

## APPENDIX A.

	PAGE
The Lives of Abú Merwán 'Abdu-l-malek Ibn Zohr, Abú Bekr Ibn Zohr, Ibn Bájeħ, Abú-l-walíd Ibn Roshd, and Ibn Joljol; translated from the work of Ibn Abí Ossaybi'ah, No. 7340 in the British Museum.	
I. The Life of 'Abdu-l-malek Ibn Zohr, fo. 143, <i>verso</i> . . . . .	iii
II. Abú Bekr Ibn Zohr, fo. 144 . . . . .	viii
III. Ibn Bájeħ ( <i>vulgo</i> Avempace), fo. 142 . . . . .	xii
IV. Abú-l-walíd Ibn Roshd ( <i>vulgo</i> Averroes), fo. 146, <i>verso</i> . . . . .	xvii
V. The Life of Ibn Joljol, fo. 137 . . . . .	xxiii

## APPENDIX B.

Extracts from the historical work of Waliyyu-d-dín Abú Zeyd 'Abdu-r-rahmán Ibn Khaldún Al-hadhramí Al-ishbílí Al-málekí . . . . .	xxvii
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## APPENDIX C.

An account of Al-hakem's Library and its destruction, extracted from the work of Sá'id, of Toledo . . . . .	xxxix
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## APPENDIX D.

Extract from the <i>Kitábu-l-iktifá fi akhbári-l-kholafá</i> (the book of sufficiency on the history of the Khalifs). . . . .	
An account of the conquest of Andalus . . . . .	xliii

## APPENDIX E.

Extracts from an historical work entitled <i>Ahádithu-l-imámati wa-l-siyásati</i> (traditions of commandment and government).	
Appointment of Músa Ibn Nosseyr . . . . .	lii
Músa's interview with 'Abdu-l-malek . . . . .	liii
Músa's appointment to the government of Africa . . . . .	liv
Músa's address to his soldiers . . . . .	lv
Músa's arrival in Ifrikiyyah . . . . .	lvi
Músa's address to the men on his arrival in Ifrikiyyah . . . . .	lvii
How the conquest of Zaghwán came to pass . . . . .	ib.
How the news of these victories reached 'Abdu-l-'azíz . . . . .	lviii
How the Khalif 'Abdu-l-malek was displeased with Músa's appointment . . . . .	ib.
The answer of 'Abdu-l-'azíz to his brother 'Abdu-l-malek . . . . .	lix
'Abdu-l-'azíz acquaints his brother 'Abdu-l-malek with Músa's victories . . . . .	ib.
'Abdu-l-malek's answer . . . . .	lx
Músa's conquests in the territories of Hawárah, Zenátah, and Kotámah . . . . .	ib.
Subjugation of the tribe of Senhájah . . . . .	lxi
The taking of Sejúmá, and how it happened . . . . .	lxii
Arrival of the news of this victory to 'Abdu-l-'azíz Ibn Merwán . . . . .	lxiv
Incursions at sea, and how they came to pass . . . . .	lxv
Expedition to Sús-al-aksá . . . . .	lxviii

## CONTENTS.

XXXIX

	PAGE
How and when the news of these victories was brought to Al-walíd . . . . .	lxviii
Taking of the castle of Ausáf . . . . .	lxix
The conquest of the opposite land of Andalus . . . . .	lxx
Al-walíd meditates the removal of Músa . . . . .	lxxii
'Alí Ibn Rabáh is introduced to the presence of Al-walíd . . . . .	lxxiii
What Músa found in the palace of Toledo where the table was . . . . .	<i>ib.</i>
On the spoils which God granted to Músa and his followers . . . . .	lxxiv
Músa's letter to the Khalif, apprising him of the conquest of Andalus . . . . .	lxxv
Músa makes war on the Bashkans (Basques) and Afranj (Franks) . . . . .	lxxvi
Músa quits Andalus . . . . .	lxxviii
Description of the stupendous table . . . . .	lxxix
Arrival of Músa in Eastern Africa . . . . .	<i>ib.</i>
Arrival of Músa in Egypt . . . . .	lxxx
Arrival of Músa at the court of Al-walíd . . . . .	<i>ib.</i>
Músa's arrival at the court of Al-walíd . . . . .	lxxxi
Suleymán's accession to the throne, and his conduct towards Músa . . . . .	lxxxii
The number of Músa's maulis . . . . .	lxxxiii
Suleymán questions Músa about Maghreb . . . . .	lxxxiv
Various other opinions current upon Suleymán's treatment of Músa . . . . .	lxxxv
Transcript of the sentence issued against Músa . . . . .	lxxxvii
The questions which Suleymán put to Músa on his doings and his conquests . . . . .	lxxxviii
A Chronological Table of the principal events recorded in this Translation or in the Notes . . . . .	xci
Additions and Corrections . . . . .	xciii

## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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IN the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful !

Praise be to God, the Lord of Kingdoms ; and his benediction be upon his messenger Mohammed, our refuge from perdition ; the favour of God be likewise on the family of the Prophet and on his Companions, whose radiant lights illumine the shadows of the deep, as well as on the learned theologians who plunged into the unfathomable sea of science, and who reached in their writings the superior regions of eloquence.

Thus saith the humblest and most despicable of God's servants, the sinner ; he who stands most in need of the abundant mercies of his Lord ; the weakest and most abject of his creatures ; he who is retained by the bonds of his power and strength, and who is bound by the chains of observance to the *Sunnah*, and respect to the prophetic mission, (all this being effected through the favour of the Almighty, in whom he trusts, and who is his safeguard ;) the contemptible, the perishable, the sinner, the criminal, he who is entirely destitute of the garments of piety, Ahmed Ibn Mohammed, known by the patronymic surnames of Al-makkari, Al-maleki, Al-maghrebi, Al-isha'ri ;<sup>1</sup> born, educated, and having passed the first years of his life at Telemsan, and resided afterwards in Fez the magnificent, and in Misr the victorious (Cairo) ;—may God Almighty make him good both in thought and in action, endow him with pure qualities, and blameless habits ; show him the right path in whatever he may think, plan, or undertake ; render him fit for the working of good and meritorious deeds, acts of obedience, and other works, actions, and intentions agreeable and acceptable to Him ; save him from contamination and pollution, protect him against the deceptions and lies of the Deceiver, defend him from the venomous shafts of calumny and envy, and change his pravity of thought and action, his insignificance, and unworthiness, into such a form as may be acceptable to him.—Amen.

When the Lord, whose decrees are infallibly executed on his servants, and from whose will there is no escape, ordered that we should travel away from our country, and migrate from the place of our birth and infancy, our steps were first directed towards *Al-maghrebu-l-aksá* (the extreme west), a country whose excellences and advantages would be complete, were it not that the demons of discord have been let loose in its peaceful districts, and the foaming waves of civil wars have inundated its fields. This we accomplished at the end of the holy month of Ramadhán of the year one thousand and twenty-seven of the Mohammedan flight (Sept. A. D. 1618), after having humbly implored the Almighty to facilitate our return to our native land, and to restore us to the country where good things are most abundant.

O Lord! said we, before starting for our expedition, with the utmost humility and devotion, listen to our prayer!—permit, through thy infinite bounty, that we may meet, whether in the East or the West, with whatever is good, and that we may find through our course in life such means for our maintenance as thou in thy wisdom hast destined for us,—that we may participate, wherever we reside, in thy ample favours, and live in entire obedience to thy holy precepts, as communicated by thy blessed Messenger, whom thou didst send with the prophetic mission to all nations of mankind, whether red or black, whether Arabs or Barbarians,—(may thy favour and benediction the most complete visit him, and those of his family, and his illustrious Companions and their Followers, who followed them in the path of good and meritorious deeds!) Show us the way through the cultivated plains, and the sandy deserts, that we may not miss through forgetfulness or sloth any of the places mentioned in the holy traditions; and that we may be fully awake to the sense of their sanctity and merits; direct our course through plain and mountain, through field and waste; and when we embark on the sea, when we find ourself placed between its enchantments and its horrors, when we witness the continual dashing of the restless billows, strengthen and comfort our soul, prepare us to meet its numberless perils, and defend us against its treacherous attacks; for—

“The sea is a cruel and implacable enemy; and we expect no mercy at his hands.

“Knowing the sea to be water, and ourselves to be made of clay; who will wonder if we suffer from its attacks?”<sup>2</sup>

After this prayer we set out on our travel, and, having reached the sea shore, we threw ourself into the hands of the perfidious element. But when we encountered its terrific waves, when the bone-breaking eagles, disturbed from their nests by the

hands of the wind, came flying in our faces, when we heard the mountains in the distance whistle, while the winds groaned and sighed over our heads, we placed all our confidence in the Almighty God, and trusted to surmount all obstacles by his help and protection; for whoever finds himself in danger on the sea, and trusts in any but in God, is sure of perdition. We were in this state of anxiety when, behold! the tempest increases, and the sea joins its terrific voice to the dismal tunes of the hurricane; the waves, agitated by an irresistible power, go and come, approach and disappear, and, frantic and infuriated as if they had tasted of the cup of madness, they knock and dash against each other, then disperse, then rally again as if they had lost nothing of their vigour, now rising in the air as if the hands of the sky were taking them by the top and dragging them out of their deep cavities, or as if they threatened to snatch the reins of the clouds out of the hands of their conductor; and now throwing open their frightful and dark abysses, until the bowels of the earth became visible. In this critical situation every new gust of the howling hurricane, every fresh attack of the roaring elements, were so many signs of our certain perdition; and the perpetual flapping of the shattered sails, the sight of the waves advancing in close ranks to accomplish our destruction, the awful crashings of the groaning deck upon which we stood, like so many worms on a log of wood, all were harbingers of our approaching death;—our tongue, through fear, clove to our mouth, our heart sank under the weight of our increasing terror, and we deemed ourself the victim offered in sacrifice to our implacable enemy; for wherever we cast our eyes on the rough surface of the impetuous billows, nothing was discovered to appease the fury of the element, and to share our fate; and we thought ourself the only object in the world, besides the unfathomable deep and those who might be buried in its dark abysses.

But our situation was rendered still more miserable and precarious through the watch we were obliged to keep, owing to our proximity to the territories of the infidels, (may God Almighty exterminate them all, and place their country in the possession of the Moslems!) especially Malta, that accursed island, from the neighbourhood of which whoever escapes in safety may well say that he has deserved the favour and protection of the Lord,—that dreaded spot, which throws its deadly shade on the pleasant waters of the Mediterranean,—that den of iniquity and treason,—that place of ambush, which is like a net to circumvent the Moslems who navigate its seas. So what with the danger of the treacherous Christians and the horrors of the sea, we were kept in a continual state of agitation and terror, expecting every moment to meet with our death; for we well knew the cruel disposition of the element with which we were struggling, we knew its unforgiving temper, we

knew that no courage would be sufficient to tame our adversary and break his power, no virtue enough to overcome him and humble his pride; and that no force could be mustered to prostrate him and make him obedient; we knew him to be an enemy who ought on no occasion to be trusted, and who makes no distinction between friend and foe, between poor and rich, between weak and strong, between armed and unarmed, between him who sheds tears, and him who affects sorrow.

“ There are three things without remedy in this world, and from which nobody is safe; the sea, time, and a Sultán.”<sup>3</sup>

However, God Almighty was pleased that we should escape both from the perils of the sea, and from the ambushes of our treacherous and impious enemies, the Christians; and that we should discover land, after having lost sight of it for many days; that our eyes should be invigorated and refreshed with the view of the port, after having gazed so long on the horrors of the sea; that our nostrils should be delighted with the smell of the scented gales of security, after having been affected by the nauseous and putrid exhalations of the irritated waves; lastly, that joy and contentment should succeed to sorrow and affliction. We then reached Alexandria, and after a short stay proceeded up the river to Cairo, where we began to think seriously of carrying into execution our project; so, after passing a few days in that city, full of that sublime conception and blessed object which makes the happiness and joy of all the true believers, namely, a visit to the two holy and illustrious spots of Mecca and Medina, we started for our expedition, and, leaving the sea behind us, took the route of Hejáz, trusting in God, and relying on his protection and assistance.

We arrived at Mecca, and visited its illustrious temple, and other holy spots, in the contemplation of which life almost left us, and our soul sank under the excess of its joy. Having fulfilled all the duties incumbent on a pilgrim, we besought God to make us of the number of those who pass their lives in his service; and we remained in Mecca, under the shade of its sanctity, and reaping the fruits of its blessedness, until the time for a pilgrimage to Medina arrived. This was in the first days of the month of Dhí-l-ka'dah<sup>4</sup> of the year one thousand and twenty-eight of the Hijra (in the month of September, A. D. 1619); and when the season for visiting that and other blessed spots came, we prepared for departure without delay, and set out on our intended expedition.

And when, after visiting all the sacred spots which lie between Mecca and

Medina, we set our feet in that latter city, a place which far surpasses in excellency any other country in the world, we exclaimed, in the words of a poet,—

“ Blessed be the purpose which brought us to the mother of cities (Mecca),  
“ restrained by the bonds of our faith.

“ When we quenched our thirst in the waters of Zemzém, and threw away as  
“ useless what remained of our travelling supply.”<sup>5</sup>

From Medina we returned to Cairo, where we arrived in Moharram of the year one thousand and twenty-nine. Soon afterwards we started on a visit to Al-Kods (Jerusalem), and arrived within its blessed walls in the month of Rabi' of the same year. When we had penetrated inside its famous temple, and gazed on its wonderful structure, of which no words can give an idea ; when our eyes had been almost dazzled, and our mind had nearly gone astray in the contemplation of the radiant beauties with which it is illumined, and through which God appears in more shining brightness to man, we anxiously inquired for the sacred ladder ; and having directed our steps to the spot pointed out to us, we saw the place where the best and last of Prophets had stood.

After visiting all and every one of the sacred spots contained within the precincts of the holy temple, and making a reasonable stay in Jerusalem, we once more returned to Cairo, where we fixed our residence, and whence we continued making repeated journeys to the pure valleys ; inasmuch as, up to the present year (being the one thousand and thirty-ninth of the Hijra (A. D. 1629-30), we have visited Mecca five times, and as many times has our heart leapt with joy at the approach of it,—as many times have we trod under our feet the roads of the desert leading to it. (May the Almighty God give us sufficient strength and life to persevere in this good practice !) Moreover, after the performance of our last pilgrimage, we returned to Cairo in the month of Safar of the year one thousand and thirty-seven of the Hijra (November, A. D. 1637), and stayed some time in that splendid capital, until, towards the month of Rejeb of the same year, we were suddenly seized with a great desire of visiting again the holy house of Jerusalem ; we therefore took our departure, and arrived therein at the end of Rejeb, and stayed five-and-twenty days, or thereabouts, God being pleased during that time to furnish us with whatever was necessary for our wants, and to give us the company of virtuous and learned people, from whom we derived both admonition and information. We also visited with the greatest devotion the tomb of our father Abraham, and such among the prophets as are buried with him.

At last, after having accomplished all the duties of a devout pilgrim, having visited most of the sacred spots, such as that of Moses, he who spoke with God, it came into our mind, towards the middle of Sha'bán, to travel to a city, whose excellences and beauties are apparent and manifest,—we mean Damascus, that splendid and magnificent capital, which shines with all sorts of perfections; which has large trees rocking before the wind, sweet-smelling gales which perfume its territory, places of worship and meeting frequented by the believers, houses which are the abode of the great and the honoured; a rich and luxuriant meadow, with enclosed orchards and vineyards, which are continually inviting the inhabitants to partake of their produce,—a perpetual shadow, to keep off the rays of the burning sun; flowers which look as if they were smiling, and whose sweet exhalations embalm the air; young trees whose tender shoots spread in the atmosphere a fragrance similar to that of the everlasting Paradise; and lastly, (to embrace all these perfections under one head,) a garden blooming with every variety of natural and artificial beauty, and glittering with the thousand hues of its innumerable flowers; a city which not only stands the first among those of its class, but which is abundantly provided with every thing that is useful or desirable in life, and of which a poet has said,—

“The beauties of Damascus increase with time, as the qualities of wine improve  
“in the bottle.

“Damascus has an advantage over other Eastern countries; which is, the  
“distance of her moons from the West.”<sup>6</sup>

We entered Damascus towards the latter end of the said month of Sha'bán, and had to congratulate ourselves upon our having come to it, and to thank God for having inspired us with the idea of visiting it; for no sooner did we begin to wander through its streets, and to gaze on the numerous objects that invited our attention, than our eyes were dazzled with their magnificence, and we forgot all the wonderful things that we had seen in other countries. In this way we visited some of its splendid buildings, and saw some of its great curiosities; and we were so much pleased, that, although our intention had been to stay only three days, a month passed without our thinking of our departure; and during that period of time we had ample opportunity to witness such proofs of its magnificence and beauty, as could not be contained within the limits of a volume, and which it would not be in our power to describe, were we endowed with all the talents of eloquence: for, indeed, the excellences of Damascus are so numerous, that it would be an act of madness in us to attempt their description, especially being, as we are, restrained by the principal object of this work, and pressed by the reader to expose the motives

of our undertaking. We cannot, however, abandon the subject, without stating that Damascus is the abode of happiness, comfort, and contentment; its mosque<sup>7</sup> a building uniting in itself more beauties than the most fanciful imagination can conceive, and its meadow a spot of blessedness and joy, abounding in beauties of all kinds;—

“ a place of pleasure and delight, an earthly Paradise.”

We had, before our arrival at this city, heard and read so much about it and its inhabitants—(may God prosper and defend them!)—that we had the greatest desire of meeting them; and long before we could put our project into execution we were anticipating the pleasure and utility which their company and society would afford us. We were not a little confirmed in our desire through our acquaintance in Mecca with one of its noblest and most illustrious citizens, one of those virtuous Shaikhs who are like unique pearls strung in the string of time, the right hand of the nobles, and the centre of theologians and preachers; he who is renowned for his writings and his wisdom in judicial matters, whose sentences were always like a discriminating line between truth and falsehood, between innocence and crime; the author of works whose number and merits it would be a hopeless task to describe; the inheritor of science without its troubles, and the endowed with learning and talents of the first order,—the Mufti of the Sultán of those districts, in the sect of An-no'mán,<sup>8</sup> our Lord A'bdu-r-rahmán, son of the *Shaikhu-l-islám* O'mmádu-d-dín, who never through life left the path followed by the directed. This holy man, with whose company and society God was pleased to favour us morning and evening, often told us of the city of Damascus, and of its worthy inhabitants, and strengthened us in our wish to visit it, and live amongst its people, praising in the highest terms their hospitality, their amiable disposition, their love of science, their generosity, and a thousand other brilliant qualities; so that, when we arrived at Damascus, and began to mix in company with the noble and the learned amongst its citizens; when we had witnessed enough of their excellences and virtues to dazzle our eyes, and make us lose our senses, we discovered not only that the information bestowed upon us by the learned judge was correct, but that his most vivid and eloquent descriptions, his most lavish praises, still fell short of their real merits; and that, in the words of a poet,—

“ We were surrounded by their qualities shining in every direction :

“ And although we had heard much in their praise, the report proved to be true  
“ when the meeting took place.”<sup>9</sup>

We were received by them with the greatest regard and distinction ; they hastened to show us all the wonders of their land ; the noble and the great honoured us with their consideration and their friendship ; the learned imparted to us their science, and furnished us with precious information ; every one made us the centre of his affections and the mark of his generosity. (May God remunerate them as amply as they deserve !) We experienced, wherever we went, the most cordial and amicable reception ; we were extolled and praised in spite of our ignorance, honoured and esteemed in spite of our wickedness ; thanked in spite of our inutility ; and, lastly, such was their kindness and good behaviour towards us, that we fancied ourselves one of their family.

Among the most polite and obliging was our Lord Ahmed Ibn Sháhín Effendi ;<sup>10</sup> he whose praises ornament the pages of the books, and whose panegyrics fall with more abundance than the autumnal rains ; he who is the revolving axle of the noble and the honoured, and the prince of writers and poets ; he who, taking us by the hand, led us to the discovery of unfrequented paths of literature, and who poured upon us the torrents of his generosity.

Encouraged by the favourable reception we had met with, we then came to the determination of settling for some time at Damascus—(may God preserve the city and its inhabitants !)—and began to give all our attention to the scrupulous and careful contemplation of all and every one of the beauties contained in its mosque, public buildings, palaces, houses, and streets, as well as to a minute perusal of the natural charms scattered over its fertile meadow : we thus saw and observed many things which might as so many incomparable pearls be threaded in the string of description, while we passed the evenings in eloquent and learned conversations, under the roof of excellent and generous friends, especially under that of the above-mentioned illustrious individual (Ahmed Ibn Sháhín), in whose company we spent the greatest part of the night in pleasant confabulations, exercising and inuring ourselves to the practice of literature and eloquence, drinking of the limpid waters of conviviality and friendship, presenting to each other the marrow of our hearts, spreading the carpet of mirth and good humour, unloosing the strings of formality and respect, discussing literary points, investigating the sources of tradition, diving into the unfathomable sea of theology and jurisprudence, wading through the tortuous maze of history, and travelling over distant lands and unknown regions, calling to our assistance, whenever we were assailed by doubt, the authority and testimony of the various masters in the respective sciences. It was then that such among the company as were eager for science, and covetous of information, began

to inquire about Andalus, and to entreat us to speak of its fertility and productions, to praise its excellences and advantages, to record passages of its history, which eloquence itself could not describe, and to repeat to them the precious sentences, the inestimable maxims, and the invaluable beauties that lie scattered in the writings of its historians and poets. It was then that, holding the reins of justice, and following the road of impartiality, we were imprudent and inconsiderate enough to undertake such a difficult and laborious task, and began to recite such passages of its eloquent writers and poets as we knew by heart and God was pleased to put upon our tongue, especially from the illustrious Wizír Lisánu-d-dín Ibnu-l-khattáb As-salmání,<sup>11</sup> (may God pour upon him the torrents of his mercy, and make him a participant in his ineffable graces!) whom we frequently represented and described as the knight of prose and verse composition, and the champion who always won the prize in the literary races of his time. And when we had, on many occasions, exhausted our powers in praise of the noble Wizír, when we had represented in the most brilliant colours his merits and virtues, our words happened to make an impression on the ears of our auditors; they would hear of no one but him, and talk of nothing else but his works, until he became the object of their search, and the end of their wishes and hopes; the topic of their conversation, and the idol of their hearts; and, when they had gathered with the hands of desire the abundant crops from his writings, their minds became impressed with his superiority in all the sciences, and their nostrils inhaled the scent of the flowers scattered over his writings. Then our Lord Ahmed Ash-sháhiní, the same illustrious individual in whose praise we have expatiated, the endowed with laudable intentions, asked us to quench his thirst of knowledge respecting the Wizír Lisánu-d-dín, in a work that should relate his origin, education, adventures in life, character, productions, intercourse with kings, poets, doctors, and other learned and eminent men among his contemporaries,—his glorious deeds, which he strung like so many unique pearls on the necklace of time, and his literary remains, on some of which the fatal north wind has exercised his deadly blast: he also requested us to reproduce some of the inestimable jewels, whether in prose or verse, which lie scattered in the Wizír's voluminous works,—those that dazzle with their vivid flashes the eyes of the readers, that surpass in merit all the literary productions of other countries put together, and which have travelled the roads of the sun and the moon.

But our answer was, that the undertaking was by no means an easy one, God having granted science only to a few among his most favourite creatures; we therefore declined the task upon the three following considerations: first, our

insufficiency to conquer the manifold difficulties of a subject which required almost universal knowledge, and a perfect acquaintance with all the branches of literature; secondly, our want of the necessary books to assist us in our task, since we had left our library in Maghreb, and most of the works we wanted were in the East more scarce than the griffin;<sup>12</sup> and thirdly, the nature of the enterprise abounding with cases of a most extraordinary kind, occurring with double force to a mind bent upon melancholy, as ours is, and the division of our attention between the difficulties of the subject and the unhappy events we had to relate.

However, our reasons having been completely disregarded, and our excuses not accepted, we, after some time, seeing the demand reiterated, thought of complying with it by way of acknowledgment for the great favours and attentions we owed to that illustrious individual, and promised him to undertake the task as soon as we should have returned to Cairo. We therefore set off for that city, and quitted Damascus with the greatest sorrow and regret, leaving our heart with the kind and benevolent people by whom we had been so hospitably received, and so generously treated.

Agreeably to our promise, some time after our arrival at Cairo we began the task we had taken on our shoulders, and before many weeks had elapsed we wrote a good portion of it, which would have charmed the eyes and hearts of the lovers of composition; we followed in its arrangement the most frequented paths, we ornamented it with the most precious jewels from the East and West, and we spared no labour to make it acceptable for the learned. But after this we were suddenly seized with a desire to leave our work unfinished; and our idleness representing to us this resolution of ours as an equitable one, we were first led to postpone it, as the debtor postpones the payment of his debt to his generous creditor, and little by little to lay it aside, and then at last to think of not completing what we had begun; thus striking the long space of time we had spent in its composition from the sum of our deserts, deviating from the mark of the arrow of our intention, and leaving in the deep shadows of night descriptions of things and ideas which had never occurred to the mind of any other author. We were persevering in this determination when a letter of that noble Lord came, announcing to us that no excuse whatsoever would be received for the non-fulfilment of our promise, and that he waited in the greatest anxiety the completion of our task; so we were obliged to return to our work, and, spurred by his eloquent and affectionate letter, in which he urged us on to the pursuit, we once more took the pen in our hand, decided not to lay it aside until we had brought our undertaking to an end.<sup>13</sup>

We were fast advancing in our work, when it occurred to us that were we to add to our former plan the history of Andalus, and what Islám performed in it, as well as a description of the manifold advantages which that country possesses, and the heroic deeds of its inhabitants; were we to transcribe such select pieces in prose and verse as would give the scholar an idea of the literary accomplishments of the Andalusians, and to say enough of its history and antiquities to fill the cup of the lover of those sciences, we might, without deviating from our path, (since all this falls within the scope of our subject,) make an important addition to our intended work. We had, it is true, while residing in the *Maghreb* (West), when the shades of youth were declining towards their evening, and when the high regions of thought were getting out of the reach of the attacks of fate, laboured hard on the history of Andalus; we had collected for the description of that country and its inhabitants (two subjects to fill with delight the hearts and souls of the lovers of science) the most interesting and valuable documents, and the most curious and complete written as well as oral information; we had described minutely the aptitude and superiority of the Andalusians in the sciences, their forwardness and courage in attacking the cruel enemy of God; the enchanting beauties of the spots which they formerly inhabited, the sites of their contests and battles; of all which we had amassed treasures enough to satisfy the wishes and ambition of the most excellent and scrupulous historian, and collected a sufficient number of unique pearls to bewitch the minds of the readers, and gathered in the delightful paths of their literature flowers enough to gratify the senses of the studious, and strung together many useful and hitherto unknown things, in a manner to make the eyes of the learned and ingenious start out of their orbits with pleasure and astonishment: all this, moreover, was written by us in such an elevated and pleasing style, that had it been publicly delivered by the common crier, it would have made even the stones deaf.

But, alas! the whole of this we had left in *Maghreb* with the rest of our library; so that we had nothing to assist us in our gigantic undertaking but what little still remained impressed on our mind and memory, and a few detached leaves of our work, which, when inquired for, answered our summons, and happened by chance to be among our papers: for had we at present with us all we had collected for the purpose, and what we had ornamented with the inestimable jewels of narration, all eyes would have been dazzled, and all hearts rejoiced; for certainly it would have been the most extensive and complete work ever written on the subject. But, such as it is, we offer it to our readers; for man is the son of times and circum-

stances, and every one spends according to his means: so if the arrow of our action falls short of the mark of our intention; if we remain behind in the path that we propose to follow; if our style, instead of being elevated and sublime, becomes humble and low; if, while extracting the account of an historian, we swallow too quickly the milk of the breasts of abridgment; if, instead of joining and connecting the accounts of the various writers, we leave them separated and disjointed; let our excuse be the liability of all God's creatures to error, and the facility with which authors, by over-rating their strength, fall into mistake and delusion. However, we have done our best to make it as useful and complete as possible; for he whose stock of learning is but scanty can only avoid falling into error by extreme and scrupulous attention and care, as the weak cannot avoid temptation otherwise than by continually repeating prayers.

Know ye, then, O readers of this book! that when we had determined upon the completion of our work, we began to think seriously about the most suitable division of its parts, and the proper arrangement of the information contained in it. We therefore, after much consideration, divided it into two separate parts, to each of which we gave a different title, although both make, as it were, the soul and body of the work, and are equally deserving of the unreserved attention of the studious. The first part, in order to attain better the object of our work, and for the sake of brevity, as also in order to curtail some accounts which it would have been impossible to abridge, and which would have appeared too long, we thought of dividing into eight chapters.

Chap. I. will contain a description of the island of Andalus, and of its beautiful climate and mild temperature, which is the same every where; as likewise an account of the manifold advantages and gifts with which God was pleased to endow it; its limits and geographical dimensions; the fecundity of the ground fertilized by copious rains; the fruits and productions of its soil; the imposing ruins and magnificent remains scattered over its surface; as also a detailed account of some of its principal provinces, with the most remarkable cities contained in them.

Chap. II. will show how the Moslems conquered Andalus; and how and at what time the whole of that extensive country was subdued by their victorious arms, under the command of Múza Ibnu Nosseyr, and Tárik Ibnu Zeyád, his freedman; how its rich plains became the hippodromes wherein the Arabs exercised their generous steeds, and its fields were converted into pasture-grounds and halting-

places for their camels : it will also contain the narrative of the conquest, borrowed from the most authentic sources, and such information about the early times of Islám in Andalus as we have been able to collect.

Chap. III. will be a chronological history of such illustrious Moslems as were, by their sanctity and virtues, the firm supporters of religion, or who, engaged in perpetual battle with the enemy of God, defeated him morning and evening, never resting from the fatigues of the holy war, but prosecuting it with incredible ardour through pain and toil, over hill and dale : it will likewise contain an account of the disposition and forwardness of the Andalusians to face the enemy on every occasion, relate some of their heroic deeds and praiseworthy actions, and inform the readers of their constancy and ardour in observing the holy precepts of their *Sunnah*, and defending them with drawn swords against the attacks of the infidels.

Chap. IV. will give the history of Cordova, that illustrious capital and seat of the Khalifs, from which the conquerors sallied out who trod on the necks of the impious Christians, and brought down their pride ;—of its great mosque, built by the Sultáns of the family of Merwán, and decorated with glittering magnificence, and works of art dazzling to the eye ;—of the manifold beauties contained in the two royal seats in its neighbourhood, namely, Medínatu-z-zahrá, built by An-nássir, and Medínatu-z-záhirah, which Al-mansúr erected ;—of the numerous pleasure-gardens and other spots of recreation in which its environs abound ; the extensive and fertile territory, with its productions of every kind ;—and lastly, several anecdotes and historical accounts which are intimately connected with this subject, and will fill with delight the hearts of the acute and the studious.

Chap. V. will be entirely consecrated to the history of those Andalusians who quitted their native country to travel into the distant regions of the East, and to enter the territories pure from contamination, and free from heresy ; as also to commemorate the praises which the said eminent doctors, the endowed with superior minds and virtuous propensities, lavished on Damascus, that mole on earth's cheek, that terrestrial Paradise ; together with such information respecting its principal orators and best writers among its present inhabitants as we deemed necessary to illustrate our narrative. It will also contain the conversations which these illustrious individuals, whose well-directed arrows always hit the mark of their intention, notwithstanding that their modesty and self-denial are excessive, held with the despicable and unworthy writer of the present work, when, dismounting from the camel of peregrination, he alighted amongst them, in the year one

thousand and thirty-seven of the Hijra, and had therefore an opportunity of witnessing their rare excellences, and being almost offuscated by the brightness of their virtues.

Chap. VI. A biography of several Eastern worthies, who, guided by the torch of direction, which was rapidly being extinguished in their own country, bent their steps towards Andalus, where they implanted, by their stay, the seeds of virtue and learning; and who, on their return to their native land, delighted the ears of their audience with tales respecting the countries they had visited.

Chap. VII. A sketch of the manifold gifts that God Almighty has lavished upon the people of Andalus, such as quickness of intellect, power of reason, strength of imagination, and retentiveness of memory;—their prodigal expenditure in the acquisition of knowledge, and their wonderful efforts to arrive at fame;—their superiority in all the branches of literature, as likewise some of their witty sayings and clever answers, their jokes, epigrams, satirical traits, and some selections from their writings; all tending to show their aptitude for science and literature, and their undeniable pre-eminence and superiority in all the branches of learning.

Chap. VIII. How the impious enemy of God subdued the island of Andalus, after putting in practice all his treasons and deceits against it, surrounding it with his circumventing nets, and exciting dissensions and civil wars among the kings and chiefs of the Moslems;—how the shrewd Christian acted, and how he conducted himself, until (may God confound him, and extirpate his progeny to the last!) he conquered all the territories which acknowledged the sway of Islám, and obliterated from them the worship of the only God, substituting that of the Trinity and its abominable rites, inscribing its name with the hands of sacrilege and impiety on the threshold of the temples and other places of worship consecrated to the only and indivisible God.—How the Andalusian Moslems (of Granada), surrounded on every side by the enemies of their faith, solicited in eloquent epistles, either in prose or verse, the assistance and help of their Moslem brethren of the East and West; and how, their entreaties being disregarded, under the plea that the enemy guarded all the avenues to that city, and that their forces were not sufficiently numerous to contend with the various nations of Christians who besieged it, they fell helpless and unarmed into the hands of their cruel enemy. May God restore to it the words of Islám, and re-establish in it the laws of his blessed messenger, the Lord of the Creation, (upon whom be blessing and salutation!) and expel from it and the surrounding countries all the infidel nations!

Such will be the division<sup>14</sup> and arrangement of the first part of this work, in which we have not introduced any chapter respecting the *Wizír Lisánu-d-dín*; for, as the reader will see, the second, which forms the bulk of this work, is exclusively consecrated to him, the first part being only, as it were, an episode in the life of that eminent and illustrious individual.

As to the title which we have chosen for our work, we must state that our first thought was to name it "Sweet Odour emanating from the History of the *Wizír Lisánu-d-dín Ibnu-l-khattíb*;"<sup>15</sup> but, when we determined upon adding to our plan the history of Andalus, we changed our mind, and entitled it, "*Fragrant Smell from tender shoots of Andalus, and the History of the Wizír Lisánu-d-dín Ibnu-l-khattíb*."<sup>16</sup> We must add that we were not a little stimulated to the composition of the work, and to divide it in the manner we have just described, by several reasons: the first and principal, because the individual who was the cause of the composition of this work was himself a native of Syria, and born in the illustrious city of Damascus; the second, that the conquerors of Andalus were for the most part Syrians, all men of courage and determination; the third, that the greatest part of the Arab families who settled in Andalus in the first centuries after the conquest, fixing therein their permanent residence, and carrying with them wherever they went prosperity and power, were originally from Syria; and lastly, that the city of Granada was chiefly inhabited by people from Damascus, who, struck by the resemblance which that former city bore to the capital of Syria, in its palaces, rivers, abundance of trees, and profusion of flowers, named it after their native city.

We shall now beseech the readers to look at this our book with the eyes of indulgence; not to inquire further into the motives of its being written, nor to think about him who was the principal cause of its composition; but, putting aside all these and other considerations, to place all their reliance and trust in its contents, to forgive such errors as they may detect, and to pardon the mistakes and want of judgment of the author. We further request them not to examine our narrative with the eyes of close criticism, whenever they see us struggling either with the obscurities of the language, or with the insurmountable difficulties of history; but to treat us with indulgence, and to consider, that although our work may not satisfy their wishes, yet it is not altogether devoid of utility and interest; and it may lead them to the discovery of more precious information. For our part, we are satisfied with our most intimate conviction of not having spared either time, expense, or labour, to render this book as useful and agreeable as possible, and feel confident that very few works will be found to surpass the present, or even to compete with

it, in point of abundance and diversity of matter. We therefore consider it as a valuable gift, and as such we hope that it will be received with open arms by all lovers of learning and information.

In the course of our narrative we have occasionally introduced quotations, in prose and verse, from various writers, especially whenever we deemed it expedient or necessary for the illustration of our subject ; and we have likewise brought in such anecdotes of Kings, Wizírs, Kádis, Poets, and other learned men, as we thought would be an example for future generations, and a salutary admonition for all our readers.



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OF  
THE MOHAMMEDAN DYNASTIES IN SPAIN.

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B O O K . I .

CHAP. I.

Etymology of the name of Andalus—Climate—Geographical Divisions—Dimensions of the Country—Shape—Ancient divisions—First settlers—Vandals—Africans—Romans—Ishbán, son of Titus—Bisht-ilikát—Goths—Iskhander.

IN the name of God, whose assistance we humbly beseech and implore, we shall begin by describing the Island of Andalus,—a country whose excellences are so numerous, and of such a kind, that they cannot easily be contained within the limits of a book, and that no words can be found sufficiently strong to give an idea of them. For our part, we consider Andalus as the prize of the race won by the horsemen who, at the utmost speed of their chargers, subdued the regions of the East and West.

Respecting the etymology of its name different opinions prevail ; some authors, like Ibnu Sa'id,<sup>1</sup> derive it from Andalus, son of Túbál, son of Yáfeth, son of Núh, who settled in it, and gave it his name, in like manner as his brother Sebt, son of Yáfeth, peopled the opposite land, and gave his name to the city of Sebtah (Ceuta). Ibnu Ghálib<sup>2</sup> follows the same opinion, but makes Andalus to be the son of Yáfeth. Ibnu Hayyán,<sup>3</sup> Ibnu Khaldún,<sup>4</sup> and others, derive it from *Andalosh*,<sup>5</sup> a nation of barbarians who settled there. This latter opinion seems the most probable ; but God is all-knowing.

The country of Andalus (may God restore it entire to the Moslems !) has been described both by native and foreign writers in the most pompous terms. The Wizír Lisánu-d-dín<sup>6</sup> Ibnu-l-khattíb, (may God show him mercy !) in one of his historical works, says as follows : “ God Almighty has distinguished this our “ country by endowing it with gentle hills and fertile plains, sweet and wholesome

“ food, a great number of useful animals, plenty of fruits, abundance of waters, comfortable dwellings, good clothing, beautiful vases, and utensils of every description ; fine weapons, a pure and wholesome air, a slow succession of the seasons of the year. He has also endowed its inhabitants with great aptitude for the sciences and the arts of domestic life ; acuteness of mind, quickness of intellect ; courage, ardent love of every thing which is noble, and many other brilliant qualities, which are not to be found united in people of any other country.”

Abú 'Obeyd-illah Al-bekrí Al-andalusí<sup>7</sup> compares his native country to Shám (Syria) for purity of air and sweetness of waters, to Yemen for mildness of temperature, which is every where the same, to Hind (India) for drugs and aromatic plants, to Al-ahwáz<sup>8</sup> for the magnitude of its snakes, to China for mines and precious stones, to 'Aden for the number and security of its coasts and harbours.

Geographical  
position.

Abú 'A'mir As-salámí,<sup>9</sup> in his work entitled “ *Durru-l-kiláyid wa ghurruru-l-fawáyid*, (pearls of the necklaces, and stars of useful things,) says that Andalus belongs to the climate of Shám (Syria) ; that which, of all those into which the earth is divided, is reckoned the best and most temperate, which has the finest land and waters, and which abounds most in animals, fruits, and productions of all kinds : “ that climate,” he adds, “ occupies a middle place among the other climates, and “ is therefore considered the best, it being well known that the most preferable “ portion of any thing is that which is in the middle.”

The Sheikh Ahmed Ibn Mohammed Ibn Músa Ar-rází<sup>10</sup> says that Andalus is situated at the extremity of the fourth climate towards the West, and that all learned authors agree in describing it as a country with delightful valleys, and fertile lands, rich in all sorts of agricultural productions, watered by many large rivers, and abounding in springs of the sweetest waters. It contains but few wild beasts, or venomous reptiles ; the air in winter is mild, and the coolest breezes temper the heat of summer. The climate is so temperate all the year round as to make the transition from one season to another almost imperceptible ; in fact, it may be said that a perpetual spring reigns all over Andalus, this being the reason why most of the fruits of earth grow in all seasons, and the crops succeed one another without interruption ; owing, too, to the different qualities of the soil, the same produce may be obtained all the year round in various provinces of Andalus ; as, for instance, on the coast and the lands adjoining to it all fruits of the earth are very forward, while in the Thagher<sup>11</sup> and its districts, and especially on the mountains, where the air is colder, they are, on the contrary, very backward. Most of its fruits, also, partake of a flavour and beauty which are not common to those of other countries.<sup>12</sup>

That Andalus is situate in the fourth climate appears sufficiently demonstrated