

## THE ERA OF THE RIGHTLY GUIDED CALIPHS (PERSONALITY OF THE CALIPHS, SUCCESSION SYSTEM, POLITICS, CIVILIZATION DEVELOPMENT)

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### ABSTRACT

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki dan menganalisis aspek-aspek kunci dari masa Khalifah Rasyidah dalam sejarah Islam, termasuk kepribadian khalifah, sistem suksesi, politik, dan perkembangan peradaban. Metode penelitian melibatkan analisis historis terhadap sumber-sumber primer dan sekunder yang relevan, serta interpretasi dan sintesis data yang diperoleh. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepribadian khalifah pada masa Khalifah Rasyidah ditandai oleh sifat-sifat kepemimpinan yang adil, bijaksana, dan berjiwa pelayan terhadap umat Islam. Khalifah Abu Bakar, Umar bin Khattab, Utsman bin Affan, dan Ali bin Abi Thalib dikenal sebagai pemimpin yang memegang teguh prinsip keadilan dan kebenaran. Sistem suksesi dalam masa Khalifah Rasyidah dipelajari dengan fokus pada proses pemilihan khalifah, mekanisme konsultasi, dan faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi penentuan penerus. Penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa sistem suksesi didasarkan pada konsultasi di antara tokoh-tokoh Muslim terkemuka, dengan mempertimbangkan kualitas kepemimpinan, integritas, dan dukungan umat.

**Kata Kunci:** Sejarah; Sejarah Peradaban Islam; Khulafaurrasyidin

**Abstract:** This study aims to investigate and analyze key aspects of the Era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs in Islamic history, including the personality of the caliphs, the succession system, politics, and the development of civilization. The research method involves the historical analysis of relevant primary and secondary sources, along with the interpretation and synthesis of the collected data. The findings reveal that the personalities of the caliphs during the Rashidun period were marked by leadership qualities that were just, wise, and servant-hearted towards the Muslim community. Caliphs Abu Bakr, Umar ibn Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan, and Ali ibn Abi Talib were known as leaders who firmly upheld principles of justice and truth. The succession system in the Rashidun period was studied with a focus on the process of selecting a caliph, consultation mechanisms, and the factors influencing the determination of a successor. The research reveals that the succession system was based on consultation among prominent Muslim figures, considering leadership qualities, integrity, and the support of the community.

**Keywords:** History; History of Islamic Civilization; Khulafaurrasyidin



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## A. INTRODUCTION

Civilization, simply put, can be interpreted as the product of human culture that has high value. Therefore, discussing Islamic civilization refers to the high cultural achievements produced by the Islamic community. As a comprehensive doctrine encompassing all aspects of human life, Islam has created a civilization that has significantly impacted human life from the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW to the present. One notable period of Islamic civilization was during the Umayyad Dynasty (Amin, 2010).

In the history of Islam, the Umayyad Dynasty (referred to here as the "First Umayyad Caliphate" centered in Damascus) represents the third phase of governance after the era of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and the Rashidun Caliphs. Despite occurring during the classical Islamic period and being acknowledged as a contributor to the formation of Islamic civilization, the Umayyad phase is often viewed as relatively weak compared to the preceding and succeeding phases, namely the Rashidun and Abbasid periods. This perception partly arises because the Rashidun phase is considered to most accurately represent Islamic values after the Prophet Muhammad's leadership (Abdullah, 2019), while the Abbasid phase is seen as the symbol of the Golden Age of Islam or the peak of Islamic civilization. Additionally, various political issues during the Umayyad era have significantly contributed to its negative image.

At least three factors have influenced the negative perception of the Umayyad Dynasty's history. First, the political system change was initiated by the first Umayyad caliph, Mu'awiyah, from the Shura system (a consultative decision-making process) to a monarchy (a hereditary system of governance). Second, the Umayyad leaders' focus on political and military expansion was perceived as neglecting or insufficiently advancing civilization. Third, the dominance of the Arabs in political life hindered the cultural exchange processes that were crucial for the advancement of civilization (as seen later during the Abbasid period). These negative perceptions have led to the view that the Umayyad Dynasty played a weak role in the development of Islamic civilization (Jabir, 2007).

These assumptions are certainly worth further investigation. It seems improbable that a civilization that lasted nearly a century would have little or no impact on historical development. Especially since, following the Umayyad period, the Abbasid Dynasty emerged as the symbol of the Golden Age of Islamic civilization. The rise of the Abbasid Dynasty, despite occurring after the fall of the Umayyads, could not have happened without building on the achievements of the previous Islamic community, including those left by the Umayyad governance.

From this standpoint, examining the contributions of the Umayyad Dynasty to history is intriguing to explore further, providing a more comprehensive explanation of the development of Islamic civilization during its rule. Therefore, the focus of this study is divided into three main research questions: What is the general overview of the political development during

the Umayyad Dynasty? What were the advancements in civilization during the Umayyad period? And lastly, what contributions did the Umayyad Dynasty make to the development of Islamic civilization?

Regarding the research methodology, this study uses a historical qualitative method that is descriptive and interpretative, aiming to understand the meaning and historical context of the Prophet Muhammad's era in Mecca. Data is systematically collected and analyzed to produce valid and credible findings. Primary data sources include the Quran and Hadith, which are the main sources of Islamic teachings, and the Prophet Muhammad's history. Relevant verses of the Quran and Hadith are studied in-depth to understand the context of the Prophet's mission in Mecca.

Secondary data sources include history books and biographies of the Prophet Muhammad written by Muslim scholars. These books are used to strengthen and complement the information obtained from primary data sources. Data is collected through literature study and critical analysis of primary and secondary data sources.

The data is then systematically analyzed using various qualitative analysis techniques, such as content analysis, thematic analysis, and data triangulation. This study employs a systematic and tested method, considering various perspectives and viewpoints. The findings are expected to provide a deep and accurate understanding of the Prophet Muhammad's era in Mecca.

In terms of approach, besides using a historical approach (as this is historical research), the study also employs a political approach. This approach examines political aspects such as power structures, types of leadership, social hierarchy, power conflicts, and more. It is used to view the general development of the Umayyad Dynasty's governance and to further analyze its policies about the civilization's development during its rule.

## **B. METHOD**

This research employs historical methods. As a discipline, history has methods for studying, analyzing, and reconstructing past events. The purpose of this research method is to sharpen understanding, guide researchers toward disciplined work, and train critical thinking and assessment. This research falls under the category of Library Research or literature review. The steps taken by the researcher in this study include (1) Heuristics (Source Collection), (2) Verification (Source Criticism), (3) Interpretation, and (4) Historiography (Writing).

## **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **General Description of the Rashidah Caliphate Period**

The Rashidun Caliphate was a significant period in Islamic history that occurred after the death of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in 632 AD. This era is marked by the leadership of the first four caliphs (the Rashidun Caliphs), namely Abu Bakr, Umar ibn Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan, and Ali ibn Abi Talib. The general overview of the Rashidun Caliphate includes various aspects such as politics, social structure, economy, and religion (Lapidus, 2014).

One of the main focuses of the Rashidun Caliphs was consolidating the caliphate and expanding Islamic territories. Under the leadership of Abu Bakr and Umar, the Islamic territory expanded rapidly through carefully planned and effective military campaigns.

The implementation of social and economic justice during the Rashidun Caliphate is also notable. The caliphs adopted Islamic principles in governing society, including the fair distribution of wealth, the enforcement of just laws, and the protection of people's rights.

During the Rashidun Caliphate, various state institutions and administrative systems were developed. Umar ibn Khattab, for example, is known for introducing an efficient administrative system, including the establishment of the advisory council (Majlis al-Shura) and the organized distribution of zakat.

One of the hallmarks of the Rashidun Caliphate was the preservation and dissemination of Islamic values. The caliphs endeavored to ensure that Islamic laws were properly enforced and that Islam served as the primary foundation in the daily lives of the people.

### **The Caliph's Personality**

The personality of a Caliph reflects leadership that is just, wise, and responsible. As leaders of the Muslim community in Islamic tradition, Caliphs are expected to undertake broad duties, including ensuring the welfare of the people, maintaining social justice, upholding moral values, and guiding the community in adherence to religious teachings.

The personality of a Caliph embodies loyalty, integrity, and simplicity. They must possess the ability to listen to and understand the needs of the community and make decisions that are in the best interest of collective well-being. Good leadership qualities in a Caliph also include courage in facing challenges, decisiveness in implementing policies, and a willingness to learn and grow.

References for understanding the personality of a Caliph can be found in Islamic history, especially in the lives of the Caliphs who ruled after the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The lives and policies of Caliphs such as Abu Bakr, Umar ibn Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan, and Ali ibn Abi Talib provide real examples of how a Caliph should lead the community with justice, wisdom, and full responsibility. Additionally, literature on leadership in Islam and the views of scholars on the qualities required in a Caliph can also serve as valuable references (Manshur, 2003).

## **Politics of Civilization Development**

The Umayyad Dynasty was a period of Islamic rule led by the descendants of the Banu Umayyah, a tribe named after Umayyah bin Abdi Manaf, one of the prominent figures of pre-Islamic Mecca (Syamsul Munir Amin, 2019: 118). Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan, the founder of this dynasty, initiated a new political tradition in Islamic history by replacing the previous system (the era of the Khulafa'urrashidin) which used the shura system (a system that bases policy on consultation) with a monarchical system (a system that grants authority to a family lineage). Hence, this era is also referred to as a "Dynastic" rule.

The establishment of the Umayyad Dynasty was influenced by two main factors: first, the tumultuous situation at the end of the Khulafa'urrashidin period (due to the turmoil following the assassination of Caliph Uthman bin Affan), and second, the ambition of Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan, a governor of Syria, to become a caliph. On one hand, the assassination of Caliph Uthman bin Affan RA (referred to as the Fitnah al-Kubra) significantly fueled the emotions of Muslims, demanding justice for those involved in the assassination (Lathif, 2008). This placed his successor, Ali bin Abi Talib RA, in a difficult position due to strong demands for the prosecution of the culprits. Resolving this issue required time and caution due to the many people involved.

This situation led to widespread dissatisfaction among several factions, resulting in conflicts during Ali's RA reign, such as the Battle of the Camel (a battle between Ali and some Muslims, including Aisha RA), the Battle of Siffin (between Ali and Mu'awiyah), and the Battle of Nahrawan (between Ali and the Kharijites). Meanwhile, Mu'awiyah, who was a successful regional leader (in the Levant), also aspired to lead the Muslim community. The conflict between Caliph Ali RA and Mu'awiyah RA included the Battle of Siffin and the arbitration event (Tahkim), which failed to produce a conclusive result, neither victory for one side nor peace.

Caliph Ali RA had successfully navigated some of these crises. However, during his efforts to manage ongoing issues, he was assassinated while performing the Fajr prayer by a member of the Kharijites (former supporters of Ali RA who defected due to their extremist views). This event paved the way for Mu'awiyah to become caliph, as there were no other strong (politically) figures in the community. Hasan bin Ali RA (the grandson of the Prophet SAW) initially gained support from the people of Kufa but chose unity and avoided division among Muslims. Ultimately, Mu'awiyah RA gained legitimacy after Hasan (Muslih, 2020).

The Umayyad Dynasty's rule lasted for approximately 90 years. Among the 14 caliphs, the most influential in political developments were the five major caliphs of the Umayyad Dynasty: Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan, Abdul Malik bin Marwan, Walid bin Abdul Malik, Umar bin Abdul Aziz, and Hisham bin Abdul Malik. Caliph Mu'awiyah laid the foundations of the

Umayyad government. He effectively utilized his position by reorganizing the administrative and military systems, improving relations with those opposed to his leadership, and taking decisive and measured actions to stabilize the state. Under his rule, the process of expanding Islamic territories, which began during the Khulafa'urrashidin period, continued, including maritime expansion in the Mediterranean.

Caliph Abdul Malik revitalized the Umayyad Dynasty after it was shaken by conflicts during the previous caliph's reign. His stable rule encouraged developments in various fields, such as refining the state administration system, minting national currency, adopting Arabic as the national language, and promoting its development. This period also saw significant territorial expansion (Nasution, 2013). Caliph al-Walid ascended during a time of stability after his father's reign. He capitalized on this stability to maintain and develop existing systems, such as administration, economic prosperity, and infrastructure development. His reign marked the peak of Umayyad territorial expansion, reaching the Iberian Peninsula (Andalusia). The Umayyad Dynasty's territory extended from Southern Europe and North Africa (Maghreb) in the West to Transoxania (referred to by Arabs as "Maa Wara al-Nahr" or beyond the Oxus River, including Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan) and parts of India in the East (South Asia) (Yatim, 2017).

Caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz, although his reign was brief, made significant contributions by addressing the weaknesses of previous Umayyad caliphs. His strengths were exemplified in his righteousness, justice, and preaching. His piety, profound understanding of religious knowledge, and asceticism made him a beloved figure among the people and respected by opposition groups (Shia and Kharijites). Through his justice, he fostered social equality between the Umayyad family (nobles) and the general populace, and between Arabs and non-Arabs (Rachman, 2018). He also reformed the tax system (eliminating fraud), supervised officials, and abolished various forms of discrimination prevalent in society at that time. Regarding preaching, Caliph Umar actively promoted Islamic outreach programs, leading to the rapid spread of Islam. These three strengths facilitated prosperity, tranquility, and stability. The last significant caliph, Hisham bin Abdul Malik, is credited with maintaining the Umayyad Dynasty's existence. He achieved this through administrative advancements, including systematic and professional record-keeping (Karim, 2017).

Following Hisham's leadership, the Umayyad Dynasty faced a severe leadership crisis. There were almost no competent leaders, both in terms of leadership (political) and religious knowledge and practice. At the same time, opposition movements, previously suppressed or reconciled, resurfaced and actively mobilized (especially Shia and Kharijites). The most formidable movement was the revolutionary campaign led by some descendants of Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib (Bani Abbas) with Muhammad bin Ali as its leader. This

movement gained widespread support by symbolizing Bani Hashim (the Prophet's SAW clan). Additionally, it garnered strong backing due to public dissatisfaction with the weaknesses of Umayyad caliphs, including from non-Arab communities who felt socially marginalized (except during Umar bin Abdul Aziz's reign). Ultimately, this movement became a platform for various opposition factions against the Umayyad rule. At the end of its reign, the Umayyad Dynasty was led by a capable caliph, Marwan bin Muhammad. However, the accumulated issues rendered him unable to withstand the Abbasid revolution. The dynasty ended after the last caliph was killed following his army's defeat in the decisive battle near the Zab River (Syalabi, 1973).

In addition to its notable expansion of power and development of administrative systems, the Umayyad Dynasty was also characterized by the dominance of Arabs in governance. This dominance was evident in the many key government/political positions held by Arabs, contributing to the perception of non-Arabs as "second-class" citizens, referred to as the "Mawali" group. However, this condition was not absolute. Some non-Arabs had opportunities to contribute to governance and the development of knowledge (Sunanto, 2007). Discrimination by the government did not always persist, as efforts to eliminate it were made, especially during Caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz's reign, allowing a truly Islamic way of life to be felt. This situation can also be understood, as the Arabs were a newly successful conquering nation at that time. Similar situations occurred in history with the Romans, Mongols, modern Europeans, and others when they first became dominant conquerors.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

The era of the Rashidun Caliphs, which includes the leadership of the first four caliphs in Islam—Abu Bakr, Umar bin Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan, and Ali ibn Abi Talib—was a crucial period in Islamic history that laid the foundation for the expansive development of Islamic civilization. The Rashidun Caliphs were known for their integrity, justice, and decisiveness in leadership, leading by example and adhering firmly to Islamic principles in both their personal and public lives. Despite the absence of a formal succession system, their leadership was determined through consensus or election by the companions of the Prophet Muhammad, reflecting the principle of consultation in Islam. They faced significant political challenges, such as territorial expansion, law enforcement, and internal issues, with pragmatic approaches grounded in Islamic values. This period also witnessed rapid advancements in various fields, including science, art, architecture, and the economy, with the conquest of new territories enabling cultural exchange and the spread of Islamic knowledge. Overall, the era of the Rashidun Caliphs marked the beginning of an advanced and influential Islamic civilization, characterized by strong leadership, a just system, and an emphasis on Islamic

values that formed the foundation for broad and diverse civilizational development. Despite various challenges, their leadership wisely overcame these obstacles, contributing significantly to the progress of the Muslim community and human civilization as a whole.

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