

**AVERROES/IBN RUSHD AND HIS TIME**  
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**BOOKLET OF SUMMARIES**







## FIRST SESSION

### Ibn Rushd in the Juridical and Legal-Theoretical Milieu

#### Averroes and his Family: The Making of an ‘Independent Legal Scholar’

Delfina Serrano Ruano  
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##### Summary

In my paper, I focus on Averroes’ training period and the impact of the teachings he received from his father and, through him, his grandfather. I examine this impact in Averroes’ legal works, particularly in his *Bidayat al-mujtahid*. In order to investigate Averroes’ intellectual family background, I will examine his father’s biography to determine whether he deserves to be labelled a ‘weak link’, as Dominique Urvoy did, for not having written any works of his own. I will also investigate the transmission of the grandfather’s most significant legal works within and outside the family, including the *Fatawa*, the *Bayan*, and, especially, the *Muqaddimat* which is most similar in structure and orientation to the *Bidaya*.

#### Averroes, the Commentator? Neo Aristotelianism as Juridical Hermeneutics

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##### Summary

This lecture examines Ibn Rushd’s conception of breathing as situated at the intersection of philosophy, medicine, and psychology. Confronted with Galen’s challenges to the Aristotelian tradition, Ibn Rushd reexamined and reconfigured Aristotle’s cardiocentric physiology, treating Galen not merely as an adversary to be refuted but as a thinker whose insights must be assimilated. Through this careful synthesis, breathing emerges not only as a vital physiological function but also as a conduit linking body and soul. The lecture highlights Ibn Rushd’s distinctive capacity to harmonize philosophical reasoning with medical knowledge, offering a nuanced vision of human life in which Galen’s empirical observations enrich and refine the Aristotelian framework.

**Negotiating *Ikhtilāf* and *Ijmāʿ*:****Ibn Rushd's *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid* and the Almohads' Quest for Consensus**

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**Summary**

Legal authority under the Almohad dynasty was reconstituted through a program of doctrinal consolidation and a decisive shift from Mālikī traditionalism toward a model in which reason served as the basis of legal theory and practice. Within this milieu, Ibn Rushd's *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid* emerged as a work of comparative jurisprudence of exceptional analytical rigor. The present study situates Ibn Rushd's text within the broader politico-legal transformations that shaped the juridical landscape of the period, with close attention to the Almohads' assertive pursuit of consensus (*ijmāʿ*). It argues that his adoption of the *ikhtilāf* genre was a conscious and strategic response to these transformations. In this light, *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid* is not a mere register of juristic differences, but a deliberate effort to institutionalize *ikhtilāf* through a systematic manual crafted to train jurists, both within and beyond state circles, in the ways of comparative and causal legal reasoning. Its intricate analytic structure, methodological posture, and theorization of *ikhtilāf* reflect a moment in which legal reasoning was reoriented amid attempts to centralize legal interpretative authority. This paper concludes that *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid* represents a paradigmatic expression of the Almohads' ambition to harmonize legal interpretation with a rationalist vision, while preserving a juridical disposition distinctly its own.

**Ibn Rushd's Legal Reasoning and Philosophy of Law: A Case Study on *Ribā* in *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid***

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**Summary**

Between 560/1164 and 573/1177, Ibn Rushd began writing his middle commentaries on Aristotle's works, as well as shorter abridgements and commentaries in various disciplines such as grammar and legal theory. His strategy in these writings was to analyze particular cases and discussions in order to highlight the underlying abstract principles. During this period, Ibn Rushd also composed a major work on substantive law: the *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid*. This text combines elements of works on legal disagreement (*ikhtilāf*) with those on juristic principles and precepts (*qawāʿid*) and substantive law (*furūʿ al-fiqh*). The first version was completed in 564–65/1169–70, and Ibn Rushd later added the missing chapter on the pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) in 584/1188. Although detailed studies exist on Ibn Rushd's views on *uṣūl al-fiqh*, especially in his *al-Ḍarūrī* and in the introduction to *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid*, much less attention has been paid to his analysis of particular cases of substantive law. This paper examines two related topics in the law of contracts (*buyūʿ*): forbidden sales items and *ribā* (interest). By analyzing these cases, I will show how Ibn Rushd approaches substantive law, how he makes choices among competing views, and how he uses his sources. Furthermore, I will situate this approach within his broader legal philosophy.



## SECOND SESSION

### Ibn Rushd's Engagement with *Kalām* and Logic

#### Concepts of *ta'wīl* in al-Andalus and the Maghrib

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#### Summary

The aim of the present contribution is to explore the concepts of *ta'wīl*, interpretation, that were circulating in al-Andalus and the Islamic West in the period prior to Ibn Rushd and around his lifetime, to shed light on Ibn Rushd's own understanding of this concept. *Ta'wīl* is a major theme in Ibn Rushd's *Faṣl al-maqāl* and *Kashf 'an manāhij al-adilla*, as this concept, in opposition to al-*Ghazālī's* *ijmā'*, is central to Ibn Rushd's views on the compatibility between revelation and philosophy. Ibn Rushd, who defines *ta'wīl* as “to bring out the meaning of a voice from its literal meaning to its metaphorical one, without violating the custom of the Arabic language in using metaphorical language when naming something after its likeness, cause, effect, counterpart, or other things that were listed in the definition of the types of metaphorical speech” (*Faṣl al-maqāl*, ed. 'Imāra, Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1972, 32), favours the use of *ta'wīl* of sacred sources over their literal meaning when they conflict with reason.

In the context of the tensions between revelation and philosophy, concepts such as *ta'wīl*, *i'tibār* or *tafsīr*, were the object of debates in al-Andalus before, during and shortly after Ibn Rushd's lifetime with ongoing discussions on their nature, their governing principles and limits. Authors such as Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabī, Ibn Barrajan, al-Qaṣrī, al-Ḥarrālī or Ibn 'Arabī address concepts closely related to *ta'wīl* in their work, even with specific works such as Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabī's *Qānūn al-ta'wīl* or al-Ḥarrālī's *Miftāḥ al-ghalaq*.

**Colors can be heard and sounds can be seen****An aberration of the Ash‘arite theory on the vision of God according to Ibn Rushd**

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«It is possible for a blind person in China to see a bedbug in Andalusia»

**Summary**

Among the subjects that still deserve to be explored further in Ibn Rushd, there is that of his complex and critical relationship with *‘Ilm al-Kalām*. What remains relevant, in our opinion, is no longer only his criticism where he rejects it as much in its theories as in its logical processes, but also his way of explaining the divergent doctrinal positions, of indicating their respective presuppositions, stakes and consequences. His goal is to ensure an arbitration that he believes to be fair from the point of view of religious law and scientific truth.

We propose here to study his presentation of the theory of the *Mutakallimūn* on one of the classical and contentious questions of the *Kalām*, that of the vision of God. In his *al-Kashf ‘an manāhij al-adilla fī ‘aqā’id al-Milla*, he traces its history, criticizes the Ash‘arite theories, both ancient and evolved, and draws the most senseless consequences. Finally, he gives the solution that he agrees because it fulfils the requirements of religion and reason.

We find there a particular case that concretely illustrates his general philosophy of religion. It is in accordance with it that he intends to restore the foundations of religion (*‘uṣūl al-shar‘*), the creed of the Community (*‘aqā’id al-Milla*) with their argumentative methods (*manāhij al-adilla*), substituting the whole for the dogmas and arguments developed by the *Mutakallimūn*. In Ibn Rushd, the apparent surface of the expressions of religion (*ẓawāhir al-shar‘*) rests on the hidden depth of the ideas of philosophy (*al-ma‘ānī al-bāṭina*).

**Keywords:** *‘Ilm al-Kalām*, Ash‘arism, Dogmas, Vision of God, Religion, Philosophy, Philosophy of religion.

**Reassessing Ibn Rushd’s Theological Critique: From al-Ghazālī to al-Juwaynī**

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**Summary**

The enduring prominence of *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa* and *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* has reinforced the belief that al-Ghazālī was Ibn Rushd’s principal antagonist in his opposition to Ash‘arite *kalām*. While that view captures the philosophical dimension of their dispute, it obscures the broader scope—and the historical setting—of Ibn Rushd’s critique. This article asks whether Ibn Rushd in fact treated al-Ghazālī as a representative of the Ash‘arite school and thus as a figure warranting direct rebuttal in his anti-*kalām* writings.

I argue that in works such as *al-Kashf ‘an Manāhij al-Adilla* al-Ghazālī does not occupy the central adversarial role often attributed to him. The conventional reading, which places al-Ghazālī at the forefront of Ibn Rushd’s opposition across contexts—especially in *al-Kashf*—fails to register the full ambit of Ibn Rushd’s project. Rather than merely refuting al-Ghazālī, Ibn Rushd advances a comprehensive challenge to Ash‘arite doctrine as it had taken shape in the Maghrib. His arguments address foundational theological issues that exceed al-Ghazālī’s critiques of the philosophers and seek a re-evaluation of the Ash‘arite framework as reflected in contemporary *kalām*.

Accordingly, while al-Ghazālī is the primary interlocutor in *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa* and *al-Faṣl fī al-Maqāl*, the pivotal figure in *al-Kashf* is al-Ghazālī’s teacher, Abū al-Ma‘ālī al-Juwaynī—a fact long noted but rarely integrated into accounts of Ibn Rushd’s anti-*kalām* agenda. I show that Ibn Rushd’s shift from al-Ghazālī to al-Juwaynī reflects interrelated factors: al-Ghazālī’s doctrinal instability and the resulting limits of his authority in Maghribī *kalām*, contrasted with Juwaynī’s considerable prestige among Maghribī theologians. Ibn Rushd’s focus on Juwaynī should thus be read less as a critique of Juwaynī per se than as a targeted engagement with Maghribī theologians for whom Juwaynī functioned as a central authority.



## **Taṣdīq and Taṣawwur in Averroes' Logical Thought**

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### **Summary**

Based on the new English translation and Arabic edition of Averroes's text, extant only in two Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts, this paper explores the way in which Averroes organizes the exposition of the work to highlight the importance of taṣdīq (assent) and taṣawwur (concept). In doing so, he examines how they function in logical reasoning as well as how they affect the possibility of reaching demonstrative conclusions. These terms, first given prominence by Alfarabi, are developed in detail by Averroes as he follows through on and develops more precisely the earlier suggestions of Alfarabi.







### THIRD SESSION

#### Natural Philosophy and the Dialectics of Knowledge

##### Averroes on Infinity in the Long Commentary on Aristotle's Physics

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##### Summary

In the Long Commentary on Aristotle's Physics, which is available in Latin translation, Averroes examines Aristotle's arguments concerning infinite being, versus Melissus, and the broader concept of infinity. This paper examines Averroes' interpretation of the concept of infinity in the Long Commentary on Aristotle's Physics.

##### Averroes on Abstraction: Tradition, Avicenna, and Influence

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##### Summary

Averroes (Ibn Rushd) is well-known for his epistemological theory of abstraction, a particular interpretation of the Aristotelian system, according to which universal intelligibles are acquired by intellect's abstracting them from sense data (images). In fact, he is often viewed as the principal abstractionist thinker from classical Islamic philosophy, usually juxtaposed to his predecessors Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) and even al-Fārābī, both of whom seem to include at least some more Neoplatonic element of emanation. In this paper, I will review Averroes' unequivocal attack on Avicenna's supposed emanationism and show how his criticism was adopted by the later Scholastic thinker, Thomas Aquinas. Averroes' reputation as an abstractionist is, thus, well-founded and was historically influential. On the other hand, I will argue that Averroes' descriptions and terminology of abstraction are wholly traditional, taking for granted not just Aristotle, Alexander, or even al-Fārābī, but perhaps most importantly Avicenna—regardless of how we interpret the question of Avicenna's own abstractionism or emanationism. I will argue that Averroes definitely knows about Avicenna's abstractionism (whatever he made of it) and, because of its well-established status within *falsafa*, Averroes ends up discussing abstraction in mostly Avicennian terms and, ironically, far less than Avicenna himself.

**Philosophy in Dialectical Context:  
Understanding Ibn Rushd's Methodology in the *Tahāfut al-tahāfut***

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**Summary**

In his *Tahāfut at-tahāfut* Ibn Rushd (Averroes) explains in the Eleventh Discussion that his reasoning there “is the theory of the philosophers on this problem and in the way we have stated it here with its proofs, it is a persuasive not a demonstrative argument.” He goes on to indicate that those who want to come to complete happiness through reasoning functioning at its highest level should consult his demonstrative works. This presentation addresses the issue of just what sort of writing the *Tahāfut at-tahāfut* is. Is it dialectical and to be placed in that category with his *Faṣl al-maqāl* (*The Decisive Treatise*), *al-Kaṣhḥ ‘an manāhiġ al-adilla fi ‘aqā’id al-milla* (*The Explanation of the Sorts of Proofs in the Doctrines of Religion*), and his so-called *Damima* (*Question on Divine Knowledge*)? Or, given his extensive metaphysical reasoning against al-Ghazali in numerous parts of the work — reasoning seemingly explicating his own thought — should it be considered another important work dealing with metaphysical topics in accord with what is found in his *Long Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle* and related works even if he himself writes of it being persuasive and not demonstrative?



## FOURTH SESSION

### Ibn Rushd and the Scientific Traditions

#### The sciences of the Ancients in the time of Ibn Rushd

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#### Summary

The main objective of this paper is to analyse the general characteristics of scientific practice in Almohad society, especially during the period in which Ibn Rushd was active. The second half of the 6th/12th century was a particularly important period in the history of science in al-Andalus, largely due to the patronage of the Almohads. Their interest in the sciences was comparable only to that shown by some Taifa kings in the 5th/11th century (or 'Abd al-Raḥmān II at the beginning of the 3rd/9th, or al-Ḥakam II in the second half of the 4th/10th). Even though the Almoravids (first half of the 6th /12th century, approximately) were less interested in sponsoring the sciences than the precedent rulers, the authors of the Taifa era created a solid tradition that survived and flourished again under the Almohads. However, the characteristics of scientific practice during the Almohad era were distinct from those of preceding historical periods. A good example is astronomy. Mathematical astronomy, which flourished as never before during the Taifa period (Ibn al-Samḥ, Ibn al-Zarqālluh, Ibn Mu'ādh), continued to decline during the Almohad period, as the practice of astrology was virtually absent from power circles since the time of the Almoravids, and the situation did not change substantially under the Almohads. It should be noted that the main practical purpose of mathematical astronomy was the casting of accurate horoscopes (needless to say, treatises on astrology almost disappeared in 6th/12th centuries). However, theoretical reflection on astronomical models intensified in the second half of the 6th/12th century (Ibn Ṭufayl, Ibn Rushd, al-Biṭrūjī), because philosophers (who, in general, rejected astrology as much as religious scholars), played a prominent role in scientific production. Other areas of science like mathematics, medicine, and natural sciences also presented differential characteristics that must be specifically considered, and which also have to do with philosophical activity. To characterize scientific practice, general questions will be raised such as: what works were written; why; who wrote them; for whom. The empirical basis of the study is twofold. First, a relatively objective basis will be considered: the scientific works of the period, including both the treatises that have come down to us and the treatises that we know only indirectly. Second, less reliable but equally important elements will be considered, such as historical accounts that reflect society's interest or lack of interest in the sciences. From this indirect evidence, we can deduce phenomena of evident importance, such as the initiative by the Almohads to spread scientific knowledge among the elites, the existence of which is suggested by several sources.

## Mathematics Across Cultures: The Intellectual Context of Ibn Rushd's Era

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### Summary

The intellectual landscape of Ibn Rushd's era (12-13th century *al-Andalus*) was marked by intense cross-cultural exchanges that shaped the transmission and transformation of mathematical knowledge. This contribution explores the ways in which mathematics functioned as a bridge between diverse traditions – Greek, Arabic, and Latin – within the broader philosophical and scientific debates of the time. By situating Ibn Rushd within the networks of translation, commentary and pedagogy, my study highlights the fact that mathematics should not be considered only as a technical discipline, but also as a key element of epistemological frameworks across cultures. Special mention will be given, for example, to the role of mathematical reasoning, the circulation of Euclidean geometry, and the integration of algebraic practices into the intellectual fabric of medieval Iberia.

## Averroes on Practical Medicine

Joël Chandelier

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### Summary

Averroes, although best known as a philosopher, is the author of an important medical work, consisting of both a general work (the *Kitāb al-Kulliyāt fī l-ṭibb*, or *Book on the Generalities of Medicine*), several commentaries on the works of Galen and a few short treatises on specific topics. Until now, research has focused on his view about the relationship between medicine and philosophy and, in particular, on his redefinition and reduction of the scope of the medical discipline. This is not surprising, as Averroes acknowledges that he hardly practised medicine and because his work is primarily concerned with theoretical aspects, referring to other works, such as the *Kitāb al-taysīr* by his contemporary Ibn Zuhr (d. 1162), for the practical side of this art. Nevertheless, a large part of his work is devoted to concrete questions and, as he himself states, aims to provide a framework for the work of practitioners. Questions of general therapeutics, on the definition of diseases, their general and specific causes, are therefore fundamental and are discussed at length both in his *Kulliyāt* and in his commentaries on Galen. This paper will therefore attempt to offer an overview of this aspect of his medical thinking, focusing in particular on certain specific conditions such as fevers, in order to understand how the philosopher fits into an older tradition, but also how he deviates from it.



## Averroes as a Reader of Avicenna's Medical Works

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### Summary

Averroes had original ideas regarding medical theory. In particular he rejected some Galenic ideas, which Avicenna, on the contrary, had taken up. Nevertheless Averroes wrote a commentary on Avicenna's *Poem on medicine*. It is true that this poem did not share all the same views as those expounded in the *Canon*. My purpose is to examine closely, with some examples, how Averroes had read Avicenna's medical works and what was the range of his criticisms.

## Averroes on Medical Crises and Critical Days in *al-Kulliyāt*

Luis Xavier López Farjeat

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### Summary

According to Hippocratic tradition, the cause of illness is a disturbance in the harmony of the bodily humors. This harmony is related to the environment and climatic conditions. There are critical days on pre-established dates when, in their struggle for balance in the body, illness and nature reach a climax called a "crisis." The crisis manifests itself through signs and symptoms. In his *De diebus decretoriis*, Galen adopted the Hippocratic theory of medical crisis, suggesting the possibility of astrological influence on critical days. While he was referring to natural astrology, especially the medical implications of lunar periods, he also made some allusions to the zodiacal influence. Galen's treatise was translated into Arabic, and there was even a translation of an Alexandrian summary. In the Islamic context, both Avicenna and Averroes characterized the medical crises as purely naturalistic. With some nuances, Avicenna accepted the lunar influence in certain terrestrial phenomena. By contrast, in *al-Kulliyāt*, when Averroes explains medical crises and critical days, he focuses on natural causes and the proportion of humors, while downplaying the lunar influence. He vaguely mentions that, although the influence of the moon could be somewhat true, it would be a remote cause. In this presentation, I aim to decipher, considering Averroes' cosmology, the role of the lunar remote cause on the periodicity of crises, while highlighting Averroes' contributions to the debates related to medicine and cosmology.





## FIFTH SESSION

### Perspectives, Reception, and Transmission

#### Averroes' Remarks on Contemporary Politics

Maribel Fierro

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#### Summary

Throughout his works, Averroes introduced a number of comments on the political situation of his own times. In this paper I will collect such comments and remarks, and analyze them. The aim is to assess what they tell us about Averroes' views on the policies of the Almohad caliphs and his own positionality regarding them. His relations with the rulers of his times have been subject to diverse interpretations. For example, some of the criticisms he made about certain policies have been taken to be the proof of his negative views about the Almohads, without taking into account that within the Almohad camp there were diverging positions and also that critical assessments could be – and were – formulated.

#### Averroes Hebraicus: State of the Art and Future Directions

Yoav Meyrav

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#### Summary

It is well-known that several of Ibn Rushd's compositions survive only in medieval Hebrew translations. Even when the Arabic survives, Hebrew translations are utilized to control the Arabic text, especially given the highly literal style of most of his translators. Accordingly, and just as in the case of the Latin, the study of Ibn Rushd's Hebrew translations has always been an integral part of the scholarship on his thought, especially with respect to producing editions of his works. Since much has been done in recent years by several researchers often operating independently of one another, in the present talk I will provide an overview of the state of research and-with the use of several examples-argue for three points: first, that we should adopt a more manuscript-based approach to the Hebrew corpus; second, that even microscopic textual elements in Hebrew can shed new light on Ibn Rushd's thought, evolution, and work methods; and third, that other Hebrew materials besides translations (especially supercommentaries and encyclopedias) should receive greater attention from scholars working outside of the Hebrew tradition.

### **How Ramon Marti Read his Ibn Rushd**

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#### **Summary**

Unlike the overwhelming majority of Latin scholastic authors, Ramon Martí read Averroes' works directly in Arabic. In this paper I will focus on both the mechanics of his reading and translation of Averroes' texts and on the polemical use to which he put them. As such I will focus not on book one of the *Pugio fidei*, where Martí offers his philosophical defense of theism, but on the other parts of that work as well as his other treatises in which he used Averroes to score points against Islam and Judaism.

### **Ibn Rushd in the Renaissance: The Averroes Latinus and Montaigne**

Pablo Montosa

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#### **Summary**

This paper examines the Renaissance reception of Ibn Rushd's psychology through the Latin tradition of the Averroes *Latinus*, with particular attention to the commentary on Aristotle's *De memoria et reminiscencia*. It analyses how the Latin Averroist reconfiguration of memory and reminiscence—as modalities of a single cognitive process, distinguished by degree and by the dynamics of habit—circulated in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Aristotelianism.

Against this background, the paper proposes Montaigne as a particularly revealing case of this reception. Rather than reading his reflections on custom merely as a reaction to Aristotle, it situates them within the conceptual horizon shaped by the Latin Averroist tradition, where habit emerges as a decisive factor in the formation, persistence, and distortion of images. Montaigne's treatment of memory and *coutume* can thus be understood as a Renaissance reappropriation of Ibn Rushd mediated by the *Averroes Latinus*, illustrating the enduring philosophical productivity of this exegetical lineage.