‘Abdurrahman ad-Dakhil (Superman in Islamic History: 756 CE-788 CE)

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Abstract. This article aims at discussing the struggle of one of the Umayyads' descendants who was able to escape from the Abbasid army from the city of Damascus (Syria) to Andalusia (Al-Andalus). He managed to re-establish the power of the Umayyads in Andalusia after the collapse of their power in Damascus, due to the Abbasid army attack. A qualitative method with library research-based was used in conducting this study, the data were analyzed by using qualitative descriptive approach, technical descriptive analysis, and content analysis. The results showed that Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil had great talent and strong influence with the result that Islamic Spain could be united under his rule. He was very instrumental in building a government in Andalusia in such a way that the Andalusian State could compete with the influence of the Abbasid Daulah's power in Baghdad. Thus, he is one of the most important figures in Islamic history. He became an inspirational figure because of his persistence, intelligence, thorough struggle, and upholding Islamic law.

Keywords: ‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil, Superman, Islamic History

INTRODUCTION

Islam as a religion that comes from Allah does not only talk about the problems of ubudiyah and the hereafter, but also talks about various aspects of life, including governance. (Dian, et al., 2021) In the classical period, Islam was able to expand its expansion in its golden age to the most remote areas to
the west on the European continent, namely the Andalusia region which is now called Spain (Refileli, 2017). Before Islam entered the area, Spain had previously been ruled by the Visigothic Kingdom. Prior to it, Spain was better known by the name Andalusia which comes from the word Vandalsia which means the land of Vandals. Spain was under Islamic occupation during the caliphate of Al-Walid ibnu Abdul Malik ibnu Marwan in 711 CE who was one of the caliphs of the Umayyad Daulah whose center of government was in Damascus or known as Umayyad I.

Before the conquest of Spain, the Muslims had occupied North Africa and made the area one of the provinces of the Umayyad dynasty whose center of government was in the city of Damascus. (Mirdad, 2020) The three Islamic heroes who contributed the most to the process of Andalusia conquest were Tarif ibnu Malik, Tariq ibnu Ziyad and Musa bin Nushair (Fauziah, 2016). The victory achieved by Muslims was due to two factors: internal and external factors. The internal factors were the social, political, and economic conditions of Spain which were in decline. While internal factors came from the Islamic rulers themselves, strong leaders, and compact, united, and strongly confident army (Napitupulu, 2019). Therefore, one by one the Spanish territory could finally be controlled by Muslims and made Spain one of the provinces of the Umayyad Daulah power, centered in the city of Damascus, although previously the spread of Islam in this region was strongly opposed by King Roderick, the ruler of Andalusia at that time (Faidi, 2021).

Approximately during the 90 years of the reign of the Umayyad dynasty in Damascus (Umayyad I), there were 14 caliphs who ruled alternately starting from the period of the first caliph Muawiyah ibnu Abi Sufyan to the last caliph Marwan ibnu Muhammad. Until finally replaced by the Abbasid dynasty with its first Caliph was Abu Abbas Saffah. One of the descendants of the Umayyads who managed to escape and survived the threat and pursuit of the Abbasids was ‘Abdurrahman ad-Dakhil who was the grandson of Caliph Hisham ibnu Abdul Malik, the 10th caliph of the Umayyad reign. ‘Abdurrahman fled to Palestine, then continued to Egypt, and then reached North Africa and crossed into Andalusia until finally succeeded in establishing the Umayyad Daulah there which was later known as Umayyad II. The Umayyad descendants continued their reign there which was previously in the Damascus Region, which was overthrown by the Abbasid dynasty. Until finally the existence of Muslims in Andalusia was able to last for almost eight
centuries (97 H-898 H/711 CE-492 CE and has brought fresh air to the progress of the West until now (Fatikhah, 2017)

‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakil is referred to as one of the Superman (great men) in Islamic history, of course in this case apart from the discussion of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH who was indeed the chosen human being determined by Allah SWT and several other great men who had no doubt about their roles in development of Islamic Civilization. ‘Abdurrahman was also known as the “The Falcon of Quraysh”. He experienced the bitter journey of being chased by his enemies because he was one of the Umayyad’s descendants who had the opportunity to replace the position of the previous caliphs as the next caliph. At that time, he was 19 years old, he was chased by enemy troops through several regions from the land of Sham to Egypt, to Morocco in North Africa, to cross the Strait of Gibraltar, and finally arrived in mainland Spain at the age of 25 years and became the greatest leader in the country, Andalusia (Spain). Based on this, the author was interested in revealing how the journey of ‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakil, the struggles, and progress of civilization achieved during his leadership, so that he is said to be an extraordinary human being in the course of Islamic history.

This research is qualitative research with library research type. Analytical descriptive methods were used in conducting this study. The data were obtained based on the relevance to the topic of discussion. The data sources were gained from documents such as Islamic history books, journals, magazines, newspapers, or research reports. An analytical study was then conducted to analyze the data to provide answers to the problems raised in this paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Biography of ‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakil

‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakil, whose full name was Abu al Mutharrif ‘Abd al Rahman ibnu Muawiyah ibnu Hisham ibnu ‘Abd al Malik ibnu Marwan al Amawiy, was born in 110 H/728 CE (Fatmawati, 2010) then he was also called Ad-Dakil which means “one who enters Spain” (Harun & Firdaus, 2016) because he was the first person to enter the Spanish Territory as a leader of the descendants of the Umayyads. He was born in Their Khanan which is a small town in the Damascus Region. His mother’s name was Raha and his father’s name was Muawiyah ibnu Hisham, his grandfather’s name was Hisham ibnu Abdul Malik al Amawiy who was the
10th caliph of the Umayyad Daulah who ruled from 105-125 H/724-743 CE.

‘Abdurrahman ad-Dakhil was the grandson of Caliph Hisham ibnu Abdul Malik (the 10th Caliph of the Umayyad Daulah), he was one of the descendants of the Umayyads who was able to escape from the pursuit of the Abbasids when the Abbasids carried out cleansing against the Amawiyyah people after they succeeded in overthrowing the Umayyad Daulah.

Abdurrahman’s father died during the Umayyad expansion of Islam when he was a child, thus he was raised by his grandfather Hisham ibnu Abdul Malik al Amawiy. He lived in the palace environment of the Umayyad caliphate so that since childhood he had felt the glory that had been obtained by the Umayyad Daulah. The court environment made him a figure of a man who was intelligent, smart, brave and strong, as a result, in the end he became a Pioneer of the establishment of the Umayyad government in Andalusia (Spain). He died at the age of 59 years (788 CE) and was buried in the Cordova Palace Area (Aravik, 2020).

B. Social and Political Conditions of ‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil’s Journey to Andalusia

As a political force, Islam had shown extraordinary abilities to finally be able to control the Spanish regions despite many obstacles from the Spanish rulers and European Christians. From 716 to 756 CE consisted of 20 Guardians (Governors) who had been in power for more or less in the span of 40 years, starting from Governor Abdul Aziz as the first governor who was the son of Musa bin Nushair, one of the governors in North Africa to the last Wali Yusuf ibnu Abd al Rahman al Fihriy. It was during al-Fihriy’s time that Abdurrahman managed to enter the Spanish Territory. He was one of the descendants of the Umayyads who could escape the pursuit of the Abbasid army led by Abu Abbas al Saffah (who succeeded in defeating the last Caliph of the Umayyad Caliphate in Damascus).

‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil hid and disguised himself as a trader, then fled to Palestine, in his disguised situation he learned a lot about Islam including about leadership strategies in Islam.

From Palestine he continued his journey to Egypt, but because of the territory of Egypt which also included the territory of the Abbasid dynasty, and seeing Egypt’s condition that was not safe for him because many
intruders knew of his whereabouts, Ad-Dakhil finally fled and then continued his journey to North Africa and stayed for a while. He also studied Islam a lot there, including the science of jurisprudence, the books of hadith, and also the science of Sufism. In 755 CE, he crossed into the Andalusia Region (Spain) and made the Andalusia Region as his last port because he saw that there were still many Islamic communities, including the descendants of the Yemeni Arabs and the descendants of the Umayyads who had long lived in the area.

Seeing the condition of Andalusia like that, he finally thought about taking the initiative to stay there. When he arrived in Andalusia (Spain) he tried to approach one of the warring tribes there, namely the Kalb Tribe under the leadership of al Bajl ibnu Bisri. This tribe used its power to seize power from Yusuf ibnu ‘Abd al Rahman al Fihriy, the governor who came from the Qays Tribe which was a serious enemy of the Kalb Tribe. Then, after going through the battle in September 756 CE in Masrah, finally ‘Abdurrahman ad-Dakhil was able to defeat Abdurrahman al-Fihriy and finally Ad-Dakhil was able to occupy Andalusia, then made the city of Cordova the center of his government. Since then, the Spanish region had turned into the center of government of the Umayyad dynasty, which was free from the Abbasid government, based in Baghdad (Fatmawati, 2010).

C. The reign of ‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil in Spain (Andalusia)

After Ad-Dakhil was able to take control of the Spanish Territory and make the city of Cordova the center of government of the Umayyad dynasty (Fatmawati, 2010), at that time Spain was under the authority of the Amir (Commander/Governor) but the government was not subject to the Abbasid caliphate which was centered in Baghdad area as the center of Islamic government at that time. Since serving as the ruler of Spain, Ad-Dakhil had faced many internal rebellion movements that occurred at that time (Ali, 2003). He could go through the challenges that occurred in the Andalusia region and the people could accept it well. The caliph’s attention to the development of science and cultural progress was the main thing that greatly influenced the rapid development of Islamic civilization and culture in the West at that time (Pertengahan, 2017). There were several strategies carried out by Ad-Dakhil in the process of conquering large areas in the Andalusia region, so that he could finally control the entire land of
Andalusia and build an Islamic civilization there. The big cities that became the center of Muslim power in Spain are:

a. Cordova

Cordova is located in the South of the Spanish territory which was one of the capitals of Andalusia. There were three famous Islamic heroes who contributed to the conquest of Andalusia: Tarif ibnu Malik, Tariq ibnu Ziyad, and Musa bin Nushair during the leadership of Walid Ibnu Abdul Malik from the reign of the Umayyad Daulah, which was centered in Damascus in 93 H or 711 CE, ruled by the Visigothic empire. The Muslims finally succeeded in controlling the city of Cordova and making it the center of Islamic government, therefore there was a wide spread of Islam there.

b. Sevilla

‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil then continued his journey to Sevilla after he managed to control the City of Cordova. He succeeded in attracting the Barbarians as supporters to assist him in fighting the Yemeni group. After experiencing the victory, Ad-Dakhil was able to take control of Sevilla, build, and advance Muslim civilization and promote the economy, including building mosques and regulating the government administration system in accordance with Islamic teachings there.

c. Toledo

‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil continued his next journey to the City of Toledo facing resistance and revolts from his enemies. Due to his success, he was finally able to develop knowledge, literature, science, philosophy and medicine in Toledo City. ‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil was finally able to control all of Andalusia (Spain) with these conquests, so that he succeeded in building Islamic Spanish civilization by producing the development of various sciences including the construction of large mosques in the city of Cordova and establishing Islamic schools or madrasas.

D. The Development of Islamic Civilization in the Period of ‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil in Andalusia (Spain)

The entry of Islam into Spanish territory after ‘Abdurrahman ad-Dakhil (765 CE) succeeded in establishing a government in Andalusia and
the middle of the 9th century CE had covered all of Spain and made a very impressive record in medieval intellectual history in Europe (Asy’ari, 2018).

During the Ad-Dakhil period, Spanish Muslims began to make progress in politics or in other fields of civilization. He prioritized development in various regions in Spain (Andalusia), so that Islam could be more widespread in Andalusia. These developments led to the development of Islamic civilization. During the period of ‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil, mosques were built in the city of Cordova and at schools in major Spanish cities. The policy in establishing a mosque in Andalusia (Spain) was to make it a center of worship and a place for the unity of Muslim there. One of the most influential mosques in the development of Islam and the largest in Andalusia was the Cordova Mosque, which was the center of Islamic development with the same architectural style as the mosque in the eastern part of the city of Damascus. He deliberately equated the building of the Cordova Mosque with the mosque in Damascus because he wanted to revive the heyday of the Umayyad dynasty in Andalusia (Spain). Previously, during the time of Hisham ibnu Abdul Malik, who was the grandfather of ‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil, a magnificent mosque was also built in the Damascus area, but it collapsed when the rulers of the Bani Abbasid dynasty attacked the region and killed the entire family of the Umayyads. The Cordova Mosque had a role as a center for the development of science in Andalusia (Spain), children were taught to write, read and so on in the mosque. Children were also taught basic knowledge of the Quran, Hadith, and Arabic language. They were taught by educated teachers (Ahmad, 1977).

The glory of scientific civilization in Andalusia began at this time, a Muslim civilization in the West, and simultaneously with the start of the splendor of the Scientific Civilization in Baghdad which was under the rule of the Abbasids. The glory of Andalusia was beautifully mentioned by Claude Addas:

“How fortunate, O you who live in Andalusia with water, shade, rivers and lush trees and a heavenly garden that only exists on your motherland and if I could choose, I would definitely choose your country. Do not be afraid to go to hell later, because anyone who has known heaven will not go to hell” (Addas, 2004).

This abundant natural wealth had become the capital for the architects of the Andalusian scientific civilization, hence ‘Abdurrahman ad-
Dakhil is stated as the most important determinant of Andalusian Civilization (Setiawan, 2021).

‘Abdurrahman ad-Dakhil also built a Palace with Islamic architecture in order to control the government there. The palaces that were built during his time were the Al-Ma’mun Palace in the Toledo region, the Ja’fariyah Palace in the Zaragoza region, and the Al-Hamra Palace in the Granada region. These developments were able to create an Islamic civilization in Andalusia. Moreover, the palace also functioned as a place to study for children which eventually gave birth to famous scientists.

In addition to building the Government Capital and Palaces, ‘Abdurrahman ad-Dakhil also built high gardens and forts on the Andalusian border. One of them was a park called Ar-Rashafah in Andalusia which was also created by his grandfather Hisham ibnu Abdul Malik in Damascus. The establishment of this park was a testament to the beauty of the Andalusia region at that time by bringing in various plants from all over the world. Meanwhile, the fortress built by Ad-Dakhil in Andalusia (Spain), namely Fort Zaragoza, became one of the icons of Andalusia and became a form of protection for the Andalusian region from enemies of Islam and external threats. Zaragoza Fortress extended outward from Salim City to Toledo region.

Ad-Dakhil at that time was able to advance the Andalusian Civilization with his brilliant ideas. He had the capability to make Europe the basis for the development and progress of Islamic civilization through the region. It was due to the character of ‘Abdurrahman ad-Dakhil as a scientific and well-mannered person, and had a great sense of humanity that could make Islam in Andalusia developed rapidly so that it could reach its heyday and golden peak. Until finally the progress of civilization could compete with the one achieved by the Abbasid dynasty in Baghdad region, both in the field of Islamic architecture and other fields.

During that time, the field of science had been experiencing very rapid development. Many achievements were obtained, even their influence could bring Europe and the world to a more complex progress. Spain was also a fertile region that brought a fairly high economic income, and in the end produced many thinkers who contributed their thoughts to the formation of Spanish environmental culture which gave birth to a scientific revival with various branches of science (Maskhuroh, 2017). Several branches of knowledge were developed including the fields of Islamic
Philosophy, Jurisprudence, Science, Music and Arts, Language and Literature. Cordova with its libraries and universities was able to compete with the Abbasid dynasty in the city of Baghdad which was the center of science at that time because at that time various scientific and philosophical works were imported from the East. Efforts to advance science in the field of Islamic science and philosophy by ‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil became very important for the advancement of Islamic Civilization in Andalusia which eventually gave birth to prominent Islamic philosophical figures including Abu Bakr Muhammad ibnu Al-Sayigh (Yahya, 2017). The establishment of various universities in Cordova and libraries in various regions in Andalusia also gave birth to many new branches of science such as chemistry, astronomy, mathematics and medicine. The figures of Islamic scientists in the field of science were Abbas Ibnu Farnas who discovered the manufacture of glass made from stone, Ibrahim Ibnu Yahya al Naqqash who was famous in the field of Astronomy and could determine the time of the solar eclipse and how long the solar eclipse took, and he also succeeded in making modern binoculars which determined the distance between the solar system and the stars. Ahmad ibnu Ibas Cordova was a figure known as an expert in the field of Medicine. In the fields of History and Geography, many famous thinkers had been born, including Ibnu Jubair in Sicilia and Ibnu Battuta. They all studied in the Andalusian Region (Spain), which then after being equipped with a lot of knowledge, they traveled the world to find new theories. And in the end, they were able to strengthen the power of the Umayyad dynasty in Andalusia.

‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil was also very concerned and focused on the development of religious knowledge such as the science of Jurisprudence because he saw the rapid development of Islam in Andalusia (Spain). He glorified the ulama and facilitated all the scholars in the hope that these scholars could control the community in the event of crime and security disturbances in the stability of the Islamic government. The most popular school in Andalusia in the field of Jurisprudence at the time of Ad-Dakhil was the Maliki School (Nofrianti, 2022). Apart from fiqh, there were also developments in the fields of Sufism and Kalam at that time.

In the field of music and arts, the Andalusian region also achieved its brilliance with the appearance of a figure named Al-Hasan ibnu Nafi, known as Zaryab. He performed his talent at every meeting and banquet held (Fatmawati, 2010). He was also very well known as a composer. His
fame even spread widely because he also passed the knowledge he had to his children, both men and women and even to his slaves.

In the field of language and literature, scientific improvement had also occurred. ‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil made Arabic the official language of the Islamic government in Andalusia (Spain). This provision could be accepted by the Spanish, both Muslim and non-Muslim, even the natives of Spain subordinated their native language to prioritize Arabic in their lives. Thus, many experts who were proficient in Arabic (Syukur, 2010). ‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil was also known as a poet with very beautiful poems. Therefore, he was also able to advance the science of literature so that he could raise the spirit of the Andalusian people in dealing with the various problems they faced and to be able to raise the spirit of his troops in the face of war when carrying out the expansion of Islam in Andalusia.

During the Ad-Dakhil period there was also a cultural development. A Great Mosque was built in the city of Cordova. It was one of the largest mosques which was more beautiful than the mosques in the Eastern part of the Islamic World at that time. Its construction costs reached 800,000 dinars. This mosque was built with a minaret that reaches 40 dzikra high, the inner dome is made of wood that is beautifully carved and colored like chess colors. Inside the mosque there are 19 long and spacious rooms, and there are also 38 other rooms. The glory of the mosque attracted people from outside Andalusia to study various sciences there. Thus, the mosque was not only a place of worship, but also as a center for the development of Islamic knowledge. At that time, architecture became one of the peaks of Andalusian scientific civilization (Saputri, 2021).

Moreover, educational buildings and the Al-Hambra Palace in Granada were also built. Al Hambra Palace which is located in Granada was one of the manifestations of the progress of Islamic architectural art (Hidayati et al., 2021). Various educational buildings such as universities in Cordova and various scientific institutions were also built, with the aim that people in the Andalusia region, especially in Cordova, could study at these institutions. Thus, people became capable and were productive in advancing Islamic civilization there. Along with these developments, leading scientists or figures such as Ibn Rushid and Az-Zahrawi were born. At this time the roads were widened, drainage and urban layout were neatly arranged. Palaces and towns were flooded with clean water, factory walls and stonework were built around the city and palaces. Ar-Rashafat
Park, which was located outside the city, was built by the architects of his ancestors in Damascus. Various trees, plants, and fruit plants which were imported from Islamic areas were planted in this park.

There had also been some developments in the field of economics during the period of ‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil, this economic progress made contribution to the progress of Andalusia. Ad-Dakhil carried out the business of exporting goods to countries around the world. The goods produced included various agricultural tools, looms, household tools, utensils, and silk fabrics. This economic progress had brought Andalusia to compete with the Abbasid dynasty, which was based in Baghdad.

In the political field, Ad-Dakhil was able to collaborate with countries in various parts of the world. He was an expert in the field of state administration in addition to being an expert in the military and warfare. It was because he was a descendant of the Umayyads who was able to manage the country with the leadership that his ancestors taught him earlier. Hence, he had capability in leading the Andalusian region and developing Islamic civilization during his reign.

CONCLUSION

‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil succeeded in re-establishing the rule of the Umayyad Daulah, which had collapsed in the Damascus Region, by continuing it in the Andalusia Region. He was the first Amir in the reign of the Umayyads in Andalusia (Umayyad II). He succeeded in establishing the greatness of the Umayyads in the West, namely Andalusia (Spain), although he experienced many obstacles. However, because of his intelligence, persistence, patience, and the experience he gained during his 6 years of escape before arriving in Andalusia, he was finally able and succeeded in uniting one by one the warring tribes there. Even though Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil had been hunted down to be killed by the Abbasid army, he always prayed for the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad, even when the Muslims reached their heyday. ‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil made Andalusia the center of Islamic civilization and science in Europe, while the Abbasid Caliphate made Baghdad the Center of Islamic Science in the East. East and West were shone by the brilliant light of Islam and science, the radiance of both is what has inherited the rise of Europe after European nobles learned from Andalusia and learned the findings of scientists in Baghdad. Due to the struggle and sacrifice of his journey, ‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil was able to change the city of the world, illuminate, guide, and share
knowledge. If ‘Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil did not do so, Andalusia would have collapsed around 100 H, but thanks to the journey of ‘Abdurrahman ad-Dakhil to Andalusia, Allah allowed Andalusia to survive for up to 700 years later.

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