

ABDURRAHMAN AN-NASHIR'S ROLE IN ADVANCING DEVELOPMENT AND THE SPLENDOR OF ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE IN ANDALUSIA

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Abstract

Andalusia is one of the most magnificent centers of Islamic civilization. Its beauty is said to be able to match the beauty of Baghdad and Constantinople. This makes Andalusia as one of the centers of world civilization. Physical and architectural development in Andalusia advanced and developed during the leadership of Abdurrahman An-Nashir (912-961M). This is because apart from being proficient in politics, Abdurrahman III is also known to be proficient in the field of development planning. This study aims to explore further the role of Abdurrahman An-Nashir in advancing architecture in Andalusia, as well as the impact of these advances in various fields. Some of An-Nashir's efforts in advancing Andalusian architecture were urban planning, building mosques, building palaces, and establishing universities and libraries. This policy has positive impacts in various fields, including advancing the education sector, improving the economy, maintaining government stability, and contributing to the legacy of civilization.

Keywords: Andalusia; Abdurrahman An-Nashir; Islamic Architecture.

INTRODUCTION

Andalusia is the most Western place conquered by Muslims. Islam born in the East once prevailed over Andalusia, a Christian state in the West. The success of Islam in the conquest of Andalusia was supported by several factors, including the religious, social, political, and economic conditions of Spain which at that time was in a disadvantaged condition. The Ghath, the group that was in power at the time was intolerant of other religions. Andalusian residents are forced to convert to Christianity and eradicated it if they disobey (Nasution, 2013). This condition is very different from the previous government when the Roman empire still controlled Andalusia (Antonio, 2012). After the introduction of Islam, the Spanish region managed to make progress in various fields, especially in the fields of science and development. This Spanish advance is inseparable from the role of the Islamic government in Andalusia. Islamic civilization in Andalusia also produced many socio-cultural achievements, as well as advances in the field of architecture, which remain a reference to civilization to the present, although history also reports that Islam ended tragically in Spain, and left almost nothing behind (Napitupulu, 2019).

Since it was first controlled by the Islamic government, Andalusia reached a golden peak during the leadership of Umayyad Daulah II, especially under the rule of Abdurrahman An-Nashir (Abdurrahman III), the eighth Amir in the history of the Umayyad Dynasty II in Spain. Caliph An-Nashir ruled Andalusia for 50 years, ushering Andalusia to the advancement of civilization in various fields. In the book *Historians History of the World Vol. VIII*, it is described that in addition to carrying out external developments with political and diplomatic skills, Abdurrahman III also carried out internal developments by improving the military system, improving the economic and industrial sectors, and building sophisticated infrastructure (Septialona, 2016a). During

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the reign of Abdurrahman III (912-961 AD) the call of the king in the government also changed, from what was originally called *amir* to the *caliph*. Abdurrahman was titled Khalifah An-Nashir or An-Nashir li-diinillah. It was during Daulah Umayyad II reached the peak of glory and continued until the leadership of Hakam II (961-976 AD) (Saputri, [2021](#)).

Previous studies have revealed the influence of the Islamic government on the progress of civilization in Andalusia in various fields, including the fields of economics (Aravik & Tohir, [2020](#)), education (Muthoharoh, [2018](#)), culture (Saputri, [2021](#)), and architecture (Sobandie, [2013](#)). Previous research has also noted the great role of Abdurrahman An-Nashir in the rapid development of the Andalusia (Septialona, [2016a](#)), both in the field of education (Azzahra, [2018](#)), and political policy (Salamah, [2017](#)). However, no research has been conducted that highlights the role of Abdurrahman An-Nashir in advancing development and architecture in Andalusia. This study aims to dive further into the role and policies of Caliph An-Nashir in architectural progress in Andalusia and its impact on Islamic civilization in Spain.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this study is the historical method. The historical method consists of several steps, including verification, interpretation, and writing of findings. Historical research is used to examine events in the past accurately and structured, which aims to understand the culture, language, or events in a certain group of people or canyons (Suparlan, [2019](#)). This research is descriptive qualitative with a type of library research, namely research that refers to written sources. The primary data source in this study is a book by Syamruddin Nasution *The History of Islamic Civilization* and is supported by secondary data obtained from books, encyclopedias, and the latest research articles. Data analysis techniques refer to Miles and Huberman's theory of qualitative research which consists of 1) data reduction; 2) data presentation; and 3) drawing conclusions (Miles & Huberman, [1994](#)). This research focuses on the progress of development and architecture during the reign of Abdurrahman III in Andalusia and the various benefits produced.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Policy dan Efforts of Abdurrahman An-Nashir in Advancing Architecture in Andalusia

In addition to successes in the political and scientific fields (Rachman, [2018](#)), the Umayyad Dynasty also achieved glory in the field of development under the rule of Abdurrahman An-Nashir in Andalusia. Among An-Nashir's policies that have had an impact on the development, the sector is urban planning, palace construction, university establishment, and libraries.

Urban Structuring

The first city to feel progress in the field of development was Cordova or Cordoba, especially after Abdurrahman An-Nasir established it as the capital and center of the Islamic caliphate in the West. The advancement of infrastructure, science, and economy

has made Cordova famous enough to compete with the cities of Baghdad and Constantinople as the center of world civilization. Abdurrahman An-Nashir also renovated the Cordova Mosque Building. The mosque, which was built during the time of Abdurrahman An-Dakhil, was expanded and beautified again by the order of Caliph Abdurrahman III (Azzahra, [2018](#)).

In addition to the city of Cordova, Abdurrahman An-Nashir also built a very beautiful city called Medinat Az-Zahrah (Az-Zahra City), which is 3 miles from Cordova. The city of Az-Zahra began to be built in 936 AD at the request of his late concubine Abdurrahman An-Nashir whom he loved so much named Al-Zahra. The city of Al-Zahra can be described in three parts, the first part closest to the mountain includes the palace of the fahan, the Resting Garden, and others. The second part is a home for servants, maids, and bodyguards. In the third part, there is a garden and a private palace of Caliph An-Nashir. The city of Az-Zahra is now known as *Cordova la Vieja*, with pillars imported directly from Rome, Constantinople, and Carthage, which still leave traces of Islamic greatness in the past (Saiful, [2013](#)).

During his reign, An-Nashir also built a number of public facilities such as parks and baths, as well as built streets with lighting. The streets of Cordova are also smooth and flat. At night, the lights hanging in front of people's houses illuminate both sides of the road, which creates security for the people and the comfort of mobility within the city (Affan, [2018](#)).

Palace Construction

During his reign, Abdurrahman An-Nashir built several palaces, but the most famous for their beauty was the al-Nashir palace in the city of Az-Zahra. Abdurrahman III himself was involved in the process of planning, construction, and supervision. To beautify al-Nashir's palace, Abdurrahman III imported marble from Numidia, Carthage, Tunisia, Sfax, and several other places in Africa. A number of columns, ponds, and statues were given as gifts from Constantinople, and others were excavated from mines in the Andalusian region, such as white marble from Tarragona and Almeria. Al-Nashir Palace was constructed by 10,000 workers and 1,500 transport animals over a period of 12 years. At that time, Al-Nashir Palace was the most magnificent palace, and even Baghdad and Constantinople could not match (Nasution, [2013](#)).

In addition to the An-Nashir Palace, another palace built during the time of Abdurrahman III is the An-Naurah Palace (meaning windmill) located to the west of the city of Cordova. In this palace, there is an abundant flow of water coming from the springs of the Mountains of Cordova. Water flows through the pipes arranged in a geometric, curved, and interconnected arrangement. In the palace of An-Naurah, there is also a statue of a lion plated in gold and jewels, the water that comes out of the mouth of the lion statue flows into parks throughout the city (Azzahra, [2018](#)).

Establishment of the University of Cordova

The University of Cordova was founded by Abdurrahman An-Nashir in 929-961 AD. The University of Cordova became one of the world-famous institutions of higher education. Cordova University was able to match Al-Azhar University in Cairo and

Nizamiyah in Baghdad and was able to attract many students from all corners of the world to study in Andalusia. Among the scholars who have taught at the University of Cordova is Ibn Qutaybah who is a grammarian and Abu Ali Al-Qali who is a Philologist (Refileli, [2017](#)). The existence of the University of Cordova has attracted the attention of students not only from Spain but also from other places such as Europe, Africa, and Asia. In addition to Religious and Social Sciences, the University of Cordova also teaches astronomy, mathematics, medicine, theology, philosophy, chemistry, and law (Muthoharoh, [2018](#)).

Guna supports the advancement of education and science, Caliph Abdurrahman An-Nashir also built supporting facilities such as dormitory buildings for students and teaching staff, water that was in h, and other facilities, to spend about 261,567 dinars or 2.6 trillion for the present. Abdurrahman III allocates one-third of the state's annual revenue to the advancement of science, arts, and culture (Nasution, [2013](#)). Caliph An-Nashir also offered scholarships to Muslim and non-Muslim students who wished to continue their studies. Every year, the University of Cordova accepts up to thousands of students. The obtained undergraduate title gives access to graduates to high positions in the government. The University of Cordova often holds meetings for academics, public reading rooms, original poetry reading forums, and speech delivery (Nizar, [2013](#)).

Establishment of the Library

Abdurrahman An-Nashir also established a library to support education. The library has 600,000 scientific references compiled in 44 thick catalogs. The existence of a library with a large number of scientific sources is one of a number of educational supporting facilities that are of concern to the world. In addition, exhibitions or book bazaars are activities that are often held at the University of Cordova. This shows that society focuses its attention on science and scientific studies. The source of funds from the waqf also helps to improve the quality of the library. The administration of book lending is also well implemented, with special provisions for book borrowers to become two groups, namely scholars and non-scholars (Napitupulu, [2019](#)).

The development of libraries in the Islamic world is evidence of efforts to develop science. Libraries are a medium used by Muslims in the past to spread knowledge. Because at that time there was no printing house, books were written by hand and the price was very expensive, so only rich people mampu bought and owned books (Syalabi, [2013](#)). Thus, the establishment of the library was a big step in the development of science.

Impact of Architectural Advances in Andalusia on Islamic Civilization

Education

In general, education in Andalusia from primary to secondary level is carried out in mosques. Mosque occupied a central position in the development of science, both religious science, and general science. A mosque is a meeting place between students and scholars, where there are dialogues, discussions, and academic debates. Clerics or teachers play a dominant role in the learning climate, so diplomas are often not issued in the name of the school but in the name of the teacher. The University of Cordova has

brought advances in the field of education and scientific studies. In addition to the University of Cordova, there is also the University of Granada which is no less famous than the University of Cordova. The university was founded by the seventh Nashariyah Caliph, Yusuf Abu al-Hajjaj. In this university, each building has a gate flanked by lion statues (Azzahra, [2018](#)).

The advancement of education is also greatly helped by the existence of libraries built in classical times. In addition to the public library, during the time of Abdurrahman An-Nashir also developed a mosque library. At this time, the mosques were equipped with libraries as a place for community learning. Mosques not only function as places of worship but also have an educational function. The development of educational institution facilities is also a major influence in shaping the life patterns and culture of the Muslim community (Nizar, [2013](#)). The advancement of education is not only centered in the capital but evenly distributed throughout the country. In the national capital, there are 27 free schools. There is no city however small in the whole country that does not have a school. In fact, in every city, there is already a college (Nasution, [2013](#)).

There are several factors that influence the development of education and science in Andalusia, namely: First, the support of the rulers. Caliphs who love science, and are strong enough and authoritative in maintaining political stability, strongly support the creation of a conducive climate of development and development. Second, is the establishment of several schools, universities, and libraries that have tens of thousands of book collections by Abdurrahman An-Nashir. The existence of adequate educational and research facilities is a major factor in the production of science. Third, the large number of scholars and scholars from all fields of science who are interested in studying in Cordova. They came with fresh knowledge and ideas that later became the subject of discussion and flourished in educational institutions in Andalusia. Fourth, there was a competition in the field of science between the Abbasids in Baghdad and the Umayyad II in Andalusia. This rivalry encouraged the rulers to compete with each other in advancing education in their respective regions (Muthoharoh, [2018](#)). The contribution of Islamic civilization in Andalusia was considerable to the glory of Islam in the aspect of science until it was said that the advancement of education had developed during the reign of the Abbasid Caliphate, perfected during the time of Islamic rule in Andalusia through the fall of Granada in 1492 AD (Suwarno, [2019](#)).

Economic Advances

Not only aiming for the development of science, but Abdurrahman An-Nashir also carried out building to improve the economy of his people. The first thing that Abdurrahman III did was to repair the soil dissipation using the irrigation stem. Thanks to this, barren lands become fertile and can be used for cultivation. This leads to the rise of the agricultural sector in Andalusia. Andalusia itself is an area rich in produce and other natural resources, so in the hope of his leadership, Abdurrahman III sought various natural resources and improved agricultural systems to improve the country's economy (Septialona, [2016a](#)). The cool climate and abundant water in Andalusia are hampering the development of the agricultural sector. The economy is developing rapidly and many agricultural experts have emerged in Andalusia, one of which is Ibn

al-Awwam who got the title of a leading agricultural expert (Khuluq, Shamsuri, & Lahuri, [2020](#)).

Aravik and Tohir argue that important policies made by Abdurrahman III that greatly influenced the economy of the Umayyad dynasty included: First, minting gold coins as a legal means of transaction after the release of Abbasid rule. On the coin, there is the name and title of the caliph, and it prints a quarter of the dinar following the model of the Aglabiyah and Fatimid caliphs. Second, build a satellite town called Al-Zahra on a hill in the Sierra Morena Mountains, where there is an arms factory and a jewelry factory as well as shops and mosques. Third, build the Cordova Bridge located above the Al-Wadi Al-Kabir river under the name Qonthoroh ad-Dahr (Masa Bridge). This bridge is 30 meters high and about 400 meters long and 40 meters wide. This bridge was built as a means of facilitating the social and economic activities of the community. Fourth, build a waterway that penetrates an 80-kilo-meter-long mountain to drain water into public baths, farmland, residential areas, and palaces. Fifth, make industrial political policies and create industrial equipment factories, which give birth to various industrial centers such as wool, cotton, silk, leather, and logam in various cities such as Cordova, Seville, and other major cities (Aravik & Tohir, [2020](#)).

An-Nashir was also able to promote his community in the manufacture of boats and agricultural tools. Apart from being in the form of equipment and produce, Caliph An-Nashir also initiated an industry in the health sector called the pharmaceutical industry (medicines). The people of Andalusia were able to create canals, as well as grow various crops and fruits. In addition, they also introduced rice, apricots, peaches, pomegranates, oranges, sugarcane, cotton, and turmeric. For trading activities, An-Nashir created numerous and specific markets for selling goods produced from existing industries. Because of this, in Andalusia, there are markets for ironsmiths and meat, and there is a special market for all kinds of flowers. State money from economic income is used to build roads, public facilities, bridges, castles, schools, hospitals, colleges, and so on (As-Sirjani, [2013](#)).

Government

Abdurrahman III and his successor, al-Hakam II (961 AD – 976 AD) were a harbinger of the peak of Islamic glory in the West. For before and after this erythroid, the Andalusian Government was never able to grasp political influence stably, either in Spain or in Africa. During this period, Andalusia, or more specifically the Umayyad capital became the most cultured city in Spain, and along with Constantinople and Baghdad, became one of the three cultural centers of the world. All thanks to the splendor of civilization and architecture in Andalusia. History records that the Umayyad Capital II had 130,000 houses, 21 suburban cities, 73 libraries, and a large number of bookstores, mosques as well as magnificent palaces. Therefore, the Umayyad capital gained international popularity, as well as evoking charm and admiration in the hearts of arriving travelers (Septialona, [2016b](#)).

Political stability is also supported by adequate means of government. It was in the magnificent palaces of the caliphate that meetings, political discussions, and a place to welcome foreign diplomats who visited in the framework of cooperation. Seeing

prosperity in Andalusia, diplomats and foreign envoys are increasingly confident in the cooperation program with the Andalusian government. They returned to their respective countries and told of the Andalusian beauty they witnessed. Not only the caliph's palace, but Abdurrahman An-Nashir also provided houses for government officials in the beautiful city of Az-Zahra. Even the aides, royal guards, and servants also got a place to live provided not far from the main palace (Azzahra, [2018](#)).

Towards *Ahlu Dzimmi*, An-Nashir also implemented a tolerant policy, namely tolerance that is maintained by boundaries that are less restrictive and not burdensome, as well as facilitating and creating harmony in society. Abdurrahman III led Umayyad II so intelligently that it created an Islam in Andalusia that was culturally friendly. And *ahlu dzimmi* who are willing to keep these boundaries contributed greatly to creating civilization in Andalusia (Salamah, [2017](#)). In addition, the police force formed by Caliph An-Nashir also provides a sense of security for the community and foreign immigrants, so that social, political, and economic activities run smoothly (Nasution, [2013](#)).

The Legacy of Civilization

When Muslims took control of Andalusia, Islamic architectural styles also influenced the development and had an impact on Spanish civilization. There was the reign of Abdurrahman An-Nashir, the most pronounced Islamic architecture was the construction of many old and new cities with Islamic patterns and architectural styles. In the city, there are mosques, parks, public baths, palaces, and others. In addition to the Islamic architectural styles that are new to Spain, the mixing of two different styles of architecture, namely Islamic and Spanish, has given its own influence and color to the Spanish architectural style. The two different architectural patterns were finally mixed and cultured into a new architectural style, namely the Islamic-Spanish style. This architectural style also adorns the largest mosque in Andalusian history, the Cordova mosque. In terms of palace and garden architecture, the architectural style used by the rulers of Bani Umayyah II is to draw examples of patterns from the previous architectural style, namely Bani Umayyah I in Damascus (Sobandie, [2013](#)).

According to Pramono, two famous buildings that bear witness to the splendor of Islam in Spain, namely the Alhambra Palace in the city of Granada and the Cordova Mosque in Cordova, are evidence of the development of Islamic architectural art in Andalusia. The construction of the two buildings was designed inseparable from Islamic art that was balanced at that time. Islamic art is divided into three types, namely flowers, geometry, and calligraphy. The three Islamic arts adorn the inner space and façade of the building. The three arts were created because Islam prohibits the display of human and animal figures in paintings, wall sculptures, or in the form of sculptures. To give decoration to the building without emphasizing the values of art, three architectural techniques emerged. In the Islamic buildings of Andalusia, the implementation of the art of geometry is more dominant compared to the art of flowers and calligraphy. Likewise, in the technique of making plans, facades, and ornaments that adorn the interior of the building, geometric techniques are highly emphasized so that the symmetrical impression is very obvious (Pramono, [2011](#)).

The Islamic architectural style that developed in Andalusia when Bani Umayyah II came to power was later called the Moorish (Moorish) architectural style. The Moorish-style buildings have the characteristics of distinctive arches (horseshoe arches), the decoration is a combination of intricate (colorful ornaments of geometric shape) and Arabesque (decoration of geometric and geometric arches, the shape of which is in the form of plant stems, flowers, leaves. When the Umayyads II in Andalusia collapsed at the hands of the Christian government, many architectural relics could not be saved. At that time, umat Islam was massacred and forced to choose to leave Andalusia or stay and embrace Christianity. This collapse was the most heartbreaking event in the history of Islamic civilization (Menocal, [2015](#)).

One of the relics of Islamic civilization in Andalusia that is still functioning until after the end of Islamic rule is the Alcazar Palace in Seville. Setra has a very neat layout, ornaments, and decorations that are very magnificent depicting the progress of Andalusia as a European lighthouse. The oldest part of the Alvarez palace was built by the architect Toledo by order of the governor of Muwahhidun in 1199-1209. The palace was restored in the Islamic style by Mudejar workers for King Peter after the collapse of power in Islam in Andalusia and served as a palace for Spanish nobles (Hidayati, Ichsan, Wulandari, & Lutfiyan, [2021](#)).

CONCLUSION

The splendor of Islamic architecture in Spain cannot be separated from the role of Abdurrahman An-Nashir who continues to encourage development in Andalusia. Some of caliph An-Nashir's most impactful policies were the arrangement of the city, the construction of mosques, the construction of palaces, and the establishment of universities and libraries. This policy has a positive influence on various fields, including the education sector, the economy, government stability, and contributing to the heritage of civilization. The architectural style that is the pattern of the mosque, urban, and palace buildings is a combination of Islamic-Spanish styles which are divided into three kinds of art, namely flowers, geometry, and calligraphy. This fusion was later called the Moorish or Moorish Style. Although there are not many physical relics from the Umayyad Dynasty II in Andalusia that can be enjoyed today, history has recorded that the architectural splendor in Andalusia at that time was able to match Baghdad and Constantinople, which made Andalusia one of the centers of world civilization.

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