

The Islamic-Christian Conflict In Northern Andalusia During The Reign Of Caliph Abd Al-Rahman Al-Nasser III

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Abstract

This research discussed the most important battles and events that occurred during the reign of Caliph Abd al-Rahman al-Nasir III. It used the qualitative method of reading and analyzing historical texts as a tool for collecting data. Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic approach serves as the analytical tool for data. The findings of the study were (i) Caliph Al-Nasser pursued a policy of quelling internal revolts in preparation for the defense of Andalusia., (ii) The intelligence strategy employed by Caliph Al-Nasser played a significant role in achieving victory , (iii), The Caliph failed to meet the expectations of the Arab soldiers by appointing a non-Arab commander for the Battle of the Trench, which resulted in the soldiers' discontent, (iv) During the Battle of the Trench, most of the soldiers did not accept the idea of their commander being a non-Arab, and this was one of the causes of the defeat that befell the Caliph's forces, (v) The Caliph's forces did not study the geography of the battle site before entering combat in the Battle of the Trench, and this led to their defeat in the battle, and (vi) the Caliph stands out as a notable figure in history, celebrated for his resolute commitment to realizing his objectives, particularly within the sphere of military pursuits.

Keywords: Andalusia, Caliph Abd al-Rahman al-Nasser III Islamic-,Christian Struggle, the Battle of the Trench ,

Introduction

Muslim armies crossed the Strait of Gibraltar in 711 AD, beginning the Islamic expansion on the Iberian Peninsula. After defeating the Christian ruler Roderic, they imposed Islamic rule over a large part

of the region for several centuries. The area flourished in culture, science, and architecture and was ruled by various Islamic dynasties, such as the Calamians, Almoravids, and Almohads. Despite the coexistence between the different sects, there were some intermittent conflicts¹.

The Christian kingdoms began a series of military campaigns known as the Reconquista in the northern Iberian Peninsula at the beginning of the 8th century and continued until the late 15th century². These campaigns aimed to recover land from Islamic rule, especially Andalusia, which was considered the focus of the Islamic-Christian conflict during the Middle Ages. This conflict was not homogeneous; instead, it was a series of regional events and conflicts³.

The wars that continued in the region for centuries created a prosperous, multicultural society that coexisted despite the region's various religious and cultural differences and regardless of the conflicts in which Christian powers sought to regain control of the region.

The caliph al-Nasir III(891-961)

Born in 891 and passed away in 961 was Caliph Abd al-Rahman al-Nasir Li Din Allah. He was regarded as Andalusia's most well-known monarch. His era witnessed the triumph and expansion of the state founded by his grandfather, Abd al-Rahman al-Dakhil. This state was established in the wake of the Umayyad Caliphate's fall in Damascus, Syria, and Abd al-Rahman al-Nasir became its eighth ruler. In 928, he declared the Caliphate of Cordoba⁴.

Under the leadership of Abd al-Rahman al-Nasser, the Umayyad state in Andalusia overcame internal rebellions and consolidated its authority, restoring prestige and extending influence beyond Cordoba and its immediate vicinity. Notably, he secured the southern borders by controlling ports on the Moroccan mainland, offering support to Moroccan princes against the advancing Fatimids⁵.

The political stability and military successes achieved during Abd al-Rahman al-Nasser's reign fueled economic and military prosperity in Andalusia. Consequently, the region became a hub for diplomatic missions from various nations, all anxious to seek favor or request support from the influential Caliph⁶.

What further sets Abd al-Rahman al-Nasser apart is his wise and brilliant governance. He unified the nation, centralized power and established a form of political equilibrium through his treaties. His leadership transcends time, making him a peer of modern-day kings rather than merely a historical Caliph from the Middle Ages⁶.

Interestingly, despite his Arab heritage, Abd al-Rahman al-Nasser's physical appearance was distinctive, with a light complexion, blond hair, and blue eyes. This unique trait was attributed to European concubines in his family's lineage, and there is even a tale that he colored his beard black to align with the Arab Umayyad image that his people had of him.

In sum, Abd al-Rahman al-Nasir Lidin Allah's rule left an indelible mark on Andalusia, not only for his military conquests but also for his diplomatic prowess and the enduring legacy of his governance.

Literature Review

In his research, the author⁷ delves into historical occurrences within the context of Islamic history and the cultural heritage of Andalusia. Andalusia is renowned for its historical advancement of ideals like equal citizenship, peaceful cohabitation, intellectual inclusivity, and religious concord among Muslims, Christians, and Jews. The findings of the study demonstrated that the principles of Islam align with the principles, objectives, and universal aspects of human rights. Islam, as a major global religion, has historically been a proponent of human rights, encompassing citizenship rights and the values of peaceful coexistence, intellectual tolerance, and religious harmony. The flourishing of various faiths relies on the presence of tolerance that conforms to the fundamental essence of humanity and transcends cultural, traditional, and religious distinctions.

The authors⁸ shed light on the actions taken by Umayyad rulers to establish peace and widespread prosperity in their territory, known as al-Andalus. Their research employs a qualitative approach, involving an examination of library resources to analyze and evaluate pertinent data from both primary and secondary sources. The results of their investigation uncover three significant undertakings pursued by Caliph 'Abd al-Rahman III and Al-Hakam II in their quest for peace and universal prosperity in al-Andalus. Firstly, they strengthened the self-governance of the Umayyad authority in al-Andalus. Secondly, they fostered diplomatic

relations with neighboring nations near of al-Andalus. Lastly, 'Abd Rahman and his son, Al-Hakam, granted equal rights to the local population, regardless of their various racial and religious backgrounds.

The author ⁹ explores the cultural and intellectual history of medieval Spain, focusing on the period when Muslims, Christians, and Jews coexisted in the Iberian Peninsula. It aimed at providing a detailed and nuanced historical account of the cultural interactions and exchanges that occurred in medieval Spain, shedding light on the period when Muslims, Christians, and Jews lived together, often in relative harmony, and how this diverse society led to a flourishing of art, science, and culture, and challenging the commonly held view of a monolithic and hostile relationship between these religious and cultural groups by demonstrating instances of cooperation, exchange, and collaboration. The author⁹ employed an interdisciplinary methodology, drawing from history, literature, art, and cultural studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the period, an extensive analysis of primary sources, including historical texts, poems, and works of art from the period, which help to illuminate the interactions between different religious and cultural groups, and compared the Iberian experience with other regions and time periods to highlight the uniqueness of this historical moment. The study reached a set of results: The Iberian Peninsula region kept pace with developments in the field of arts and sciences, as it was an estuary for all cultures, where Christians, Muslims, and Jews cooperated to exchange ideas and information despite some conflicts and disputes. This led to the flourishing of culture and development of coexistence unique in Spain. This development that Spain experienced continues to influence art, architecture, and thought to this day.

In his analysis¹⁰, the author focused on the Andalusian era and demonstrated the interaction of Islamic, Christian, and Jewish societies. They showed us the coexistence that prevailed in some periods and the conflicts in others. In addition to their investigation into Spain's heritage and how the Islamic presence influenced culture, architecture, and intellectual development on the Iberian Peninsula,

In his research, the author⁴ relied on a wide range of primary and secondary sources, including medieval texts, historical documents, archaeological evidence, and academic scholarship. An interdisciplinary approach combined historical research with cultural and social analysis elements to view this period comprehensively. Comparative analysis is also used to highlight the similarities and differences between Moorish Spain and other medieval European regions and their impact on the broader history of the Middle Ages. The results were: (i) shedding light on the disputes between Muslim, Christian, and Jewish during this period and on the peaceful coexistence and conflicts among them, (ii) The author emphasized the great development that occurred in Spain, and that period was called the Golden Age, due to progress in the fields of science, art, architecture, and literature, (iii) The authors emphasized the significant development during the Islamic presence in the Iberian Peninsula and the wider world, especially in specific fields such as architecture.

The author⁴ provide a detailed biographical account of Caliph Abd al-Rahman III, the first caliph of Cordoba and the most prominent ruler of Andalusia (Islamic Spain) during the tenth century. The influence of the leadership of Caliph Abd al-Rahman III on the development of the Caliphate of Cordoba was noted, including his contributions to the political and cultural life of the region,

The author relied on extensive historical research and a wide range of primary and secondary sources, such as Arabic historical texts, inscriptions, coins, and scholarly literature on the subject. The author used a biographical approach, focusing on the life and achievements of Abd al-Rahman III and also taking into account the broader historical context and events that influenced his reign. The authors take an interdisciplinary approach that combines historical research with elements of cultural and political analysis to provide a comprehensive view of Abd al-Rahman III's life and his legacy. The results of the study were: (i) Providing a complete picture of the biography of Caliph Abd al-Rahman III, his upbringing, early life, and the challenges he faced, (ii) Abd al-Rahman III's political achievements, such as his consolidation of power, proclamation as the first caliph of Cordoba, and efforts to centralize power within the caliphate, are discussed, (iii) The author talked about the cultural and intellectual developments of the time and highlighted Abd al-Rahman III's patronage of the arts and his contributions to the cultural prosperity of Andalusia., (iv) The historical importance

of Abd al-Rahman III's rule and the lasting influence of his leadership on the history of Islamic Spain are emphasized.

According to the above, this study was conducted to address the gap between suppressing internal conflicts, protecting the Islamic State in Andalusia, and thwarting Christian attempts to control the Islamic State during the reign of the Umayyad Caliph Abd al-Rahman al-Nasser. This article aimed to analyze the most prominent events and battles that characterized the conflict during the leadership of Caliph Abd al-Rahman al-Nasser while exploring the repercussions of the conflict on Islamic horizons in northern Andalusia..

Methodology

In this study, the researchers adopted a qualitative approach, where the data collection process was characterized by careful examination of historical documents, which are considered an abundant source of information. The thematic approach developed by scientists was relied upon to analyze the data. This approach consists of six stages, as shown in the following figure

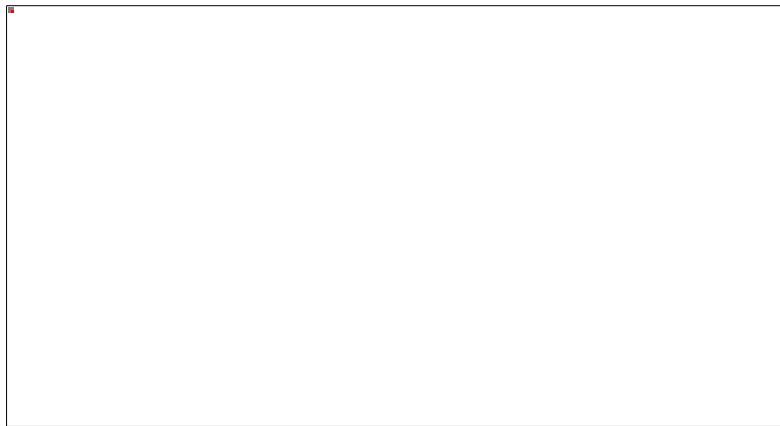


Figure 1. Thematic Approach of Braun & Clarke

1.Familiarizing with data: reading and understanding data in terms of content.

Creating initial codes: identifying keywords that explain the
2.essence of the text

3.Theme Search: grouping codes into potential themes where themes are generated based on similarities or connections between codes.

4.Reviewing Themes: Researchers review and refine the themes, ensuring they accurately represent the data. Themes should be coherent and internally consistent.

5.Defining and Naming Themes: Each theme is given a clear, concise name that captures its meaning. Researchers write a brief description of what each theme encompasses.

6.Writing a Report: Researchers compile their findings into a coherent report, which typically includes the themes, supporting quotes or excerpts from the data, and a narrative that explains and interprets the themes in the context of the research question.

Result and Discussion

The Umayyad Caliph Abd al-Rahman al-Nasir is widely regarded as the first to assume the caliphate in Andalusia. He is considered one of the most prominent Umayyads and the longest-reigning king in the history of Islam, having ruled Andalusia for an impressive fifty years and six months. Consequently, his era was marked by a plethora of historical details and significant incidents, encompassing both internal reformist endeavors within Andalusia and external confrontations with the Christians powers hailing from Lyon and Navarre in the north¹². Gökalp

Through the analysis, 5 themes were found these are:

1. The internal conflicts in Muslim Spain

Abd al-Rahman's inheritance was a complex one. His predecessor, Abd al-Rahman I (reigning from 756 to 788 CE), had diligently united Muslim Spain towards the end of the 8th century CE. However, following his demise, the Iberian Peninsula once again fell into disarray. Rebels like Musa ibn Musa and Ibrahim ibn Hajjaj established their own de facto domains within the Emirate of Cordoba, particularly in the northern regions and rural areas¹³. The Umayyads, on the other hand, maintained their authority in the major cities of southern Spain and expended considerable effort to quell these uprisings. Nevertheless, these local rulers often held too much power to be simply removed. Instead, the Umayyad emirs in Cordoba retained their leadership but required them to mobilize their forces in support of Umayyad military endeavors against other autonomous insurgents. The effective control of the Umayyads barely extended beyond the Cordoba region itself¹⁴. This somewhat fragile political control was the challenging

situation that Abd al-Rahman III encountered when he took the throne



Figure 1. Map of Caliphate of Cordoba

Abd al-Rahman wasted no time and immediately sprang into action. Before the year came to a close, severed heads of rebels started appearing on the walls of Cordoba, one after another, as one rebellious stronghold after another succumbed to the might of the Umayyad forces. The most significant change was that Abd al-Rahman assumed personal command of the Umayyad troops, a role that 'Abd Allah had not undertaken for nearly two decades. Unlike 'Abd Allah, who had to be cautious in allocating many troops to his generals to prevent potential betrayal, Abd al-Rahman could personally lead the majority of his forces. Furthermore, he initiated the recruitment of foreign mercenaries, including Eastern Turks and North African Berbers, whose loyalty could be assured since they lacked their own local power bases¹³.

Nonetheless, the Umayyad authority continued to face its primary challenge. Umar ibn Hafsun emerged as a formidable opponent to the Umayyad rule, commencing his first rebellion in 880 CE. Despite facing suppression on multiple occasions, he repeatedly eluded Umayyad control. It was only in 914 CE, when Abd al-Rahman launched a comprehensive campaign against him, laying siege to several of his strongholds and decimating the defenders of the Belda fortress, that Umar ibn Hafsun eventually acquiesced to Umayyad rule in 915 CE. By that point, he held sway over more than 100 fortresses in Al-Andalus¹⁵. Among those dissatisfied with the rule of Al-Nasir, the governor of Zaragoza, situated in close proximity to the Spanish strongholds in the north, was Muhammad

bin Hashim al-Tajibi. Ayoub Castle was under the rule of his relative, Mutarrif bin Mandaf Al-Tajibi. During this time, King Ramiro II of the kingdom of León was pursuing a policy of conflict and expansion, which Al-Nasir countered with resistance.



Figure 2 Map of the internal conflicts

Ramiro's interests and those of the Al-Tajibi family converged in their opposition to Al-Nasir, leading to a secret agreement. This agreement was based on the condition that the ruler of Zaragoza, Muhammad bin Hashim Al-Tajibi, would pledge loyalty to the ruler of the kingdom of León in exchange for support for Zaragoza's independence. While Abd al-Rahman al-Nasir's forces were advancing to dismantle the Kingdom of Leon in 934, the Tajibians declared their rebellion against Cordoba and supported King Ramiro, and the army of the Kingdom of Leon rallied behind the Tajibids. This contributed to the expansion of their territory by integrating different sites and fortifications in Zaragoza. This alliance developed further when Totota, Queen of Navarre, and the Bashcans joined the alliance¹⁶.

This prompted the entire northern region to unite against Cordoba, and this alliance posed a threat to Caliph Abd al-Rahman who began a siege of Ayoub Castle, which did not last long in 973. He ordered the execution of the castle's commander, Mutarrif bin Mandaf al-Tajibi, along with the supporting leaders. The kingdom of León, dispatched by Ramiro II, followed by the Cordoba army under Caliph Al-Nasir, advanced until they reached the Alba region,

where they successfully incorporated several castles and fortifications. Ultimately, the army reached Zaragoza, with Al-Nasir assigning the responsibility of besieging and governing the city to a relative, Commander Ahmed bin Ishaq. However, Ibn Ishaq harbored intentions of collaborating with the Fatimids in Morocco and engaged in correspondence with them. Taking advantage of his proximity to the Umayyad enemies in the north, he reached out to Ramiro and exhibited leniency in the siege of Zaragoza. Al-Nasir confirmed this betrayal and promptly executed Ibn Ishaq.

Afterwards, Al-Nasir successfully occupied Zaragoza through a relentless siege. Muhammad bin Hashim al-Tajibi was appointed as the leader of the Tajibs in the northern regions, despite his involvement in the crime of treason. Given the turbulent situation, the significance of the Tajiks in that region was undeniable. Al-Nasir imposed several specific conditions, to which Ibn al-Tajibi agreed. These conditions mandated that Hashim display unwavering obedience, complete submission, and surrender several members of his family as hostages to Al-Nasir in Cordoba. Additionally, Hashim was required to fight Al-Nasir's enemies¹⁶.

During the period when Muslims controlled most of the Iberian Peninsula, there were still small Christian kingdoms located in the mountainous regions of northern Spain. These Christian kingdoms were situated in areas such as Asturias, Navarre, and parts of Catalonia. This period was the most important in the history despite recurring skirmishes and conflicts. Territorial disputes, raids, and border clashes characterized the conflict between Muslims and Christians during this period. Christian kingdoms sought to protect and expand their territories, while Muslim rulers, primarily of the Umayyad dynasty, aimed to maintain and expand their dominance in the region.

The significant difference in power between the Muslim-controlled areas in the south and the fragmented Christian kingdoms in the north was considered one of the reasons for the relative absence of solid religious connotations in these conflicts. The Umayyad-dominated Islamic part of Spain was significantly stronger and politically unified than the Christian kingdoms that were divided among themselves.

2. Introductory Campaigns

At the beginning of his rule, Al-Nasir focused on suppressing internal revolts. This opportunity was seized by King Ordonio II of Leon (914-924 AD), who mobilized a large force of knights, soldiers, and archers in early 214 AD. They launched an attack on the city of Ybara and succeeded in storming it, killing 700 men and capturing more than 4000 women .

Ordonio II seized Al-Hanash Castle and engaged in conflict with many Muslims. Following the capture of the castle, significant numbers of Christians rallied to his cause. Ordoño had two Berber Muslim guides accompanying him, who assured him that they would lead his army through easier paths to Luxor. However, they intentionally misled him onto difficult routes, causing the group to lose their way. When Ordoño discovered the treachery of the two guides, he executed them and retraced his steps to castle of al-Hanash

In 915 AD, another Christian king, Shanjah ibn Gharsiyya I, the ruler of Navarre or Nabara, coveted Andalusia .He launched an attack on one of the cities in the upper march, Al-Andalusi, which happened to be the city of Tudila, resulting in the loss of a significant number of lives

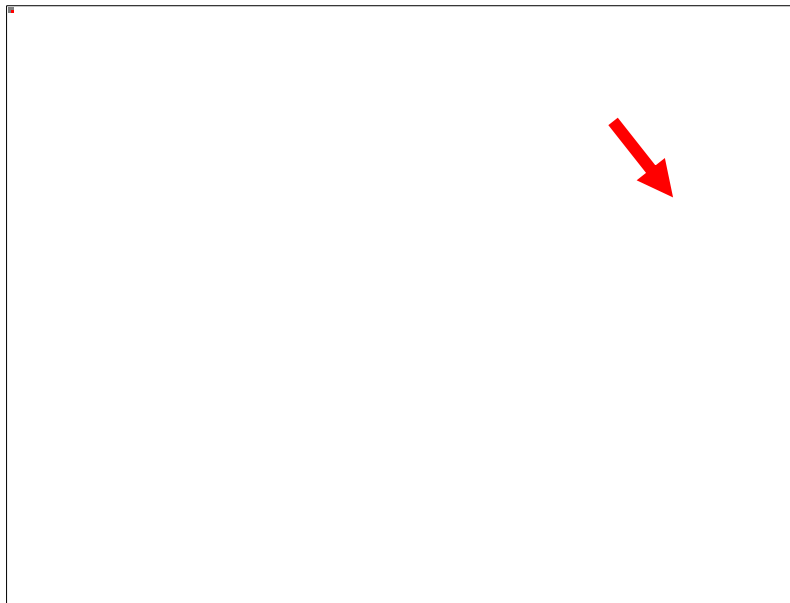


Figure 3 Maps of attacking the upper march

The Christian assaults, particularly their attacks on Tula, became frequent and troublesome. Caliph Abd al-Rahman al-Nasser found himself compelled to address these threats alongside the internal

dangers posed by revolutions. Faced with this peril, he initiated a series of limited campaigns against the Christians, with the first one being led by Abu al-Abbas Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Abduh. This campaign resulted in the conquest of their territory¹⁷.

Al-Nasser dispatched the same commander, Abu Abbas Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Abduh, to lead a second campaign in 917 AD. This campaign successfully launched multiple attacks on the Christians. Faced with this Islamic offensive, substantial Christian forces assembled, with the addition of hypocrites from the Upper Frontier region such as Tulta. Together, these combined forces managed to defeat Commander Abu Abbas and his army.



Figure 2. Maps of operation against Upper-March

In the year 917 AD, the Upper March (Al-Tagr-al-Ala) faced a severe attack by the kings of Leon and Navarre, along with a substantial army. They launched an assault on the cities of the Upper-March, including Tudela. This army laid waste to all the cities, crops, and orchards it encountered. Some of the army units marched towards the Beltira Fort (1) and engaged in a fierce battle with the Muslim

defenders of the fort, resulting in the defeat of the units and the destruction of the fort's mosque (Mediano,2013)

In the year 917 AD, Caliph Abd al-Rahman al-Nasir initiated a third preliminary attack prompted by the incendiary attack on the Grand Mosque in Fort Beltira. He issued orders to "muster men, recruit the soldiers and knights, and dispatch messages to the inhabitants of the outlying regions and frontiers, urging them to mobilize and confront the enemy. The Caliph successfully assembled a formidable army and appointed Badr bin Ahmed as their commander, under whose leadership they managed to vanquish the forces of King Kingdom of León¹⁸.

3. The First Campaign

The burning of the mosque marked a significant turning point in Caliph Al-Nasser's stance towards the Christian community. In retaliation for the mosque's desecration, he dispatched armies led by Commander Badr and emerged victorious in these campaigns. In the year 920 AD, he assembled a formidable army that departed from the capital of his realm, Cordoba, to confront the Christian forces.

Caliph Al-Nasir penetrated deep into the Christian territories through a strategic opening. The Christians found themselves in retreat, seeking refuge in the mountains, while Al-Nasir systematically dismantled their fortifications and towers in thw. He successfully invaded the entire region, met with no resistance from the Christians, and dealt fatal blows to numerous knights and leaders during this campaign. Those captured by him faced swift and decisive execution. Al-Nasir returned from this approximately three-month-long campaign to Cordoba in late September of 920 AD ¹⁷.

4. The Second Campaign

began in the month of April 924 because the King of Kingdom of León raided the city of Nagra, which is one of the cities in the Tudila State, and seized it in the Upper March. Moreover, the King of Navarre marched to the city of Qira, another city in the Tudila State, and besieged it, capturing a portion of its people and killing them. When news of their killings spread, there was an uproar in Andalusia, blaming Al-Nasser and accusing him of negligence in protecting the country.

It was imperative for Caliph Al-Nasir to confront the monarchs - the King of Kingdom of León and the King of Navarre - and seek retribution for the killing of prominent Muslims. Consequently, he initiated preparations for war and successfully launched an expedition in 923 AD to the Upper Breach, led by his minister, Abd al-Hamid ibn Bisbil. Abd al-Hamid advanced to Tullah and engaged in battle with the King of Navarre, ultimately emerging victorious¹⁷.

Abd al-Rahman al-Nasir departed from Cordoba on April 17, 924 AD, having completed his preparations. He led a substantial force with the intent of confronting the armies of King Kingdom of León and the King of Navarre. Upon his arrival in Tudul, numerous Islamic forces joined him. With these combined armies, he entered the Kingdom of Navarre. Panic swept through the populace, causing most of them to flee and seek refuge in their forts and castles. With no resistance, Al-Nasser ordered the seizure of the area, subsequently demolishing and destroying it. Al-Nasser then proceeded to advance into the heart of the-Navarre kingdom and marched toward its capital, Banyuluna. The local inhabitants made efforts to resist, but he defeated them.

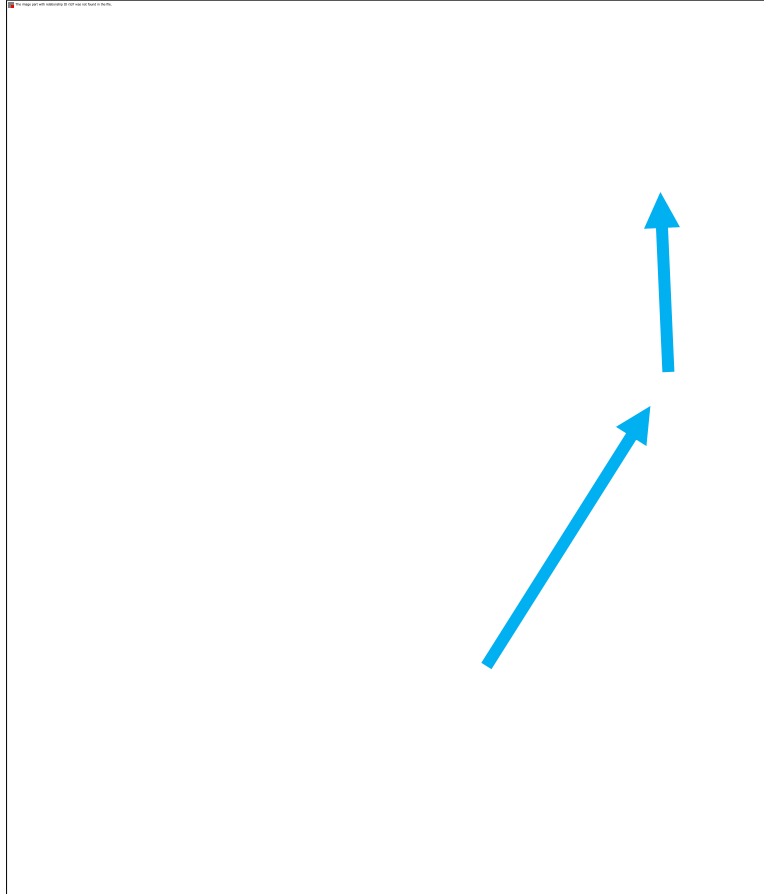


Figure 4 Map of the Second Campaign

King Al-Nasser successfully entered the Kingdom of Navarre and withdrew his forces in August 924 AD, returning triumphantly to Cordoba after spending four months in the campaign known as the Battle of Pamplona.

5. The Third Campaign

Abd al-Rahman al-Nasser felt at ease upon his return from the second campaign, following his victory over the armies of King Kingdom of León and King Navarre. The attacks on Andalusia stopped because the Christians were busy with their internal issues. In the year 925 AD, a family dispute occurred over the throne when the king of the Kingdom of Leon died, and a war broke out between them that lasted for several years. In the end, Ramiro took the throne during this conflict, so Al-Nasir chose not to interfere in their internal affairs and focused instead on strengthening security within his country.

Ramiro II was a mighty and courageous king famous for staunch opposition to the Islamic State of Andalusia. He worked to weaken the power of Muslims by provoking conflicts and discord among them from the beginning of his rule. He encouraged the city's leaders to revolt against Caliph Abd al-Rahman al-Nasser. In response, the Caliph sent a delegation to convince the societies of Toledo to succumb to his government. Still, they vehemently refused, driven by their pride and the supporting of King Ramiro II,

In 930 AD, Al-Nasir marched a powerful army to Toledo, where he besieged the city and destroyed the neighboring towns. A few weeks later, he made his way back to Cordoba, leaving some of his forces to carry out the siege. In order to deliver the decisive blow and take control of Toledo, he returned there in the summer of 932 AD. Ramiro II, King of the Kingdom of León, retaliated by attempting to preserve Toledo. He was eventually forced to surrender to Al-Nasser's forces after they stopped him from entering the city. Consequently, Al-Nasser triumphantly arrived in Toledo.

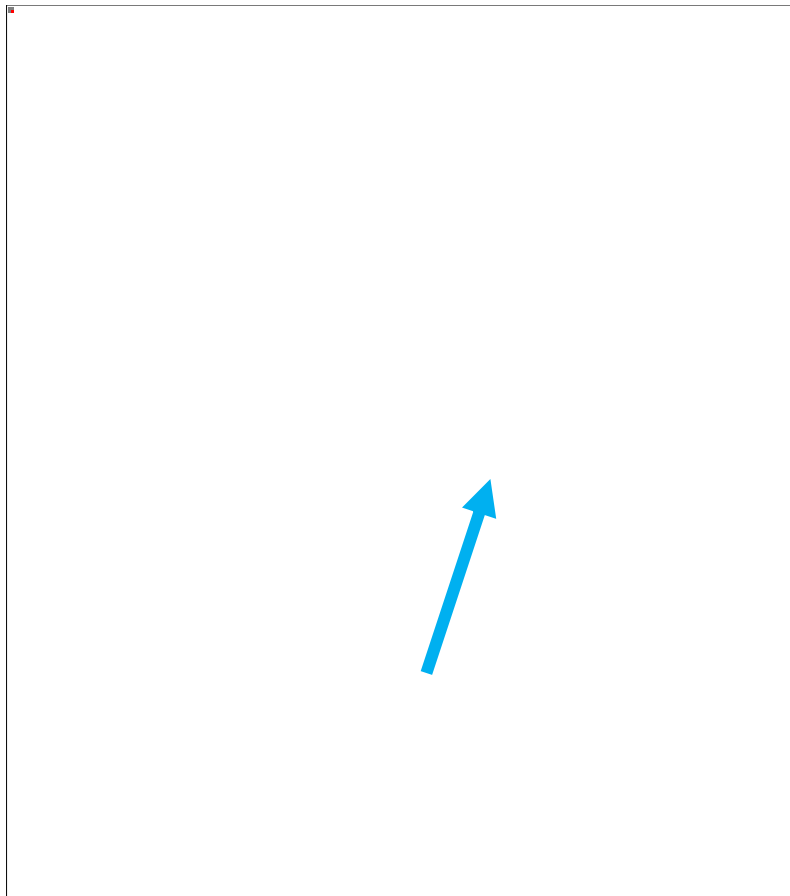


Figure 5 The Third Campaign's Map

1. The Fourth Campaign

The fourth campaign began in mid-May 934 AD when Al-Nasir led a large army with the aim of retaking the city of Khasma (also known as Osama). This city was situated near Douira, on the border between the Kingdom of Andalusia and the Kingdom of León. In 933 AD, it had been occupied by the King of Kingdom of León. Nevertheless, Al-Nasir made a strategic decision to first focus on the lands of the Kingdom of Navarre.

Queen Toyoda of Navarre reached out to him, offering her allegiance, a commitment to refrain from causing harm to the people of Andalusia, and a pledge not to form alliances with others against them. Al-Nasir accepted her proposal and entered into a treaty with her.

After signing a treaty with the Kingdom of Navarre, Al-Nasir ventured into the lands of Albeh and the castles of Kingdom of León, which stretched north of the Ebre River. He successfully captured 30 of its forts, causing their inhabitants to flee and seek refuge in the mountains. During his campaign, Al-Nasir attempted to provoke Ramiro II into a decisive battle, but the latter remained holed up in the castles and did not dare to confront Al-Nasir.

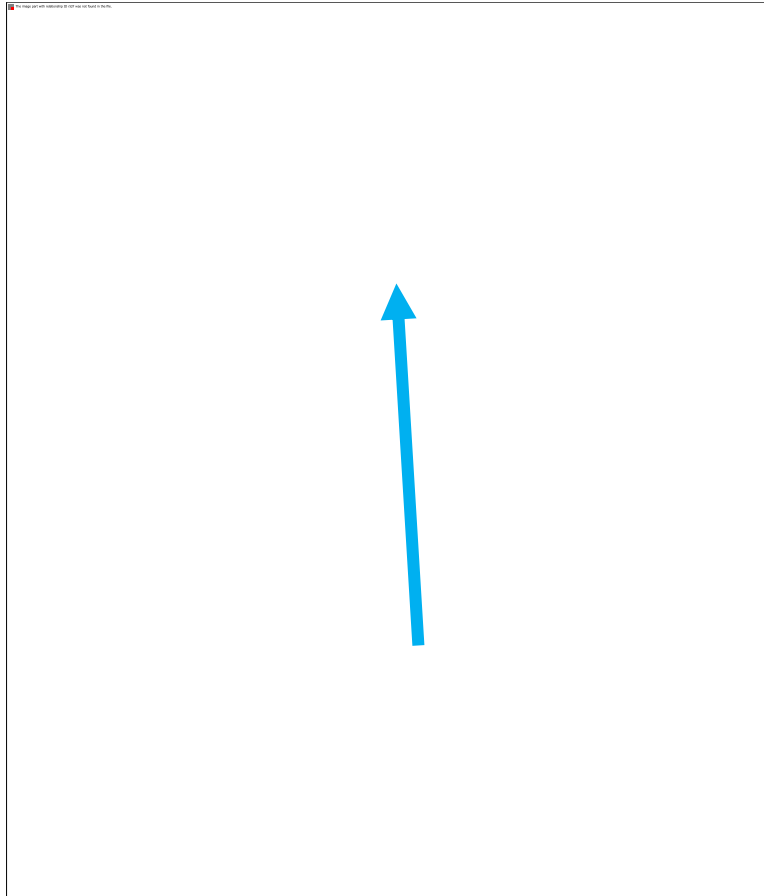


Figure 6 Map of the fourth campaign

Subsequently, all the residents of the Kingdom of Kingdom of León gathered in a fortified castle, preparing to face the forces of King Caliph Al-Nasser. The two sides clashed in a fierce battle in which many of King Kingdom of León's knights lost their lives. Al-Nasser made several attempts to entice King the Kingdom of León's forces onto the open plains, but all in vain. Consequently, he decided not to advance further and retreated with his forces to the east. On his way back, he razed the city of Burgos, located near Kingdom of León, and then returned to Qurdaba. This campaign lasted for four months."

2. The Battle of the Trench (Alkhandag)

Many events and situations paved the way for the Battle of the Trench. In the year 935 AD, Ramiro II, King of the Kingdom of León, sought reconciliation with Al-Nasser, and a treaty was signed between the two parties. However, it did not last long as Ramiro broke the agreement. The Queen of Navarre also reneged on her covenant with Al-Nasser and formed an alliance with the King of

the against Al-Nasser, joining forces with them. Some of the revolutionaries, such as Muhammad bin Hashim al-Tajibi and Mutarrif bin Mundhir al-Tajibi, thus allied against Al-Nasser, leading to a battle that erupted at the end of September 936 AD on the banks of the Ebro River between the Andalusian forces commanded by Ahmed bin Muhammad bin Elias and the King of Kingdom of León. The Andalusian forces emerged victorious in the battle." Many events and situations paved the way for the Battle of the Trench. In the year 935 AD, Ramiro II, King of Kingdom of León, sought reconciliation with Al-Nasser, and a treaty was signed between the two parties. However, it did not last long as Ramiro broke the agreement. The Queen of Navarre also reneged on her covenant with Al-Nasser and formed an alliance with the King of Kingdom of León against Al-Nasser, joining forces with them. Some of the revolutionaries, such as Muhammad bin Hashim al-Tajibi and Mutarrif bin Mundhir al-Tajibi, thus allied against Al-Nasser, leading to a battle that erupted at the end of September 936 AD on the banks of the Ebro River between the Andalusian forces commanded by Ahmed bin Muhammad bin Elias and the King of Kingdom of León. The Andalusian forces emerged victorious in the battle⁴.

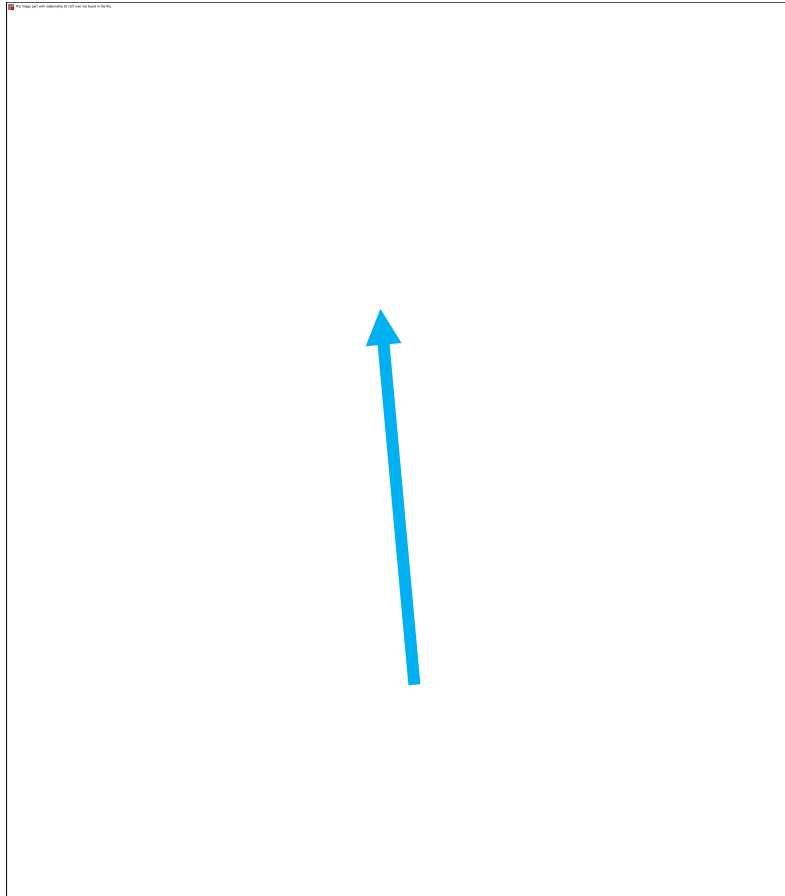


Figure 7 Map of the Battle of the Trench (Alkhandag)

Al-Nasir is preparing to engage in a decisive battle with King Kingdom of León's forces. He has assembled a formidable army comprised of both Arabs and Berbers. This force isn't confined solely to the Arab population of Andalusia; instead, it includes various Berber groups from different countries that have joined his forces.

Al-Nasir's army consisted of approximately 200,000 soldiers. A significant portion of these individuals were conscripted against their will, leading Al-Nasir's soldiers to be divided into two categories: those who abhorred combat and those who desired to fight².

Al-Nasser appointed Najdah bin Hussein Al-Saqilli, a non-Arab, as the commander of the army, which had a profoundly negative impact on the morale of the Arab population. They were frustrated and demoralized, viewing this appointment of a non-Arab commander as a grave insult. One of Al-Nasser's ministers, Ahmad bin Ishaq, was executed by Al-Nasser due to his betrayal. This

minister had a brother named Umayyah, who resided in the city of Chanterin on the borders of Andalusia. Upon learning of his brother's fate, Umayyah revolted against Abd al-Rahman and pledged his allegiance to King Ramiro II of the Jalalqa. He actively supported Ramiro II in the fight against Abd al-Rahman's forces and provided valuable insight into the weaknesses of Abd al-Rahman's army.².

The Al-Nasser army began a campaign of victories by launching a massive attack on the territory of the Kingdom of Leon. Ramiro II, in conjunction with the Arab allies who had joined him, assembled a robust army and appointed Umayyah ibn Ishaq as its commander. Ibn Ishaq discerned the vulnerabilities within the Muslim forces and conducted espionage to monitor their activities. Ramiro II diligently prepared for battle and initiated the execution of a meticulously crafted plan to entrap the forces led by Abd al-Rahman al-Nasser

Muhammad bin Hisham al-Tujibi was the leader of Nasser's armies and was at the helm of a company of knights. He engaged in a fierce battle with King Kingdom of León's forces. During the confrontation, his horse stumbled, and King Kingdom of León's soldiers seized the opportunity to attack him. As a result, his soldiers' morale decreased while the morale of Kingdom of León's soldiers soared.

Al-Nasser's forces advanced to confront the hostile forces of the Kingdom of Leon in a decisive battle. After several days of hit-and-run skirmishes, the army of the Kingdom of Leon emerged victorious over the Muslims.

The Battle of the Trench began on Friday, August 1, 939. The following Friday, the armies of the Kingdom of Leon succeeded in defeating the forces of Al-Nasser and driving them into a deep trench, hence giving the battle its name. Several of Al-Nasser's troops perished within the trench, leading to a weakened position for Caliph Al-Nasser. Consequently, he abandoned his position and withdrew to prevent additional losses².

About 50,000 Muslims were killed, some of whom perished by the swords of the King of Leon and his soldiers, while others met their fate during the stampede in the trench. Abd al-Rahman al-Nasser managed to withdraw alongside the remaining soldiers under his command, and he emerged unscathed. Moreover, the armies of

King Leon refrained from pursuing the forces of Abd al-Rahman al-Nasser. Umayyah ibn Ishaq had wisely advised the King of Leon not to pursue them out of concern that King Al-Nasir might have orchestrated an ambush against the armies of Leon. Al-Nasir, along with those who survived the battle, returned to the city of Al-Faraj, then to Wadi Al-Hajjara, and ultimately to Cordoba. The Battle of the Trench marked the last battle personally led by Al-Nasir. The reasons that led to the defeat of the Muslims in the Battle of the Trench, also known as "Khandaq," can be summarized as follows:

1. The Muslim warriors' varied backgrounds—Arabs, Berbers, as well as others—caused a lack of unity within the army
2. Combat morale and effectiveness suffered as a result of the forced participation of huge number of Muslim soldiers in the war against their desires
3. Many soldiers expressed dissatisfaction over Al-Saqlabi's appointment as the army's supreme commander despite the fact that he is not Arab. When the fighting started, some of the soldiers fled the battlefield due to this unhappiness, which ultimately led to the Muslims losing.
4. Caliph Al-Nasser killed Ahmed bin Ishaq, which led to his brother Umayyah bin Ishaq joining the enemy forces and assisting them in fighting against Al-Nasser's army.
5. Muhammad bin Hashim Al-Tajibi, considered one of the distinguished leaders, was captured. His capture weakened the faction or group with which he was associated. This could have an impact on the balance of power and the outcome of conflicts or struggles.
6. . The inability of Al-Nasser's forces to maneuver effectively when needed was evident due to the unfavorable terrain on the battlefield. This came about as a result of Ramiro II's strategy, which allowed his army to successfully encircle Al-Nasser's forces in a trench, preventing them from advancing into the surrounding areas and ultimately leading to their collapse..

Despite losing the Battle of the Trench, Al-Nasir did not back down and went on to attack the Kingdom of Lyons. In 939 AD, special preparations started. Before they left, a messenger from King

Ramiro II of León arrived and declared his wish for a ceasefire. Al-Nasser viewed his country's victory in accepting this peace offer. In 940 AD, this peace was formally signed on terms that Al-Nasir deemed suitable. Other leaders, including the King of Navarra, King Ramiro II, participated in the peace talks.

The Kingdom of Lyon broke its covenant, and the war was soon resumed, so the two sides' period of peace did not last long. To inspire the populace to fight their adversaries, Al-Nasir dispatched envoys. In the year 943, he made Ahmed bin Muhammad bin Elias commander, and they stormed the castles of the Kingdom of Lyon. Many expeditions were sent in the ensuing years, and they were successful in achieving their objectives.

At the age of 73, Al-Nasser passed away during the month of Ramadan in 961 AD. He spent his entire life fighting Christians and putting out the fires of revolution .

Discussion

The strategy of Caliph Al-Nasser's reign was well-known, as it was centered on quelling insurrections within the country in order to strengthen Andalusia's defense. Andalusia faced numerous threats and challenges, and his leadership demonstrated a keen awareness of the unstable political climate of the day..

Putting up a unified front that would be good resistant to external impacts was his aim. Alnasser's use of intelligence proved useful in securing triumphs during his rule. He stands out in the process of obtaining and analyzing data because of his exacting attention to detail and comprehensive understanding of his rivals. As such, he was able to issue decisions. His success was primarily attributable to his clever approach, which allowed him to leverage this strategy to expand his influence in the geopolitical sphere. The Arab militaries were displeased with Al-Nasser for appointing a non-Arab leader, which went against army customs and conventions. The soldiers believed their decency and welfares were not adequately represented, which made them uncomfortable with this decision. In the Battle of the Trench, the Muslim army made a deadly mistake because they were unaware of the topography of the battle place.

Their lack of preparation for navigating the Trench significantly hindered their progress.

The Caliph's army failed to properly study the terrain of the battlefield, which dealt them a serious blow during the pivotal Battle of the Trench. This carelessness proved to be a costly mistake as it allowed the defenders to exploit the natural topographies of the terrain. The Caliph's army were ill-prepared to negotiate the trench because they were unfamiliar with the terrain, which caused them to encounter significant difficulties during their advance. One of the best examples of how important it is for military operations to have both comprehensive strategic planning and a firm understanding of the battlefield terrain.

It is believed that knowledge is the most important weapon for success. It's employed in deciding on the combat plan. This was Caliph Al-Nasser's method, in which planning required careful consideration of intelligence, *recce*, and reconnaissance.

Even though the army of Al-Nasser 's objectives of religion and policy , divisions among them resulted in internal conflicts. During this historical era, Alnasser faced significant challenges in leading a army that was multiethnic, which had an impact on both the stability of their rule and the outcome of their campaigns.

The determination to attain Alnasser military objectives and his desire to maintain his forces equipped, both in terms of information and equipment, as well as their ability to recognize powers and feebleness, are among Al Nasser's most defining characteristics. This all-encompassing strategy, which blends planning, strategic thinking, and thorough preparation, enhanced his reputation as a skilled and successful military commander

Conclusion

Caliph Al-Nasser was prosperous in upholding the Islamic country's supremacy and identity as well as its economy, culture, and scientific progresses. Additionally, it had a significant social, cultural, and economic impact on the growth of the Islamic State, whose might put the Christian states in jeopardy.

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