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How Islam Entered North Africa and Andalusia

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Abstract

This article titled "How Islam Entered North Africa and Andalusia" uses the descriptive-analytic method and analyzes the subject based on the concept of historical texts with desk research method. In fact, the first contact of Muslims to Africa dates back to the first days of Islam at the time of the Prophet (PBUH), which regard to the torment of the Muslims, the Prophet (PBUH) was issued on the orders of the emigration to Abyssinia. In that early Islamic centuries, North Africa was captured by Muslims. With the arrival of Islam and the dissatisfaction of the people with their own Arab rulers, the Arabic-Islamic identity was formed in these areas, and then they quickly added into the territory of Muslims one after another.

Keywords: North Africa; Andalusia, Marrakech, Umayyad

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The beginning of the Muslims' movement in North Africa

Prophet (PBUH) came to Medina to stay and implement his long-term policies that did not succeed in Mecca. To reach this goal, the leader of the Islamic Republic must have provided security in the interior borders before any move outside the borders of Medina. In regard to it the first attack of the polytheists of Mecca was successfully fended off.

However, polytheists were in motion in the area but could not do anything and subsequently, with the conquest of Mecca, all the disciplines were conceived, and the polytheists who know they are failed, with the acceptance of Islam by coercion, joined the Prophet (PBUH), so that they might be able to strike Islam and Muslims from the inside.

The Romans have also shown that they do not tolerate the power of Islam and seek an opportunity to strike Islam, therefore, in the battle of Mu'tah, though they defeated Muslims, but Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) with his tact and politics had a decisive response to the attacks in the Tabuk War.

But Islam was a universal religion and one of the goals of the Prophet (PBUH) according to what God had revealed was to universalize this religion: "O Prophet, we have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner."

Therefore, according to this goal, the Prophet (PBUH) began writing letters to kings and elders without committing violence. However, he tried to spread Islam in his lifetime through the absorption and conquest of the hearts, as mentioned in the Quran, make Islam universal, however complete success wasn't achieved.

But after the death of the Prophet (PBUH) and taking over of the first three Caliphates, although with no compatibility with the function and purpose of the Prophet (PBUH), the first conquests were spread.

At the time of the Abu Bakr, the first caliphate, many of the areas of the Syria and the Roman Empire were conquered. At the time of the Omar, the second caliphate, the conquest of them had been completed and Damascus and Yarmouk were captured by the Muslims. "Hercules" abandoned the dictum and fled to Constantinople. Syria gradually fell into the hands of the Muslims and they managed to advance to the mountains of Taurus in Asia Minor. "Bit El-Moghaddas", which was called "Iliya" at the time, was surrendered by the Archbishop to Omar during his journey. After that Omar rushed to expand the conquests in Egypt and North Africa.

And thus, the Islam which had entered the middle of the peninsula of Al-Arabi at the time of Prophet (PBUH), during the Abu-Bakr era entered the whole of the peninsula and Muslims succeeded in transmigrating the Transoxiana and the Northern Sea of Macron and all Iran (except the northern shores of the Alborz walls) and the land of Iraq, Syria, Egypt and the bank of the coast of Libya.

At the time of third caliphate, Osman, their conquest reached to the Aral Lake and the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea (east of Asia Minor and South Caucasus), south of Aswan and much of the coast of Libya.

The extent of the influence of Islam in the east was to Sistan and Khorasan. In the northwest of Iran, including Azerbaijan and Armenia, and in the west including all that was called the Shamats, namely Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Egypt were dominated by the Byzantine state (Eastern Rome). Some people of these areas were Arabs and the other were Romans.

After the Islam, the demographic composition of this land has sprouted to the Arabs, and Arabic culture, except for some ethnic-religious minorities, dominated in these areas.

The first contact of Muslims with Africa dates back to the first days of Islam, when some of the new Muslim Arabs in the aftermath of the oppression of the infidels, had refuge to Negus, the king of Abyssinia, where they were offered his support.

During the early Islamic centuries and the battles that Muslims did to promote the last divine religion, North Africa had become the seizure of Islam. With the arrival of Islam in the region, the Arab-Islamic identity presented, and the inhabitants of these regions who were upset by the Byzantines' rulers, saw a simple life, equality and an Islamic brotherhood. They joined Islam group by group and also became promoters of it.

The spread of Islam from then continued intensively. Arabic migrators went to the southern parts of the continent for trade, spreading the spiritual teachings of the prophet of Islam among the people who were worshipping the idols.

With the spread of Islam, various religious differences have also been found in this part of the Islamic world. Local dynasties and governments were also formed. In the meantime, Christianity also had its followers and Christian missionaries were also engaged in promoting their religion.

Following the reign of Christians over the Islamic Republic of Andalusia, Christians began to bump into Muslim regions of North Africa.

The inability of North African rulers in prevention of influence of the Christians has led Muslims to gather together through the leaders of the Sufi Tricks. Tricks which were hierarchical like political organization and led the Jihad against Christians.

The famous dynasties of Sufism, such as Qadiriyya, Shazuliya, Tijaniyyah, Mauritius and Senegal, got many followers among the masses.

And now, in most African countries, these same manners, the sects and associations that the mass of people respect, honor and bow to theirs to show their faith. In this short time the history of Islamism in the major Muslim African countries of the Black Sea is being investigated.

At first look it seems a bit unlikely that Islam had been able to attain these speeds one after another and reach to the North Africa, but it's true and the history and its resources are the source of this incredible fact. The fact that was able to traverse the Byzantine, Babylonian, Alexandria boundaries and to the North of Africa and Tunisia by Uqba ibn Nafi in 670 AD.

But in the meantime, the main role of this puzzle was played by the slogans of Islam, because the Muslim commanders simply could not rule the people of these areas as a conqueror, whereas they knew if this is their policy, they would be off the hook soon.

Muslims coming to Africa and Andalusia

The conquest of Northern Africa was carried out by the Muslim Arabs from the year (23-93 AH / 643–711 AD), during which the duration of the rule of the Arab Caliphs in these lands was accompanied with fluctuations. After the end of the conquests, the establishment of the Arabs' sovereignty over the territory did not last long and the spread of insurgency paved the way for the formation of semi-independent and independent states.

These riots definitely had political, social, intellectual and religious reasons. Though Andalusia at the late of the first Hijri century was conquered by the army of Arabs and Muslim Barbars of North Africa, but during the conquest of Andalusia, Spanish-speaking Visigothic tribesmen who were dissatisfied with their

rulers, collaborated with Muslims. Therefore, although the Arabian Muslims had the leadership of the Spanish Muslims, the Barbarians and Ghettos principals also had a lot of power.

Although the conquest of the northern parts of Spain and the spread of Islam in all of that land remained unfinished, the Umayyad Caliphate in order to preserve their sovereignty over Andalusia, appointed one of the Arab leaders living in that area as their agent. But this person did not have much power against the disobedience of the barbarians and the ghettos and the companionship of the Arab tribes with him, usually was to maintain their own position against other peoples.

The contemporaneous situation in Andalusia, the rule of the Umayyad, which was an Arab state, was destroyed by the "Abbasid" and then the new government began to tame them to overthrow all the Umayyad elements.

In regard to this policy a group of Umayyad members sought a shelter for their salvation, and one of the areas that considered by the Umayyad was Andalusia. Thus, Abdul Rahman, the descendants of "Hisham bin Abdul-ol-Molk" (the tenth caliphate of Umayyad), survived the clash of Abbasids and fled to Andalusia. In 137 AH, he entered Andalusia (five years after the establishment of the Abbasid Caliphate) and he could also bring along a number of Arab tribes with himself. In a situation where some Muslims in Andalusia were neutral, the forces prone to the Abbasids were defeated and Abdul Rahman managed to take power.

The long distance between the Andalusia to the center of the Abbasid caliphate prevented the immediate and effective action of "Bani Abbas" to capture Andalusia, and when the Abbasid government forces were deployed there, Abdul Rahman could achieve the accompaniment of Ghettos and Barbarians.

At this time, they considered Abdul Rahman's government to maintain their political independence. Thus, Abdul Rahman founded the Umayyad dynasty of Andalusia. The Umayyad rule in Andalusia continued from 721 to 433 AH.

During this time 70 people ruled. The first ruler of Umayyad was "Abdul Rahman I" or "Abdul Rahman Addakhil". About a hundred years after the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty of Andalusia, Abdul Rahman and his successors were calling themselves "Emir".

Their government was not religious and their national and armies elements were a combination of Muslims and Christians. For this reason they could not choose the title of Caliphate, which had a merely Islamic meaning. [2]

Therefore, in analyzing this matter, we can say that Muslims seized many lands during their conquests. All the lands that were captured by the Muslims became Muslim lands and to this day, also included the realm of Muslims. However Andalusia had an exceptional situation. Andalusia was the only land that Muslims lost it and also today it's not considered as a Muslim territory. One of the factors in this has contributed to the geographic location of Andalusia. This land has no connection with the Muslim world

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[2] Mohammad Ibrahim Ayati, Andalusian or the history of Muslim rule in Europe, Heran: Tehran University Press, Institute of Publications and Print, 1997, pp. 2-4. And Shakib Arsalan, The History of the Muslim Conquest of Europe, Shokib Arsalan, Ali Dawani, 5th Edition; Office of Islamic Culture Publication; p. 26. And Nefrat al-Tayb al-Moghadri, V. 3 , p. 28

and between it and the Islamic world, the sea has been restrained. The south of Spain that was in the hands of the Muslims, was connected to North Africa only by sea. While the north, which was in the hands of the Christians, was connected with the European lands and had enough contact with its people and the Christian states of Europe. Due to this geographical situation and the separatist governments that came to power (like the Umayyad) Andalusia were virtually isolated from the Muslim world; while the Christian states of northern Spain were closely associated with the Christian world and received helped from their peers.

Geographical and Commercial Situation of Ifriqiya and the Maghreb

Maghreb had a privileged place between the Islamic East and Muslim Spain, as well as between the Sahara and Sudan on one hand and the Mediterranean on the other hand. The three Maghreb regions that Eastern Muslims ruled over, each had an important position. Ifriqiya dominated the Sicilian Strait and was the old center of the Carthage and the regional Succulus.

Maghrib al-Aqsa dominated the Strait of Gibraltar and the tributaries of Italy and Spain. The situation of desert margin in the Atlas Mountains was different from the other two. The area of the eastern western part of the region was the fringe of desert trails and the station of the northern terminals roadway which formed the network of communications of the Sudan cities. [3]

It was also be used as a desert safe place by the nomad Barbarian inhabitants on the high plateau. The central margin of the Maghreb highlands is in the form of step from the east to the west and extends from north to south, The Mediterranean to Sudan. Beach with a series of mountains, Tel Atlas, tall plateau, desert atlas and deserts divided into several sections. Coastal plains are widespread on either side of Africa and the Maghreb of Al Aqsa. The problems of groups like the Romans who wanted to dominate the highlands are these geographical conditions.

In the Islamic world of those days, the Maghreb was considered as an important landmark, and in terms of civilizational horizons and perspectives as well as contact and encounter between civilizations, the bridge between the East and West of the Islamic world and the interconnection point between civilized lands. In the Muslim period, the region has grown to a new level in terms of population and urban development business prospered. Maghreb was not on the brink of major commercial roads, but was one of its arteries. Many eastern businessmen came to the cities of northern Africa to buy Sudanese gold, which were transported by sand merchants through the desert. Maghreb, at this time, played an important role in trading between the territories of the Mediterranean and other regions. [4]

The expansion of Islamic civilization in this era is greatly owed to the Maghreb. Ifriqiya centers had an active business with the Mediterranean, Sicily and Spain. Tunisia was the Andalusian frontier, and it was the path to Andalusia. [5]

Tunisia was the first port to take to Fergana from Andalusia which from there, they traveled to Trastoshe, on the Andalusian coast. "Gabès", the desert and Mediterranean countryside, was the entrance to Sudan.

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[3] Colin McEvedy, Historical Atlas of Africa, Translated by Fereydoun Fatemi, First Edition (Tehran, Publishing Center, 1365 SH) p. 52

[4] Abu Abid Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz al-Bakri, Al-Mugharb fe Zakrar Blād Afrikiyah and al-Mugharb, Dozalan research (Baghdad, al-Maqtani) p. 2-14; Taha Zenon, Al Fattah and El Pasargir al-Arafi in northern Africa and Al-Adelsh(Baghdad, Dar al-Rashid, 1982 AD) p .55

[5] Al-Bakri, Formerly, p. 37 and 84; Taha Zenon, The former, p. 55-57

Ifriqiya and the Maghreb were the crossing points of Sudan's products, such as gold[6], and imported and exported products such as saffron, pistachio, cloth, ivory, pearls, luxury items and western products, namely Slavic slave, skin and sword[7]. Along with these products, the trade of olive oil had a very important role for residents of the non-coastal areas of Ifriqiya and the Maghreb. [8]

Marrakesh geographic location

Marrakesh in Arabic, Al-Maghreb (the site of sunset) and in English, Morocco, is a country located at northwest of Africa. Morocco has a long coastline with the Atlantic Ocean and from the north reaches to Gibraltar and the Mediterranean Sea. Morocco is located in the east of Algeria, from the west by the Atlantic Ocean and from the south by the Mauritanian country. This country claims the sovereignty of Western Sahara and its capital is the city of Rabat. The tribes of the Berbers or Amazighen had have long close relations with the nations and the ancient Phoenician, the Carthagic, Romanian and Byzantines civilizations. Nevertheless, none of these civilizations had the ability to fully dominate the region. Because the tribes living in these areas have distinctive traits such as resistance, resistance, liberty, and adherence to their language and culture. With the arrival of the Islamic call to this area in 50 AH (665 AD), the inhabitants of the region became acquainted with Islamic goals, and as a result, accepted the new religion of Islam. [9]

Finally Islam in the year of 170 (786 AD) spread fundamentally in the area, after one of the descendants of the Prophet (PBUH) known as "Mola Idris ibn'Abdullah ibn al-Hasan ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali" (AS) had taken refuge from the Abbasid rulers of Baghdad to this location. Following the allegiance and declaration of loyalty of the people of this region, and with the help of them, the first Islamic state, independent of the Eastern Arabic caliphate, was founded by the name of "Idriss ibn Abdullah", the "Edrissian". [10]

The inhabitants and rulers of this region, beyond their tribal and radical differences, while adhering to the Islamic values, made effort for publication and propagation of Mohammad's mission and its objectives, not only throughout Morocco, but also in the South regions and other African lands, as well as countries such as Spain, Portugal and southern France.

Conclusion:

With the death of the Prophet (PBUH) and the caliphate of Abu Bakr for reasons that are beyond the scope of this discussion, territorial expansion began. Although the first time that Muslims arrived at Abyssinia was during the time of the Prophet (PBUH), but after that, the penetration of Islam spread and Muslims gradually captured the North Africa and Andalusia.

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[6] Zakriebon Muhammad bin Mahmud Qazvini, Asar al-Balad and Akhbar al-Abad, Jahangir Mirza Qajar translation, Mirhashe Mohaddes correction, First print (Tehran, Amir Kabir, 1994 SH) p. 85

[7] Al-Bakri, Former, pp. 47, 56, and 57; Taha Zenon, the former, p. 51-55; Mojouul al-Mulof, El'basbīrar Fay Ayyub al-Sa'sar, Correction of Saad Zaghalul Abdul Hamid (Baghdad, Darul Shaun Al-Aameh, 1986 AD) p. 21

[8] Abu Abdullah ibn Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Tajajani, Rahelah al-Tajajani, research by Hasan Hassani Abdul Wahhab (Tunisia, al-Dilar al-'Abbiya al-kabbiq, 1988 AD) p. 65-66; Abdul Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn'Abd Allah, Al-Amman al-Qa'riān's revelation, Ibn Naji al-Tekhni, Ibrahim al-Satth (Cairo) Al-Khanji, 1968 AD) V. 1 p. 35-36

[9] Naseri Taheri, Abdullah, History of the spread of Islam in North Africa, Publisher: Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance – Organization Printing and Publishing, p. 18

[10] History of Ibn Khaldun, Abdul Rahman bin Mohammad, Tehran: Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, Institute for Cultural Studies and Research, 1984SH, V. 5, p. 148

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The commanders knew that the people who lived with tyranny and oppression, saw the entrance of Islam as a great social revolution for their liberation are looking for their lost dignity which they found in the course and motto of Islam. The mottos, though for the conquerors was perhaps a symbol, but for the people who lived much further from the borders of the Arabian Peninsula, was a fact. A fact that was able to rid them from the cruelty of oppression.

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