

AL-RAZIS INTELLECTUAL EFFORTS IN RECORDING THE HISTORY OF ANDALUSIA

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RESEARCH SUMMARY

The purpose of this research is to highlight the real efforts of Al-Razis and their intellectual contribution in writing history, specifically the history of Andalusia. This research is also an effort to enrich the educational and cultural field with the historical and educational heritage of this family. They began competing with the schools of the East, especially developing research methods and investigating historical stories, as well as mixing geography with historical information, which was a distinguished research method in recording history for Andalusians. Therefore this family contributed in forming a historical school included important types of sciences.

The first serious attempt to establish a base for historiography in Andalusia was in 300s A.H/ 900s A.D by one of Al-Razi family members; Ahmad Bin Muhammad Bin Musa Al-Razi, a historian and a geographer, whose methods were followed by most historians, followed him.

This family has a massive contribution in writing history; they covered the history of Andalusia and its geography during the century they lived. They described their societies and recorded all historical events, unfortunately, we don't have a complete book of theirs, due to the historical events and what the country faced of blind extremism after the diminish of the Arab rule there.

PREFACE

Following the history of Muslims in Andalusia, we will see that it wasn't separated from the Islamic East politically, socially and intellectually. The civil, culture and ideological historical record of this land started when Muslims got there in (92 A.H, 711 A.D). Andalusia became a center of knowledge comparing to the European neighboring countries, which were living in the darkness of the middle Ages. During the eight centuries of Muslims ruling, they were interested in history, therefore many historians contributed in recording and writing history of this part of the world. Their writings recorded all the development of the historical events happened during the existence of Muslims in Andalusia.

Due to the popularity of these historians and their contribution in this field, many active families have appeared such as the Al-Razis, which is the title of this

research paper, as well as Bani Rushid family, Bani Isba', Bani Al-Zahar and other families popular in the field of historical recording of social, economical and political life.

Andalusians were obsessed about writing the history of their country; therefore many great Andalusian historians appeared in the 300 A.H/ 900 A.D and left their clear fingerprints in writing history. This century was the beginning of writing history that was influenced by the Islamic East. Writing history in the 300 A.H 900 A.D was mature and wide included all types of historical writings.

It is correct that we don't have any of those written books, for they are all lost in the conflict between the Muslims and the Spanish on the Iberian Peninsula (Andalusia), but pieces were found here and there in libraries and others were found in the Islamic East. We can also say that the proficiency of historians in Andalusia flourished, and was separate from the Islamic

East during rule of Abdalrhman Al-Nasir 300-350 A.H/ 912-961 A.D and his son Al-Mustansir 350-366 A.H. / 961-977 A.D. Andalusians recorded the history of their country as an attempt to establish a scientific base for history of Andalusia.

This research paper was divided into two parts

FIRST: THE POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES LIVED BY AL-RAZI FAMILY.

Al-Razi family has lived under unstable political situation and witnessed political turmoil, which weakened the Umayyad authority in Andalusia. That age of several princes ruling the country was called the age of setback or the first age of Sectarian States, which was different from the second one that came after the fall of the Umayyads in Qurtaba (422 A.H./ 1031 A.D.)⁽¹⁾. There were a lot of opposition to the Umayyads from the various Andalusian communities of Arabs and Barber, many of the Muladies revolt against them in Andalusia, which weakened the central authority and dismantled the unity of the Andalusian community. However, after the death of prince Abdallah (300 A.H./912 A.D.)⁽²⁾His grandson Abd ar-Rahman Alnasir III, who reunited Andalusia and planned for it since he took power ⁽³⁾.

Despite the unstable political circumstances in Andalusia before Al-Nasir, it didn't have a strong impact on the intellectual life. Prince Muhammad Abdalrhman II built the library of the palace in Qurtuba and was very generous to intellectuals in Andalusia and those who were coming from the Islamic East and gave them lands⁽⁴⁾. Additionally, the political stability and prosperity during the rule of Al-Nasir, developed most of administrative, military and constructions aspects of life. There was a great attention to the intellectual life through purchasing very expensive rare books and bringing intellectuals from the East ⁽⁵⁾. Andalusia witnessed a historical rise in the 300s A.H., they were independent from Egypt in this type of knowledge and many intellectuals appeared in various types of knowledge. The character of the Andalusian historians was very clear in what they have left of books and publications. During that period there were many intellectuals in all types of sciences such as language, history, writings and Hadeeth (saying and teachings of prophet Muhammad) as well as intellectual families such as Al-Razi who have inherited the interest in writing down

the history of Andalusia and they were creative in this field, which will be explained further below.

SECOND: AL-RAZIS AND THEIR INTELLECTUAL EFFORTS IN WRITING THE HISTORY OF ANDALUSIA.

This family was one of the most important families, who wrote down the history of Andalusia during the period of the rule of prince Muhammad Bin Abdalrhman (238-273 A.H. / 852-886 A.D.) and the period of rule of Al-Hajib Al-Mansour Bin Abi Amer (366-399 A.H/976-1009 A.D.), because they lived during this period.

In reality, this family took the lead of the historical school during this time, three of them were the most distinguished historians; first: Muhammad Bin Musa Al-Razi, second: Ahmad Bin Muhammad Al-Razi, the most popular and most knowledgeable one, third: the grandson Essa Bin Ahmad Al-Razi, whom their biographies will be discussed consequently.

Muhammad Bin Musa Al-Razi

He is the head of this honored family, his full name is Muhammad Bin Musa Bin Bashir Bin Janad Bin Laqet Al-Kinani Al-Razi ⁽⁶⁾, originally from the East from Al-Ray people⁽⁷⁾, came to Andalusia in (250 A.H./864 A.D.)⁽⁸⁾ and settled in Qurtuba. He worked as a vendor in his early youth⁽⁹⁾ and built a good reputation till the prince Muhammad Abdulrahman heard about him and liked him, he made him close to him, especially after he delivered a message from prince Ibrahim Bin Ahmad bin Muhammad Bin Al-Aghlab (an African prince) to boost the social and political relations ⁽¹⁰⁾. Within time their relationship became stronger and Al-Razi gave him one of his dearest maids as a gift, but the Prince refused her, because he was afraid of espionage ⁽¹¹⁾, which forced Al-Razi to leave Andalusia during the last days of prince Muhammad. He later settled in Sijilmasa ⁽¹²⁾city, where he got married and his trade flourished. After the death of prince Muhammad (273 A.H./886 A.D.) he was called by prince Munthir (229-275 A.H. 844-889 A.D.) and gothis acceptance and satisfaction and became very close to him. He was both intellectual and a trader, which was confirmed by Ibn Al-Abar when he said: (some were coming to the Umayyads Caliphs from the East as traders and intellectuals)⁽¹³⁾.

Al-Razi decided to leave Andalusia after the death of prince Munthir 275 A.H./ 889 A.D.) to return East, but he died in Al-Bireh city⁽¹⁴⁾ (277 A.H./890 A.D.)⁽¹⁵⁾.

His intellectual life:

Perhaps Muhammad Bin Musa Al-Razi had an intellectual project and wrote his book "Al-Rayah", unlike what other researchers⁽¹⁶⁾ accused him of being a trader only, not an intellectual. What confirms this opinion is what Ibn Al-Abar wrote; he was inundated in intellectual life⁽¹⁷⁾.

In his book Al-Rayah, from which only small pieces remained, he described in details how Musa Bin Nusayr⁽¹⁸⁾ conquered Andalusia and had valuable information about the Islamic conquer of the land, as well as a detailed description of the tribes that accompanied him of Quraish and other Arabic tribes⁽¹⁹⁾. It also described the procedures taken by Musa Bin Nusayr to divide the land of Andalusia and how he treated the different sects of locals (Spanish).

Second: Ahmad Bin Muhammad Bin Musa Al-Razi:

It seems that Ahmad Bin Musa Al-Razi used his father intellectual heritage and became ready to be the best of Al-Razis, whose intellectual approach and methodology made his works very distinguished.

He was born in Andalusia (27 A.H./888 A.D.)⁽²⁰⁾ His father died when he was 3 year-old, he grew up amongst the people of Andalusia and became an author, a poet and a narrator. Due to his numerous historical works, he was known as "The Historian", he wrote down the history of Andalusia circumstantially and inclusively, he didn't write down historical events only, but also talked about the significant sides of the private and public life of the people⁽²¹⁾.

He taught many students such as Ibn Essas Bin Ahmad Al-Razi, who continued his father path in writing down history⁽²²⁾. Malak Bin Had was one of his students too, who was from the city of Tartousha⁽²³⁾. Ahmad Al-Razi loved historical events and searched them and was precise in recording information as he recorded events dates, months and years and continued this approach till he died (344 A.H./ 955 A.D.)⁽²⁴⁾

His intellectual life

The translated historical sources of Ahmad Bin Muhammad Bin Musa Al-Razi shown his most important work, which are:

1. Akhbar Mulok Al-Andalus "News of Kings of Andalusia": In this book, Al-Razi wrote down the news of kings of Andalusia and the main events of invasions, and setbacks, he prolonged when talking about kings and princes as he had a close relations with them⁽²⁵⁾.
2. Masalik Al-Andlus "the trails of Andalusia", in which he talks about the elite of Andalusia, its anchorages, roads and ports, as well as its soldiers and the characters of each city⁽²⁶⁾.
3. Ayan Al-Mawali "The Elite figures of Andalusia", in this book he talks about the popular figures in Andalusia and its elite who had an influence in the Umayyad state⁽²⁷⁾.
4. Al-Istiyab fe Mashahir Al-Andaluce "the Comprehension of the Popular people of Andalusia", this one of his largest works, it consists of five books, unfortunately we only have a little of it.

Losing this treasure of books was kind of compensated by late historians who quoted Al-Razi a lot in many texts and events; therefore they kept important information about the history of Muslims in Andalusia and their civilization when they were on the land of Andalusia. These books were basic sources for many, Arabs and non-Arabs historians who searched in the history and geography of Andalusia⁽²⁸⁾.

Third: Essa bin Ahmad Al-Razi:

He is the third of Al-Razis, he is also as significant as his father, he was knowledgeable in literature and history, he didn't finish up his father's book only, he also wrote a new book about the first events during Muslims control of Andalusia. He was known for his love to literature and intellectual life. His knew various branches of knowledge and was precise in writing his sources, he continued contributing to this field till his death in (379 A.H./ 989 A.D.)⁽²⁹⁾.

His intellectual life:

Essa Bin AHmad Al-Razi was creative in literature and history, he didn't only finish his father's book of "News of the Kings of Andalusia" but he also wrote his own book, "The history of Andalusia"⁽³⁰⁾ in which he circumstantially wrote down the first events of Arabs in Andalusia. ⁽³¹⁾Al-Maqari has quoted him in a text goes back to the age of *Wilat* "governors" (95-138 A.H/714-755 A.D). Ibn Al-Bar also quoted some of his stories. It seems that Al-Razi followed his father's approach is writing⁽³²⁾, he followed Al-Hawliat method of writing according to Hjiri years. In addition to his elaboration in writing down public way of life, therefore many historians used what Al-Razi wrote such as Ibn Athari and Ibn Hayan who liked Essa a lot and called him "The owner of history"⁽³³⁾. As his father Essa gave his works as presents to the princes, Essa gave his book to prince Al-Hakam Al-Mustansir. His second book was called "Hijab Khlafa Al-Andalus"⁽³⁴⁾ The Cover of Andalusia Caliphs, in which he mentioned the most distinguished figures that got this position; he gave this book as a present to Al-Hajib Al-Mansur Muhammad Ibn Abi Amir⁽³⁵⁾. Giving books as presents to princes by Al-Razi family seemed an inherited habit and they were proud of it. It is worth to mention that Essa Al-Razi elaborated in his explanation of the process of hiring janitors and how they were treated, as well as other social aspects⁽³⁶⁾. His third book was titled as "Ministers and Ministry", in this book he talked about ministers and their work, this book may also be same as the second book because Janitors might also be a minister for the king⁽³⁷⁾.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we look at the achievements of Al-Razi family, through this research study, many important sides become clear to us, which can be summed as:

- Al-Razi family left a great heritage of historical records, especially Ahmad Bin Musa Al-Razi, who was the first one who presented history through geography, a method was used by all historians who came after him.
- The historical development of writing during the fourth century became one of the cultural fruitful developments in Andalusia. It was transformed from the age of taking to the age of giving, from an early stage featured as writing stories, to a

mature stage that used historical precision by expert historians, who wrote mature and specialized works similar to Al-Razi's works.

- The historians of Andalusia were knowledgeable in all types of sciences in addition to their wide range knowledge of history; they recorded the cultural and ideological movements in Andalusia.
- Many of Andalusian historians, especially in the fourth century, published many opinions, thoughts and points of views that later became important base for historians and thinkers.
- Following the historical studies of Andalusia, we notice a wide range of history recording activities, which have widened to several branches and sides related to the history of Andalusia, and its distinguished political and intellectual figures.
- We have to mention that the family of Al-Razi and many other families were supported by princes of Andalusia, especially during Caliph Al-Nasir and his son, who has encouraged them.

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