

THE POETICS OF CIVILIZATION: FROM CONQUEST TO COLLAPSE IN ANDALUSIAN ARABIC POETRY

A POÉTICA DA CIVILIZAÇÃO: DA CONQUISTA AO COLAPSO NA POESIA ÁRABE ANDALUZA

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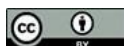
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Abstract

This study examines Andalusian Arabic poetry not merely within the framework of literary genres or chronological periods, but as an aesthetic locus of memory reflecting the emergence, maturation, and dissolution of a civilization. The study explores the intricate relationship between poetry, political power, social structure, and cultural identity across the historical trajectory spanning from the initial conquest in 711 to the fall of Granada in 1492. The research demonstrates that while the classical poetic tradition centered in the East remained dominant during the periods of conquest and initial organization, geographical nuances, emotionality, and local elements progressively permeated the poetry. It is revealed that during the Caliphate and the Muluk al-Tawa'if (Taifa) periods, poetry reached its aesthetic zenith, evolving into a discourse that legitimized political power through panegyrics, descriptive verses, and nature poetry. Furthermore, the study emphasizes that uniquely Andalusian genres such as the Muwashshah served as the poetic expression of a multicultural

Resumo

Este estudo examina a poesia árabe andaluza não apenas dentro da estrutura de gêneros literários ou períodos cronológicos, mas como um locus estético de memória que reflete o surgimento, a maturação e a dissolução de uma civilização. O estudo explora a intrincada relação entre poesia, poder político, estrutura social e identidade cultural ao longo da trajetória histórica que vai da conquista inicial em 711 à queda de Granada em 1492. A pesquisa demonstra que, embora a tradição poética clássica centrada no Oriente tenha permanecido dominante durante os períodos de conquista e organização inicial, nuances geográficas, emotividade e elementos locais permearam progressivamente a poesia. Revela-se que, durante o Califado e o período Muluk al-Tawa'if (Taifa), a poesia atingiu seu ápice estético, evoluindo para um discurso que legitimava o poder político por meio de panegíricos, versos descritivos e poesia da natureza. Além disso, o estudo enfatiza que gêneros exclusivamente andaluzes, como o Muwashshah, serviram como expressão poética



and multilingual societal structure. In the Nasrid period, it is identified that poetry was primarily shaped around themes of sorrow, loss, and melancholy; specifically, in the works of Abu al-Baqa al-Rundi and his successors, the transformation of Al-Andalus into a 'civilization of memory' is reflected as a form of aesthetic resistance. By making the interaction between political history and aesthetic consciousness visible, the study aims to demonstrate how a civilization is constructed and dissolved through a poetic memory.

Keywords: Arabic Literature, Poetry, Andalusian Arabic Poetry, Civilization and Aesthetics, Aesthetic Memory.

de uma estrutura social multicultural e multilíngue. No período Nasrida, identifica-se que a poesia se moldava principalmente em torno de temas de tristeza, perda e melancolia; especificamente, nas obras de Abu al-Baqa al-Rundi e seus sucessores, a transformação de Al-Andalus em uma "civilização da memória" se reflete como uma forma de resistência estética. Ao tornar visível a interação entre história política e consciência estética, este estudo visa demonstrar como uma civilização é construída e dissolvida por meio da memória poética.

Palavras-chave: Literatura Árabe. Poesia. Poesia Árabe Andaluza. Civilização e Estética. Memória Estética.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Iberian Peninsula, which has hosted numerous nations and cultures throughout history due to its strategic location, rich mineral resources, and natural beauty, was transformed into a preeminent center of civilization under Muslim rule from 711 to 1492. Following the completion of the conquest of North Africa in 710, Muslims embarked on the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in 711, during the reign of the Umayyad Caliph al-Walid I (d. 96/715). Under the orders of Musa b. Nusayr (d. 98/717), the governor of North Africa, and the command of Tariq b. Ziyad (d. 102/720), an army of seven thousand—composed predominantly of Berbers—initiated the campaign (Atçeken, 2011: 40/24-25).

During this conquest process, which lasted approximately three years, Muslims brought nearly the entire Iberian Peninsula under their rule and continued their advance as far as the French border (Özdemir, 2016: 52-53). The name *Hispania* or *Spania*, which was used for the Iberian Peninsula prior to the conquest and forms the etymological root of the word 'Spain,' was changed to *al-Andalus* by the Muslims. This nomenclature gained official status with a dinar known to have been minted in 98 AH / 716 AD; on one side, it bore the Latin inscription 'minted in Hispania,' while the other side featured the Arabic phrase 'minted in al-Andalus' (Özdemir, 2016: 63).

The exact etymological origin of the word 'al-Andalus'—which was used for various regions of the Iberian Peninsula from 716 to 1492 and continues to be applied to parts of present-day Spain—remains an unresolved issue. The earliest accounts regarding

this matter belong to Muslim historians and geographers. According to these narratives, it is stated that the first settlers in the region after the Great Flood were a people known as the Andalis (Andalus b. Tubal [Tufan] b. Japheth b. Noah). Other accounts suggest that the region derived its name from a community that inhabited the Iberian Peninsula during the early periods, and that this name was pronounced in various forms across the languages of the different nations that subsequently settled in the area (al-Maqqarī, 1968: I/125).

The approximately eight centuries of Islamic rule in the Iberian Peninsula are politically divided into seven distinct periods: the Period of Conquest (711–714), the Period of the Governors (714–756), the Umayyad Emirate and Caliphate Period (756–1031), the Muluk al-Tawa'if (Taifa) Period (1031–1091), the Almoravid Period (1091–1147), the Almohad Period (1147–1238), and the Nasrid Period (1238–1492).

Al-Andalus represents the most brilliant manifestation of Islamic civilization in the West. For eight centuries (711–1492), not only did a political power emerge in these lands, but an aesthetic, philosophical, and cultural consciousness also flourished. As the most intense form of this consciousness, poetry became a mirror for social memory, spiritual fluctuations, and the ideal of civilization.

Modern literary scholars have categorized the poetics of Al-Andalus under three main headings: the Period of Imitation of the East, the Period of Emancipation from Imitation, and the Period of Innovation. However, this study approaches Andalusian Arabic poetry not through these historical stages, but as an aesthetic mirror that reflects how this civilization was founded, how it reached maturation, and how it continues to endure within the collective memory.

2 FROM CONQUEST TO POLITICAL AUTHORITY: EARLY PERIOD ANDALUSIAN POETRY

While the identity of the first settlers of the Iberian Peninsula remains largely unknown, the region has historically been influenced by diverse cultures. While the Phoenicians and Carthaginians established commercial colonies, the Celts developed social and military structures in the interior regions. Subsequently, the Romans integrated the peninsula politically, legally, and culturally. In the post-Roman era, although the Suebi, Vandals, and Alans established short-lived hegemonies, the Visigoths provided a

more enduring political order, shaping the cultural fabric of the region. (Özdemir, 2016: 37-39). After completing the conquest of North Africa in 710, Muslims turned their attention toward the Iberian Peninsula. In 711, Musa b. Nusayr—one of the most successful Umayyad commanders—dispatched an army of seven thousand, composed predominantly of Berbers, on an expedition to the peninsula under the command of Tariq b. Ziyad, who was then in charge of Tangier. Subsequently, an additional five thousand soldiers were sent as reinforcements, increasing the total number of troops to twelve thousand (al-Maqqarī, 1968: I/229-245; al-Sarjānī, 2011: I/50). As a result of the Battle of Guadalete (Wadi Lakkah), which lasted eight days against the Visigoths, the Visigothic King Rodrigo was killed on the battlefield, and the Muslims captured numerous cities, including the capital, Toledo (Mu'nis, 2005: 71-72). By the year 713, the Muslims had captured the northern part of the Iberian Peninsula and advanced as far as the Pyrenees. However, the Umayyad Caliphate did not permit the army to advance further; by order of the Caliph, the conquest activities were concluded, and the administration of al-Andalus was entrusted to Abdulaziz, the son of Musa b. Nusayr, thereby marking the beginning of the Period of the Governors (Şeyban, 20; Özdemir, 2019: 57).

During the Period of the Governors, which lasted approximately forty-two years, it can be argued that the foundations of the Umayyad State of al-Andalus were laid, despite the emergence of *Reconquista* activities. Following the Abbasid Revolution, the Abbasids terminated the Umayyad dynasty and began a rigorous pursuit to eliminate its members. Consequently, some members of the dynasty in the East, led by Abd al-Rahman I, fled to al-Andalus. By inviting other Umayyad family members scattered across the world to the region and appointing them to administrative positions, Abd al-Rahman I established the fundamental framework of the state organization (Ibn Khaldūn, 2001: IV, 154-159; al-Sarjānī, 2011: I/150-164; Amīr Shakīb, 1983: 27). The reign of Abd al-Rahman II was a period marked by significant advancements in agriculture, weaving, and manufacturing, as well as a transition from small-scale masjids to grand complexes and Great Mosques. During this era, various rebellions were suppressed, and the Abbasid tradition was prominently emulated in palace architecture and court protocol. As the economic structure of al-Andalus strengthened and prosperity increased, a more luxurious lifestyle became widespread. Due to these flourishing developments, the reign of Abd al-Rahman II is referred to in historical sources as '*Ayyam al-'Arus*' (The Days of the Bride/The Wedding Days). Furthermore, what bestowed a distinct identity upon this era

was the arrival of Ziryab in al-Andalus and the comprehensive transformations he introduced to the court (al-Maqqarī, 1968: I/ 347; 'Inān, 1997: 254-288). In accordance with the principle of a 'single ummah,' Abd al-Rahman III strengthened the political unity of Andalusian society by integrating diverse religious and ethnic elements into the administrative apparatus. He achieved significant military victories against the Kingdoms of Leon and Navarre, as well as the Counties of Barcelona and Aragon, thereby establishing regional hegemony. In 929, he assumed the title of *al-Nasir li-Din Allah* and proclaimed the Caliphate, marking the transition from the Emirate to the Caliphate period in al-Andalus. During this era, Madinat al-Zahra was constructed, the Mosque of Cordoba was expanded, and Fatimid influence in North Africa was curtailed, transforming Cordoba into a preeminent diplomatic hub. This period, beginning with Abd al-Rahman III and lasting until the end of the Amirid rule in 1008, is generally characterized as the 'Golden Age' of al-Andalus." (Brockelmann, 1947: 186; Özdemir, 2016: 123-126).

With the arrival of Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula, which was already inhabited by various ethnic elements, an even more vibrant social structure emerged. In addition to the historically present Hispano-Roman and Germanic Visigothic communities, the participation of Arab and Berber elements—who arrived with the conquest—transformed the society into a multi-layered ethnic framework. This geography, which represented Christianity, Judaism, and various pagan beliefs prior to the conquest, evolved into a mosaic where religious and cultural diversity became more prominent following the advent of Islam. Within this multicultural structure, the policy of coexistence implemented by the Muslim authority allowed for the recovery of previously lost statuses and rights, thanks to the legal and social privileges granted to different religious and ethnic groups (Özdemir, 2016: 64-66).

Although diverse ethnic elements lived together, it can be argued that the Arabs held the primary authority in governance and remained the truly decisive force in this process, which continued until 1031. The Arabic culture transported to al-Andalus with the conquest preserved its existence until this period, manifesting itself as a reflection of the East. Consequently, until this era, Andalusian Arabic poetry has been subjectively evaluated as mere imitation. Poets—who, in the East, had saved the glory and achievements of their ancestors from oblivion and preserved the cultural memory—received even greater esteem in al-Andalus, ascending to ranks where they held significant influence in the administration.

As is widely recognized, the execution of literary activities requires the establishment of conducive conditions. It would be inappropriate to speak of poetry during a period of ongoing conquest. It is also certain that neither poetry nor the poet could find a place for themselves during the Period of the Governors, which was characterized by political instability. From this era, only a few couplets belonging to two poets, Abu al-Ajrab (d. 138/756) and Abu al-Khattar (d. 129/746), have survived to the present day (Haykal, 1985: 62). Consequently, it should be noted that any assessment regarding the poetry of this period is inevitably speculative. Based on this information, it can be argued that the poems of those who arrived in al-Andalus during or after the conquest possess no distinctively Andalusian characteristics; rather, they consist of classical themes such as *madih* (panegyric), *hija* (satire), *fakhr* (vainglory), and *hamasa* (heroic epic). In terms of diction, meaning, style, and imagery, this poetry is an imitation of Eastern verse. This situation indicates that the poetic forms and metaphors remained identical, serving primarily as carriers of Arab culture. In other words, the fact that poetry maintained its semantic power despite a new environment demonstrates that cultural continuity in al-Andalus was established through the medium of poetry (‘Ānī, 1978: 128). Although it is often stated that an 'Andalusian essence' began to emerge in the poetic activities during the early years of the Umayyad State of al-Andalus, it would be more accurate to conclude that this period closely resembled previous eras. For instance, Abu al-Muhashsha—one of the prominent poets of this period—began a panegyric (*qasida*) composed in praise of Abd al-Rahman I with a description of a journey (*rihla*), adhering strictly to the classical *qasida* style. The opening of Abu al-Muhashsha’s poem is as follows: (Ibn al-Khaṭīb, 1973: IV/ 197-198).

1- امتطيناها سيماءاً بُدْنَا فتركناها نضاءً بالعنا
2- وذريني قد تجاوزت بها مهمها قفراً إلى أهل الندى

1. We mounted it [the steed] in a state of plumpness and strength, yet we left it emaciated and worn by the rigors of travel.
2. Leave me be, for with it [the steed], I have crossed a desolate and boundless desert to reach those of noble generosity.

The most prominent indication of the emerging 'Andalusian breeze' in the poetry of this period is the poet's beginning to infuse his work with personal emotionality. This shift also reflects the growing influence of geography on poetic expression. For instance,

Abd al-Rahman I composed a poem depicting a date palm in his summer gardens (*Rusafa*). However, this poem serves as a reflection of the Emir's profound emotional state rather than a mere objective description (Çiftçi, 1999: 33). A portion of Abd al-Rahman I's poem is as follows: (‘Inān, 1997: I/203)

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| تَنَاءتْ بِأَرْضِ الْغَرْبِ عَنْ بَلَدِ | 1- تَبَدَّتْ لَنَا وَسَطَ الرِّصَافَةِ نَخْلَةٌ |
| وَطَوَّلَ التَّنَائِيَّ عَنْ بَنِي وَعَنْ | 2- فَقُلْتُ شَبِيهِي فِي التَّغْرِبِ |
| فَمَثَلِكَ فِي الْإِقْصَاءِ وَالْمَنْتَأَى | 3- نَشَأَتْ بِأَرْضٍ أَنْتَ فِيهَا غَرِيبَةٌ |

- 1- In the midst of Rusafa, a date palm appeared before us in the Western land, far removed from the realm of its origins.
- 2- I said: In exile and separation, and in remaining distant from my kin and my children, you are my very likeness.
- 3- You have grown in a land where you are a stranger; your state of distance and isolation is just as mine.

One of the prominent themes in the poetry of this period is the longing for the ancestral homeland. A poem composed by Abd al-Rahman I demonstrates this situation clearly. This particular poem incorporates both the 'weeping over the ruins' (*al-wuquf 'ala al-atlal*)—a traditional characteristic of classical Arabic poetry—and the distinct emotionality unique to al-Andalus. The poem by Abd al-Rahman I is as follows: (al-Maqqarī, 1968: III/38)

- | | |
|---|---|
| أَقْرُ مِنْ بَعْضِي السَّلَامَ لِبَعْضِ | 1- أَيُّهَا الرِّكْبُ الْمِيمِمُ أَرْضِي |
| وَفُؤَادِي وَمَالِكِيهِ بِأَرْضِ | 2- إِنَّ جِسْمِي كَمَا عَلِمْتَ بِأَرْضِ |
| وَطَوَى الْبَيْنَ عَنِ جَفُونِي | 3- قَدَّرَ الْبَيْنَ بَيْنَنَا فَافْتَرَقْنَا |
| فَعَسَى بِاجْتِمَاعِنَا سَوْفَ يَقْضَى | 4- قَدْ قَضَى اللَّهُ بِالْفِرَاقِ عَلَيْنَا |

- 1- O caravan traveling toward my homeland! Convey a greeting from one part of me to the other.
- 2- For you know: my body is in one place, while my heart and its keepers are in another.
- 3- Separation has been decreed for us, and this parting has snatched away (exhausted) the sleep from my eyelids.
- 4- Allah has ordained this separation for us; perhaps, hereafter, a reunion may be ordained as well.

By the time of the Caliphate period in al-Andalus, it can be argued that poetry had attained a high level of aesthetic sophistication. García Gómez characterized this state as

a 'standstill at the summit' (Gómez, 1956: 12). During this era, the number of individuals engaged with poetry increased, and the renaissance in scientific thought contributed significantly to the advancement of poetic intellect. Consequently, the poetic language began to incorporate the linguistic characteristics of the Andalusian vernacular, and elements distinctive to al-Andalus started to find a prominent place within the verses (Haykal, 1985: 194). Although the neo-classical school remained dominant during this period, it is a fact that both classical and *muhdath* (modernist) schools also secured a place for themselves. Furthermore, the *muwashshah*—a poetic genre described as 'a form of verse led by the nature and social structure of al-Andalus'—is among the most significant fruits of this era (al-Fākhūrī, 1986: 948). The emergence of the neo-classical school may be attributed to the disruption of the natural structure of poetry by the *muhdath* (modernist) movement—led by Abu Nuwas in the East—as well as the thematic routine persisting in classical poetry (Çiftçi, 1999: 40-50). Prominent figures of this period include Ibn Abd Rabbih (d. 328/940), al-Ramadi (d. 403/1013?), Ibn Darraj al-Qastalli (d. 421/1030), and Ibn Shuayd (d. 426/1035). These individuals held significant authority within the state administration. Consequently, during this era, poetry functioned as the definitive voice of political authority. Generally, an examination of the poetry from this period reveals that—owing to the limited engagement with philosophy and *hikmah* (wisdom)—the verses remained clear and accessible. One observes an aesthetic imagination born from the breathtaking beauty of the geography, expressed through a diction that is both simple and intelligible (Khafājī, 1992: 309-310). Alongside the traditional themes of classical Arabic poetry—such as *madih* (panegyric), *hija* (satire), *ritha* (elegy), *ghazal* (lyric poetry), *wasf* (description), *fakhr* (vainglory), and *hamasa* (heroic epic)—numerous poems were composed on themes of love, *zuhd* (asceticism), and *ikhwaniyyat* (fraternal correspondence). Ibn Abd Rabbih, one of the era's preeminent figures, composed many panegyrics for Caliph Abd al-Rahman III. In one of these poems, he addressed the caliph in a simple and lucid style, expressing his emotions as follows: (Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, 1993: 57-58).

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| نداك ما كان منها الماء ثجاجا | 1- يا ابن الخلائف إن المزن لو |
| ما هيجت من حمياك الذي | 2- والحرب لو علمت بأساً تصول |
| وذلت الخيل إجماعاً وإسراجا | 3- مات النفاق وأعطى الكفر ذمته |

4- يا بدر ظلمتها يا شمس صبحتها
يا ليث حومتها إن هائج هاجا

5- إن الخلافة لن ترضى ولا
حتى عقدت لها في رأسك التاجا

- 1- O son of Caliphs! Had the rain clouds known of your generosity, they would not have poured forth their flowing waters.
- 2- Had War known the courage with which you strike, it would not have been stirred by its own mobilized zeal.
- 3- Hypocrisy has perished, and disbelief has received its due; the horses have surrendered, bowed by their bits and saddles.
- 4- O Full Moon of the darkness! O Sun of the morning! O Lion of the battlefield when the enemy stirs!
- 5- The Caliphate was not, nor will it ever be, satisfied until you placed the crown upon your head.

Ibn Abd Rabbih composed numerous *ghazals* (love lyrics) for his wife. In one of his poems, he prioritized the simple language and aesthetic preferences of al-Andalus, eschewing complex diction in favor of plain yet evocative imagery, such as the gazelle and the countenance. He balanced physical beauty with modesty and refinement. Furthermore, the motif of the poet seeing himself reflected in his beloved's face clearly manifests a sense of internal and subjective lyricism. The poem by Ibn Abd Rabbih is as follows: (Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, 1993: 119).

1- يا لؤلؤاً يسبي العقول أنيقا
ورشاً بتقطيع القلوب رقيقا

2- ما إن رأيتُ ولا سمعتُ بمثله
دراً يعودُ من الحياء عقيقا

3- وإذا نظرتُ إلى محاسن وجهه
أبصرتُ وجهك في سناه غريقا

4- يا من تقطع خصره من رقبة
ما بال قلبك لا يكون رقيقا

- 1- O pearl who imprisons the intellects with such grace! O gazelle who shatters the hearts with such elegance!
- 2- Never have I seen nor heard of a pearl like her, who turns into a ruby out of sheer modesty.
- 3- When you gaze upon the beauties of her countenance, you behold your own face submerged within her radiance.
- 4- O you, whose waist is so slender it seems it might break! What has happened to your heart that it does not soften (slenderize) as well?

One of the most significant poetic developments during the Umayyad Caliphate of al-Andalus was the emergence of the *muwashshah*. This genre is an original poetic form that reflects the multicultural and multilingual social fabric of al-Andalus on an aesthetic plane. It incorporates elements of the Romance languages alongside classical

(*fusha*) and colloquial (*ammiyya*) Arabic terms. This phenomenon clearly demonstrates the cultural interaction between Muslims, Christians, and Jews in al-Andalus. While the intrinsic link between *muwashshahs* and music mirrors the refinement of courtly and urban life, the themes within them reveal the aesthetic sensitivity of Andalusian civilization toward life itself. In this respect, by diverging from the classical Arabic poetic tradition, the *muwashshah* became the literary manifestation of a unique Andalusian poetic language and civilizational vision. It is reported that Muhammad b. Mahmud al-Qabri ad-Darir was the first to introduce this genre; Ibn Abd Rabbih was the first to compose it using new meters outside the known prosodic scales (*arud*); and al-Ramadi was the most instrumental figure in its widespread popularization (al-Shantarīnī, 1997: I/468-470).

Ubada al-Qazzaz (d. 412/1021), one of the most renowned *washshahs* (composers of *muwashshahs*) of the era, composed a panegyric *muwashshah* for al-Mu'tasim b. Samadīh, the Emir of Almería. In this poem, he portrayed being under the shadow of the Emir's lineage not as a mere necessity, but as a conscious choice, regarding this allegiance as a matter of supreme honor: (al-Maqqarī, 1968: III/411)

1- ولو لم أكن عبدا لآل صمادح و في أرضهم أصلى وعيشى
2- لما كان لي إلا إليهم ترحل و في ظلهم أمسى وأضحى

- 1- Although my origin, my life, and my birthplace are within their domains; even if I were not a servant to the House of Samadīh,
- 2- My devotion would still be directed solely toward them; I would spend my evenings and mornings, and find my very sustenance, within their shadow.

3 CULTURAL ZENITH: THE GOLDEN AGE OF POETRY AND AESTHETIC SYNTHESIS

This era encompasses the period starting with the *Muluk al-Tawa'if* (Party Kingdoms) and extending through the Almoravid and Almohad dynasties. Under the centralized governance of the Andalusian Umayyads, Córdoba had risen to a position of unrivaled political and administrative supremacy; however, as the influence of the Amirids waned, this dominance drew to a close. Consequently, other cities that had long remained in the shadow of Córdoba began to gain power, and the state entered a process of internal political fragmentation even before its official dissolution (Özdemir, 2016:

167; al-Sarjānī, 2011: I/321). Following the collapse of the Andalusian Umayyad State, nearly twenty city-states of various sizes emerged from its ashes. Prominent among these were the Abbadids (1023–1042), the Hudids (1040–1142), the Jahwarids (1031–1069), the Dhun-nunids (1016–1085), the Aftasids (1022–1094), and the Zirids (al-Maqqarī, 1968: I/438-442; al-Ḥajjī, 1981: 323-355).

The onset of territorial conflicts among the Muslim city-states during this period provided an opportunity for the Christian kingdoms to consolidate their power. In some instances, certain Islamic states even entered into alliances with Christian rulers, accepting their suzerainty. Amidst this precarious situation on the Peninsula, the second *Reconquista* movement was launched, ultimately resulting in the fall of Toledo -one of al-Andalus's most significant centers-to Christian forces (al-‘Arūsī, 1982: 211; ‘Inān, 1997: 422).

The internal struggles among the city-states paradoxically catalyzed the peak of literary activities. Sultans utilized poetry as a tool for propaganda, transforming it into a symbol of political prowess. Consequently, poetry became a medium that reinforced the values of the newly established administrations, fostered a sense of social cohesion, and sustained the legitimacy of the ruling powers. Poets, in turn, became the spokesmen of the state, often becoming renowned for the fortunes they amassed through their panegyrics (‘Abbās, 1997: 66-67). The poets of this era can be categorized into three groups: The first group includes figures like Ibn Zaydun (d. 463/1071), Ibn Ammar (d. 479/1086), and Ibn Abdun al-Fihri (d. 529/1134), who attained high-ranking offices such as vizierate and chancellorship—positions of unprecedented influence. The second group consists of poets like Ibn Wahbun (d. 483/1090), Ibn Hamdis (d. 527/1133), and Abu’l-Fadl al-Baghdadi (d. 455/1063), who were formally attached to a sultan and received a regular stipend. The third group comprises figures such as Ibn Sharaf al-Qayrawani (d. 460/1067) and Abd al-Rahman b. al-Makana al-Ishbuni, whose income was derived solely from the rewards granted for their individual panegyrics (Çınar, 2020: 66)

During the *Muluk al-Tawa’if* period, several key factors catalyzed the flourishing of literary activities: the profound interest of rulers and state dignitaries in entertainment, wine, and music; their lavish patronage of poets who sang their praises; the widespread use of poetry in both formal and informal correspondence; the deep integration of *ghina* (vocal music) into social life; and the atmosphere of intense rivalry among the various states (‘Abbās, 1997: 58-64).

In the panegyrics of this period, themes such as nature, power, and morality are typically interwoven. The generosity of the Sultans is frequently likened to the beauty and abundance of nature or the lush Andalusian gardens. Such imagery represents both the prosperity of al-Andalus and its perceived political stability. Ibn Ammar stands out as one of the figures who best reflects this synthesis. In a panegyric composed for the Emir of Seville, al-Mu'tadid, the poet utilized cosmic and natural elements—such as the breeze, stars, night, and morning—to convey a sense of tranquility, order, and continuity. Through garden imagery, he articulated both the material wealth and the political equilibrium of al-Andalus. Furthermore, the abstract concepts he frequently employed—such as generosity, abundance, and coolness—were personified and transformed into a tangible, sensory experience. Ibn Ammar attributed the source of this idyllic state directly to the presence of the sovereign. Selected portions of the poet's famous *ra'iyah* (poem rhyming in the letter 'ra') are as follows: (al-Isbahānī, 1971: II/ 72).

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|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| والنجم قد صرف العنان عن | 1- أدر الزجاجاة فالنسيم قد انبرى |
| لما استرد الليل منا العنبرا | 2- والصبح قد أهدى لنا كافوره |
| والجو قد لبس الرداء الأغبرا | 3- عباد المخضر نائل كفه |
| وأذ في الأجفان من سنة الكرى | 4- أندى على الأكباد من قطر الندى |
| لما سقاني من نداء الكوثر | 5- أيقنت أني من ذراه بجنة |
| كالروض يحسن منظراً أو | 6- ملك يروقك خلقه أو خلقه |
| فقرأته في راحتيه مُفسراً | 7- وجَهِلْتُ معنى الجود حتى زرته |

- 1- Circulate the goblet, for the breeze has emerged and the star has drawn its reins away from the night.
- 2- As the night reclaimed its ambergris from us, the morning offered us its camphor.
- 3- It is 'Abbad whose hand flourishes with generosity, while the atmosphere has donned a garment of ashen grey.
- 4- He is cooler to the parched liver than droplets of dew, and sweeter to the eyelids than the onset of slumber.
- 5- When he gave me to drink from the Kawthar of his bounty, I realized I had found a sanctuary upon his heights.
- 6- He delights you with his very nature and character; he is like a garden distinguished by both its outward splendor and its inner essence.
- 7- I knew not the true meaning of generosity until I visited him; then, I saw it manifest and clear within the palms of his hands.

Ibn al-Haddad (d. 480/1087) is another preeminent poet who composed exquisite verses in this style. In his panegyric for al-Mu'tasim, the Emir of Almería, Ibn al-Haddad transformed the description of nature into a sophisticated instrument of political exaltation. Selected passages from this panegyric are as follows: (al-Shantarīnī, 1997: II/719)

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|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1- ويا لك من نهر صؤول مجلج | كأنّ الثرى مُزّنٌ به دائم الرعد |
| 2- إذا صافحته الريح تصقل مئته | وتصنع فيه صنع داود في السرد |
| 3- كأنّ يد الملك كبن معن محمّد | تفجر من منبع الجود والرفد |
| 4- فمن جوده ما في الغمامة من حياً | ومن نوره ما في الغزاة من وقد |
| 5- ومنك أخذنا القول فيك جلاله | وما طاب ماء الورد إلا من |

- 1- What a surging and torrential river you are! The earth within is like a rain cloud carrying a never-ceasing thunder.
- 2- When the wind brushes against it, it polishes its surface, performing the very craft that David wrought upon the armor.
- 3- The hand of the Sultan is like Muhammad ibn Ma'n; it gushes forth from the springs of generosity and benevolence.
- 4- Whatever life-giving essence resides in the cloud is from his bounty; whatever radiance exists in the light of the sun is from his luster.
- 5- We have derived these magnificent words about you from your very self; for rosewater cannot be fragrant without the rose.

The Almoravid period also stands as one of the literary zeniths of al-Andalus. Established in North Africa and arriving in al-Andalus in response to desperate calls for aid, the Almoravids ruled the region between 1091 and 1147 (al-Maqqarī, 1968: I/442). Throughout this nearly sixty-year reign, although a significant victory was achieved against the Castilians, the loss of Zaragoza (Sarakusta) resulted in a severe depletion of power for the Muslims, as Zaragoza had served as a vital shield for the region (al-Sarjānī, 2011: II/ 479-480; Özdemir, 2016: 198-199). During this era, it can be observed that a certain stagnation accompanied the literary peak—much like the preceding period—and that poetry had finally attained a completely Andalusian identity. During this period, poets were actively supported and amassed considerable fortunes; consequently, the volume of panegyrics increased significantly, while nature poetry became the hallmark of the era (Bahjat, 1988: 117-121; 'Abbās, 1997: 63-64). The preeminent poets of the Almoravid era include al-A'ma al-Tutayli (d. 525/1131), Ibn Khafaja (d. 533/1139)—

widely celebrated as the 'Gardener of al-Andalus'—and Ibn Quzman (d. 555/1160), who is recognized as the 'Imam of the Zajal Poets.

The most prominent features of the Andalusian descriptive tradition are reflected in the imagery of gardens and social gatherings (*majlis*). Poets transformed space into a multi-sensory aesthetic stage, incorporating not only visual elements but also light, fragrance, and sound. These gatherings, typically held over wine, formed compositions that represented al-Andalus's 'garden-civilization' ideal through images of trees, water, and flowers. Such compositions mirror the refinement of Andalusian court culture. Consequently, Andalusian descriptive poetry is not merely a depiction of scenery; it is a poetic expression of a lifestyle and cultural identity (Kılıç, 2022: 150). Ibn Khafaja is one of the poets who best exemplifies this phenomenon. One of Ibn Khafaja's nature descriptions is as follows (Ibn Khafāja, 1994: 115).

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|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| تندى وأفلاك الكؤوس تدار | 1- وأراكة ضربت سماء فوقنا |
| نثرت عليه نجومها الأزهار | 2- حفت بدوحتها مجرة جدول |
| حسناء شد بخصرها زنار | 3- وكأنها وكأن جدول مائها |
| تجلى ونوار الغصون نثار | 4- زف الزجاج بها عروس مدامة |
| وتجسمت نورا بها الأنوار | 5- في روضة جناح الدجى ظل بها |
| فيها ويفتق مسكه العطار | 6- غناء ينشر وشبه اليزاز لي |
| وجه الثرى واستيقظ النوار | 7- قام الغناء بها وقد نضح الندى |
| زرت عليه جيوبها الأشجار | 8- والماء من حلي الحياء مقلد |

- 1- While the spheres of goblets revolved, above us stood a dewy arak tree reaching toward the heavens.
- 2- A stream was embraced by lush branches, upon which the stars of blossoms had been strewn.
- 3- The scene of that tree by the watercourse was like a slender maiden with a sash fastened around her waist.
- 4- As the blossoms on those branches scattered about, the goblet was in a bridal chamber with the adorned 'bride of wine'.
- 5- It was a garden shaded by the wing of the night, where lights were embodied as blooming flowers.
- 6- A garden where the draper displayed his embroidered fabrics for me, and the perfumer sprinkled his musk.
- 7- There, the dust had settled as the dew moistened the soil and the flowers awakened.
- 8- Modesty had buttoned the collars over their garments; the trees had donned a raiment of water.

Another state that reigned in al-Andalus during this era was the Almohad Caliphate. Originating in North Africa like the Almoravids and arriving in al-Andalus upon invitation, the Almohads ruled the Iberian Peninsula between 1147 and 1238. Although they secured a momentous victory against the Christians at the Battle of Alarcos (Erek) in 1195, they suffered devastating losses following the defeat at Las Navas de Tolosa (al-Iqab) in 1212. By the 1220s, as the Almohads' inability to defend al-Andalus became increasingly apparent, some members of the local population—driven by the conviction that 'Andalusians should govern al-Andalus'—began to struggle for power in various cities. In the 1230s, the Kingdoms of Aragon, Castile, and Portugal united, and with the support of the crusading knights, they seized the remaining territories of the Iberian Peninsula, except for the southeastern coastal strip (Ibn Abī Zar', 1972: 234; Dandash, 1988: 101-105).

The Almohads, whose state was established on radical religious foundations, brought numerous poets with them as they crossed into al-Andalus, utilizing these poets primarily as instruments of propaganda. During this era, genres such as *madih* (panegyric), *fakhr* (boastful poetry), and *hamasah* (heroic/epic poetry) proliferated, while *khamriyyat* (wine poetry) and *ghazal* (lyric love poetry) reached the verge of extinction. The preeminent poets of this period include Ibn Sahl (d. 649/1251?), Muhammad b. Ghalib al-Rusafi (d. 572/1177), and Abu'l-Abbas al-Jurawi (d. 609/1212), who served as the official poet of the state (Ibn al-Khaṭīb, 1973: II/505-515; al-Suyūṭī, 1964 I/ 302).

One of the most striking examples reflecting the poetic characteristics of this era belongs to al-Jurawi. In his panegyric composed for the Sultan, al-Jurawi employed expressions aimed at elevating political and religious legitimacy; he portrayed the nobility of the Sultan's lineage as a source of supreme pride. In other words, this poem clearly demonstrates that it is not merely a personal tribute, but rather an ideological discourse that grounds political power within a sacred framework. Selected passages from this panegyric by al-Jurawi are as follows (el-Cerâvî, 1994: 37).

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|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ومرتبة تتحط عنها المراتب | 1- إمام له فضل على الخلق باهر |
| ونورا ألا الله تلك المناقب | 2- مناقبه مثل الكواكب كثرة |
| وقد زاحمت منها السماء | 3- هي الدوحة السماء في الأرض |
| تقر لها بالمعلوات مواهب | 4- له نسبة قيسية قدسية |

5- بقيتم أمير المؤمنين وسعدكم تهز قنا منه وتتضي قواضب

- 1- He is an Imam whose virtue dazzles all of creation, holding a rank so elevated that all other stations pale in comparison.
- 2- His glorious deeds are as numerous as the stars; by Allah, his virtues are pure radiance and light.
- 3- He is like a tree with many branches whose roots are deep in the earth, yet whose canopy has crowded the very heavens.
- 4- He possesses a sacred lineage tracing back to Qays, a truth that Gnosis confirms through divine knowledge.
- 5- O Commander of the Faithful! May you and your prosperity endure, so that by your very presence, spears may tremble and swords be unsheathed from their scabbards.

4 COLLAPSE AND MELANCHOLY: THE POETIC RESISTANCE OF MEMORY

This period encompasses the years between 1238 and 1492. Following the collapse of the Almohad State, the Nasrid Dynasty—established along the southeastern coastal strip of the Iberian Peninsula—managed to maintain its existence for over two hundred and fifty years. Since the major Andalusian cities of former importance had fallen into Christian hands, the state's rulers initially focused on extensive reconstruction and architectural projects. The Alhambra Palace and the Yusufiyya Madrasa are monumental legacies that bear the traces of this era to the present day (Būhassūn, 2013: 31). In subsequent periods, constant conflicts with the Kingdoms of Aragon and Castile ensued, internal rebellions arose, and the Nasrids suffered continuous territorial losses (Scott, 1904: II/418-520). Furthermore, the union initiated by the marriage of Prince Ferdinand of Aragon and Princess Isabella of Castile in 1469 extinguished any remaining hopes for the Muslims to stay in the region. With Isabella becoming the Queen of Castile in 1474 and Ferdinand ascending to the throne of Aragon in 1479, the Unified Kingdom of Castile-Aragon was formed, marking the start of the final *Reconquista* wave intended to expel Muslims from al-Andalus (al-Bustānī, 2002: 35-37). As a result of relentless assaults, the decision was made to surrender Granada to the Christian kingdoms in 1491. According to the Treaty of Santa Fe, which came into effect in 1492, the sovereignty of the Emirate of Granada (the Nasrid State) on the Iberian Peninsula officially ended (al-Shatshāt, 2001: 67-68).

Following the collapse of the Almohad State, massive migrations occurred from major cities such as Córdoba, Seville, Loja, Elvira, Valencia, and Málaga toward

Granada. Among these migrants were renowned figures such as Abu al-Baqa al-Rundi (d. 684/1285). During this period, poetry maintained the linguistic and aesthetic vigor characteristic of previous Andalusian eras; however, due to the loss of territories, the verses increasingly reflected a profound sense of pain, sorrow, and bereavement ('Inān, 1997: IV/452). As in earlier periods, poets were appointed to high-ranking offices and rose to positions where they could steer national policy. Furthermore, figures such as al-Rundi, Ibn al-Jayyab al-Gharnati (1261–1348), Ibn al-Khatib (d. 776/1374-75), Ibn Zamrak (d. 798/1395), and Ibn Farkun were categorized as 'Poet-Officials' (*al-Shu'ara al-Kuttāb*) (Rubiera Mata, 1999: 152-157; Dayf, 1989, 69-70).

A single verse recited following the surrender of Granada by the Muslims serves as the quintessential summary of the internal turmoil experienced during this period. As Abu Abdullah (Boabdil) departed from the city, he looked back toward Granada from a high cliff with a sorrowful farewell and began to weep inconsolably. At that moment, his mother, Aisha al-Hurra, recited these exemplary words—words that would never be erased from the stage of history: (al-Dakkāk, 1975: 320).

1- إبكِ مثل النساءِ ملَكًا مضاعًا لم تحافظِ عليه مثل الرجالِ

1- Weep like a woman for a lost kingdom that you could not defend like a man.

The poem that best encapsulates the fall of al-Andalus and the plight of the Andalusian Muslims belongs to al-Rundi. In this celebrated work, known as the 'Elegy for al-Andalus,' al-Rundi recounts the atrocities committed by other kingdoms against the local populace and issues a desperate plea for help to the global Muslim community. The poem treats themes of worldly transience, the cyclical nature of history, and the impermanence of civilizations through a mournful style. He asserts that whatever reaches perfection must inevitably decline. By lamenting that the once-renowned cities of al-Andalus no longer stand, he addresses both the concrete physical destruction and the abstract loss of knowledge, religion, and culture. Furthermore, the emotional intensity is heightened by his emphasis on how sacred Islamic values and sites have fallen into the hands of Christians. This poem, which also critiques the disunity of Muslims, functions both as a historical elegy and a sermon intended to awaken a sense of civilizational consciousness. Selected passages from this poem are as follows: (Amīr Shakīb, 1983: III/546-548; al-Maqqarī, 1968: IV/487-488).

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|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| فلا يغز بطيب العيش إنسان | 1- لكل شيء إذا ما تم نقصان |
| من سره زمن ساءته أزمان | 2- هي الأمور كما شاهدتها دول |
| وأين شاطبة أم أين جيان | 3- فاسأل بلنسية ما شأن مرسية |
| من عالم قد سما فيها له شان | 4- وأين قرطبة دار العلوم فكم |
| فيهن إلا نواقيس وصلبان | 5- حيث المساجد قد صارت كنائس |
| حتى المنابر تكي وهي عيدان | 6- حتى المحاريب تكي وهي جامدة |
| كما تفرق أرواح وأبدان | 7- يا رب أم وطفل حيل بينهما |

- 1- Everything, once perfected, begins to diminish; let no man be deceived by the sweetness of life.
- 2- As I have seen, circumstances are ever-shifting; he whom one moment makes happy, other times shall surely grieve.
- 3- Ask Valencia, what is the state of Murcia? Where is Xátiva, and where is Jaén?
- 4- Where is Córdoba, the abode of sciences? Therein dwelt many scholars of exalted renown.
- 5- The sites of the mosques have been transformed into churches, containing now only bells and crosses.
- 6- The mihrabs weep, though they are inanimate, and the pulpits (minbars) mourn, though they are but pieces of wood.
- 7- How many mothers and children have been torn asunder, like the very separation of souls from their bodies.

5 CONCLUSION

As a result of this study, it has been observed that throughout its historical course, Andalusian Arabic poetry was not merely a literary output, but an aesthetic language and a reflection of a civilizational consciousness. It is determined that during the conquest and early periods, poetry performed a function of 'cultural continuity' by carrying the Eastern-centered classical tradition; conversely, over time, a distinct Andalusian poetic language emerged through the influence of geography, the sense of exile (*ghurbah*), and local sensibilities. The fact that poetry became the voice of state authority during the Caliphate, functioning as an ideological tool that reinforced the legitimacy of power, and the emergence of local genres such as the *muwashshah*, demonstrate that Andalusian civilization achieved an institutionalization on an aesthetic level.

In the periods of the Taifa Kingdoms, the Almoravids, and the Almohads, poetry's representation of a 'garden-civilization' ideal through imagery of nature, gardens, and social gatherings (*majlis*)—while simultaneously becoming a vessel for political

competition and propaganda via panegyrics—clearly reveals the tight bond between literature and power. Conversely, in the Nasrid period, it is observed that poetry shifted its course; the lost cities and the disintegrating political structure were represented through themes of sorrow, elegy, and melancholy. In the texts of Abu al-Baqa al-Rundi and the poets who followed him, poetry ceased to be the language of power and instead transformed into a field of poetic resistance, preserving the memory of a vanishing civilization.

Within this framework, the study evaluates the journey of Andalusian Arabic poetry from 'conquest to collapse' as an integrated aesthetic narrative reflecting the stages of a civilization's foundation, zenith, and dissolution. It has been demonstrated that poetry was not merely a witness recording historical events, but a fundamental discourse that constructed the cultural identity, political imagination, and collective memory of al-Andalus. Thus, Andalusian poetry is repositioned not as a peripheral field within classical Arabic literature, but as a central aesthetic experience that constructed the poetics of a civilization.

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Authors’ Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study’s findings are fully available within the article.

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