

## Andalusi *Sīra* Writing from the Third Century to the Fall of al-Andalus (Transformation from Historical to Legal Tradition in the Maliki-Salafi School)

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### Abstract

This article investigates the development of Andalusian *sīra* writing over seven centuries of intellectual activity. The scope of the study includes major figures of Andalusian *sīra* writing from ‘Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb to Ibn Sayyid al-Nās and their principal works. Drawing on a qualitative content analysis of authoritative historical and *sīra* texts, such as *al-Maghāzī* by Ibn Ḥabīb, *Jawāmi‘ al-Sīra* by Ibn Ḥazm, *Mukhtaṣar al-Sīra* by Ibn al-‘Arabī, *al-Shifā’* by Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, and *‘Uyūn al-Athar* by Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, the study argues that Andalusian *sīra* writing evolved through three distinct phases. These phases include: (1) the historical–narrative and jurisprudential *sīra* of Ibn Ḥabīb in the third century AH; (2) the critical and *ijtihād*-based approach of Ibn Ḥazm alongside the Salafī–jurisprudential orientation of Ibn al-‘Arabī in the fifth century AH; and (3) the legal devotional *sīra* of Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ and the integrative approach of Ibn Sayyid al-Nās from the sixth to the eighth centuries AH. The shift from an emphasis on the narration of military expeditions (*maghāzī*) to a focus on the legal and devotional concept of the “rights of the Prophet” (*ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā*) was closely connected to broader political, legal, and theological transformations.

**Keywords:** Andalusī *Sīra* Writing, Maliki–Salafī Tradition, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, *al-Shifā’*, Transformation of Islamic Religious Literature.

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## 1. Introduction

Islamic historiography began with the recording and compilation of the *sīra*, the biography of the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings be upon him). *Sīra*-writing, as a specialized branch of Islamic historiography, reconstructs the life, character, ethics, campaigns, and policies of the Prophet. This type of historiography is central to religious and doctrinal studies and serves as a critical source for understanding the social, political, and cultural foundations of early Islamic society.

Over subsequent centuries, *sīra*-writing was influenced by the political, social, and cultural conditions of different regions. While the earliest *sīra* works were produced in Medina and Mecca, by the late first and second centuries AH, scholars from other regions contributed to this tradition due to the geographic expansion of Islam.

Following the spread of Islam to the Maghreb and al-Andalus, intellectual activity flourished in these regions. Prominent thinkers contributed significantly to Islamic civilization, producing works that advanced disciplines such as science, literature, philosophy, and law. As Ghazali and Zamani note:

"Spain remained under Muslim rule for about eight centuries; their light illuminated Europe. Sciences, literature, and industry flourished, and through this route, various disciplines such as mathematics, botany, astronomy, history, philosophy, and law reached maturity in Islamic Spain" (Ghazali & Zamani, 2007: 246).

The enduring recognition of this intellectual tradition is further illustrated by the sale of a manuscript of Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's *al-Shifā' bi-ta'rīf ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā* at Christie's London in 1438 AH for 265,000 euros. This event underscores the lasting influence and prestige of Andalusī *sīra*-writing, which addressed the cultural challenges of the Middle Ages and shaped religious, legal, and identity formation among Maliki communities in the Maghreb.

Despite this significance, the development of *sīra*-writing in al-Andalus and the Islamic West has received comparatively limited attention, especially relative to Eastern traditions such as the *sīra* of Ibn Ishāq and the *Maghāzī* of al-Wāqidī.

## 2. Problem Statement

The regions of the Islamic West were incorporated into the Muslim world later than Eastern regions, and it took time for Islamic culture and institutions to become established. Accordingly, *sīra*-writing in al-Andalus developed later than in the East. Nevertheless, Islamic powers in the West made substantial contributions to Islamic civilization, facilitating the transmission of knowledge to Christian territories in the Mediterranean.



Prophetic biography, an integral aspect of this region's history, has received limited scholarly attention. Historians often engage with Andalusi *sīra* sporadically, leaving many aspects underexplored. A focused analysis is necessary to understand the distinctive development of this genre.

Re-reading Andalusi *sīra*-writing is important for three reasons:

1. **Religious literature:** Andalusi *sīra* transformed the concept of biography, redefining it as a set of rights incumbents upon Muslims rather than a mere historical record. This conceptual shift influenced Sunni thought across the Maghreb and continues to inform contemporary practices of veneration in West Africa.
2. **Juridical thought:** Political, geographic, and ideological pressures shaped the transformation of *sīra*-writing in al-Andalus. In response to the expansion of Christian powers, the fall of Córdoba, the rise of the Almoravids and Almohads, and internal religious challenges such as Mu'tazilite influence, *sīra*-writing became a tool to legitimize ruling systems and consolidate Maliki–Salafi identity.
3. **Contemporary religious policy:** Limited knowledge of this tradition has led to misconceptions regarding Sunni schools in the Maghreb, with some scholars treating works by Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ and Ibn Sayyid al-Nās as derivative of Ibn Ishāq. In reality, these authors explicitly sought to establish an independent intellectual framework.

This study addresses the knowledge gap regarding why *sīra*-writing in al-Andalus shifted from a historico-narrative approach (e.g., Ibn Ḥabīb) to a juridical-devotional approach (e.g., Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ) and how this transformation relates to the Maliki–Salafi juridical-theological current. While prior research has catalogued key figures and works (Naseri Taheri, 2009; Yusef, 1992; Maqqari, 1978), few studies analyze the simultaneous changes in method, structure, purpose, and the role of Maliki–Salafi thought as a moderating factor.

The independent variable of this research is the Maliki–Salafi juridical-theological current (comprising Maliki jurisprudence, Salafi creed, and resistance to Mu'tazilite theology and philosophy). The dependent variable is the mode of *sīra*-writing, ranging from historico-narrative to juridical-devotional. The moderating variable includes political-cultural pressures such as confrontations with Christian powers, the fall of Córdoba, and the rise of the Almoravids and Almohads. The study hypothesizes a gradual transformation: as the Maliki–Salafi current expanded and faced external challenges, *sīra*-writing shifted from battle narratives to articulating the rights of the Prophet.



The overall aim is to explain how Andalusī *sīra* evolved from a historical genre into a juridical-theological instrument for consolidating Maliki–Salafī identity. Specific objectives include: (1) reconstructing the scholarly and political contexts of this transformation from the third to eighth centuries AH, (2) identifying the three key stages of development, and (3) analyzing the role of the Maliki–Salafī school as a driving factor.

### 3. Research Background (Historical-Literary)

The expansion of scholarly activity in the Islamic West and Al-Andalus fostered the development of *Sīra* writing, the biographical literature of the Prophet. Despite its importance, scholarly attention has predominantly focused on biographical cataloging of figures and their works, rather than on the methodological and structural evolution of *Sīra* as a literary and intellectual genre. Existing research can be broadly categorized into three strata: primary sources, classical secondary sources, and contemporary studies, each with specific strengths and limitations.

Primary sources constitute the foundation for understanding Andalusian *Sīra*. Key texts include *Tarteeb al-Madaarik* by Qadi' Iyad, *Al-Sila* and *Takmilat al-Sila* by Ibn Bishkuwal and Ibn al-Abbar, *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'* and *Tārīkh al-Islām* by al-Dhahabi, and *Al-Ihata* by Ibn al-Khatib. These works provide detailed accounts of scholars' lives and contributions; however, they generally adopt a prosopographical-historical approach, emphasizing personal attributes, debates, official positions (*manaṣīb*), and literary output rather than the development of *Sīra* as an independent literary and intellectual form. For instance, al-Dhahabi praises Qadi' Iyad's *Al-Shifā'* as his "Most Noble and Excellent Composition" but does not analyze why this work attained prominence among *Sīra* narratives (Naseritahari, 2009). Similar patterns appear in Ibn al-Khatib's *Al-Ihata* and Ibn Bishkuwal's *Al-Sila*, where Qadi' Iyad is described as a "Synthesizer of the Disciplines of His Age" without connecting this mastery to the structural evolution of *Sīra* writing.

Contemporary studies have attempted analytical approaches, although significant gaps remain. Mohammad Yousif (*Al-Muṣannafāt al-Maghribiyya fī al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1992) produced the first systematic catalog of *Sīra* works in the Maghreb, noting stylistic continuity between Qadi' Iyad's *Al-Shifā'* and Eastern models such as *Kitāb Shamā'il al-Nabī* and *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah* (al-Dhahabi, 1985). However, he did not address whether this reflects a conscious innovation or an unintended continuity. Naseritahari (2009) critiques claims of rationalist historiography in the Maghreb, emphasizing that Andalusian *Sīra* writing developed independently from Eastern rationalist schools, but does not situate this within a methodological framework. Western scholars, including Bouca

(1999), focus more on narrative transmission than on the intellectual evolution of *Sīra* writing. Similarly, Shahidi Pak (2010) provides general historical context on Maghreb cities and dynasties but does not integrate political developments with the evolution of *Sīra* literature. A review of these studies highlights three persistent patterns:

Focus on personalities rather than structure: Most sources emphasize who said what rather than why it was said and how it differs from other accounts.

Neglect of Maliki-Salafī influence: The role of juristic (Maliki) and theological (Salafī versus Mu'tazilite and philosophical) perspectives in shaping Andalusian *Sīra* methodology is rarely examined. Absence of evolutionary segmentation: Andalusian *Sīra* literature is described linearly from Ibn Habib (3rd century AH) to Ibn Sayyid al-Nas (8th century AH), without analysis of three intellectual-historical-narrative stages:

Juristic-Historical-Narrative (Ibn Habib)

Critical-Salafī (Ibn Hazm and Ibn al-'Arabi)

Legalistic-Dogmatic (Ta'abbudī, including Qadi' Iyad and Ibn Sayyid al-Nas)

Research gaps include:

Transformation of *Sīra* into *Huqūq* (Legal Rights): Previous studies fail to trace how *Sīra* writing evolved into a juridical-ethical framework within the Maliki-Salafī context.

Methodological rupture: No structural analysis has examined the shift from Ibn Habib's descriptive accounts of military campaigns to Qadi' Iyad's prescriptive delineation of the Prophet's rights.

Synchronization with political developments: The interrelation between *Sīra* writing and historical events (fall of Córdoba, rise of Almoravids and Almohads, temporary conquest of Seville, fall of Granada) remains unexplored.

This study aims to reconstruct the evolution of Andalusian *Sīra* writing, situating it within juristic, theological, and historical frameworks, and highlighting its significance as a distinct intellectual achievement in the Islamic West.

#### 4. Methodology

This study employs a historical-analytical approach and falls under qualitative research, specifically utilizing qualitative content analysis of historical documents.

The population comprises Andalusian *Sīra* writers active from the third century AH until the fall of Granada (238–897 AH), as cited in authoritative historical sources including *Al-Sila*, *Takmilat al-Sila*, *Tarteeb al-Madaarik*,



*Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'*, and *Al-Ihata*. These sources identify authors of independent *Sīra* works. Seven key figures are highlighted:

1. 'Abd al-Malik ibn Habib (d. 238 AH)
2. Ibn Hazm (d. 456 AH)
3. Qadi Ibn al-'Arabi al-Ishbili (d. 543 AH)
4. Ibn Hubaysh (d. 581 AH)
5. Qadi 'Iyad (d. 544 AH)
6. Yusuf ibn Biyyasī (d. 653 AH)
7. Ibn Sayyid al-Nas (d. 734 AH)

Selection criteria were limited to authors who were either born in al-Andalus or permanently established there (*muḥaddar*), produced independent *Sīra* works, and were explicitly identified in primary prosopographical-historical sources either by the title of “*Sīra*-Writer” or by specific mention of their biographical compositions. Authors who only included sections on *Sīra* within broader jurisprudential or historical works, such as Ibn Khaldun, were excluded.

### **5. Historical Transformations of Al-Andalus and Islamic Civilization**

The Iberian Peninsula, presently comprising Spain and Portugal, was conquered by Muslims in 92 AH, and Islamic rule in al-Andalus continued until 897 AH. During these eight centuries, al-Andalus witnessed a remarkable flourishing of science, culture, and philosophy, acting as a counterbalance to the intellectual stagnation of Medieval Europe and laying the groundwork for the European Renaissance (Al-Sāmmarrā'ī, 2003: 17).

The unified Islamic state in al-Andalus periodically weakened due to internal strife, dissent, and external pressures. These internal divisions, combined with the rising influence of the Catholic Church and other external factors, ultimately led to the end of Islamic dominion. Nevertheless, the legacies of Islamic civilization endured: Islamic art, culture, and philosophy remained evident in Spanish cities, supported by approximately 300 Muslim religious centers engaged in the translation and dissemination of Islamic works (Qurčanlu, 1381: 2/452).

Al-Andalus served as a beacon of Islamic culture, contributing significantly to astronomy, medicine, mathematics, chemistry, and agriculture. Its intellectual achievements illuminated the darkness of Medieval Europe (Dhanun Taha, 2004: 72). The contributions of Muslims were so profound that even Western historians and Orientalists recognize the accomplishments of Islamic civilization in the region. Prominent scholars such as Ibn Bāja, Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Ibn Tufayl, Ibn 'Arabi, Ibn Firnas, al-Zarqālī, Majrīṭī, Ibn Ṣaghīr al-Qurṭubī, and al-Bitrūjī exemplify these advances across multiple disciplines.



This intellectual and cultural brilliance coincided with a period of European stagnation. English Orientalist Lane-Poole notes that Spain remained under Muslim rule for eight centuries, and its civilization illuminated Europe. Spanish Orientalist Martínez Montalbán adds: "Had it not been for eight centuries of Islamic rule over Spain, this country would never have entered the historical trajectory of civilization. While neighboring Europe was enslaved by ignorance and backwardness, Islam transferred the illumination of wisdom and culture to it" (Al-Rifa'ī, 1371 AH: 149).

The fall of Granada, the last Islamic stronghold in al-Andalus (modern-day Spain), in 1492 CE / 896 AH, marks one of the most significant events in Islamic history. Despite the valor of Muslim defenders, Granada fell without external aid against the Christian armies. This event remains a cautionary episode in world history, and historians have extensively analyzed the causes of al-Andalus' collapse and the subsequent expulsion of Muslims from the Iberian Peninsula.

### **6.1. 'Abd al-Malik ibn Habib al-Sulamī (174–238 AH): The Founder of the *Sīra* Writing Tradition in Al-Andalus**

The study of *Sīra* writing in Al-Andalus, particularly during the third to fifth centuries AH, requires an understanding of figures who not only compiled biographies of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) but also acted as pioneers in establishing a new literary tradition in the Islamic West. 'Abd al-Malik ibn Habib al-Qurtubi holds a unique position, recognized both as the first Andalusian to author a work concerning his homeland and as the first figure in Al-Andalus to write an independent treatise dedicated to the *Sīra* of the Prophet (pbuh).

#### **6.1.1. Ibn Habib's *Sīra* Works**

Ibn Habib authored four works concerning the Prophet's biography (*Sīra*) and military expeditions (*Maghāzī*): *Al-Maghāzī*, *Ḥurūb al-Islām*, *Fadā'il Rasūl Allāh*, and *Maqām Rasūl Allāh*.

*Al-Maghāzī* covers the military campaigns of the Muslims from the beginning of Islam through the era of the first three Caliphs, concluding with events contemporaneous to the author. *Ḥurūb al-Islām* is a blend of *Sīra* and general history, written in the style of the Medinan *Maghāzī*. It also examines the Islamic conquests and battles that occurred during the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.

The works *Fadā'il Rasūl Allāh* and *Maqām Rasūl Allāh* focus on the life and *Sīra* of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), following the style of *Sīrat Ibn Ishāq*. According to Boučia, the origin of these books is linked to "the beginning of creation and its formation" (Boučia, 1999, p. 50).



The term *Maghāzī* generally denotes “conquest” or “military expedition,” and in most contexts, it specifically refers to the Prophet’s campaigns (*ghazawāt*), including his detachments (*sarāyā*, small groups sent ahead) and companions.

### 6.1.2. Analysis of Ibn Habib’s Personality in *Sīra* Writing

Ibn Habib can rightly be regarded as the intellectual founder of Al-Andalus. He was not only the first person in this region to write a book on the Prophet’s *Sīra* but also the first to author an independent work on his homeland’s history. These dual contributions—*Sīra* writing and local historiography—created a revolutionary synthesis within the scientific culture of Al-Andalus.

From a methodological perspective, while remaining faithful to the Medinan tradition through his direct connection with Imam Mālik and Nāfi’, he introduced a novel model of *Sīra* writing within the Andalusian context. This model merged narration with analysis, integrated the Prophet’s biography with general Islamic history, and linked knowledge to social responsibility.

His scholarly network, spanning teachers and students, demonstrates that he served as a central nexus in the intellectual circulation of Al-Andalus. His influence was so profound that traces of his methodology and sources appear as late as the eighth century AH, particularly in the works of Ibn Sayyid al-Nas in Cairo, indicating that the tradition initiated in Córdoba spread to Egypt and the Levant.

In this trajectory, Ibn Habib consistently functions as both a starting point and an authority figure, as the establishment of an independent *Sīra* writing tradition in the Islamic West would have been impossible without the foundations he laid.

### 6.2. Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi (384–456 AH): *Sīra* Writing within the Framework of the *Zāhirī* School

The study of *Sīra* writing in Al-Andalus would remain incomplete without addressing a figure such as Ibn Hazm of Córdoba. He occupies an exceptional position in the intellectual history of the Islamic West, not only as one of the most prominent jurists of Islamic civilization, but also as the first *Sīra* writer to critically examine the biography of the Noble Prophet (pbuh) within a principled and systematic framework. Among Andalusian *Sīra* writers, Ibn Hazm is the only individual who consistently applied his specific intellectual school—the *Zāhirī* school—not only in jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and theology (*kalām*) but also in *Sīra* writing.

Abū Moḥammad ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Sa‘īd ibn Hazm, known as Ibn Hazm al-Qurṭubī al-Zāhirī, was born in 384 AH in Córdoba, the scientific and political capital of Al-Andalus during the Umayyad era. He personally



attested in his writings that he was born in this city (Ibn Sa'id, 1912: 1/75). This emphasis underscores the significance of the 'Qurtubi' identity in shaping his intellectual persona, as Córdoba was a major center of the Mālikī school and a transmitter of the Medinan tradition.

His ancestors resided in Muntlisham, a village in the region of Huelva, but his family settled in Córdoba. In his youth, Ibn Hazm served as a secretary and advisor to the *Ṭawā'if* (*Taifah*) emirs, first in Córdoba and later at the court of al-Mu'taḍid in Seville. He was appointed to several official posts, including vizier and judge (*qāḍī*). Despite his political and administrative acumen, he frequently engaged in intellectual conflicts with opponents, particularly Mālikī jurists, which occasionally escalated to physical confrontations and the burning of his books.

From the beginning of his apprenticeship, Ibn Hazm was exposed to diverse intellectual currents, including Mālikism (through Farhūn), Mu'tazilism and Greek philosophy (through al-Madhḥijī), as well as Ash'arī and Māturīdī theology (through al-Azdi). However, he was not merely a recipient of this knowledge; he emerged as a "bold critic" within these traditions.

In terms of the volume and diversity of his writings, Ibn Hazm is regarded as one of the most prolific figures in the history of Islamic thought. Qaḍī Abū al-Qāsim Sā'id ibn Aḥmad al-Andalusī states:

"He reached a degree of knowledge and *ijtihād* that none of the scholars of Al-Andalus had attained. He produced countless compositions—more than 40 books and nearly 1080 folios—and such knowledge is only found in someone like Jābir ibn Jarīr al-Tabarī; he possessed the most extensive writings among Muslim scholars" (Ibn Sa'id, 1912: 1/77).

He did not specialize in a single field but maintained an active presence across all branches of Islamic learning, including *fiqh*, *kalām*, literature, and logic.

### 6.2.1. The Hagiographical Works of Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī (Final ISI-Ready Version)

Ibn Ḥazm authored two independent works in the field of *Sīrah* (Prophetic Biography): *Jawāmi' al-Sīrah*, a comprehensive biography serving as a key source for researchers, and *Ḥijjat al-Widā'*, a specialized treatise. Despite differences in volume and scope, both works share a standard methodology and objective. They critically re-examine the Prophet Mohammad's (pbuh) biography based solely on the Qur'an and authentic Ḥadīth, excluding weak narrations and *Isrā'īliyyāt* (Judeo-Christian legends).



### ***Jawāmi' al-Sīrah: The First Critical Biography in al-Andalus***

*Jawāmi' al-Sīrah* is Ibn Ḥazm's most significant work in *Sīrah* literature. Its title reflects its purpose: to collect the most reliable reports of the *Sīrah* rather than compiling all existing narrations. This distinction demonstrates Ibn Ḥazm's critical approach. The work gained greater recognition in the East than in the West, the author's birthplace and the cradle of its composition (Yūsif, 1992 CE: 1/53).

The book was likely compiled during Ibn Ḥazm's final period of seclusion (circa 440–455 AH) in Montijo. He stated that he wrote it “despite the criticism of scholars and opponents, in quiet solitude,” highlighting that he no longer sought scholarly approval and regarded the composition as a *wazīfah shar'īyyah* (religious obligation) rather than a regular academic endeavor.

In *Jawāmi' al-Sīrah*, Ibn Ḥazm transparently cites his sources:

- The Qur'an as the primary basis
- *Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sittah* (Six Authentic Books)
- *Muwatta'* of Mālik
- The *Sīrah* of Ibn Ishāq (only those sections corroborated by other texts) (Moḥammad ibn Futūḥ, 1429 AH: 1/275)

He explicitly avoids reliance on later *Maghāzī* works, such as al-Bayhaqī's *Dalā'il al-Nubūwah*, and *Isrā'īliyyāt*. In the introduction, he writes:

“Any narration that contradicts the Qur'an or authentic Ḥadīth must necessarily be set aside, even if it appears in the books of great scholars.”

This approach demonstrates, for the first time in *Sīrah* literature, the prioritization of the Qur'an over *Zannī Sunnah* (probabilistic tradition). *Jawāmi' al-Sīrah* is organized chronologically and features the following characteristics:

- Focus on legal rulings (*Aḥkām Shar'īyyah*) derived from the *Sīrah* (e.g., Jihād, transactions, ethics)
- Omission of unnecessary details (e.g., exhaustive descriptions of battles)
- Analysis of political and social causes of events (e.g., reasons for the Battle of the Trench or the Confederates)
- Responses to doubts or misconceptions about the *Sīrah* (e.g., the marriage of 'Ā'ishah at a young age)

In sections concerning the final events of the Prophet's (pbuh) life, Ibn Ḥazm provides a political analysis of the post-Prophetic period, expressing his theory on the Caliphate—a perspective rarely observed in other biographies. The work influenced both the Maghrib and the Mashriq, remaining a subject of scholarly attention for centuries (Yūsif, *ibid.*).



### ***Hijjat al-Widā'*: The Zenith of Conciseness in *Sīrah* Literature**

Ibn Ḥazm's second *Sīrah* work, *Hijjat al-Widā'* (The Farewell Pilgrimage), is his shortest yet most substantial treatise. The title refers to the sermon delivered by the Seal of the Prophets (Ppbuh) during the Farewell Pilgrimage, which articulated the core principles of Islam, including Monotheism (*Tawḥīd*), the Qur'an, and the rights of women and enslaved people.

In just a few pages, Ibn Ḥazm compiled:

- The precise time and location of the Farewell Pilgrimage
- The complete context of the Prophet's sermon, citing sources for every statement
- Analysis of doctrinal and jurisprudential principles derived from the sermon
- Responses to challenges related to this *Hajj* (Moḥammad ibn Futūḥ, 1429 AH: 1/275)

This work avoids repetition and rhetorical embellishment while combining juridical precision with literary elegance. It represents the most concise and robust articulation of the life of the Prophet of Islam at a pivotal historical moment.

#### **6.2.2. Analysis and Conclusion on Ibn Ḥazm's Hagiography (Transformative)**

Ibn Ḥazm's *Sīrah* work cannot be understood in isolation from his broader intellectual school of thought. He views the *Sīrah* of the Prophet Moḥammad (pbuh) not merely as a "biography of a hero" but as the primary source for deriving legal rulings (*Istinbāt al-Aḥkām al-Shar'īyyah*).

Unlike the *Sīrah* of Ibn Ishāq, which is confined to the Prophet's era, Ibn Ḥazm's *Sīrah* occasionally addresses the period of the Rashidun Caliphs, particularly regarding issues such as the Caliphate and Islamic conquests. This extension is deliberate, aiming to demonstrate that post-Prophetic politics must also be grounded in the literal interpretation of the Sunnah.

Moreover, he references contemporary events in al-Andalus, such as the Jihād against the Christians, indicating that the *Sīrah* served for him not merely as history but as a model for present and future guidance.

Ibn Ḥazm stands out as one of the rare figures in Islamic civilization who transformed the *Sīrah* from a purely narrative and compilational form into a critical, argumentative, and practical discipline. He not only rewrote the Prophet's biography but also provided a methodology for the responsible re-examination of the *Sīrah* across generations.

His intellectual boldness in confronting established traditions is particularly noteworthy. He recognized that the indiscriminate compilation



of narrations does not preserve the Sunnah but rather propagates “doubt” (*shubhah*) and “disagreement” (*ikhtilāf*). Therefore, he selected only narrations with a “firm chain of transmission” (*sanad maḥkam*).

Although his methodology faced contemporary criticism, it has gained renewed attention in subsequent centuries. Today, both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars regard Ibn Ḥazm as a pioneer of the historical-critical method in Islamic studies.

Ultimately, studying Ibn Ḥazm not only recovers a significant intellectual figure but also fosters a broader discussion on the relationships among Tradition (*Sunnah*), Reason (*‘Aql*), and Criticism (*Naqd*) within Islamic culture. He reminds us that every tradition, whether ancient or recent, must be accountable to standards of knowledge and ethics.

### **6.3 Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn al-‘Arabī al-Ishbīlī (468–543 AH): Bridging the Western and Eastern Islamic Worlds in Jurisprudence, Theology, and Hagiography**

Ibn al-‘Arabī al-Ishbīlī was a pivotal Andalusian scholar whose influence extended beyond the field of Sirah. He served as an intellectual bridge between the Eastern and Western Islamic traditions, functioning both as a credible transmitter of the Mālikī school in al-Andalus and as a conduit for theological currents from Baghdad to the Maghrib. This dual role positioned him as a key agent in the cross-fertilization of Islamic thought.

He was born in Ishbīliyya (Seville, modern-day Spain) in 468 AH. His father, Ibn ‘Abd Allāh, was a leading scholar who profoundly shaped his son’s scholarly development (Ibn Farḍūn, 1410 AH: 289). Ibn al-‘Arabī began his education under his father at an early age, and by fifteen, he had achieved mastery in Arabic literature, Qur’anic recitation, and arithmetic, forming the foundation for both transmitted (*naqli*) and rational (*‘aqli*) sciences (Ibn al-Abbār, 1410 AH: 82).

In Ishbīliyya, he also studied under Abū al-Qāsim al-Huwazanī and Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Sarakusī, prominent scholars who integrated the Sunnah of Medina with local Andalusian culture. This environment nurtured a solid understanding of the Mālikī school while fostering openness to diverse intellectual currents—a trait evident in his later travels (Ibn ‘Adhārī, 1400 AH: 4/88).

In 489 AH, Ibn al-‘Arabī embarked on a formative journey to the Levant and Baghdad. In Damascus, he attended study circles led by Abū al-Faḍl Ibn Furāt al-Shī‘ī, Abū Moḥammad Ibn Akfānī, and Abū al-Faḍl al-Maqdisī. His sojourn in Baghdad, the intellectual center of the Islamic world, exposed him to the Mu‘tazilī, Ash‘arī, and Mashshā‘ī (Peripatetic)



schools, leaving a profound impression; he later described Baghdad as the “City of Sciences and Wisdom” (al-Dhahabī, 1390 AH: 4/129).

The journey to the East was not solely academic. Ibn Khaldūn notes that Yūsuf ibn Tāshfīn, the Almoravid Emir, commissioned the trip to dispatch a political-religious representative to the Abbasid court, strengthening relations between the Maghrib and Mashriq (Ibn Khaldūn, 1371 AH: 74). Earlier, in 485 AH, Ibn al-‘Arabī traveled through North Africa and Egypt, culminating in a three-year stay in Jerusalem (al-Dhahabī, 1390 AH: 135).

### 6.3.1 Intellectual Profile and Creedal Orientation

In theology (‘*Aqā'id*), Ibn al-‘Arabī adhered to a Salafī framework. In *al-‘Awāṣim min al-Qawāṣim* (The Fortresses Against the Blemishes), he rejects any form of theological or philosophical interpretation (*ta'wīl*) regarding internal Islamic events, relying strictly on the apparent meaning (*Zāhir*) of the Qur’ān and Sunnah. He criticized both the Mu‘tazilah and Greek philosophers (*Faylasūfūn*) for methods incompatible with Islamic doctrine (al-‘Arabī, 1392 AH: 2/252).

In jurisprudence, he was a staunch Mālikī, sometimes regarding Imam Mālik as “the most eminent among the Four Schools,” while critiquing the Ḥanbalīs, Shāfi‘īs, and Zāhirīs (al-‘Arabī, 1392 AH: 2/252). However, he never saw himself as a mere Muqallid. As a *Mujtahid Muṭlaq*, he occasionally issued fatwas diverging from prevailing Mālikī opinions. His approach was text-centric (*naṣṣ-exis*), emphasizing adherence to primary sources. Additionally, he highlighted legislative wisdom (*Hikmah Tashrī‘iyyah*), arguing that the underlying purpose of a ruling can, in some cases, take precedence over its literal formulation (Ibn ‘Adhārī, 1400 AH: 94).

### 6.3.2 Hagiographical Works

Ibn al-‘Arabī’s contributions to Sirah literature reflect his comprehensive scholarship:

#### ***Mukhtaṣar al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah* and the Chapter on the Sandals (Na‘l)**

This structured summary of the Prophetic Biography (pbuh) follows Mālikī methodology. Its most distinctive feature is the chapter on the Prophet’s sandals (*Na‘l*) (Yūsif, 1992 CE: 1/73), symbolizing reverence, spiritual obedience, and emotional attachment. Some Companions preserved the Prophet’s sandals as sacred objects (*Muqaddasāt*). In Andalusī culture, the Na‘l became a key symbol connecting the community to the Prophet (Ibn Bashkwāl, 1410 AH: 2/591).



### ***Sharḥ Ḥadīth al-Ifk (Commentary on the Hadith of Slander)***

Ibn al-‘Arabī critically analyzes the Ifk incident. In this commentary, he:

1. Critiques weak narrations surrounding the event.
2. Examines the causes and social roots of the slander.
3. Discusses the Qur’ānic penalty for *Qadhf* (slander) as outlined in *Sūrat al-Nūr*.
4. Clarifies ‘Ā’ishah’s religious status within the legal framework (Yūsif, 1992 CE: 1/79).

### ***Sharḥ Ḥadīth Umm Zar’ (Commentary on the Hadith of Umm Zar’)***

This work analyzes sayings narrated by a woman prior to Islam about her husbands, exploring criteria for a virtuous wife, family structure, and marital relations in both pre-Islamic and Islamic societies (Ibid.).

### ***Tabyīn al-Taṣḥīḥ fī Ta’yīn al-Dhabīḥ (Clarification Regarding the Identification of the Sacrificed One)***

Addressing whether Abraham (PBUH) was commanded to sacrifice Ismā’īl or Ishāq, Ibn al-‘Arabī affirms Ismā’īl, consistent with Mālikī doctrine, citing the Qur’ānic verse “And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice” (*fa-fadaynāhu bi-dhibhin ‘azīm*), narrations from Medina, and critiques of Shāfi‘ī and Ḥanafī positions (al-‘Arabī, 1392 AH: 2/280).

### ***Al-Riwāyah al-Maghribiyyah li-l-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah (The Western Narration of the Prophetic Biography)***

This compilation of Maghribī *Sīrah* narrations demonstrates that the Western tradition developed independently from the Mashriq. It is essential for reconstructing both the narrative style and intellectual trajectory of *Sīrah* in al-Andalus (Yūsif, 1992: 1/95).

### **6.3.3 Hagiographical Methodology: Characteristics and Transformative Dimension**

Ibn al-‘Arabī’s approach to *Sīrah* writing within the Mālikī-Salafi framework is distinguished by three primary characteristics:

#### **A) *Sīrah* as a Tool for Creed (‘*Aqīdah*)**

Unlike hagiographers who saw the *Sīrah* merely as a biography, Ibn al-‘Arabī used it to derive legal rulings (*Istiṭbāṭ al-Aḥkām*), ethical paradigms, and as a cornerstone of Islamic identity, engaging in deep analysis alongside narration.

#### **B) *Sīrah* Based on Political Legitimacy**

Given his role as a representative of Yūsuf ibn Tāshfīn, his *Sīrah* writing carried a political dimension. He presented the Prophet Muhammad’s (pbuh) biography as a model legitimizing Almoravid rule, highlighting the Prophet’s struggle against foreign aggression and internal hypocrisy, and emphasizing reliance on God as the ultimate source of legitimacy.



### 6.3.4 Analysis and Conclusion of Ibn al-‘Arabī al-Ishbīlī’s Hagiography

Ibn al-‘Arabī rightly deserves recognition as a bridge between the Islamic West and East. He was not only a reliable transmitter of the Mālikī school in Al-Andalus, but through his scholarly and political journeys, he also facilitated intellectual exchange between Baghdad and Córdoba.

From a historiographical perspective, Ibn al-‘Arabī was not the first to write a *Sīrah* in Al-Andalus; however, he was the first to present it within an analytical, Mālikī-Salafī framework. He treated the *Sīrah* not merely as a historical narrative, but as a living tool to address the pressing challenges of his time—from defending against Christian incursions to preserving unity against sectarianism.

His extensive scholarly network, ranging from teachers in Baghdad to students such as Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, demonstrates that he played a central role in the intellectual circulation of Al-Andalus. His influence was so profound that traces of his methodology and sources can be observed in the works of Ibn Sayyid al-Nās in Cairo during the 7th century AH.

Ultimately, a comprehensive study of Ibn al-‘Arabī not only reconstructs the portrait of one of Al-Andalus’s most eminent jurists but also illuminates the methodological trajectory of Western Islamic hagiography, spanning from Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ to Ibn Sayyid al-Nās.

### 6.4 ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Moḥammad ibn Yūsuf ibn Ḥabīsh (d. 581 AH): The Mālikī Narrative Muḥaddith

Abū al-Qāsim al-Qāḍī Ibn Ḥabīsh was born in 504 AH in Al-Murīyah, southern Al-Andalus. His nisbah, Ḥabīsh, refers to his wet nurse. His family originated from Sharīqah, Valencia, from where his grandfather ‘Abdullāh migrated to Al-Murīyah. He is regarded as the last great Muḥaddith of the Maghrib, as noted by his student Abū al-Rabī‘ al-Kulā‘ī (Ibn al-Abbār al-Andalusī, 1974 AH: 3/573).

He began his education in Al-Murīyah, studying Qur’anic recitation (*Qirā’āt*) under Abū al-Qāsim Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Qaṣbī, Abū al-Qāsim ibn Abī Rajā’ al-Balawī, and Abū al-Aṣbagh ibn al-Yasa’, among others (Ibid.). He studied Arabic sciences under Abū ‘Abdullāh Moḥammad ibn Abī Zayd al-Naḥwī.

In 530 AH (1136 CE), he traveled to Córdoba to further his studies, learning Hadīth from scholars including Ibn Mughīth, Ibn al-Manāṣif, Ja‘far ibn Moḥammad ibn Makī, and Abū Bakr al-Ma‘āfirī, known as Ibn ‘Arabī (Al-Dhahabī, 1390 AH: 4/129). After approximately three years, he returned to Al-Murīyah, where he remained until the Crusader capture of the city in 542 AH / 1147 CE. He died in Al-Murīyah following a period of illness (Ibn al-Abbār al-Andalusī, Ibid.).



#### 6.4.1 The Scholarly and Intellectual Profile of Ibn Ḥabīsh

Ibn Ḥabīsh was a distinguished scholar of the Mālikī school, recognized for his mastery of Hadith and Islamic sciences. Although early sources do not explicitly state his affiliation, later authorities consistently list him among the Mālikīs. Some historical accounts, however, mistakenly classify him as a Ḥanafī. One of his most notable personal attributes was his exceptional memory, which underpinned his scholarly accomplishments.

Contemporaries described Ibn Ḥabīsh as a man of profound piety and exemplary character. He was known for his humility and introspection, often walking through the streets without greeting others, keeping his eyes lowered in contemplation. Despite this reserved demeanor, he maintained an engaging teaching practice: he regularly took his students to outdoor settings for study and discussion, providing detailed explanations of the Prophet's Hadiths and guiding their scholarly development.

Ibn al-Abbār praised him as one of the preeminent Hadith scholars in the Maghrib, noting that he excelled in documenting historical events and the biographies of notable figures. Among his contemporaries, few matched his competence in these areas. Abū Sulaymān Ibn Ḥawṭallāh highlighted his eloquence and clarity of speech, as well as his skill in producing scholarly works across various disciplines. Ibn al-Jazarī referred to him as “The Great Imam and the Righteous, Illustrious Ḥāfīz,” emphasizing both his piety and his scholarly mastery.

Ibn Ḥabīsh's intellectual and pedagogical contributions solidified his status as the last major Hadith scholar of the Maghrib, ensuring the transmission of knowledge and the preservation of the Mālikī narrative tradition for subsequent generations.

#### 6.4.3 Works of Ibn Ḥabīsh

Ibn Ḥabīsh produced several scholarly works, three of which have survived to the present: *Iqtidāb 'Alā Ṣilat Ibn Bashkwāl*, *Alqāb al-Ḥadīth*, and *Al-Maghāzī*.

Among these, *Al-Maghāzī*—also referred to as *Al-Ghazawāt*—represents his most significant contribution to Sirah literature. The full title, *Dhikr al-Ghazawāt al-Dāminah al-Kāfilah wa-l-Futuḥ al-Jāmi'ah al-Ḥāfilah al-Kā'inah fī Ayyām al-Khulafā' al-'Immah al-Awlī al-Thalāthah*, can be rendered as: “A Record of the Guaranteed and Comprehensive Battles and Glorious Conquests during the Reign of the First Three Imām Caliphs.” Currently, two sections of this work are extant. This text reflects Ibn Ḥabīsh's systematic approach to documenting military campaigns and the historical context of early Islamic governance, illustrating both meticulous historiography and attention to narrative coherence.



In addition, Ibn Ḥabīsh is credited with the commentary *Al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz*, a work that demonstrates his analytical rigor in both Hadith studies and historical exposition. This commentary exemplifies his capacity to integrate textual accuracy with critical interpretation, confirming his reputation as a leading Mālikī scholar and Muhaddith in al-Andalus.

### 6.5 Qadi Iyad ibn Musa al-Sabti (476–544 AH): The Maliki Hagiographer and Architect of the “Rights of the Chosen One” in Al-Andalus

Qadi Iyad ibn Musa al-Sabti is a central figure in Andalusi Sirah literature. As a leading Maliki jurist, Hadith scholar, theologian, and linguist of the 5th–6th centuries AH, he authored *Al-Shifa bi T'arif Huquq al-Mustafa* (The Healing by the Definition of the Rights of the Chosen One), which marked a pivotal shift in Western Islamic hagiography from narrative-historical approaches to creedal and jurisprudential frameworks.

He began his scholarly journey at a young age, studying under local shaykhs in Ceuta and later in Córdoba and Murcia. He engaged with diverse intellectual circles, including those of Ibn al-Arabi (Maliki-Salafi jurist), Ibn Rushd (philosopher), and al-Sadafi (*Muhaddith*) (Ibn Taghri Birdi, 1375 AH: 5/285). This extensive exposure enabled him to master multiple disciplines, including Hadith, Tafsir, Kalam, grammar, linguistics, history, literature, poetry, and rhetoric.

Beyond his writings, Qādi Iyād actively held judicial and teaching positions, reinforcing the practical and theoretical impact of his scholarship.

#### 6.5.1 Qadi Iyad’s Sirah-Related Works

Qadi Iyad authored numerous works beyond the Sirah that laid the foundation for his hagiographical contributions, including:

***Tartib al-Madarik wa Taqrib al-Masalik***: His most significant work on biographical reporting (*Rijāl*) and history, also known as the “Dictionary of Biographical Narrators and History of the Maliki School” (Ibn al-Khatib, 2001 CE: 4/193). This work demonstrates that Qādi Iyād completed preparatory scholarship in three key areas—*Rijāl*, *Hadith*, and *Fiqh*—before composing *Al-Shifā* (Iyad, 1390 AH: 24).

***Al-Shifa bi Tarif Huquq al-Mustafa***: Recognized as the first “rights-centric” Sirah in Islamic history, it is considered by al-Dhahabi as the most sublime of Qadi Iyad’s compositions. The book is notable for:

- Introducing the *Ziyārah* (visitation) of the Prophet’s grave as a recognized “Right of the Prophet.”
- Providing detailed guidance on sending *Ṣalawāt* (blessings), citing Qur’anic verses such as “Indeed, Allah and His angels...” along with Hadiths.



- Systematically explaining the Prophet's *'Ismah* (infallibility) from a jurisprudential and theological perspective, rather than relying solely on *Hadith* (Ibid.: 35).

### Structure of *Al-Shifā*

1. **The Status of the Prophet in the Qur'an:** Covers verses of praise, divine oaths, eloquence, lineage, birthplace, wives, and physical and moral attributes.
2. **The Prophet's Rights over Muslims:** Includes obedience, love, reverence, sending blessings, and grave visitation.
3. **Unique Characteristics:** Discusses infallibility (*'Ismah*), human forgetfulness, Isra' (addressing doubts), and miracles.
4. **Insult and Blasphemy (*Sabb*):** Examines the ruling on executing those who insult the Prophet, references Meccan verses regarding harm to the Prophet, and rulings on apostasy.

### 6.5.2 Analysis of Qadi Iyad's Hagiography within the Andalus School

Qadi Iyad represents the culmination of the trend of "*Fiqh*-ization of the *Sirah*" in Al-Andalus and the beginning of the era of "Veneration-making" (*Ta'zim-sazi*) of the *Sirah*. His methodological approach shifted the focus from the narrative of the *Sirah* to the "Rights" (*Huqūq*), encompassing the Prophet's rights over Muslims, including love, obedience, sending blessings, and visitation.

*Al-Shifa* had an unprecedented impact, being the first *Sirah* work to consider the Ziyarah (visitation of the Prophet's grave) as definitively obligatory or highly recommended—a practice that remains foundational to visitation culture in the Maghrib.

If Ibn Ishaq's *Al-Maghazi* transformed the *Sirah* into a "story," and Ibn Abd al-Barr's *Al-Durar* framed it as "Fiqh" (jurisprudence), Qāḍī Iyāḍ, through *Al-Shifa*, established the *Sirah* as "Law/Right" (*Haqq*). This approach directed Andalus hagiography for centuries toward a devotional and reverence-based perspective.

One of his key innovations was the formalization of ceremonial chapters in the *Sirah*, including:

- Sending Blessings
- Grave Visitation
- Love and Obedience

These sections were unprecedented in their scope, transforming the *Sirah* from a purely "field of knowledge" into a "field of worship" (*Ibadah*).

Qāḍī Iyāḍ's influence extended to subsequent biographers. Ibn Sayyid al-Nas, in *Uyoun al-Athar*, cites *Al-Shifa* over one hundred times in his chapter on "Rights." Al-Maqqari (8th century AH) organized all *Sirah*-



related chapters around *Al-Shifa* in *Azhar al-Riyad*. In regions influenced by Andalusī jurisprudence, *Al-Shifa* became a core textbook in theological and jurisprudential schools.

## **6.6 Yusuf ibn Mohammad Bayyasi (d. 573–653 AH): Historian and Man of Letters**

Yusuf ibn Mohammad Bayyasi was a historian, Muhaddith, poet, and man of letters of the 7th century AH. He was born in Bayyasa (Biyasa) in Al-Andalus in 573 AH. He is closely associated with Bayyasa, a city in the province of Jaén, and some sources explicitly state that he was born there (Palencia, 1955 CE: 107).

### **6.6.1 The Scholarly and Social Profile of Bayyasi**

Bayyasi traveled extensively throughout Al-Andalus. During the reign of Abu Zakariyya Yahya I, the Hafsid ruler of Ifriqiya (625–647 AH), he moved to Tunis, following many other Andalusian Muslims who were fleeing the Christian reconquest in Spain and seeking refuge in North African cities (Tawahi, 1955 CE: 213).

Abu Zakariyya, known for appointing elite émigrés to high offices, honored Bayyasi with respect, a stipend, and a monthly salary. Bayyasi apparently remained in Tunis until the end of his life (Al-Dhahabi, Mohammad, 1406 AH: 217).

During this period, Bayyasi engaged in literary activities, compiling a collection of poetry (Yafii, 1390 AH: 4/130). His best-known work is the *Epic of Bayyasi* (*Kitab Hamasat Bayyasi*). He was described as a “lexicographer, historian, and poet, well-trained in the classical school of poetry” and an authority in verse (Yafii, 1390 AH: 5/39).

Another notable work is his commentary on the *Risalah* of Ibn Hariq, which itself comments on the verses of *Al-Jumal* by Abu Ishaq al-Zajjaji. In his commentary, Bayyasi clarified unusual expressions, proverbs, and difficult passages, citing Arabic poetry as supporting evidence for each point (Mahfuz Mohammad, 1405 AH: 1/173).

Bayyasi’s historical contributions include *Tarikh Ibn Hayyan*, a supplement to Ibn Hayyan’s major historical work, *Al-Mutin*.

### **6.6.2. Bayyāsī’s Works on Sirah**

*Al-I’lām bi al-Ḥurūb al-Wāqī’ah fī Ṣadr al-Islām* (The Informing on the Wars That Occurred in the Early Days of Islam). Upon his arrival in Tunis and the warm reception by Emir Abū Zakariyyā, Bayyāsī compiled the two-volume work *Al-I’lām bi al-Ḥurūb al-Wāqī’ah fī Ṣadr al-Islām* for him (Ḥājji Khalīfa, 1410 AH: 1/81).

As indicated by its title, the narratives in this work begin with the assassination of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (23 AH/644 CE) and conclude with



the uprising of Walīd ibn Ṭarīf al-Shārī against Hārūn al-Rashīd (Al-Ṭabarī, 23 AH/644 CE).

Ibn Khallikān described Bayyāsī's writing in this book as highly specialized, noting that he had examined and praised it. Jurgi Zaydān regarded *Al-I'lām* as unparalleled in its detailed exposition of Umayyad history (Zaydān, 1975 CE: 3/89).

### **6.7. Ibn Sayyid al-Nās (671–734 AH): The *Shāfi'ī Muḥaddith***

Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, whose full name is Abū al-Faṭḥ Fath al-Dīn Ya' marī, was a Hadith scholar, historian, Shāfi'ī jurist, and Andalusī man of letters. His family belonged to the Ya' marī tribe, and their homeland was Seville (Ishbīliyyah) in Al-Andalus. Most of his ancestors were renowned for their scholarship and political acumen. After the fall of Seville to the Christians in 646 AH/1248 CE, they were forced to leave their homeland (Al-Ṣafadī, 1381 AH: 1/294). His father, Abū 'Amr Moḥammad, studied in Tunis and Beja before immigrating to Egypt, where he brought with him important and reliable books. Abū 'Amr continued his studies in Alexandria, Mecca, and Cairo, eventually settling in Cairo (Al-Dhahabī, 1405 AH: 4/99). Ibn Sayyid al-Nās was born in Cairo and attended the study circles of its scholars from childhood.

#### **6.7.1. The Scholarly Status of Ibn Sayyid al-Nās**

Ibn Sayyid al-Nās received ijāzāt (licenses to transmit Hadith) from numerous scholars in the Hijāz, Iraq, Syria, Ifriqiya, and al-Andalus. Ibn Kathīr considered him preeminent among his contemporaries in the disciplines of Hadith, Fiqh, grammar, Sirah, history, and other fields. Al-Dhahabī noted that his narrations were accurate and insightful, regarding him as highly knowledgeable in Sirah, Rijāl, and linguistics (Ibid.).

He also possessed considerable talent in poetry and literature. His poems in praise of the Noble Prophet (pbuh) gained widespread recognition. Ibn Sayyid al-Nās was a master calligrapher and notably fast in reading and writing. He famously copied the entire Qur'an in a single Friday and completed his Sirah book in twenty days (Al-Subkī, 1383 AH: 9/270).

His scholarly and cultural activities were extensive. A large number of people from Syria, Egypt, and elsewhere attended his Hadith recitations and lectures. Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī and Al-Ṣafadī also studied his books (Al-Ṣafadī, 1381 AH: 1/300).

#### **6.7.2. Ibn Sayyid al-Nās's Famous Work in Sirah Writing**

*'Uyūn al-Athar fī Funūn al-Maghāzī wa al-Shamā'il wa al-Siyar*  
(The Springs of Traditions Concerning the Arts of Campaigns, Qualities, and Biographies)



This book, as its title clearly indicates, is dedicated to the biography of the Noble Prophet (pbuh) and represents the primary source of Ibn Sayyid al-Nās's scholarly renown. In the introduction, the author explained that he selected the most reliable sections from existing Sirah works and arranged them chronologically according to the sequence of events.

In compiling his Sirah, Ibn Sayyid al-Nās drew upon numerous sources, including the Six Canonical Books of Hadith (*Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sittah*), the *Sirah* of Ibn Ishāq, the *Maghāzī* of al-Wāqidī, the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Sa'd, and *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr* by al-Ṭabarānī.

A close examination of the text demonstrates that Ibn Sayyid al-Nās provided detailed explanations of events whenever possible, avoided narrating weak or unreliable reports, and occasionally offered critical analysis. He presented reasoned arguments to support or question the authenticity of specific accounts, making his Sirah not merely a narrative history but, in many instances, an analytical work.

## 7- Discussion and Analysis of Research Findings

The findings of this study indicate a structural transformation in Andalusī Sirah writing. As the genre increasingly adhered to the Mālikī-Salafī tradition, its format evolved from a primarily "Chronological-Narrative" arrangement to a more "Conceptual-Juridical" framework.

A significant development in this period was the introduction of a dedicated chapter on the "Rights of the Prophet" (including love, obedience, blessings, and visitation of his grave), which became independent of the chronological sequence of military campaigns (*Ghazawāt*). This structural innovation is consistently observed in Sirah works composed after the 5th century AH.

Furthermore, the reliance on the foundational Sirahs of Ibn Ishāq and al-Wāqidī diminished in texts conforming to the Mālikī-Salafī school, reflecting a deliberate shift in methodological priorities.

The underlying causes of this transformation can be discerned through three interrelated analytical layers:

1. **The Juridical Layer (*Fiqh*):** With the consolidation of the absolute Mālikī current in al-Andalus, Sirah writing increasingly incorporated principles of "Applied Mālikī Jurisprudence." This adaptation enabled the presentation of the Prophet's life in a manner consistent with juridical norms and moral exemplars.
2. **The Theological Layer (*Kalām*):** The intellectual presence of the Mu'tazila and other philosophical currents in al-Andalus transformed Sirah writing into a medium emphasizing the Prophet's absolute Infallibility (*iṣmah*). This development facilitated the alignment of historical narratives with theological doctrine.



3. **The Political Layer:** Following the fall of Córdoba (422 AH), Almoravid and Almohad authorities sought a depiction of the Prophet that was both venerable and tangible, rather than merely a “Prophet of Battles.” This objective explains the symbolic prominence of the “Sandal” (*Naʿl*) in Ibn al-ʿArabī’s *Mukhtaṣar al-Sīrah* and Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ’s *Al-Shifāʾ*, which functioned as markers of a tangible connection to the Prophet rather than simple historical artifacts.

Collectively, these juridical, theological, and political factors elucidate the conceptual shift in Andalusī Sirah literature, highlighting its evolution from mere historical narrative to an integrated analytical and doctrinal enterprise.

### 8- Conclusion

One of the primary questions addressed in this study was: Why did Sirah writing in al-Andalus, spanning from the 3rd century AH until the fall of Granada, evolve from a “Historical-Narrative” approach toward a “Juridical-Devotional” model, and how was this transformation related to the Mālikī-Salafī jurisprudential and theological currents?

This conceptual gap emerged because previous studies, although identifying key figures and cataloging their works, had not examined this structural transformation in Andalusī Sirah as a conscious response to the social, political, and religious challenges faced between the 5th and 8th centuries AH.

The findings of this research demonstrate that this evolution was neither accidental nor a mere imitation of Eastern models; rather, it constituted a deliberate intellectual and political process. As the Mālikī-Salafī current expanded in al-Andalus, particularly under the Almoravid and Almohad regimes, which sought to establish a cohesive religious identity to legitimize their rule against Christian encroachment, Sirah writing shifted from narrating military campaigns to articulating the Prophet’s rights over the Muslim community. This transformation can be conceptualized in three sequential stages:

1. **The Historical-Narrative Sirah**, exemplified by Ibn Ḥabīb.
2. **The Critical-Salafī Sirah**, exemplified by Ibn Ḥazm and Ibn al-ʿArabī.
3. **The Juridical-Devotional Sirah**, exemplified by Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ and Ibn Sayyid al-Nās.

The significance of these three categories is evident in three dimensions:

- **Theoretical:** Providing a three-stage model for the evolution of Maghribī Sirah writing.



- **Contextual:** Reinterpreting the history of religious literature in the Western Islamic world within the framework of political and identity confrontations.
- **Conceptual:** Introducing the “Juridical *Sirah*” as an independent literary genre.

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings challenge traditional models of historiography as a passive reflection of events and instead support a model of historiography as a deliberate instrument of legitimization. From a practical perspective, this research indicates to educational policymakers in Mālikī-dominated West African contexts that the culture of veneration of the Holy Prophet in the Maghreb is rooted not in emotional excess but in a conscious jurisprudential and political tradition.

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