

Ibn Qudāma al-Maqdisī

fiqh

jurisprudence

Ḥanbalī

Damascus

Khallāl

al-Khiraqī

al-Maqdisī

al-Mughnī

Rawḍa

al-Muqni

kalām

traditionalist theology

Ibn Qudāma al-Maqdisī (d. 620/1223) was a distinguished jurist affiliated with the Ḥanbalī school of law, one of the four major schools of Sunnī legal thought. At a time when leading Ḥanbalī luminaries were based in the Levant and Iraq, Ibn Qudāma rose to become one of the most celebrated jurists of his generation and a pre-eminent scholar of the school. His prodigious literary output in law, traditionalist theology, genealogy, *ḥadīth* (Prophetic traditions), and popular piety underscores the great range of his expertise and learning.

Ibn Qudāma Muwaffaq al-Dīn al-Maqdisī (541-620/1147-1223), was a distinguished jurist affiliated with the Ḥanbalī legal school, one of the four major traditions of Sunnī legal thought. Born in Jammāʿīl, a village on the outskirts of Nablus, Muwaffaq al-Dīn ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn Qudāma b. Miqdām b. Naṣr b. ʿAbdallāh al-Maqdisī (d. 620/1223) hailed from a family of jurists and *ḥadīth* (Prophetic tradition) specialists. At a time when many Ḥanbalī luminaries were based in Palestine, Syria, and Iraq, Ibn Qudāma rose to become an established authority in

the Ḥanbalī school of law and, through the influence of his works and scholarship, became one of the school's most celebrated jurists. His prodigious literary output in the field of law critically shaped the dynamics of legal scholarship in the school, while his writings in traditionalist theology, genealogy, *ḥadīth*, and popular piety underscore the great range of his expertise and learning.

1. LIFE AND TIMES

Renowned chiefly as a jurisconsult and traditionalist scholar, Ibn Qudāma was born in Shaʿbān 541/January 1147 in Jammāʿīl and died on 1 Shawwāl 620/28 October 1223 in Damascus, Syria. His father, Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Qudāma (d. 558/1162), a respected preacher and jurist, migrated to Damascus from Nablus with members of the family in 551/1156. Following the First Crusade and the conquest of Jerusalem in 492/1099, the Franks established the Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem, which exercised administrative control over Nablus and the surrounding districts and villages, including Jammāʿīl. It is alleged that the local Frank governor, Ibn Bārizān, had imposed punitive measures on the village where the Qudāma family lived, viewing Ibn Qudāma's father as an agitator who encouraged dissension (Ibn Ṭūlūn, *al-Qalāʿid al-jawhariyya*, 67; cf. Miura, 132). Fearing for his life and the safety of his family, his father embarked on a dangerous journey from Jammāʿīl to Damascus, accompanied by several relatives. Having settled there, he later sent word for other members of the extended family to join him there. According to Ibn Qudāma's nephew, Diyāʿ al-Dīn al-Maqdisī (d. 643/1245-6), Ibn Qudāma, his elder brother Abū ʿUmar (d. 607/1210), and his maternal cousin ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Maqdisī (d. 600/1203) were amongst the approximately thirty-

five people who undertook the journey to Damascus; Ibn Qudāma is reported to have been around ten years old at the time (Ibn Ṭūlūn, *al-Qalā'id al-jawhariyya*, 66-71; Leder, 283; Talmon-Heller, 108-9). Upon arriving in Damascus, members of the family took up residence in the vicinity of the mosque known as Masjīd Ṣāliḥ, where they remained for two years. The Qudāma family's close association with the mosque and the quarter in which it was situated resulted in their acquiring the *laqab* (sobriquet) al-Ṣāliḥī (Ibn Ṭūlūn, *al-Qalā'id al-jawhariyya*, 64-66; Leder, 283). Established through an endowment (*waqf*), the mosque and the surrounding area became renowned for hosting scholars associated with the Ḥanbalī school. Large numbers had, however, settled the area and caused it to become overcrowded and unhealthy; many members of the family succumbed to illness. For these reasons, they were granted permission to move to an area known as Jabal Qāsiyūn, situated in the foothills on the outskirts of Damascus. Ibn Qudāma's brother, Abū 'Umar, was instrumental in orchestrating the move. There, they had a home built and founded a school along with a mosque that was later referred to as "al-Muẓaffarī" in honour of the Turkmen governor of Erbil, Muẓaffar al-Dīn Kūkubūrī (Gökböri, d. 630/1233), who had contributed generously to its completion (Ibn Ṭūlūn, *al-Qalā'id al-jawhariyya*, 71-81; Miura, 50-57; Miura, 136).

During his formative years in Damascus, Ibn Qudāma studied with some of the city's leading Ḥanbalī scholars, including members of his own family. He memorised the Qur'ān and the *Mukhtaṣar al-Khiraqī* by the Iraqi jurist Abū l-Qāsim 'Umar b. al-Ḥusayn al-Khiraqī (d. 334/945-6) (al-Dhahabī, *al-Ibar*, 3:180-1; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt*,

7:155). The *Mukhtaṣar* distilled the legal teachings and opinions of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) and was a standard manual for Ḥanbalī jurists. A crucial turning point in Ibn Qudāma's legal training appears to have taken place in 561/1116, when he and his maternal cousin 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Maqdisī embarked on an ambitious journey to Baghdad to study with leading scholars there (Sibt b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 22:265; Ibn Rajab, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3:282; al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi*, 17:23-4). Ibn Qudāma remained there for four years, during what was to be the first of three extended periods he spent in Baghdad (al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 22:166; Ibn Muflīḥ, *al-Maqṣid al-arshad*, 2:18; cf. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyat*, 13:108). While there, he was taught by several eminent jurists and *ḥadīth* specialists, including Hibatallāh b. al-Ḥasan al-Daqqāq (d. 562/1166-7), Ibn al-Baṭṭī (d. 564/1169), Abū Zur'a al-Maqdisī (d. 566/1170-1), Yahyā b. Thābit (d. 566/1170-1), Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200-1), Ibn Tāj al-Qurrā' (d. 563/1167-8), and Abū l-Faṭḥ b. al-Mannī (d. 583/1187). Ibn al-Mannī—~~Al-Mannī~~ was considered the foremost authority on Ḥanbalī jurisprudence in Iraq and was the most influential of Ibn Qudāma's mentors (al-Dhahabī, *Siyār a'lām*, 22:169; Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl Ṭabaqāt*, 3:287-8; Ibn Muflīḥ, *al-Maqṣid al-arshad*, 2:16). It is reported that, upon their arrival in Baghdad, both Ibn Qudāma and his cousin 'Abd al-Ghanī resided briefly in the law college of the celebrated Ḥanbalī mystic 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166). Some sources even claim that Ibn Qudāma was symbolically presented with al-Jīlānī's *khirqa* (cloak or patched frock), which he eventually passed on to one of his cousins; such a gesture seemingly alludes to the impressive piety and devotion of Ibn Qudāma, even at this

early stage of his life (*al-Manhaj*, 4:149-51; Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl Ṭabaqāt*, 3:282-3; cf. Makdisi, p.125). The prolific Damascene historian and *ḥadīth* scholar al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) related that it was also in Baghdad that he audited the lectures of several women *ḥadīth* specialists, amongst them the celebrated Nafīsa al-Bazzāza (d. 563/1168) and Shuhda al-Kātiba (d. 574/1178) (al-Dhahabī, *Siyār a'lām*, 22:166; cf. al-Mundhirī, *al-Takmila*, 3:107). According to his nephew Diyā' al-Dīn, Ibn Qudāma ventured back to Damascus in about 565/1170, but he returned to Baghdad in 567/1171-2 and spent another year there. In 574/1179, he set out for Mecca to perform the annual pilgrimage and, while there, engaged with al-Mubārak b. al-Ṭabbākh (fl. fifth-sixth/eleventh-twelfth century), a respected Ḥanbalī jurist, in the further study of al-Khiraqī's *Mukhtaṣar* (Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl Ṭabaqāt*, 3:288). Following the pilgrimage to Mecca, he returned, with the Iraqi pilgrimage caravan, to Baghdad for a third time and once more immersed himself in the study of al-Khiraqī's *Mukhtaṣar* with Ibn al-Mannī.

The *Mukhtaṣar* was central to the legal scholarship of Ibn Qudāma. Following his return from Baghdad to Damascus, he began the composition of his magnum opus, the *Kitāb al-mughnī*, an extensive commentary on al-Khiraqī's text, on the compilation of which he probably much of his life (Ibn Mufliḥ, *al-Maqṣid al-arshad*, 2:18; Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl Ṭabaqāt*, 3:283). Having returned to settle in Damascus, Ibn Qudāma lectured in the Umayyad Mosque, where Ḥanbalī scholars had dedicated study circles and sessions. He also remained active in the Muẓaffarī mosque established by his family (Abū Shāma, *Kitāb al-Dhayl 'alā al-rawḍatayn*, 5:212; al-Dhahabī *Siyar*,

22:167; Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, 3:285-6). It is even recorded that Ibn Qudāma participated, alongside his brother Abū 'Umar, in the campaigns against the Franks led by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (Saladin, r. 569–89/1174–93), who eventually recaptured Jerusalem after the battle of Ḥiṭṭīn in 583/1187.

Stressing his charismatic standing and reputation, the biographical sources abound with references to Ibn Qudāma's unrivalled knowledge and expertise in jurisprudence and portray him as a benevolent figure who shunned ceremony in favour of an austere, humble, and devout existence (Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 22:267; Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, 3:287-91). Numerous reports mention that he performed miracles (*karāmāt*), and anecdotes proclaim his remarkable prescience, recounting, for instance, that he experienced premonitions of his own death (Ibn Ṭūlūn, *al-Qalā'id al-jawhariyya*, 468; cf. al-'Ulaymī, *al-Manhaj*, 4:149-51).

Ibn Qudāma had three sons and two daughters. His sons, Abū l-Faḍl, Abū l-'Izz, and Abū l-Majd, who were talented Ḥanbalī jurists, are reported to have died during his own lifetime (Abū Shāma, *al-Dhayl 'alā al-rawḍatayn*, 5:214; Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl Ṭabaqāt*, 3:298-9). A valuable collection of contemporary biographical material covering the career of Ibn Qudāma and the extended family is recorded in his nephew Diyā' al-Dīn's *Sīrat al-Maqādisa* ("The history of the Jerusalemmites"), a text frequently cited by classical biographers of the Ḥanbalī school (al-Dhahabī, *al-'Ibar*, 3:180-1; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 22:167). It is a source of many anecdotes and reports relating to Ibn Qudāma's scholarly career and the family's migration. Other valuable biographical data are preserved by his

students, including Abū Shāma (d. 665/1267) al-Mundhirī (d. 656/1258), and Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 654/1256), who preserved biographical details of their mentor in their own compilations.

2. HIS LITERARY LEGACY: THE LEGAL TEXTS

Although Ibn Qudāma's writings cover a variety of subjects and areas of learning, his scholarly legacy rests chiefly in law. Based on a commentary on al-Khiraqī's text, his most celebrated work is *Kitāb al-mughnī*, in which Ibn Qudāma pored over legal differences of opinion amongst the major schools and jurists of Islam in all the conventional topics featured in classical manuals on substantive law, analysing them in light of Ḥanbalī views. Preserved in the rich body of material referred to as *masā'il* (legal responsa), Ibn Ḥanbal's legal views and musings were originally expressed orally and were collected and collated by his sons and other close students (Bakr Abū Zayd, 458; Spector, 461; Sarhan, 2). This material was synthesised by the Iraqī scholar Abū Bakr al-Khallāl (d. 311/923)—whom some have viewed as the virtual founder of the Ḥanbalī legal school—in *al-Kitāb al-jāmi'* ("The compendium"), although only a small part of al-Khallāl's original text has survived. Separately, al-Khiraqī's *Mukhtaṣar* provided an abridgement of Ibn Ḥanbal's opinions and arguments, adducing material gleaned from the various *masā'il* collections. Numerous commentaries were written on al-Khiraqī's *Mukhtaṣar*, but Ibn Qudāma's *Mughnī* surpassed them all in merit and esteem. The years of rigorous study of the *Mukhtaṣar* and the legal teachings and positions of the other pre-eminent schools of jurisprudence had equipped Ibn Qudāma with mastery over the debates,

arguments, and discussions among classical jurists on substantive law. In the text, deference is formally paid to defined Ḥanbalī opinions, and, in the introduction to the work, Ibn Qudāma emphasises that, in his estimation, Ibn Ḥanbal's legal methodology and views embody the soundest of possible perspectives. He contends that this is the case because Ibn Ḥanbal upheld the epistemological primacy of Prophetic dicta in his approach to the synthesis of law. In the *Mughnī* Ibn Qudāma occasionally espouses positions on the points of law in which he takes exception to views advocated in the Ḥanbalī school, exercising his authority and independent judgement as a jurist.

Supplementing the *Mughnī*, Ibn Qudāma composed three related legal manuals, each dealing with differences on points of law and ritual in the Ḥanbalī school): these include *Umdat al-fiqh* ("The pillar of jurisprudence"), *al-Muqni'* ("The satisfying book"), and *al-Kāfi* ("The sufficient book"). In the *Umda*, the most concise of the three texts, Ibn Qudāma confines himself to presenting a single view of Ibn Ḥanbal on each legal topic. In the course of his exposition, he omits proofs (*adilla*), explaining that the *Umda* was designed to serve as an accessible primer on Ḥanbalī law. In the second manual, a slightly longer text titled *al-Muqni' fi fiqh al-Imām Ahmad b. Hanbal*, Ibn Qudāma treats a broader selection of legal rulings (*aḥkām*), ostensibly referring to two narrations or statements as the basis for his discussions, although in the book he likewise eschews the inclusion of proofs (*dalīl*) and their summary exposition (*ta'līl*). In the third text, *al-Kāfi*, Ibn Qudāma pursues a weightier exposition of legal topics. In his preface to the work, he asserts that his intention in the *Kāfi* is

to steer a middle path between “lengthiness and concision,” while also deliberating upon the proofs that formed the basis of legal discussions in the Ḥanbalī school. He also mentions that he would trace the Prophetic traditions adduced in the work to their original sources.

Later luminaries of the school produced extensive commentaries on these treatises, which served as coveted sources relied upon by later Ḥanbalī jurists. His nephew Bahā’ al-Dīn al-Maqdisī (d. 624/1226) composed *al-Udda. Sharḥ al-‘umda* (“The instrument. Commentary on the ‘umda”), and, in the following century, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) produced his own commentary on the text, although only parts of his original work are extant. The profusion of commentaries devoted to the *Kitāb al-muqni‘*, which in turn inspired many super-commentaries and marginalia, attests that it, like the *Mukhtaṣar* of *al-Khiraqī*, became one of the axial texts around which centuries of Ḥanbalī scholarship on jurisprudence revolved. Bahā’ al-Dīn also produced one of the first commentaries on this text, parts of which have been published. Another nephew of Ibn Qudāma, Shams al-Dīn Abū l-Faraj al-Maqdisī (d. 682/1283), wrote a much vaunted commentary titled *al-Sharḥ al-kabīr* (“The major commentary”), also referred to as the *al-Kitāb al-shāfi‘* (“The comprehensive book”), in which discussions from the *Mughnī* were resourcefully employed to provide a commentary on the *Muqni‘*. In addition, Zayn al-Dīn Ibn al-Munajjā (d. 695/1296) composed *al-Mumti‘. Sharḥ al-Muqni‘* (“The delectable [book]. Commentary on the *Muqni‘*”). And the contents of the *Muqni‘* were ornately set to verse by Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Qawī al-Maqdisī (d. 699/1299) in *Iqd al-*

farā'id wa-kanz al-fawā'id (“The necklace of precious gems and useful gifts”). Muḥammad b. Abī l-Faṭḥ al-Ba‘lī (d. 709/1309) composed *al-Muṭli‘ alā alfāz al-Muqni‘* (“The divulger of the vocabulary of the *Muqni‘*”), which reviews the terminology and technical phrases used in the *Muqni‘*. In a work of even greater significance, the accomplished jurist Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Mardāwī (d. 885/1480), whose family also hailed from a village near Nablus, produced a monumental commentary on the *Muqni‘*, titled *al-Inṣāf fī ma‘rifat al-rājiḥ min al-khilāf* (“Equity in the apprehension of the preponderant view on the disputed points [of the law]”). It was composed in an age when jurists of the Ḥanbalī school were engaged in evaluating the profusion of legal and related dicta transmitted on the authority of Ibn Ḥanbal and the views of other early Ḥanbalī figures. Al-Mardāwī remarked in his introduction that he sought to appraise critically the body of material cited by Ibn Qudāma in the *Muqni‘* while clarifying some of the terminological ambiguities in the original text. He explained that Ibn Qudāma had, in the *Muqni‘*, followed the convention of *‘iṭlāq al-khilāf* (the free presentation of disputed opinions), namely, intentionally adducing the different transmitted opinions on a given topic without stipulating which was preponderant. As the title of *al-Inṣāf* indicates, al-Mardāwī’s work sets out to resolve this issue (al-Mardāwī, *al-Inṣāf fī ma‘rifat al-rājiḥ min al-khilāf*, 1:4-11; cf. Ibn al-Mibrad, *al-Jawhar al-munaddad fī ṭabaqāt muta’akhhiri‘ aṣḥāb Aḥmad*, 1:99-100). The text became one of the most cited reference works of Ḥanbalī legal thought, since it not only helped determine the formal positions on points of substantive law taken by the school but

also, in doing so, painstakingly gathered material from a vast array of historical legal sources, including commentaries on the *Muqni* that are no longer extant. Motivated by the desire to revisit and summarise the processes of verification applied in the *Inṣāf*, al-Mardāwī went on to write *Tanqīḥ al-mushbiʿ fī tahrīr aḥkām al-Muqniʿ* (“The repletion of refinement, on the explication of the rulings in the *Muqni*”). Another seminal figure in the Ḥanbalī school, Abū Ishāq Burhān al-Dīn Ibn Muflīḥ (d. 884/1479), compiled an acclaimed exposition of the *al-Muqni* titled *al-Mubdiʿ. Sharḥ al-Muqniʿ* (“The innovative book. Commentary on the *Muqni*”). The preoccupation with the *Muqni* continued over the centuries, with the esteemed scholar Sharaf al-Dīn Mūsā al-Ḥajjāwī (d. 968/1561) writing his abridgement of the text titled *Zād al-mustaqniʿ* (“Provision for the seeker of contentment”), which was the subject of a commentary by the Egyptian scholar Maṣṣūr b. Yūnus al-Buhūtī (d. 1051/1641) titled *al-Rawḍ al-murbiʿ* (“The verdant meadow”). These texts, too, inspired elaborate commentaries and marginalia.

Ibn Qudāma’s legal works also include *al-Hādī*, an abridgement of the influential *Kitāb al-hidāya* (“The book of guidance”) composed by Abū l-Khaṭṭāb Maḥfūz b. Aḥmad al-Kalwadhānī (d. 510/1116), a major Ḥanbalī jurist of Baghdad who studied under Abū Yaʿlā b. al-Farrāʿ (d. 458/1066). The text presented legal discussions not included in al-Khiraqī’s *Mukhtaṣar*, thus substantially increasing the corpus of legal material available to Ḥanbalī jurists. It was also a source relied upon by al-Mardāwī in his *Inṣāf*, supporting his efforts to establish the formal positions on points of law of the school. Later

scholars of the Ḥanbalī legal tradition tentatively identified three broad phases in its historical development: the age of the earliest generations of scholars (*ṭabaqat al-mutaqaddimīn*), which included such figures as al-Khallāl and al-Khiraqī; the age of the middle generations (*ṭabaqat al-mutawassiṭīn*), which comprised luminaries such as Abū Yaʿlā, al-Kalwadhānī, and Ibn Qudāma; and the age of later generations of scholars (*ṭabaqat al-mutaʾakḥkhirīn*), including figures such as al-Mardāwī, Yuṣuf b. ʿAbd al-Ḥadī Ibn al-Mibrad (d. 909/1503-), and al-Ḥajjāwī (Bakr Abū Zayd, 455-75). The prevailing consensus was that the middle generations had not fully delineated and authenticated the corpus of established legal positions of the *madhhab* but had focused their efforts on collating, preserving, and presenting a miscellany of legal narrations and points of view that were widely circulated and transmitted. The colossal task of establishing the formal positions of the school was accomplished through the industry of al-Mardāwī and later generations of Ḥanbalīs.

In addition to Ibn Qudāma’s works in the field of substantive law, he was the author of an immensely influential treatise on the principles of law titled *Rawḍāt al-nāzīr wa-junnat al-munāzīr* (“The observer’s meadow and the shield of the debater”). The seminal work of the Shāfiʿī affiliated scholar, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), *al-Mustaṣfā fī ʿilm al-uṣūl* (“The distillation of the science of principles”), provided Ibn Qudāma with a template and frame of reference for his text. Integrating sophisticated methods devised by rational theologians for the examination of the principles of law, al-Ghazālī’s treatise had become a pre-eminent treatment of the subject. The study of legal constructs and concepts

was intricately fused with the analysis of topics in rational theological discourses. Al-Ghazālī included a tract on logic as an introduction to the work. It is striking that Ibn Qudāma never mentions al-Ghazālī by name in the *Rawḍa*, and it is reported that the latter’s disquisition on logic, with which the *Mustasfā* begins, was omitted in some versions of the *Rawḍa* in response to criticism by some of Ibn Qudāma’s Ḥanbalī peers, who disputed the pertinence of logic to the study of the principles of law and thereby objected to its inclusion in the text (al-Ṭūfī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 100-1). With an emphasis on concision and context, Ibn Qudāma does stamp his own mark of authority on the exposition of topics in the *Rawḍa*, ostensibly avoiding rational theological discussions that he deemed contentious while subtly promoting Ḥanbalī legal perspectives by alluding to the opinions of his predecessors, such as Ibn Ḥāmid (d. 403/1012), al-Qāḍī Abū Ya‘lā, Abū l-Khaṭṭāb al-Kalwadhānī, and Ibn ‘Aqīl (d. 513/1119), all of whom had written treatises on the principles of law. Ibn Ḥāmid wrote *Tahdhīb al-ajwiba* (“Refinement of the responsa”); Abū Ya‘lā wrote *al-Udda fī uṣūl al-fiqh* (“The instrument for the [study of] the principles of law”); al-Kalwadhānī compiled *al-Tamhīd fī uṣūl al-fiqh* (“The prelude to the principles of jurisprudence”), and Ibn ‘Aqīl wrote *al-Wāḍiḥ fī uṣūl al-fiqh* (“Clarity in the principles of jurisprudence”). The *Rawḍa* was the subject of several commentaries and abridgements that bolstered its reception in the Ḥanbalī legal tradition, including the abridgement *Talkhīṣ Rawḍat al-nāzir wa-junmat al-munāzir* by Muḥammad b. Abī l-Faṭḥ al-Ba‘lī; a précis of the text by Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī (d. 716/1316), referred to as *Kitāb al-bulbul* (“The book of the nightingale”);

and a commentary by Ibn al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Mujāwir (d. 772/1371) titled *Hujjat al-manqūl wa-l-ma‘qūl fī sharḥ Rawḍat ‘ilm al-uṣūl* (“Transmitted and rational proofs. A commentary on the *Rawḍa* on the science of the principles of law”) (Ibn al-Mibrad, *al-Jawhar al-munaḍḍad*, 25; Ibn Badrān, 462-3). Al-Ṭūfī went on to compose an extensive commentary on his own abridged recension of the *Rawḍa*, supplementing the legal discussions in the text with copious theological and linguistic insights. The pervasive influence of the *Rawḍa* in the Ḥanbalī school has continued in more recent times, and commentaries have been composed on the text, including works by ‘Abd al-Qādir Ibn Badrān, Bakr Abū Zayd, and ‘Abd al-Karīm Ibn ‘Alī al-Namla.

3. THEOLOGICAL TRADITIONALISM

An aversion to *kalām* (rationalist theology) had been a historical hallmark of Ḥanbalī theological traditionalism, particularly amongst Levantine Ḥanbalī scholars (Rodrigo, chap. 7; Leder, 279-81). Reflecting this antipathy towards *kalam* and the doctrines inspired by its discourses, Ibn Qudāma’s oeuvre includes pithy theological tracts, treatises, apologia, and even edicts in which his opposition to philosophical theology is articulated. Prominent amongst these texts is *Tahrīm al-nazar fī kutub ahl al-kalām* (“Proscribing examination of the books of speculative theologians”). The focus of this text is the retraction in which the Ḥanbalī scholar Ibn ‘Aqīl disavowed theological beliefs associated with the Mu‘tazilī school, a movement that had its origins in the early Islamic tradition (Makdisi, 36 and 45). Mu‘tazilīs unapologetically championed forms of rationalistic theology, applying the principle that reason should be the sole arbiter of truth, and they developed

key teachings on the question of the absolute transcendence of God that were intended to obviate anthropomorphic interpretations of the nature of the divine essence. They were also ardent advocates of the idea of individual human liberty and responsibility. Ibn Qudāma used the treatise intuitively to rebuke Muʿtazilī-inspired doctrinal positions that Ibn ʿAqīl had professed before his recantation, on the basis that these relinquished views were still being promoted provocatively by proponents of rational theology. Ibn Qudāma posited that such teachings impinged egregiously upon the traditionalist doctrines of the *salaf* (pious ancestors). While Ibn Qudāma regularly critiqued Muʿtazilī thought, he also frequently censured positions taken by Ashʿarī theologians. They had emerged as a counter-movement to the Muʿtazila, attempting to blend elements of rationalism and traditionalism in the expression of theological doctrine. The movement became a dominant school of Sunnī thought, despite the fact that its positions and methods were criticised by traditionalists. Tensions on these issues lingered throughout the history of Sunnī intellectual thought, and strident criticisms of Ashʿarī theological doctrines appear in several of Ibn Qudāma’s writings (Daiber, 249-51). For example, in *al-Burhān fī bayān al-Qurʾān* (“The proof on the elucidation of the Qurʾān”) he derided the Ashʿarī teaching on the nature of God’s speech (*al-kalām al-naḥsī*, internal speech). On this question, Ashʿarī theologians had emphasised the need to distinguish the created status of the physical Qurʾān and its recitation from its uncreated original, which was conceived as inhering in the divine essence. Ibn Qudāma professed the doctrine of the eternity of the Qurʾān in all its manifestations, returning to this

issue in several epistles and edicts. The excoriation of attempts by rational theologians to promote figurative interpretations of scriptural statements is pursued in Ibn Qudāma’s *Dhamm al-taʿwīl* (“The censure of metaphorical interpretation”). Creedal summaries, ranging from doctrinal pronouncements on theodicy to traditionalist teachings on the divine attributes and the question of Prophetic intercession (*shafāʿa*), are presented in Ibn Qudāma’s *Kitāb lumʿat al-iʿtiqād* (“The book of resplendence in belief”) (Daiber, 105). Related theological tracts by Ibn Qudāma include *Kitāb al-qadar* (“The book of predestination”); *Masʿalat al-ʿuluww* (“The question of aboveness”); and *Jawāb masʿala waradat min Ṣarkhad fī l-Qurʾān* (“A response to a question regarding the Qurʾān that arrived from the town of Ṣarkhad). In his theological writings, Ibn Qudāma defended unswervingly the notion that references to the divine attributes should be understood in accordance with the concept of *bi-lā takyīf wa-lā-tashbīh* (without qualification or resort to comparison) (al-ʿUlaymī, *al-Manhaj*, 4: 154). Such perspectives were redolent of traditionalist expressions of theology and aimed to counter the accusation that scholars were assiduously encouraging the formulation of conceptions of the divine being that were excessively anthropomorphic. Aspects of Ibn Qudāma’s doctrinal statements on the divine attributes betray traces of the principle of *tafwīd* (delegation), namely, the precept of refraining from proffering judgement on the modality and meaning of specific divine attributes (Shinqīṭī, *Tadhkira*, 95-6). Still, in the biographical notice devoted to Ibn Qudāma in the *Kitāb al-rawḍatayn*, his student Abū Shāma (d. 667/1268), a Shāfiʿī jurist

known for his Ash‘arī sympathies, heaped praise on him and his literary achievements but lamented the fact that, on theological questions germane to the divine attributes (*al-ṣifāt*), he adhered to approaches adopted by his Ḥanbalī colleagues. Hinting at his dismay, Abū Shāma commented that it was a matter of divine wonder that Ibn Qudāma did not perceive these matters correctly, given his pre-eminence as a scholar and his appreciation of the import of the textual sources (Abū Shāma, *al-Dhayl ‘alā al-rawḍatayn*, 5:211). Abū Shāma’s remarks earned him a measured rebuke from al-Dhahabī, who commented that Ibn Qudāma and his peers would have been equally astonished by the views of Abū Shāma and those in his camp, especially given their level of discernment, and that it should have been obvious to him that ideological adversaries characteristically consider the views of their rivals to be objectionable (al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 22:172).

4. RELATED LITERARY ENDEAVOURS

Although Ibn Qudāma is renowned principally for his legal and theological writings, his interests also extended to fields such as *ḥadīth* scholarship, biography, philology, and popular piety, revealing the eclectic nature of his studies. Amongst his literary output are: an abridged version of al-Khallāl’s *Kitāb al-‘ilal* (“Book of hidden defects”) on Prophetic traditions; a philological treatise titled *Qun‘at al-arīb fī tafsīr al-gharīb* (“What suffices for the learned. Commentary on unusual vocabulary [in *ḥadīth*]”), which offers a commentary on Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām’s (d. 224/839) seminal *Gharīb al-ḥadīth* (“Lexical paraphrase of the vocabulary of the traditions”); two treatises on genealogy, the first of which examines the lineage of the Quraysh and the second

the ancestry of the Anṣār (Medinan Companions of the Prophet); a work on the merits of the month of ‘Āshūrā’; a tract titled *Dhamm al-Muwaswasīn wa-l-taḥdhīr min al-waswasa* (“Censure of those who engage in self-doubt and cautionary advice against [harmful] apprehension”). Ibn Qudāma was also acknowledged as an important narrator of al-Shāfi‘ī’s (d. 204/820) *Musnad* and Ibn Māja’s (d. c.273/887) *Kitāb al-Sunan* (“the book of Prophetic practice”), because he had received permissions that authorised him to transmit these works (Ibn Nuqta, *al-Taḥyīd*, 2:607-8). Reflecting Ḥanbalī scholars’ longstanding fascination with expressions of asceticism, Ibn Qudāma also composed works that treated spirituality and popular piety, including the *Kitāb al-tawwābīn* (“The book of penitents”), the *Kitāb al-mutaḥābbīn* (“The book of devotees”), and the *Kitāb al-riqqa wa-l-bukā’* (“The book of pious contemplation and weeping”). It is even intimated that he was learned in arithmetic and astronomy (Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, 3: 286). Pondering the magnitude of Ibn Qudāma’s achievements, the Shāfi‘ī scholar and traditionist Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūrī (d. 643/1245) remarked that the *Mughnī* alone would have been more than enough to secure his legacy (Ibn Mufliḥ, *al-Maqṣid al-arshad*, 2:17). The same could be said of the *Muqni’*, which became the foundational text used by generations of the school’s jurists to cultivate, revise, and expand Ḥanbalī legal discourse in the field of substantive law. Given the impact and scale of his many contributions, Ibn Qudāma remains one of the most distinguished and admired authorities in the history of Ḥanbalī law.

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