

**Rebellions, Revolts, and Uprisings in the Metropolis of Cordoba during the Almoravids Era  
(500 – 541 AH / 1106 – 1146)**

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**Abstract:**

This research presents the most significant rebellions, revolts, and uprisings that the metropolis of Córdoba experienced during the final four decades of the Almoravids (500 – 541 AH / 1106 – 1146). This opposition movement against the Almoravids' authority varied according to its motives and causes. Sometimes, it was led by Almoravids' leaders, such as the governor of Córdoba, who refused to pledge allegiance to the new Emir Ali ibn Yusuf. At other times, it was led by religious scholars, such as Ibn Hamdin, who was initially among the loyalist scholars but later opposed the authority and urged scholars to revolt in other Andalusian cities. While these revolts occasionally emerged as collective popular movements without a specific leader, their underlying causes varied in each instance. Sometimes, they aligned with the ambitions of their instigators; other times, they arose as reactions to the excesses of the ruling authority and its institutions, the actions of the Jewish community in response to alleged crimes, or harsh natural circumstances such as famine and plague. The official authorities' handling of these revolts ranged from leniency and tolerance at times, yielding to the demands of the protesters at other times, to suppression and the use of force on yet other occasions.

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## Introduction

At the beginning of the 6th century AH (12th century), following the death of his father, Yusuf ibn Tashfin, in the year 500 AH / 1106 CE, the Almoravid prince, Ali ibn Yusuf, ascended to the throne. His reign was the longest among the Almoravids' rulers, second only to that of his father. Despite being known for his humility and gentle treatment of his subjects and even his opponents, as well as his resistance to the expanding Christian powers encroaching on Al-Andalus, dangers increasingly surrounded his state during his rule. Threats came from both sides: from the north, where Christian kingdoms aggressively advanced into Muslim lands, and from the south, where Muhammad ibn Tumart's rebellion erupted, bringing about the downfall of the Almoravids' state.

What further deteriorated the Almoravids' state were the numerous revolts and uprisings that broke out, particularly in the Andalusian territories. These movements were often led by Almoravids' commanders and religious scholars, although at times they erupted spontaneously and collectively without a clear leader. Among the various cities, Córdoba, one of the most important in Islamic Al-Andalus, stood out as the main center of the uprisings. It had been a political and cultural hub for successive Muslim states for a long time and retained its significance throughout.

During the first four decades of the 6th century AH (12th century), Córdoba experienced a series of instabilities that often escalated into civil conflict and unrest within the general community (1). This raises several critical questions:

What were the most significant rebellions and uprisings that took place in Córdoba during this period?

What were their underlying causes and driving forces?

What outcomes and consequences did they lead to?

How did the Almoravids' authorities respond to these revolts?

And finally, how did these disturbances contribute to the security erosion of instability within the state?

## 1. The Cordoba Rebellion of 500 AH / 1106

After the Almoravids' Prince Yusuf ibn Tashfin died in 500 AH / 1106 (Ibn Abi Zar', 1972, p. 156; Anonymous author, 1979, p. 83; Ibn Idhari al-Marrakushi, 1983, Vol. 4, p. 45), the new Prince, Ali ibn Yusuf, was sworn in (Ibn Abi Zar', 1972, p. 158; Ibn Idhari al-Marrakushi, 1983, Vol. 4, p. 48; Anonymous author, 1979, p. 84). However, as Ali ibn Yusuf took on his new role, some Almoravid leaders in Morocco and Al-Andalus refused to accept him. The governors of Fez in Morocco (Ibn Abi Zar', 1972, p. 158) and Granada in Al-Andalus (Ibn al-Khatib, Al-Ihata fi Akhbar Gharnata, 1977, Vol. 1, p. 407) both disputed his legitimacy. Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn al-Hajj, the governor of Cordoba, also declined to pledge allegiance, which raises several questions.

**What is the story behind this rebellion?**

**Was it an isolated act by an individual, or did other parties join the governor in his defiance?**

**What was its outcome, and how did the authorities deal with it?**

Following the new Almoravid prince Ali ibn Yusuf's declaration of allegiance, Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn al-Hajj, the governor of Cordoba, withdrew his support (Ibn al-Abbar al-Andalusi, Al-Mu'jam, 1989, p. 141; Ibn Idhari al-Marrakushi, 1983, vol. 4, p. 49, footnote 1). By doing so, he openly expressed his disobedience. This was not an isolated

action; several Almoravid figures and jurists also joined the rebellion (Ibn al-Abbār al-Andalusī, al-Mu'jam, 1989, pp. 141–142). Among the rebels was Ibn al-Khassal (2), who served as one of Prince Ali ibn Yusuf's secretaries but had previously been a close friend of Ibn al-Hajj, standing by him through both hardship and ease until his death (Ibn al-Abbar al-Andalusī, Al-Mu'jam, 1989, pp. 141-142). Another accomplice was Abu Bakr ibn al-Markhi (3), who joined Ibn al-Hajj's rebellion and opposed the new Almoravid prince Ali ibn Yusuf (Ibn al-Abbar al-Andalusī, Al-Mu'jam, 1989, p. 141).

The rebellion sparked chaos in Cordoba, causing widespread insecurity and eroding trust among both the people and the authorities (Al-Fath ibn Khaqan, 1989, p. 611; Shihab al-Din al-Maqqari, 1942, vol. 3, pp. 96-97). However, the new ruler remained undeterred by the uprising and continued to fulfill his duties. The governor, Muhammad ibn al-Hajj, was arrested by the Almoravid authorities, while some of his supporters fled Cordoba. Among them was Ibn al-Markhi, who escaped east (Ibn al-Abbar al-Andalusī, Al-Mu'jam, 1989, p. 142). Later, the Almoravid prince Ali ibn Yusuf issued a decree that removed Muhammad ibn al-Hajj from power (Ibn Abi Zar', 1972, p. 157; Ibn al-Abbar al-Andalusī, Al-Mu'jam, 1989, p. 142).

These sources show the humiliation and disgrace of the failed rebels, who were left to fend for themselves. However, the kind and noble prince showed mercy to the rebels, giving them a second chance and lifting them from the darkness (al-Fath ibn Khāqān, 1989, p. 611; Ibn al-Abbār al-Andalusī, al-Mu'jam, 1989, p. 142; Shihāb al-Dīn al-Maqqarī, 1942, vol. 3, pp. 96–97). In fact, he went out of his way to honor Muhammad ibn al-Hajj, appointing him governor of the city of Fes and its surrounding regions in the Maghrib, where he was later joined by Ibn al-Marakhī (Ibn 'Idhārī al-Marrākushī, 1983, vol. 4, p. 49; Ibn al-Abbār al-Andalusī, al-Mu'jam, 1989, p. 142). Later, Ibn al-Hajj became governor of Zaragoza and Valencia until his death, likely in the year 508 AH / 1114 (Ibn al-Abbār al-Andalusī, al-Mu'jam, 1989, p. 142; Ibn Abī Zar', 1972, p. 160). (4)

Regarding the history of the rebellion, it took place during Prince Ali Ibn Yusuf's rule in 500 AH/1106 (Ibn al-Abbār al-Andalusī, al-Mu'jam, 1989, pp. 141–142). However, al-Fath ibn Khāqān and al-Maqqarī attributed the rebellion to 499 AH / 1105 (al-Fath ibn Khāqān, 1989, p. 611; Shihāb al-Dīn al-Maqqarī, 1942, vol. 3, p. 96), although this is unlikely since Ali ibn Yusuf's reign began in 500 AH / 1106, following his father's death. While the rebellion did not significantly deplete the state's resources or result in material or human losses, it did disrupt the loyalty to the new prince and led to other rebellious movements in both Fes and Granada.

## 2. The Cordoba Revolution 514 AH/1120

Among the revolutions that shook the foundations of the Almoravid state was one led by the populace, most likely occurring in the year 514 AH / 1120. This rebellion was so significant that it compelled the Almoravid prince, Ali ibn Yusuf, to travel personally to Cordoba to quell the unrest (Anonymous author, 1979, p. 86; Ibn al-Athīr, 1987, vol. 9, p. 188; Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī, 2004, vol. 24, p. 151; Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, 1990, p. 78).

The primary cause of the rebellion, as stated by the historian Ibn 'Idhārī al-Marrākushī, was the death of a boy during a crowd surge that occurred while spectators gathered for a shooting demonstration. This event incited anger among the populace. Subsequently, a

compensation (diyah) was provided to the boy's father, which pacified the crowds and ended the uprising. However, on the day of Eid al-Adha, the governor of Cordoba ventured out once more to witness a new spectacle. A large number of people assembled, overwhelming the palace. The guards were unable to fend off the mob, which plundered everything within the palace, forcing its occupants to flee out of fear for their lives. (This narrative is found in the Qarawiyyin manuscript by Ibn 'Idhārī al-Marrākushī, as referenced by Abd Allah 'Inān, 1990, p. 82)

Al-Nuwayri and Ibn al-Athir offer a different account of the origins and escalation of this civil conflict. Their version states that Abu Bakr ibn Yahya ibn Dawud (5) was serving as the governor of Córdoba at that time. On Eid al-Adha, while the community gathered to celebrate, one of Abu Bakr's slaves attacked a woman by grabbing her. She cried out for help, prompting nearby Muslims to rescue her. This incident ignited a violent clash between the slaves and the citizens of Córdoba, continuing throughout the day and into the night until the crowds finally dispersed. In response to the disturbances, the scholars, influential figures, and community leaders convened and insisted that Abu Bakr execute one of the slaves who had provoked the unrest. He declined their demand. The next morning, Abu Bakr gathered his forces to suppress the dissent. However, the scholars, influential figures, and local youth rallied against him and fought in battle. They defeated him, forcing him to retreat to the palace, where he sought refuge.

The rebels later surrounded the palace and finally breached it with ladders. In the ensuing turmoil, Abu Bakr escaped. The local populace then stormed the fortress, setting fire to the Almoravids' residences, looting their belongings, and driving them out of Córdoba. (Al-Nuwayri, 2004, vol. 24, p. 151; Ibn al-Athir, 1987, vol. 9, pp. 187–188)

Al-Wansharisi, author of *Al-Mi'yar*, offers an alternative perspective on this uprising, providing further details about its causes. He claims that the general populace revolted in reaction to a legal opinion (fatwa) issued by a group of jurists, including Ibn Rushd, who had advised the Almoravid emir, Ali ibn Yusuf, regarding the properties of the Banu Amir and the Banu Sumadih. However, Ibn Hamdin contended that the fatwa would result in a loss of wealth for the public. This dissent sparked widespread unrest among the common people, culminating in a popular uprising against Ibn Rushd and those who supported his legal opinion. (Al-Wansharisi, 1981, vol. 6, p. 98)

Contrary to al-Wansharis's version, the historian Ibn Abi Zar' al-Fasi provides a different account of Ibn Rushd's dismissal. He reports that the jurist Ibn Rushd was removed from his position as judge of Córdoba due to his preoccupation with composing his work *Al-Bayān wa al-Taḥṣīl*, which led the Almoravid emir to appoint the jurist Abu al-Qasim Ibn Hamdin in his place (Ibn Abi Zar', 1972, p. 164).

The writer of *Al-Ḥulal al-Mawshiyya* mentions the insurrection in Córdoba without providing details about its origins, simply noting that Emir Abu Yahya ibn Rawwad took control of the city, "and tensions arose between him and the residents, prompting them to revolt against his rule; additionally, a significant conflict erupted between the city's population and the Almoravids living there, leading to the looting of their homes and palaces" (Anonymous Author, 1979, p. 86).

Despite the differences among historical sources regarding the causes of this uprising, they agree on its destabilizing impact on the Almoravids' state. The circumstances at the time further fueled the revolt, especially the celebration of Eid al-Adha, which allowed



people to gather in large numbers. This mass assembly heightened public agitation, culminating in fierce clashes between the residents of Córdoba and the Almoravids' authorities that lasted until nightfall.

When the city's governor, Abū Bakr Yaḥyā ibn Rawwād, learned of the rebellion, a delegation of jurists and local leaders demanded that he act against the slave responsible for the incident to calm the unrest, stabilize the citizens, and suppress the uprising at its beginning. However, the governor, filled with pride and arrogance, dismissed their request and submitted to anger (Ibn al-Athīr, 1987, vol. 9, p. 188; al-Nuwayrī, 2004, vol. 24, p. 151).

At dawn, he gathered his troops, arms, and supplies, preparing to confront the rebels. However, the rebels had anticipated this move. The jurists, prominent figures, and youth united, organized themselves, and fought fiercely against the governor's forces. The conflict ended with the defeat of Córdoba's governor, Abū Bakr Yaḥyā ibn Rawwād, who fled to his palace for safety. The rebels assaulted the palace, besieged it, and broke in using ladders. He narrowly escaped, fearing revenge from the citizens of Córdoba. In the aftermath, looting and arson erupted within the palace and even spread to the Almoravids' properties in the city (Ibn al-Athīr, 1987, vol. 9, p. 188; al-Nuwayrī, 2004, vol. 24, p. 151; Anonymous, 1979, p. 86; 'Abd Allāh 'Inān, citing Ibn 'Idhārī al-Marrākushī, 1990, p. 82).

News of the uprising spread rapidly and reached the Almoravid Emir, 'Alī ibn Yūsuf, in Marrakesh. Concerned by this turn of events, he deemed it vital to address the situation to prevent further escalation. Consequently, he gathered a sizable army composed of Ṣanhāja, Zanāta, Berbers, and other factions, and led his troops to Córdoba in Al-Andalus. Upon his arrival, he laid siege to the city and surrounded it. Nevertheless, the people of Córdoba mounted a strong defense, and the Almoravid forces were unsuccessful in their attempts to breach the metropolitan area (Anonymous, 1979, pp. 86–87; Ibn al-Athīr, 1987, vol. 9, p. 188; al-Nuwayrī, 2004, vol. 24, p. 151; Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, 1990, p. 78; Ibn Abī Zar', 1972, p. 164).

Although historical sources confirm the Almoravids' failure to breach the city of Córdoba, it is our view—and God knows best—that Emir 'Alī ibn Yūsuf was, in fact, capable of storming the city, given the sheer size of his army. It is difficult to accept that a small city could withstand such a vast military force. Supporting this interpretation is the account provided by the author of al-Ḥulal al-Mawshiyya, who reports that the notables of Córdoba reminded 'Alī ibn Yūsuf of his father's directive: not to harm the people of Córdoba, to accept the goodwill of the virtuous among them, and to pardon those who had erred. Thus, it was the emir's tolerance and magnanimity, reinforced by his father's testament, that ultimately led him to refrain from assaulting the city and to resolve the matter through amicable means.

The Almoravids' forces had besieged Córdoba until signs of a resolution emerged. Correspondence was initiated between the two sides, and the city's notables and dignitaries began visiting the Almoravid Emir. Eventually, an agreement was reached to bring an end to the uprising and to lift the Almoravid siege of the city, on the condition that the people of Córdoba pay a fine as compensation for the property looted from the Almoravids during the revolt (Anonymous Author, 1979, p. 87; al-Nuwayrī, 2004, vol. 24, p. 151; Ibn al-Athīr, 1987, vol. 9, p. 188).

One factor that likely played a role in the peaceful resolution of the crisis was the reminder issued by the notables of Córdoba, of the testament left by the Emir's father, which urged him to appreciate the good in the people of Córdoba and to forgive the wrongdoers (Anonymous Author, 1979, p. 87). As a result, the unrest in Córdoba ended, and Muslim blood was saved. A notable outcome of these events was the removal of Judge Ibn Rushd from his position (Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, 1982, p. 54; Ibn Abī Zar', 1972, p. 164).

As for the dating of this uprising, it has been a matter of scholarly disagreement among historians. While al-Nuwayrī, Ibn al-Athīr, and Ibn Abī Zar' al-Fāsī mention the year 513 AH / 1119 (al-Nuwayrī, 2004, vol. 24, p. 151; Ibn al-Athīr, 1987, vol. 9, p. 188; Ibn Abī Zar', 1972, p. 164), both al-Nuwayrī and Ibn al-Athīr also propose the following year, 514 AH / 1120, which corresponds to the date cited by the author of al-Ḥulal al-Mawshiyya and by the text of Ibn 'Idhārī al-Marrākushī as quoted by Professor 'Abd Allāh 'Inān from a manuscript housed at the Qarawiyyīn Library (al-Nuwayrī, 2004, vol. 24, p. 151; Ibn al-Athīr, 1987, vol. 9, p. 188; Anonymous Author, 1979, p. 86). Meanwhile, Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ dates the uprising to 515 AH / 1121, noting it as the cause for the dismissal of the jurist Ibn Rushd from his judicial post. This account aligns with that of Ibn al-Qaṭṭān al-Marrākushī, who also states that the uprising occurred in 515 AH / 1121 CE, while the Almoravid emir's arrival in Córdoba took place the following year (Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, 1982, p. 54; Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, 1990, p. 78).

### 3. The Córdoba Uprising of 525–526 AH / 1130–1131

One instance of civil unrest in Córdoba occurred between 525 and 526 AH / 1130–1131, causing widespread chaos. Unfortunately, there's limited information about these uprisings, mainly from a single source, Ibn al-Qaṭṭān al-Marrākushī. According to him, in 525 AH / 1130, the people of Córdoba stoned the judge and jurist Ibn al-Manāṣif because he enforced a tax called al-Mu'ūna (a form of taxation in Islamic Cordoba) on them (Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, 1990, p. 222). However, it's unclear if this tax was the only reason for the public uprising. Were there deeper underlying factors at play?

One of the judges in question was Muḥammad ibn Aṣḥab ibn Muḥammad ibn Aṣḥab al-Azdī, known as Abū 'Abd Allāh or Ibn al-Manāṣif. He served as the chief judge of Córdoba, led the required prayers at its main mosque, and was considered one of the last prominent and respected figures of the city (Ibn al-Abbār al-Andalusī, the ale-Mu'jam, 1989, p. 138). Al-Ḍabbī described him as a well-known expert in jurisprudence and hadith (Ibn 'Amīrah al-Ḍabbī, 1967, p. 61). Furthermore, the accounts of Ibn Sa'īd al-Maghribī about this jurist strongly contradict any claims of tyranny or extremism that could have alienated the people of Córdoba. He reported that Ibn al-Manāṣif would support over three hundred families every day, taking care of their homes and helping them through tough times. His lands and estates brought in substantial income, yet he only kept what was necessary for living (Ibn Sa'īd al-Maghribī, 1995, vol. 1, p. 163).

According to the biography of this jurist, he is cleared of any wrongdoing or misconduct allegations. As a result, the rebellion can be tied to the enforcement of the Mu'ūna tax, which had become a customary obligation for those living in Al-Andalus. Under this custom, each district was responsible for maintaining and repairing the part of the city walls that bordered their area.

According to Ibn 'Idhārī al-Marrākushī, the rebuilding of Córdoba's fortifications started in 520 AH / 1126. At that time, Judge Abū al-Qāsim Ibn Ward ordered a fund-

raising campaign to build the city wall. When the initial wall began to deteriorate, the public was asked to contribute again to repair it. The project was completed without any major disruptions or civil unrest.

Additionally, Ibn 'Idhārī al-Marrākushī notes that a man from Almería named Ibn al-'Ajamī was responsible for collecting funds from the people and using them wisely, which ultimately led to the wall being finished to an exceptionally high standard (Ibn 'Idhārī al-Marrākushī, 1983, vol. 4, pp. 73–74). This account provides evidence that a tax was levied on the general population in Al-Andalus.

However, historian Ibn al-Qaṭṭān al-Marrākushī attributes the Córdoba uprising in 525 AH / 1130 CE to Judge Ibn al-Manāṣif imposing the 'awn tax to rebuild or repair the city walls. This led to the people stoning him in response (Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, 1990, p. 222). The account suggests that Ibn al-Manasif's strict tax enforcement may have sparked the revolt. Tension was further fueled by the severe economic losses the people suffered after a massive fire destroyed the linen market (Sūq al-Kittān) and silk market (Sūq al-Ḥarīr), causing widespread financial ruin (Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, 1990, p. 222).

Historical records offer limited information on the Almoravid authority's response to the Córdoba demonstration in 525 AH / 1130. However, Ibn al-Qaṭṭān al-Marrākushī mentions that the judge involved was later removed from his position in 528 AH / 1134 by the Almoravid emir 'Alī ibn Yūsuf (Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, 1990, p. 234).

In 526 AH / 1131, more unrest broke out in Córdoba, but natural disasters forced the residents to act. According to Ibn al-Qaṭṭān's account of events in al-Andalus that year, "famine and plague became severe in Córdoba, killing more people, driving up the price of wheat to fifteen dinars per mudd (6), and causing widespread chaos" (Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, 1990, p. 226). His report makes it clear that famine and plague were the main reasons for the rising death toll in the city. The situation got even worse when locusts destroyed crops, adding to the population's struggles.

While Ibn al-Qaṭṭān doesn't directly mention a popular uprising, he does note that the governor of Córdoba, Ibn Qannūna, turned to violence and bloodshed. This implies that his actions were probably a response to civil unrest or rebellion by the people of Córdoba, who were fed up with the prevailing disorder (Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, 1990, pp. 226, 228).

These serious offenses committed by Governor Ibn Qannūna, as described by Ibn al-Qaṭṭān al-Marrākushī, led the Almoravid emir, 'Alī ibn Yūsuf, to remove him from office. The situation escalated further, as Ibn Qannūna was later imprisoned in Seville. In his place, Tashfīn ibn 'Alī ibn Yūsuf was named governor of Córdoba in the month of Sha'bān, 526 AH / 1131 (Ibn 'Idhārī al-Marrākushī, 1983, vol. 4, p. 87; Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, 1990, p. 228).

Letters from Emir 'Alī ibn Yūsuf to his son Tashfīn, sent just before his appointment, show a clear plan by the Almoravid leadership to bring back justice, consultation (shūrā), and principles of tolerance and kindness to stop any more unrest among Córdoba's people. In the letter, the emir advises his son to uphold justice, fear God, and be humble toward his subjects (the full text is available in Ibn 'Idhārī al-Marrākushī, 1983, vol. 4, pp. 87–88).

However, Ibn al-Qaṭṭān's account of the killings and violence by the Córdoba governor in 526 AH / 1131 CE isn't backed up by other contemporary sources. The Almoravid emir's letter to his son also doesn't mention the former governor, Ibn Qannūna's,



misconduct or brutality. This lack of supporting evidence suggests that Ibn al-Qaṭṭān might have exaggerated the events, especially given his known bias against the Almoravids.

#### 4. The Populace Uprising in Córdoba in 529 AH / 1134

Historical records show that Córdoba experienced another uprising in 529 AH / 1134, when the general public rose up against the Jewish community (Ibn 'Idhārī al-Marrākushī, 1983, vol. 4, p. 93; Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, 1990, p. 243). This widespread revolt seems to have been the result of long-standing hostility and resentment toward the Jews, who had already been accused of similar misdeeds.

One often-cited example is Mūsā ibn Mafrūj, a figure famous for his calligraphic skills, literary refinement, arithmetic abilities, intelligence, and ambition. His growing influence in Granada made him widely known and respected. However, in 522 AH / 1128, his career came to a sudden end when a Jewish physician allegedly poisoned him, leading to his death. Some sources describe this as a result of internal rivalry (Ibn 'Idhārī al-Marrākushī, 1983, vol. 4, pp. 76–77).

By that time, Granada's Jewish population had grown significantly, to the point where the city was called the "City of the Jews." Jews allegedly held important administrative roles and controlled a large part of the city's wealth, allowing them to have a lot of influence over government affairs (Reinhart Dozy, 1933, p. 41). These changes sparked considerable discontent among the Muslim population.

Across the region, there was a deep-seated resentment that was echoed in the works of Abū Ishāq al-Ilbīrī, a poet from Andalusia who lived from 1067 (died at age 460 AH) (7). In his poetry, he spoke out against the ruler of Granada for giving Jews important positions and letting them gain more influence at court. His work was a call to action, encouraging people to resist this situation and expressing their frustration in a unique literary and ideological way. (8)

This episode highlights the underlying tensions that defined intercommunal relations in Al-Andalus during the Almoravids' era, where social, political, and religious grievances often combined to spark violent outbursts of collective unrest.

It seems that the poem by the Andalusian poet Abū Ishāq al-Ilbīrī struck a chord with the public, especially since he was known for his asceticism and wisdom among his people. His words had a profound impact on the general population, leading to a significant wave of violence against the Jewish community in 459 AH / 1066 CE. During this uprising, ordinary people targeted Jewish homes, plundered their belongings, and killed over four thousand individuals, according to the sources, "purging the city of their harm" (Reinhart Dozy, 1933, pp. 168–169).

This event is one of the most violent anti-Jewish incidents in Al-Andalus history, showing how powerful religious rhetoric and public opinion can spark communal unrest. It appears that a popular uprising against Córdoba's Jewish community in 529 AH/1134 was triggered by the assassination of a Muslim within a Jewish neighborhood, although the killer's identity remains unknown (Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, 1990, p. 243; Ibn 'Idhārī al-Marrākushī, 1983, vol. 4, p. 93).

One possible factor that contributed to this event was the lack of a judge in Córdoba at the time. The city's chief judge, Aḥmad ibn Khalaf al-Tujībī, was assassinated in the mosque (al-Nubāhī, 1983, p. 102; Ibn 'Idhārī al-Marrākushī, 1983, vol. 4, p. 93; Ibn Bashkuwāl, 1990, vol. 3, p. 845), leaving the city without a presiding judge for several



months. It wasn't until later that Abū Ja'far Ḥamdīn was appointed to the position (Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, 1990, p. 243).

On top of this legal uncertainty, Córdoba was also dealing with the consequences of severe economic and environmental crises. The year of the uprising—529 AH / 1134 CE—witnessed famine, plague, market fires, and a devastating locust infestation that ravaged al-Andalus' crops (Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, 1990, pp. 222, 226, 242). These conditions probably fueled public frustration and created a climate primed for violent unrest.

People in Córdoba reacted with extreme violence to the alleged crime committed by the Jews. Many members of the Jewish community were killed, their wealth and property were stolen, and their homes were set on fire (Ibn 'Idhārī al-Marrākushī, 1983, vol. 4, p. 93; Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, 1990, p. 243). This collective response showed the people's anger not just toward the specific murder of the Muslim, but also toward the broader insecurity and social struggles that were happening in Córdoba at the time.

### 5. The Populace Uprising in Córdoba Against the Judge Ahmad ibn Rushd

The general populace rose against Judge Abū al-Walīd Aḥmad ibn Rushd; however, information about this uprising is scarce and is mentioned only by Ibn al-Khaṭīb, who stated that the common people in Córdoba revolted due to the weakness of their judge, Aḥmad ibn Rushd. This compelled Judge Abū Ja'far ibn Ḥamdīn to come out to the people to calm them and pacify their unrest (Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *A'māl al-A'lām*, 1956, p. 252). But could it really have been the judge's personality that caused the people to rise against him?

Historical sources speak highly of Aḥmad ibn Rushd's character. Ibn Sa'īd al-Maghribī, quoting Ibn Bashkuwāl, described him as virtuous, wise, and distinguished, noting that he was beloved by the people. He also listed Ibn Rushd's writings, their number, and topics (Ibn Sa'īd al-Maghribī, 1995, vol. 1, p. 162).

In any case, when the people revolted against Judge ibn Rushd, Judge Abū Ja'far ibn Ḥamdīn intervened by addressing the masses to calm their revolt and soothe their minds. According to Ibn al-Khaṭīb, one of the outcomes of this uprising was Ibn Rushd's flight and his resignation from his judicial position (*A'māl al-A'lām*, 1956, pp. 252–253). Other sources describe this resignation as voluntary, with his request being accepted without disclosing the reason (al-Nubbāhī, 1983, p. 103). It appears that the governor of Córdoba, Abū 'Umar al-Lamtūnī, was sympathetic to Ibn Rushd and, therefore, left the city without a judge for over a year out of anger and protest against its people. Consequently, legal judgments were suspended until the people agreed to appoint Judge Ibn Ḥamdīn (Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *A'māl al-A'lām*, 1956, p. 253), who later instigated another rebellion in Córdoba in the year 539 AH / 1144, thereby turning against the Almoravid authorities.

Regarding the date of the first uprising, we suggest 535 AH / 1140, based on Ibn al-Khaṭīb's assertion that Ibn Ḥamdīn's appointment as the head of Córdoba's judiciary occurred in 536 AH / 1141, one year after the revolt (*A'māl al-A'lām*, 1956, p. 253).

### 6. The Rebellion of the Jurist Ibn Ḥamdīn in Córdoba

After the death of the Almoravids' prince 'Alī ibn Yūsuf in 537 AH / 1142, a wave of revolts erupted in Al-Andalus, led by various religious jurists. These uprisings occurred simultaneously and focused on regions of Al-Andalus that were far from Marrakesh, the Almoravid capital. Meanwhile, the Almoravid authorities were occupied with addressing other rebellions, such as the Sufi-led uprising of Ibn Qasī in Al-Andalus and the

threatening Muwaḥḥidūn (Almohad) movement in the Maghrib, along with Christian incursions from the north.

One of the most prominent rebels in al-Andalus was the judge of Córdoba, Ibn Ḥamdīn, whose full name was Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Ḥamdīn al-Taghlibī (al-Nubbāhī, 1983, p. 103). He aligned himself with the ruling authorities and notably issued a fatwa sanctioning the burning of Imam al-Ghazālī's works (Ibn 'Idhārī al-Marrākushī, 1983, vol. 4, p. 59; Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, 1990, p. 70). However, he eventually distanced himself from the Almoravid regime due to ideological disagreements, which ultimately led to his dismissal in 532 AH (Ibn al-Khaṭīb, A'māl al-A'lām, 1956, p. 252; al-Nubbāhī, 1983, p. 103). This rupture with authority kindled in him the idea of rebellion, a sentiment he capitalized on amidst the outbreak of the Ṣūfī-led Murīdīn uprising under the leadership of Ibn Qasī.

The people of Córdoba proclaimed Abū Ja'far ibn Ḥamdīn as their leader and pledged allegiance to him as Emir (prince) in the Great Mosque on the 5th of Ramaḍān, 539 AH / 1145 (Ibn al-Khaṭīb, A'māl al-A'lām, 1956, p. 253; al-Ḍabbī, 1967, p. 42). He adopted the titles "Amīr al-Muslimīn" (Commander) and "Nāṣir al-Dīn" (Faith Defender) (Ibn al-Khaṭīb, 1956, p. 253; al-Nubbāhī, 1983, p. 103; al-Ḍabbī, 1967, p. 42). However, some inhabitants of Córdoba preferred to summon Sayf al-Dawla ibn Hūd, who succeeded in deposing Ibn Ḥamdīn, forcing him to flee and remain in hiding (Ibn al-Abbār al-Andalusī, al-Ḥulla al-Siyarā', 1985, vol. 2, pp. 206–207). Later, the people of Córdoba attacked the palace, killed some of Sayf al-Dawla's men, and he fled, allowing Ibn Ḥamdīn to return (Ibn al-Khaṭīb, 1956, p. 253; Ibn al-Abbār al-Andalusī, al-Ḥulla al-Siyarā', 1985, vol. 2, p. 207).

Ibn Ḥamdīn began establishing a new political order by organizing state registers, laying out policies, and recruiting soldiers (Ibn al-Khaṭīb, 1956, p. 253; al-Ḍabbī, 1967, p. 42). Once in control, Ibn Ḥamdīn sent letters to the judges of al-Andalus, urging them to renounce their allegiance to the Almoravids and instead pledge loyalty to him. A group of rebels in Murcia, led by Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥājj al-Lūrqī, answered his call, pledged allegiance, and then withdrew. The people of Murcia subsequently appointed Judge Abū Ja'far ibn Abī Ja'far, who also aligned with Ibn Ḥamdīn (Ibn al-Abbār al-Andalusī, al-Mu'jam, 1989, p. 239). Among those who joined him was Judge Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn 'Umar ibn Aḍḥā, who pledged loyalty and received military support from Ibn Ḥamdīn during his revolt against the Almoravids, who were besieging him in Granada (Ibn al-Abbār, al-Ḥulla al-Siyarā', vol. 2, p. 212).

Some of Ibn Ḥamdīn's opponents wrote to Yaḥyā ibn Ghāniyah, urging him to reclaim Córdoba. Ibn Ghāniyah marched with his forces, defeated Ibn Ḥamdīn, and entered Córdoba in 540 AH (Ibn al-Khaṭīb, 1956, p. 253; al-Ḍabbī, 1967, p. 42). According to Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Ibn Ḥamdīn ruled for eleven months, although al-Nubbāhī suggests it was only four months (Ibn al-Khaṭīb, 1956, p. 253; al-Nubbāhī, 1983, p. 103). Ibn Ḥamdīn then fled to Badajoz in western Al-Andalus and later to a fortress east of Córdoba, from which he sought to expand his control over nearby regions (al-Nubbāhī, 1983, p. 103; Ibn al-Khaṭīb, 1956, p. 253). Ibn Ghāniyah laid siege to him for about a month until Ibn Ḥamdīn called for aid from the King of Castile (Ibn al-Khaṭīb, 1956, p. 253), prompting Ibn Ghāniyah to lift the siege and return to Córdoba. The allied Christian forces pursued and entered the city in 540 AH / 1146, during which time they pillaged the city, desecrated the Great

Mosque, tore apart Qur'anic manuscripts, and burned the markets. Meanwhile, Ibn Ghāniyah remained entrenched in the citadel, defending it ('Abd Allāh 'Inān, 1990, pp. 314–315).

When the Castilians heard of the approaching Almohad armies, they sought a truce with Ibn Ghāniyah. Meanwhile, the jurist Ibn Ḥamdīn aligned himself with the new ruler of the Maghrib, 'Abd al-Mu'min ibn 'Alī (Ibn al-Khaṭīb, 1956, p. 254), marking the end of Judge Ibn Ḥamdīn's rebellion after it became clear that he had colluded with the Christians at the expense of his fellow Muslim Almoravids.

### CONCLUSION

A careful observer of the revolts that occurred in Córdoba would note that its geographic remoteness from the Almoravid capital in Marrakesh may have empowered the insurgents in their actions. These revolts notably increased in frequency during the last four decades of the Almoravid state. Meanwhile, the religious elite took advantage of the state's preoccupation with its military campaigns, both in the north against the Christian kingdoms and in the south against the Almohads, to mobilize their forces. Scholars called upon one another and initiated a series of uprisings in various Andalusian cities, including Córdoba, providing mutual support and reinforcing each other's efforts.

The revolt led by the jurist Ibn Ḥamdīn revealed his conspiracy with the Castilian Christians, whom he called upon for assistance against his fellow Muslim Almoravids, despite having previously been among their loyal supporters. It is also noteworthy that the leniency of the Almoravids' prince, Alī ibn Yūsuf, may have weakened public fear and encouraged such rebellions. His leniency was evident in his treatment of the rebel Ibn al-Ḥājj, who initially refused to pledge allegiance. Instead of punishment, the emir pardoned him and even honored him by reappointing him as governor. Similarly, 'Alī ibn Yūsuf demonstrated tolerance toward the rebels of Córdoba in 514 AH / 1120, choosing to heed his father's counsel and refraining from attacking the city.

Some of these protest and revolutionary movements were politically free and were merely reactions to isolated abuses committed by certain governors, such as the revolt in Córdoba in 514 AH/1120. Similarly, the uprisings of 525–526 AH / 1130–1131 were driven by the general population's refusal to pay taxes due to the severe hardships that Al-Andalus was experiencing at the time. Furthermore, the growing influence of the Jewish community in certain Andalusian urban centers, such as Granada, contributed to hostility. When a murder occurred, the populace seized the opportunity to launch attacks against the Jews, demolishing and looting their homes. In some cases, the Almoravid authorities appeared to respond sympathetically to these uprisings and took measures to address the rebels' demands. For instance, during the revolt of 526 AH / 1131 CE, they replaced the city governor, and in another example, dismissed the jurist Aḥmad ibn Rushd following public unrest against him, appointing instead the jurist Ibn Ḥamdīn as his successor.

### Final Comments

- (1) One of the meanings of *fitnah* is "trial and test," and it can also refer to deviating from the truth, or conflict and fighting among people. Thus, division and warfare may erupt among Muslims when factions form (Ibn Manẓūr, n.d., pp. 3344–3346). In our research, we observed that the strife experienced in the Almoravid state led to internal conflict, disunity, the weakening of public morale, and the erosion of the state's authority.



- (2) Abū Marwān ‘Abd al-Malik Ibn Abī al-Khiṣāl al-Ghāfiqī, a respected figure and scribe, was famous for his refined writing style. He served as a scribe for the Almoravid state until Prince ‘Alī ibn Yūsuf dismissed him, at which point he retired and passed away in Marrakesh in 537 AH / 1142 (Ibn al-Imām, 2002, p. 42; Ibn Sa‘īd al-Maghribī, 1995, Vol. 2, p. 68; ‘Abd al-Wāhid al-Marrākushī, 1998, p. 125).
- (3) Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Dhī al-Wizāratayn al-Mushrif, also known as Marwān ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, was highly respected by the noble and virtuous Banū al-Marakhī (Ibn Bassām al-Shanṭarīnī, 1997, Vol. 2, p. 533). Later in life, he would host gatherings where people would discuss literary works until he died in 536 AH / 1141 at the age of seventy (Ibn al-Abbār al-Andalusī, Al-Mu‘jam, 1989, p. 143).
- (4) Although Ibn al-Abbār and Ibn Abī Zar‘ al-Fāsī both state that Prince Ibn al-Ḥājj was martyred in 508 AH / 1114, Ibn ‘Idhārī al-Marrākushī disputes this and claims his martyrdom happened the following year, in 509 AH (Ibn ‘Idhārī al-Marrākushī, 1983, Vol. 4, p. 61).
- (5) While both Ibn ‘Idhārī al-Marrākushī and al-Nuwayrī refer to this governor as Abū Bakr ibn Yaḥyā ibn Dāwūd, Ibn al-Athīr and the author of *Al-Ḥulal al-Muwashshiyah* refer to him as Abū Bakr ibn Yaḥyā ibn Rawād.
- (6) One mudd is a unit of volume that equals a quarter of a ṣā‘, and it matches the measure used by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) (Ibn Manẓūr, n.d., p. 4158).
- (7) Abū Ishāq al-Ilbīrī was a poet recognized for his ascetic lifestyle, wisdom, and moral teachings. Ibn al-Abbār al-Andalusī featured a biography of him in his *Takmilah* (Ibn al-Abbār al-Andalusī, 1995, Vol. 1, Biography No. 352, pp. 118–119).
- (8) See the poem Abū Ishāq al-Ilbīrī composed on this subject (Abū Ishāq al-Ilbīrī al-Andalusī, 1991, p. 108 ff.)

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