, pp. 60-69
- Ibn Ḥazm, *Al-fiṣal fī l-mīlāl wa-l-ahwā' wa-l-niḥāl*, ed. M. Ibrāhīm Naṣr and 'A. 'Umayra, 5 vols, Beirut, 1996, i, pp. 3-12
- A. Ali, 'Ibn Hazm as moralist and interpreter of love', *Hamdard Islamicus* 18 (1995) 77-84
- T. Bekri, 'Das Exil des Ibn Hazm. Gedichte', in H. Fock, M. Lüdke and D. Schmidt (eds), *Zwischen Fundamentalismus und Moderne. Literatur aus dem Maghreb*, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1994, 135-40
- C. Adang, 'Some hitherto neglected biblical material in the work of Ibn Ḥazm', *Al-Masāq* 5 (1992) 17-28
- M. Abu Laylah, *In pursuit of virtue. The moral theology and psychology of Ibn Ḥazm*, London, 1990
- A.G. Chejne, *Ibn Hazm*, Chicago, 1982
- 'Abd al-Ḥalīm 'Uways, *Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī wa-juhūdūhu fī l-baḥth al-tārīkhī wa-l-ḥadārī*, Cairo, 1979
- A.M. Turki, 'La réfutation du scepticisme et la théorie de la connaissance dans les Fisal d'Ibn Hazm', *Studia Islamica* 50 (1979) 37-76
- R. Arnaldez, art. 'Ibn Ḥazm', in *EL2*
- M. Abū Zahra, *Ibn Ḥazm. Ḥayātūhu wa-'aṣruhu, ārā'uḥu wa-fiqhūhu*, Cairo, 1964
- E. Terés, 'Enseñanzas de Ibn Ḥazm en la Ŷadwat al-muqtabis de al-Ḥumaydī', *Al-Andalus* 29 (1964) 147-78
- M. Asín Palacios, *Abenḥázam de Córdoba y su 'historia crítica de las ideas religiosas'*, Madrid, 1927-1932
- F. Pons Boigues, *Ensayo bio-bibliográfico sobre los historiadores y geógrafos árabe-espanoles*, Madrid, 1898, no. 103
- I. Goldziher, *Die Zāhiriten. Ihr Lehrsystem und ihre Geschichte. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der muhammedanischen Theologie*, Leipzig, 1884, pp. 109-86 (*The Zāhiris, their doctrine and their history. A contribution to the history of Islamic theology by Ignaz Goldziher*, trans. W. Behn, Leiden, 2008)

Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala

WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Kitāb iẓhār tabdīl al-Yahūd wa-l-Naṣārā li-l-Tawrāt wa-l-Injīl wa-bayān tanāquḍ mā bi-aydihim min dhālika min mā lā yaḥtamil al-ta'wīl, 'An exposure of the Jews and Christians' alteration to the Torah and Gospel, and a demonstration of the contradiction in what they possess of this that will not permit metaphorical interpretation'

DATE Unknown; before 1064

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

This work no longer exists independently. It is generally thought to have been incorporated into the *Fiṣal* (though see Pulcini, *Exegesis*, pp. 10-11, n. 8 for arguments against) where it provides detailed demonstrations of textual differences between the Gospels and between them and the Torah (*Fiṣal* ii, pp. 2-81).

SIGNIFICANCE

The work is an eloquent illustration of Ibn Ḥazm's passionate concern for the truth of his own faith, expressed in detailed arguments that in the terms they are set are extremely difficult to rebut. It displays unique knowledge of Christian scripture for a Muslim of the time, and unparalleled dexterity in using it to prove his point.

MANUSCRIPTS

Steinschneider, *Apologetische Literatur*, p. 22, mentions MS Berlin 2217, 24

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS —

STUDIES

T. Pulcini, *Exegesis as polemical discourse*, Atlanta GA, 1998 (particularly pp. 98-128)

G. Haider Aasi, *Muslim understanding of other religions. An analytical study of Ibn Hazm's Kitāb al-Faṣl fi al-Milal wa al-Aḥwā' wa al-Nihal*, New Delhi, 2004

Adang, *Muslim writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible*

- I. Friedlaender, 'Zur Komposition von Ibn Hazm's Milal wa'n-Nihal', in C. Bezold, *Orientalische Studien Theodor Nöldeke zum siebzigsten Geburtstag (2. März 1906) gewidmet*, 2 vols, Giessen, 1906, i, 267-77
- Goldziher, 'Über muhammedanische Polemik', pp. 363-65
- M. Steinschneider, *Polemische und apologetische Literatur in Arabischer Sprache*, Leipzig, 1877, pp. 22-23, 140
- I. Goldziher, 'Proben muhammedanischer Polemik gegen den Talmud, I', *Jeschurun* 8 (1872) 76-104, p. 80

David Thomas

Kitāb al-fiṣal fī l-milal wa-l-ahwā' wa-l-niḥal,
 'Judgement regarding the confessions,
 inclinations and sects'

DATE Unknown; before 1064

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

Ibn Ḥazm's *Kitāb al-fiṣal* is a work of Islamic theology, and has a structure that bears some resemblance to systematic theological works from about the same time, such as al-Bāqillānī's *Kitāb al-tamhīd* (q.v.) and 'Abd al-Jabbār's *Mughnī* (q.v.). It also shares the same characteristic of refuting views held both outside and within Islam that oppose the particular theological points it makes. Where it differs from these works is in the much greater emphasis it places on these opposing groups and refutations of them.

The work contains two main attacks on Christianity. The first occurs in the course of the argument that there is only one God (ed. 1899-1903, i, pp. 48-63), and focuses on the Trinity and the different Christologies of the sects. Here, some of Ibn Ḥazm's logical arguments against what he regards as the enormity of Christian claims are close to those of other polemicists in earlier times. But his other main attack is original, and demonstrates knowledge of Christianity that is rarely paralleled among Muslims of the time. This is against Christian scripture, and in particular the Gospels (ed. 1899-1903, ii, pp. 2-81, though see also the wide-ranging arguments against the scriptures of the Jews, Christians and others, i, pp. 98-223). It contains a

number of analyses of differing accounts in the synoptic Gospels of the same incident involving Jesus, and painstakingly identifies discrepancies and small disagreements. These analyses reveal that Ibn Ḥazm undertook a minutely close reading of the texts, much more so than any Muslim – and many Christians – from the pre-modern period (the single exception possibly being al-Ghazālī, or the author of the *Radd al-jamīl* (q.v.) that is attributed to him). This dismemberment of the Gospel texts gives vivid substantiation to his contention that they have been corrupted throughout and are beyond salvaging, a view that gives greater intensity to what he has already implied with qualifications in his earlier *Al-uṣūl wa-l-furūʿ*.

SIGNIFICANCE

The *Kitāb al-fiṣal* shows some continuity with trends in anti-Christian polemic argumentation from the eastern empire. But it also shows startling originality in its reading of the New Testament books, and its aggressive proof that they cannot be authentic because they repeatedly disagree with one another. This attention to detail singles out Ibn Ḥazm as possibly the most adamant proponent of the view that it was the actual text of Christian scripture that had been corrupted, rather than that it was wrongly interpreted by Christians, and that what it said about Jesus and early Christian history could not therefore be relied upon.

MANUSCRIPTS

For a list of MSS and their dates, see Ljamai, *Ibn Ḥazm et la polémique islamo-chrétienne dans l'histoire de l'islam*, pp. 52-70. An addition to the list given there is:

MS Cairo, Maktabat al-Azhar – 1451/10349 (1854)

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Al-fiṣal fī l-milal wa-l-ahwāʾ wa-l-niḥal, ed. M.I. Naṣr and ʿA.-R. ʿUmayra, 5 vols, Beirut, 1996

Al-fiṣal fī l-milal wa-l-ahwāʾ wa-l-niḥal, 5 vols in 1, Cairo, 1928-29
M. Asín Palacios, *Abenházam de Córdoba y su 'historia crítica de las ideas religiosas'*, 5 vols, Madrid, 1927 (study and partial Spanish trans.)

Al-fiṣal fī l-milal wa-l-ahwāʾ wa-l-niḥal, 2 vols, Cairo: Būlāq, 1904
Al-fiṣal fī l-milal wa-l-ahwāʾ wa-l-niḥal, 5 vols in 2, Cairo: Būlāq, 1899-1903

STUDIES

Haider Aasi, *Muslim understanding of other religions*

- G. Troupeau, 'Présentation et réfutation des croyances des chrétiens chez Ibn Hazm de Cordoue', in A.L. Delcambre and J. Bosshard (eds), *Eriqêtes sur l'islam. En hommage à Antoine Moussali*, Paris, 2004, 193-210
- Ljamai, *Ibn Ḥazm et la polémique islamo-chrétienne*, pp. 52-71
- S.-M. Behloul, *Ibn Ḥazms Evangelienkritik. Eine methodische Untersuchung*, Leiden, 2002
- Pulcini, *Exegesis as polemical discourse*
- Adang, *Muslim writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible*, 64-66, 160-62
- Al-fiṣal*, ed. Naṣr and 'Umayra, i, pp. 17-31
- M. Abu Laila, 'Ibn Hazm's influence on Christian thinking in research', *Islamic Quarterly* 31 (1987) 103-15
- M. 'A. Ḥimāya, *Ibn Ḥazm wa-manhajuhu fī dirāsāt al-adyān*, Cairo, 1983
- R. Arnaldez, 'Connaissance et compréhension des cultures religieuses. Ibn Hazm de Cordoue', in *Actas del V Congreso internacional de filosofía medieval*, 2 vols, Madrid, 1979, i, 521-29
- I. di Matteo, 'Le pretese contraddizioni della S. Scrittura secondo Ibn Ḥazm', *Bessarione* 39 (1923) 77-127
- Friedländer, 'Zur Komposition von Ibn Ḥazm's Milal wa'n-Niḥal'
- I. Goldziher, 'Über muhammedanische Polemik gegen Ahl al-Kitāb', *ZDMG* 32 (1878) 341-87

Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala

Unknown title; *Radd 'alā risālat malik al-Rūm*, 'Refutation of the Byzantine emperor's letter'

DATE Unknown; before 1064

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

In 966 an anonymous Christian author wrote a polemical *qaṣīda* in Arabic on behalf of the Emperor Nicephorus Phocas to the Caliph al-Muṭī' (see *CMR* 2, 'The representative of Nicephorus Phocas'). In this poem he recounted recent Byzantine victories against the Arabs,

threatened that the Byzantines would overrun other parts of the Abbasid empire, and predicted the overthrow of Islam and universal triumph of Christianity. In the very same year, the Muslim jurist al-Qaffāl al-Shāshī replied with an equally blunt *qaṣīda* (see *CMR* 2, 'Al-Qaffāl al-Shāshī') in which he not only praised the superiority of Islam over Christianity but also protested at the ignoble conduct of the Byzantines in victory.

This was a good century before Ibn Ḥazm composed his own reply to the emperor's letter. His reason for writing is not known, and he was far removed from the scene both in time and distance. He may have been spurred by news of victories by Byzantines or Muslims nearer his own time, though he may equally have written out of personal pique when he first became aware of the Christian poem.

His reply in its surviving form comprises 137 verses, and it employs the same *ṭawīl* meter as al-Shāshī's poem and follows a similar structure (though there is no indication that Ibn Ḥazm knew of this earlier work; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, ii, p. 184, confirms that he did not). After an introduction (vv. 1-9), it lists lands conquered by the Muslims, and emphasises their intention to defend what they hold and to extend the faith of Islam (vv. 10-99). Then it contrasts the teachings of Christianity and Islam (vv. 100-35), referring to traditional Muslim accusations of Christian doctrinal incoherence and scriptural corruption – 'How dare you brag of a Trinitarian faith?/ So removed from reason, so out of place./ Worshipping a being who has a worshipping face!/ Woe to you! Where is your sanity and brain?/ Your gospels are tampered with in every place./ And in them, words of truth are often slain' (Hermes, 'Byzantines', p. 56) – and to the prophethood of Muḥammad. It closes with a brief comment on the comparative merits of this and the Christian poem (vv. 136-37).

SIGNIFICANCE

The poem illustrates the resentment that Christian boasting could stir up among Muslims, and the points of irritation that could be calculated to provoke reactions. Unlike al-Qaffāl al-Shāshī's reply, Ibn Ḥazm's attained a reputation in later times: Ibn Kathir called it 'the unmatched and triumphant Islamic masterpiece' (*Al-bidaya wa-l-nihaya*, Beirut, 1982, p. 260; cited in Hermes, 'Byzantines', p. 52).

MANUSCRIPTS —

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Qaṣīdat Imbarātūr al-Rūm Niqfūr Fūqās fī hijā' al-Islām wa-l-Muslimīn, wa-qaṣīdatā al-Imāmayn al-Qaffāl al-Shāshī wa-Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusi fī l-radd 'alayh, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, Beirut, 1982, pp. 41-58

Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyāt al-kubrā*, 6 vols, Cairo, 1906, ii, pp. 184-89

STUDIES

N.F. Hermes, 'The Byzantines in medieval Arabic poetry. Abu Firas' *Al-Rumiyyat* and the poetic responses of al-Qaffal and Ibn Hazm to Nicephorus Phocas' *al-Qasida al-Arminiyya al-mal'una* (The Armenian cursed ode)', *BYZANTINA SYMMEIKTA* 19 (2009) 35-61, pp. 55-56

David Thomas