

by the words of the geographer Idrísí, as quoted by Ibnü Sa'íd: "Andalus," says that author, "has no portion of its territory within the third climate, but the fourth passes by its southern coast, and includes Cordova, Seville, Murcia, and Valencia; thence it goes towards Sicily, encloses this and other islands in the neighbourhood, leaving the sun at the back. The fifth passes by *Toleytoleh* (Toledo), *Sarakostah* (Saragossa) and the environs; then by *Arghon*<sup>13</sup> (Aragon), at the southern extremity of which is the city of *Barshelónah* (Barcelona), thence it proceeds to Rome and the country subject to that city, divides the *Bahru-l-Bandáikeh* (Gulf of Venice) into two parts, and comprises *Costantíniyeh* the great (Constantinople) and its territory, leaving behind the planet called *Az-zahrah* (Venus). The sixth passes by the northern coast of Andalus, that which is washed by the waters of the circumambient sea, includes part of Castile<sup>14</sup> and Portugal,<sup>15</sup> a great portion of the country of the Franks, Georgia, and the country of the Slavonians and Russians, leaving behind the planet called *Ottárid* (Mercury). The seventh comprises the circumambient sea to the north of Andalus, the island called *Alinkilterrah*<sup>16</sup> (England) and others in the neighbourhood, as well as the remainder of the countries of the Franks and Slavonians, Georgia, and Berján.<sup>17</sup>—According to Al-beyhakí<sup>18</sup> the island of Túlí,<sup>19</sup> and the two islands of Al-ajbál<sup>20</sup> (Norway) and An-nisá<sup>21</sup> (Amazones) and several other districts of Russia, fall within the limits of this seventh and last climate, which has the moon at its back."

Respecting the name of *Al-jezrah* (the island) by which all authors agree in designating Andalus, it must not be understood by it that that country is, properly speaking, an island; since it is well known to be joined to the great land (continent) by the chain of mountains called *Al-bort*<sup>22</sup> (Pyrenees), but the Arabs in general call by this name all those countries which are surrounded by water on every side but one, and this being the case with Andalus, it was called *Al-jezrah*. Two principal seas wash the shores of Andalus; on the northern and western side the circumambient sea (Ocean), on the southern and eastern the sea of *Shám* (Mediterranean). By the sea of *Shám* we understand that sea which begins at the lower extremity of Andalus, at a place on its south-western coast called *Jeziratu-l-khadhrá*<sup>23</sup> (Algesiras), between Tangiers in Africa and the coast of Andalus, taking from thence its course towards Syria. The width of this sea at the said spot is generally stated at eighteen miles; which is also the distance between *Jezirah Tarif*<sup>24</sup> (Tarifa) and *Kasr Masmúdah*<sup>25</sup> (Alcasar), near Ceuta. Between these two last mentioned places there was once a bridge, which, according to common opinion, Iskhander (Alexander) ordered to be built,

that he might pass from Andalus into the opposite land of Africa. But of this more will be said in the course of this narrative.

The narrow sea thus emerging from between the two coasts was called *Bahru-z-zokák*<sup>26</sup> (the narrow sea). Although the distance between the two shores is so small, as we have already observed, this strait is nevertheless very difficult to be passed, owing to the continual agitation of its waves, and the frightful whirlpools occasioned by the meeting of the two seas. We have said that the width of the straits at the narrowest part was eighteen miles; it is double that width at Ceuta, and from thence the sea begins to grow wider and wider, until at some places it reaches 800 miles in breadth, or perhaps more; as happens at Súr (Tyre), on the coast of Syria. This sea contains many islands, which some geographers estimate to be twenty-eight in number, and of which the principal are Sicily, Malta, Sardinia, Corsica, Crete, Corfu, and so forth.

Dimensions of  
the country.

The dimensions of the country are differently stated: Al-mes'údí,<sup>27</sup> in his "Golden Meadows," says, "Andalus is very thickly peopled; nearly two months of continual marching are required to traverse it from one end to the other. It contains nearly forty cities of the first rank." Ibn Alisa'<sup>28</sup> agrees with Al-mes'údí in this particular; his opinion is that the length of Andalus from Ariónah<sup>29</sup> (Narbonne) to Ishbónah (Lisbon) is equal to the distance that a horseman well mounted may travel in sixty days; but this is decidedly an error, first of all because Narbonne is, by that author, placed within the limits of Andalus, while it is evident that it belongs to another country; and secondly, because the distance between those two cities is much overrated, as most of the authors who have written on the subject estimate it at only one month and a half's march.

Ibnu Sa'id, however, endeavours to adjust the difference by supposing that Ibn Alisa' meant a horseman *not* well mounted, and travelling by short stages, and that his text was vitiated by the copyist. He himself adopts the computation of the Sheríf Idrísí as that which deserves more credit, namely, that the length of Andalus is of one month's march. The same opinion is followed by Al-hijárí,<sup>30</sup> who, having, as he informs us, consulted with well informed and trustworthy travellers on the subject, learnt from them that a little more than a month's good travelling was sufficient to traverse Andalus in its whole length.

The last mentioned author (Al-hijárí) estimates the distance from Lisbon to *Al-hájiz*<sup>31</sup> (the Pyrenees) at more than one thousand miles, but whoever wishes to obtain more information on the subject may consult Ibnu Sa'id, who has treated the matter at full length.

The width of Andalus measured at the top, towards the north-east, is forty miles, this being the length of those mountain barriers which separate it from the country of the Franks, and which stretch along from the Mediterranean to the Ocean; if measured at the centre, as for instance drawing a line to pass by Toledo, it is sixteen days' march.

Its shape, according to all accounts, is that of a triangle; much difference, <sup>Shape.</sup> however, exists among geographers respecting its north-eastern <sup>32</sup> angle, namely, that which falls in the neighbourhood of Narbonne: some authors, like Ahmed Ibn Mohammed Ar-rází and Ibnu Hayyán, placing it in Narbonne, a city immediately facing Bordhil (Bordeaux) <sup>33</sup> on the north-east; while others only place it in the neighbouring districts. But this, as well as other points concerning the topography of Andalus, has been decided by the Sheríf Idrísí, an author in whose accounts implicit reliance may be placed, not only because he traversed that country in all directions, navigated its seas, and surveyed its coasts, but also on account of the great knowledge he acquired in the science of geography.

The words of Ar-rází on the subject are as follows: "The shape of Andalus is that of a triangle, the angles of which are placed, one at Kádís (Cadiz), where stands the famous tower with an idol at the top, or rather at that spot on the extreme south where the Mediterranean begins, directing its course to the east. The other to the east of Andalus, between the cities of Narbonne and Bordhil, which are now in the hands of the Franks, falling diametrically opposite to the two islands of Mayórcah (Mallorca) and Menórcah (Menorca), and at an equal distance from the Ocean and Mediterranean, which in those parts are separated only by an intervening tract of land called *Al-abwáb* (the Gates), being gorges or passes which serve as a communication between the island of Andalus and the great land (continent) of which Afranjah (France) forms part. At this place the distance between the two seas is of two days' march, Narbonne being on the coast of the Mediterranean, and Bordhil facing the Ocean. The third angle is placed in the north-west, in that spot of the country of *Jalikiyah* (Galicia), where there is a mountain near the sea, and on it a very high tower, with an idol on the top, similar to that of Kádís, and looking towards Birtániah (Britain)."

Ibnu Sa'íd says, "having once asked the opinion of several men learned in these matters, I was told that Idrísí's statement seemed the most worthy of being received, namely, that neither Narbonne nor Bordhil were within the limits of Andalus, and therefore that the angle in the east must be placed between the cities of Barshelónah (Barcelona) and Tarkónah (Tarragona), at a spot called *Wádi-Zamlakalto*, <sup>34</sup> close to the mountain barrier which there

“ divides Andalus from the continent, where many different languages are spoken. “ These mountains have several passes or gates, which a Grecian king<sup>35</sup> ordered “ to be opened in the rock with fire, vinegar, and iron, for before his time there “ was no communication whatsoever by land between Andalus and the continent. “ The said gates or passes face that part of the *Bahru-z-zokák* (Mediterranean) “ which divides the two islands of Mallorca and Menorca, this being a fact which “ is corroborated by the assertions of all travellers in those districts. The second “ and third angles are placed by Idrísí in the same situation that the authors “ before mentioned agree in giving them, viz., in the promontory called '*Ajma'u-l-bahrání*,<sup>36</sup> near the city of Shant Yakóh (Santiago) in Galicia, where the “ famous beacon stands; and in the mountain of *Al-aghár*,<sup>37</sup> near Cadiz, the “ site of the well-known tower which has an idol on the top of it. Near this “ mountain, in a south-west direction, is the spot where the *Bahru-z-zokák* (narrow “ sea) emerges from the Ocean, and from whence, after washing the southern and “ eastern coasts of Andalus, it reaches one side of the Pyrenees.”

Andalus was divided, following the words of Ar-rází, into two parts:—Andalus *Al-gharbí* (Western), and Andalus *Ash-sharkí* (Eastern), the division having been made according to the prevailing winds, the fall of the rains, and the course of the rivers. The *Gharbí* (western) was that part of Andalus whose rivers empty their waters into the Western Ocean, and where it rains when the winds blow from the western quarter; the *Sharkí* (eastern), which was also called *Al-aksá*, or the remote, being, on the contrary, that whose rivers flow to the east, and where it rains when the easterly winds blow. The dividing line between these two districts was placed by Ar-rází in the mountains of the Basques (*Al-bashkans*) towards the east, from thence drawing a line to the city of Santa Maria,<sup>38</sup> then inclining a little towards the district of Agreda, in the neighbourhood of Toledo, and at last approaching that part of the Mediterranean which washes the shores of the modern Cartagena, which belongs to the district of Lórcah (Lorca). All the countries falling eastward of this line were therefore comprised within the limits of Eastern Andalus, and those to the west within those of Western Andalus. The boundaries of the latter were: to the north-west, and west, the Ocean; to the south the Western Sea, whence the Mediterranean, which the ancients called also *Bahr Tirren*,<sup>39</sup> issues to take its course towards Syria. *Bahr Tirren* means the sea that divides the globe: it was called also the Great Sea.<sup>40</sup>

Abú Bekr 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abdi-l-hakam, known by the surname of Ibn An-nadhám,<sup>41</sup> treating of the said division, adds a few particulars which we repeat here for the sake of information. “ Andalus,” he says, “ was divided into two “ parts by ancient geographers, who observed that whenever winds from the west

Ancient divisions.

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“ prevailed, it rained much in Western Andalus, and there was drought in the Eastern; and, on the contrary, when the wind blew from the east, rain fell in abundance in the Eastern, and the Western was dry and parched. The same difference was observed respecting the course of rivers, for all the rivers in Western Andalus flow from the east to the west, forcing their way through those mountains<sup>42</sup> that traverse it in the middle, and are only a branch detached from the mountains in the north-western districts. In the Eastern all rivers flow from west to east, for although some of them take a more southern direction, yet they all spring from the said mountains in the centre of Andalus, and discharge their waters into the Mediterranean, which goes on to Syria, and is known also by the name of Bahru-r-rúmí (the sea of Greece). As to the rivers of the north-western districts<sup>43</sup> (Al-Júf), including those of the country of the Galicians, and its dependencies, all empty themselves into the great ocean (Atlantic), which washes the shores of those countries.”

The same author (Ibn An-nadhdhám) says that the first people who, after the deluge, settled in Andalus, according to the accounts of foreign writers, were a nation called Andalush, who gave their name to the country. This word *Andalush* being in the course of time corrupted by the Arabs, who changed the letter *shin* into *sin*, it was written and pronounced Andalus, which is the present name of this country.<sup>44</sup> Those barbarians came to Andalus and settled in it; and their numbers having increased considerably, in the course of time they filled the whole country and established different kingdoms in it. But being idolaters (*Majús*), and otherwise inclined to depravity and corruption, they lived in entire disobedience to the divine precepts, until God Almighty, perceiving their obstinacy, withdrew the rain from them, and the whole country was thereby exposed to the most dreadful sterility; fountains sank into the bowels of the earth, rivers altered their course, trees dried up, plants withered, and both men and beasts experienced the most raging thirst, owing to which most of the inhabitants perished, with the exception of a few who escaped from death by flying into distant lands. Thus freed from these people, Andalus became a desert, and continued so for one hundred years,<sup>45</sup> for that great calamity was not confined to any part of its territory, but ravaged the whole country from the Pyrenees to the furthest extremity in the Western or Green Sea. The reign of the Andalush had lasted one hundred and odd years.

At last, after Andalus had remained in that state for the said period of years, God Almighty was pleased to send other settlers; these were certain people whom the king of Africa had banished his dominions, because of their having excited sedition in his state, and instigated his subjects to revolt against him.

After making war against them until they were nearly exterminated, he caused the few who remained to be embarked on board some vessels, and giving them for commander an officer of the name of Batrikus, he allowed them to go whither they pleased. Batrikus and his men first cast anchor at a place on the western shore of Andalus, and settled at Cadiz. Having afterwards advanced into the interior of the country, they found that, owing to the fall of rain, the land had recovered its former aspect, the fields were adorned with verdure, the rivers flowed, the fountains ran, and the trees were covered with leaves. Encouraged by what they saw, they proceeded still farther, spread themselves about the country, extended their settlements, built cities and towns, and increased their numbers by marriage. However, they settled in preference in that part of the country between the place of their landing in the west, and the country of the Franks in the east, and appointed kings to rule over them and administer their affairs. Their religion was the same as that of their predecessors in the country, that is, they worshipped idols. They fixed their capital at Talikah (Italica), a city now in ruins, and which once belonged to the district of Ishbílah (Seville). But, after a period of one hundred and fifty-seven years, during which eleven kings of that race reigned over Andalus, God Almighty permitted that they should all be annihilated by the barbarians of Rome, who invaded and conquered the country.

Romans.

“ After the defeat and destruction of the Africans, the empire of Andalus devolved to the people of Rome and their king Ishbán, son of Titus,<sup>46</sup> after whom Andalus was called *Ishbániah*. Some authors assert that the real name of this king was Isbahán, and that he was called so on account of his being born in the city of Isfahán; only that the barbarians corrupted it and called him Ishbán; but, be this as it may, certain it is that this king Ishbán founded Seville, and called it after his name *Ishbániah*, which in after time became also the appellation of the whole country, owing to the numerous ruins of works and edifices erected by him, which are still visible in many parts of Andalus. This king Ishbán is generally held as one of the conquerors of the earth. He invaded Andalus, and by the favour of God, who gave victory to his arms, he made war against the inhabitants, dispersed their armies, slaughtered and captured their men, and besieged them at last in their capital, the city of Italica. The Africans made a most desperate resistance, and, the place being very strong, held out a considerable time, until Ishbán, impatient of the delay, caused the city of Seville to be built opposite to Italica, and, pressing on the siege, took it by storm. By the taking of Italica, which he ordered to be demolished, and its marbles and effects carried to his new city, the whole of Andalus submitted to Ishbán, who, having completed the building of Seville, chose it for his court

“ and residence, established his authority permanently, increased his armies, and  
“ pursued his career of conquest. Scarcely two years had elapsed when he  
“ sailed from Seville with a fleet, attacked Ilía,<sup>47</sup> which is the same as Al-Kods  
“ (Jerusalem) the illustrious, plundered and demolished it, killed one hundred  
“ thousand Jews, spared one hundred thousand, and caused its marbles and  
“ effects to be transported to Andalus. This Ishbán further subdued all his  
“ enemies, and his reign was very prosperous.” The preceding account is taken,  
word for word, from Ibn An-nadhám. We may add to it what a certain historian  
says to prove the taking of Jerusalem, although he attributes the conquest to  
another king, namely, that most of the wonderful things which the Moslems  
found among the spoils of Andalus at the time of the conquest, such as the  
table of Suleymán, son of Dáúd, (upon whom be peace!) which Tárik Ibn  
Zeyád found in a temple at Toledo, and the pearl necklace taken by Músa Ibn  
Nosseyr from the church at Merida, as well as a great many other precious objects  
and jewels, of which a more ample description will be given hereafter, were part  
of the share in the spoil which, at the taking of Jerusalem by Bokht Nasser,  
fell to the lot of a king of Spain, whose name was Berián,<sup>48</sup> and who was present  
at the conquest of that city. The whole of these precious objects had been in  
former times the property of the Prophet Suleymán, son of Dáúd, for whose use  
the Jinn had constructed them. How the contradictory accounts of these two  
historians are to be adjusted we cannot decide, unless Ishbán and Berián be the  
same person: God only is all-knowing.

To return to Ishbán. Ibnu Hayyán, in his historical work entitled “ the book <sup>Ishbán.</sup>  
“ of the seeker of information respecting the History of the Barbarians,”<sup>49</sup> says  
that this Ishbán was once a very poor man from the lower ranks of society, and  
as he was one day engaged in ploughing a field with his oxen, Al-khadher<sup>50</sup> (on  
whom be peace!) appeared before him, and addressed him thus: “ O Ishbán, thou  
“ art destined to perform great deeds; thou shalt reign, and thy fame shall spread  
“ far and wide. When thou takest Ilía, be kind to the descendants of the  
“ Prophet.” And Ishbán answered, “ Thou art jesting, no doubt, or I am not  
“ the person thou meanest, for I am a poor and weak man, and am obliged to  
“ hire out my services to gain a living, and certainly it is not for people of my  
“ class that the empire is reserved.” “ No matter,” replied Al-khadher, “ what  
“ I tell thee is the plain truth; it is predestined, and it shall happen: He has  
“ decreed it who has the power to change that dry rod thou bearest in thy  
“ hand into a green bough.” Ishbán looked, when lo! it suddenly turned  
green, flourished, and was covered with leaves. Ishbán was astounded when he  
saw the miracle; he tried to speak, but his tongue clove to his mouth; he looked

for Al-khadher, but Al-khadher was gone, he had vanished from his sight. However, the words of the Prophet remaining deeply impressed on his mind, he began to turn over what had been said to him, and the result was that he soon afterwards left his master's service, and associated with men of courage and determination, amongst whom he became conspicuous for his prowess, until he arrived at power and performed what has been related. His reign lasted twenty years, and he transmitted the empire to his posterity, of whom fifty-five kings ruled over Andalus.

Bishtilikát or  
Visigoths.

After this the country was invaded by other barbarians coming from Rome, and called Bishtilikát,<sup>51</sup> who, with their king Talubush,<sup>52</sup> son of Beytah, at their head, arrived in Andalus, after conquering on their way the country of the Franks, which they governed by their prefects. This took place about the time of the resurrection of the Massih (anointed), son of Mariám, (on whom be peace!) They conquered the whole of Andalus, and fixed their court at Merida, remaining in undisturbed possession of the country during the reign of twenty-seven monarchs, until they themselves were subdued by the Goths, who with their king at their head invaded Andalus, and separated it for ever from the empire of Rome.

Goths.

The Goths fixed their capital at Tolétalah (Toledo). However, Ishbílah still continued to be the abode of the sciences, and the dwelling-place of the most noble among the Ishbánians. About this time the Apostles sent by 'Isa Al-massih (the anointed) began to wander about the world, calling the people to his religion. In some countries their words were heard, and thousands of people embraced the religion which they preached; in others they were unheard, and put to death. Among those who adopted their creed, and honoured the Apostles, was Khoshandinus<sup>53</sup> (Constantine), king of the Goths, who not only embraced Christianity, but called upon his subjects to do the same. This Khoshandinus is held by the Christians as the greatest king they ever had, and as the most accomplished, upright, virtuous, and wise monarch that can be imagined. It was he who introduced Christianity into his dominions, where it has flourished ever since, and used to decide in all law cases with the assistance of the Gospels, those books upon which various opinions prevail, as also upon their writers or compilers. Several kings of the posterity of Khoshandinus reigned after him in Andalus, until that country was finally subdued by the Arabs, by whose means God Almighty was pleased to make manifest the superiority of Islám over every other religion.

The number of kings of Gothic descent who reigned over Andalus is stated in the old Christian chronicles to have been thirty-six, from Atánáuinus,<sup>54</sup> who

reigned in the fifth year of the Emperor *Filibus*,<sup>55</sup> in 407 of the era of *Safar*,<sup>56</sup> from which the barbarians compute their years, to Ludherik, their last king, who reigned in 749<sup>57</sup> of the said era; and in whose time the Arabs conquered Andalus and overthrew the Gothic empire: their domination, moreover, is said to have lasted 342 years.

However, there are not wanting authors who make of the Goths and the Bishtilikát only one nation, but the generality think, as we have said, that they were distinct people, that the latter were the barbarians of Rome, that they fixed their court at Merida, and that the kings of their race were twenty-seven in number; that the Goths came afterwards, subdued the country, and made the city of Toledo the seat of their empire. All agree, however, in stating the number of their kings to be thirty-six. The Goths, according to Ar-rázi, are the sons of Yájúj, son of Yáfeth, son of Núh; others give them a different origin.

Before leaving the subject of the ancient history of Andalus, we deem it proper to transcribe here the words of the Kádí-l-kodá Ibnu Khaldún Al-hadhramí,<sup>58</sup> in his great historical work. "The opposite land," he says, "which the barbarians call *Andalush*, is inhabited by various nations of western Franks, among which the most powerful and numerous are the *Jalalcah* (Galicians). Hundreds of years before the manifestation of Islám, the Goths, after fighting many battles with the Latins, laid siege to their capital, the city of Rome; after this, peace was made between them, one of the conditions being that the Goths should go to Andalus; and they accordingly went to that country and took possession of it. When the Greeks and Latins embraced Christianity, they induced the nations of Franks and Goths who dwelt beyond them in the west to do the same, and they accordingly became Christians. The Goths, who had possession of Andalus, established their capital in Toledo; but it was not always so, for in the course of time their kings resided by turns in Seville, Cordova, or Merida,<sup>59</sup> besides the above-mentioned city. Their dominion lasted for nearly 400 years, until God Almighty was pleased to spread Islám and conquest over their country. Their king at that time was named Ludherik, an appellation generally given by the Goths to their kings, as the Romans call their emperor Kaysar (Cæsar), and the Sicilians name their king Jerjíz."<sup>60</sup>

If we are to believe the ancient traditions, Iskhander (Alexander) must also have resided in Andalus; the remains, too, of a bridge erected by him, between Tangiers and Algesiras, are reported by Idrísí as still existing in his time. The building of the bridge originated thus: It is generally asserted that, in times of old, the Mediterranean was a lake surrounded by land on every side, like the sea of

Iskhander  
comes to  
Andalus.

Tabaristán (the Caspian sea), whose waters have no communication whatsoever with those of other seas, and that Andalus and the opposite land of Africa were joined together so as to form only one continent, owing to which the people of the remote West (*Maghrebu-l-aksa*) were continually making incursions into Andalus, and visiting its inhabitants with destruction and war. On the arrival of Iskhander in Andalus, the people appeared before him, and humbly besought him that he would put a stop to the hostile incursions of their neighbours, upon which Iskhander, having taken the subject into consideration, called together his architects and geometricians, and bid them appear in his presence on the spot now occupied by Bahru-z-zokák (Straits of Gibraltar). He then commanded them to measure the level of the two seas (the Ocean and Mediterranean), which being done, the first (the Ocean) was found to be a little the higher. This being reported to Iskhander, he issued immediate orders for the demolition of all the cities which stood on the coast of the Mediterranean, enjoining at the same time that they should be rebuilt farther into the country on more elevated situations. He next caused a deep trench or canal to be dug between Tangiers and Andalus, and the digging was carried so deep into the earth that the crests of the mountains of the lower world became visible.<sup>61</sup> When the excavation was completed, a wharf,<sup>62</sup> of great dimensions, and built with stone and mortar, an admirable work of art, was erected all along the coast of Andalus, measuring in length twelve miles, the distance which then separated the two seas. Another wharf of similar dimensions was constructed along the coast of Tangiers, and the space left between the two was six miles, which is exactly the width of the straits at that spot. This being done, he caused another great excavation to be made on the side of the Ocean, and, when every thing was ready, the waters of the great sea (Ocean) were let into the excavated space between the two wharfs, but with such a fury did they rush into the Mediterranean that its bed was filled, the neighbouring countries were inundated, many cities were submerged, and thousands of people perished in the waves. The waters covered both the wharfs, and rose to a height of eleven ells. The wharf nearest to Andalus is sometimes visible at low water, when it looks like a great parallel line; the inhabitants of the two islands<sup>63</sup> call it *Al-kantarah* (the bridge). As to the African one, it is no where visible, having been completely swallowed up by the waves, which inundated on both sides a piece of ground measuring twelve miles, and were only checked in their progress by the mountains on either side. The ports in this strait are, on the side of Africa, Kasru-l-majáz (Alcasar), Tangiers, and Ceuta; on the side of Andalus, Jebel Tárik (Gibraltar), Jezírah Taríf (Tarifa), Jezíratu-l-khadhrá (Algeiras), and others.

Between the last-mentioned port and Ceuta is the widest part of the strait. The preceding has been abridged from Idrísí, who treats the subject at full length.<sup>64</sup>

We shall now pass to the description of some of the principal cities of Andalus ; but before engaging in this we deem it necessary to state, that, owing to the plan we have adopted in writing this work, it may happen that in transcribing or extracting the accounts of different historians some facts are repeated, and others entirely contradicted ; but let our excuse be that we have been obliged to connect, one with another, the narratives of writers of all countries and ages.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife  
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

## CHAPTER II.

Division of Andalus into three great districts—The central—Cordova—Granada—Toledo—Malaga—Almeria—Jaen.

LET the reader know that the Island of Andalus, (may God Almighty restore it entire to the Moslems!) was divided into three great districts, the central, the eastern, and the western.<sup>1</sup> The *central* comprised many cities of the first order, and which might be called kingdoms, as their jurisdiction extended over populous districts and large governments, as, for instance, Cordova, Granada, Malaga, Toledo, Jaen, Almeria.

Cordova.

Among the great cities of Andalus, Cordova has no doubt the preference. Its mosque, of which we shall treat elsewhere, and the famous bridge called *Al-jezr*,<sup>2</sup> built, according to Ibnu Hayyán, in the Khalifate of 'Omar Ibn 'Abdi-l-'azíz, and under the direction of the governor who then administered the affairs of Andalus<sup>3</sup> in his name, are objects which have occupied the imagination and wit of the poets. Amongst others, an Andalusian doctor has said—

“Cordova surpasses all other cities on earth in four principal things: its bridge over the Guadalquivir, its great mosque, the city of Az-zahrá, and the sciences therein cultivated.”

The following description occurs in the *Al-mishab* of Ibnu-l-hijári:—“Cordova was, during the reign of the Bení Merwán, the cupola of Islám, the meeting place of the learned, the court of the Sultáns of the family of Umeyyah, and the residence of the most illustrious tribes of Yemen and Ma'd. Students from all parts of the world flocked thither at all times to learn the sciences of which Cordova was the most noble repository, and to derive knowledge from the mouth of the doctors and ulemas who swarmed in it. Cordova is said to have been to Andalus what the head is to the body. Its river is one of the finest in the world, now gliding slowly through level lawns, or winding softly across emerald fields sprinkled with flowers, and serving it instead of robes; now flowing

“ through thickly planted groves, where the song of birds resounds perpetually in the air ; and now widening into a majestic stream to impart its waters to the numerous wheels constructed on its banks, or communicating to the plants and flowers of the vicinity freshness and vigour.”

It is related of the Sultán Ya'kúb Al-mansúr,<sup>4</sup> son of the Sultán Yúsef, and grandson of the Sultán 'Abdu-l-múmen Ibn 'Alí, that he once asked one of his generals what the people said about Cordova. His answer was the following saying, so common amongst the people ; the North of Cordova is *Shammám*, the West *Komám*, the South *Modám*, she herself and Baghdád are paradise ; meaning by *Shammám* the beauty of the mountain of Roses, by *Komám* the sweetness of all the fruits growing in her meadows, and by *Modám* her river.<sup>5</sup>

Another anecdote is told of his father the Sultán Yúsef: they say that he once asked Abú 'Omrán Músa Ibn Sa'íd Al-'ansí<sup>6</sup> to give his opinion about Cordova, and to describe its advantages, and that Abú 'Omrán having declined to do so unless he heard before what the Sultán himself thought on the subject, the Prince of the faithful then said, “ What I know about Cordova is this, that during the dynasty of the Bení Umeyyah, and when it was the capital of their empire, its limits were considerably enlarged, and its population increased most rapidly ; that its streets, houses, public buildings, and palaces were almost innumerable ; the revenues arising from taxes very considerable, and the productions of agriculture exceedingly plentiful ; that a very fine river washes its walls, that the temperature is mild, and lastly, that it is placed in the heart of Andalus. This is all I know about Cordova.” “ What then remains for me to say, O Prince of the faithful !” said Abú 'Omrán.

The Imám Ibnu Bashkúwál,<sup>7</sup> quoting the words of Abú Bekr Ibn Sa'ádeh,<sup>8</sup> gives another anecdote respecting Cordova. “ Abú Bekr,” he says, “ and his brother travelled upon a certain occasion to Toledo, where, soon after their arrival, they went to visit the Ustedh Abú Bekr Al-makhzúmí, who having asked them whence they came, Abú Bekr answered ‘ from Cordova ;’ ‘ and when ?’ said Al-makhzúmí ; ‘ just now,’ replied Abú Bekr. ‘ Then,’ said the Sheikh, ‘ come nearer to me, that I may smell the air of Cordova on thy garments.’ ‘ I approached him,’ says Abú Bekr, ‘ and he began to smell my head and to kiss it, and then, bidding me to take a pen and paper, he dictated to me the following verses extempore :

‘ O my beloved Cordova ! when shall I see thee again ! when shall the time come

‘ When I may see the clouds pouring torrents of rain upon thy western quarters, and the thunder shaking with violence the roofs of thy houses.

‘Thou art like an enchanted spot; thy fields are luxuriant gardens, thy earth of various colours resembles a block of rose-coloured amber.’”

But the most elegant description of Cordova that we have read any where is undoubtedly that contained in the *risáleh* (epistle) of Ash-shakandí.<sup>9</sup> As we shall often have occasion to refer to it in the course of this work, we deem it necessary to acquaint the reader with the motives which led to the writing of that composition. Ibnu Sa’id tells us, on the authority of his father, who was an eye-witness, that a dispute once arose in presence of Abú Yahya Ibn Abí Zakariyyá, Lord of Ceuta, between Abú Yahya Ibnu-l-mo’allem, a native of Tangiers, and the Sheikh Ash-shakandí of Cordova, on the advantages of their respective countries, Africa and Andalus, each claiming the superiority for the land of his birth: the conversation growing warmer, Ash-shakandí said to his opponent, “Were it not for Andalus, Africa, thy country, would never have been known, nor would its advantages, whatever they may be, have been justly appreciated, had not our historians and poets pointed to them in their writings: were I not afraid of annoying the illustrious individuals in whose company we are, I would soon prove to thee the truth of what I advance.” “By the Lord,” exclaimed the Amír, who was lending an attentive ear to the arguments of the contending parties, “go on, that is just what we want,” and his countenance was all of a sudden illumined by the rays of vehement curiosity. Ibnu-l-mo’allem then replied—“Dost thou really mean to say that excellency and power reside any where else but amongst us? Prove it.” Ash-shakandí was on the point of undertaking the defence of his country, when the Amír interposed and said “the subject is too important to be treated thus extempore; let each of you retire, and compose a *risáleh* (epistle) in praise of his own country; you may then treat the subject at large, and I shall be enabled to decide between you.” Ash-shakandí then produced the master-piece of eloquence and learning to which frequent allusion will be made in the course of this narrative, and from which we borrow the following:

“Praise be ascribed to God who permitted that there should be in Andalus people to take into their hands the praises of those who distinguished themselves; Him who makes lasting whatever he pleases, and who has no one to oppose him, and no one to find fault with him; since who will call the day darkness? who will say ugly to a handsome face? I have found a subject abundant with matter, since I have been endowed with a tongue to express and utter. I praise Him because he made me one of his creatures, because he chose me to be one of those who acknowledge and adore him, because he caused me to be sprung from a noble and illustrious race, because he gave me a mind to

“ admire and a tongue to praise the meritorious deeds, and the worthy qualities  
 “ of my countrymen ; and I ask his blessing and favour for our Lord Mohammed,  
 “ his illustrious messenger, and may God’s everlasting peace and salvation be on  
 “ his family and companions—those of the good deeds and pure intentions !

“ But to proceed,—I have been stirred out of my tranquil state, and disturbed  
 “ out of my peace ; I have been driven out of my pacific disposition to defence and  
 “ contradiction by a disputer on the excellences of Andalus, who wishes to separate  
 “ what is joined, and that we should bring to him things which neither spectators  
 “ ever saw nor hearers ever heard of before, or if any did, they never transmitted  
 “ their knowledge to us, since neither those who saw, nor those who heard, were  
 “ authorized to do so.<sup>10</sup> He pretends to make Africa superior to Andalus, which  
 “ is as much as to say that the left hand is better than the right, and that night  
 “ is brighter than day ; and, O wonder ! he wishes to oppose glass beads to  
 “ inestimable pearls, and to put pebbles by the side of rubies, and low lands on a  
 “ level with inaccessible mountains ; he might as well blow on a hearth where  
 “ there is no fire, or go a hunting provided with stones instead of hawks, as  
 “ presume to make great what God Almighty created small, and to lead astray  
 “ what He decreed should be a guide.

“ Where are thy wits gone ? what is become of thy wisdom and penetration,  
 “ when the love of thy country has induced thee to extinguish both thy lights, that  
 “ of thy eyes, and that of thy reason ? As to thy expression ‘ our sovereigns,’ I  
 “ must say that they are ours too, as can be proved by those words of a poet—

‘ One day against us, and another for us ; sometimes women, and some-  
 ‘ times eagles.’<sup>11</sup>

“ For although it be true that the court of the West is now held in one of your  
 “ cities, owing to the Khalifate being in the hands of the Sultáns of the family of  
 “ ‘Abdu-l-múmen, (may God Almighty perpetuate it in their hands !) we also  
 “ have had Sultáns of the Korayshite family, of whom an Eastern poet has said—

‘ I belong to a family of noble and generous people ; a race whose march  
 ‘ is proclaimed by innumerable minarets.

‘ Khalifs among the Moslems ; powerful conquerors among the infidels :  
 ‘ the source of every generous action, the fountain of honour and glory.’<sup>12</sup>

“ And of whom a Western poet has said also—

‘ Are we not one of the Bení Merwán ; whatever may be our fate, what-  
 ‘ ever may be the turn of fortune’s inconstant wheel ?

‘ Whenever a birth takes place among us does not the earth assume at  
 ‘ his aspect the appearance of a full moon ? do not the minarets quake at  
 ‘ the sound of his proclamation ?’<sup>13</sup>

“ During their reign this country produced authors and poets enough to ornament all the rest of the world, and whose names alone were to the pages of the book of time what the collar is to the neck of the ring-dove;

‘ Whose fame found its way to all regions which the sun illumines with its rays, and travelled over all the seas and lands where the wind reaches with its blast.’<sup>14</sup>

“ Kings, who never ceased one moment ruling over mankind, and of whom a poet has said—

‘ The Khalifate in your family seems to be eternal, and the Sultáns have succeeded each other as the pearls in a necklace united by the thread.’<sup>15</sup>

“ Until God Almighty decreed that their thread should be cut; and their empire should vanish. They disappeared, and their history with them; they went away, and their very traces have been obliterated.

‘ The ornament of earth they were while they lived; after their death, alas! their names will only embellish books and give value to history.’<sup>16</sup>

“ For how many noble actions did they not furnish the historian with? How many of their memorable sayings became the property of the poet, to drive both him and the historian to despair with the difficulty of the subject?

‘ Since man always leaves behind him some memorial; and thine will be a real treasure for the collectors.’<sup>17</sup>

“ One of their greatest kings was Al-mansúr Ibn Abí 'A'mir, of whom I shall merely mention to thee a few circumstances, for I know of no other Moslem who, in his conquests of the Christian territory, reached, sword in hand, to the very shores washed by the green sea, who did not leave in the infidel country a single Moslem captive, who surpassed Herkal (Heraclius)<sup>18</sup> in the number of his armies, Iskhander (Alexander) in prudence and military talents, and upon whose tomb, when his doom was decreed, the following verses were engraved:

‘ The traces he left behind will tell thee who he was, as if thou sawest him with thy own eyes.

‘ By Allah, the succeeding generations will never produce his equal, nor one who knows better how to defend our frontiers.’<sup>19</sup>

“ More praises have been sung of this Al-mansúr, and more books have been dedicated to him, than is easy for me to enumerate and inform thee of, so much so that the fame of his name reached as far as Baghdád, and the most remote corners of the globe were filled with the report of his good and bad qualities.

“ However, when, after the breaking of the necklace and the scattering of its

“ pearls, the kings of small states<sup>20</sup> divided among themselves the patrimony  
“ of the Bení Umeyyah, the cause of science and literature, instead of losing,  
“ gained considerably by the division, since every one of the usurpers disputed  
“ with each other the prize of prose and poetical composition, and overstocked  
“ their markets with all departments of science; encouraged literature, and treated  
“ the learned with distinction, rewarding them munificently for their labours:  
“ their principal boast was to have people say, the learned man such a one is  
“ held in great esteem by the king so and so—or the poet such a one is much  
“ beloved by the king so and so; so that not one is to be found among them  
“ who has not been distinguished by the most brilliant qualities, or who has  
“ not left behind him traces that the hand of time will never obliterate, and  
“ which will be transmitted to future generations in the writings of orators and  
“ poets. Such, I am told, was the case with the Sclavonian Eunuchs of Al-  
“ mansúr, who rose in their governments after his death, such as Mujáhid,  
“ Mundher, and Khayrán, not to mention the Arab sovereigns of the dynasties  
“ of Bení Abbád, Bení Somádeh, Bení Al-aftas, Bení Dhí-l-nún,<sup>21</sup> Bení Húd,  
“ all of whom were so much praised and extolled by poets, that had the same  
“ praises been bestowed on night she would have become lighter even than  
“ day; and the poets never ceased presenting each other with the offerings of  
“ the sweet-scented gales playing among the flowers, and making upon their  
“ treasures the attacks of Al-barádh,<sup>22</sup> until their ambition grew such that one  
“ of their poets swore that he would not praise a king in a *Kassideh* under  
“ one hundred dinárs, and Al-mu’atamed Ibn ’Abbád, having heard of it, sent  
“ for him and ordered him to write one, and used all sorts of persuasion to  
“ induce him to do it, but he obstinately refused to comply with his wishes  
“ unless he agreed to give him the sum he asked, it being worthy of remark  
“ that Al-mu’atamed was not only the most powerful sovereign of his time,  
“ but one who could bear the least opposition on the part of a subject.

“ One of the greatest acts of generosity that ever a monarch performed towards  
“ a subject appears in the following anecdote, which is a further illustration of  
“ what I have advanced. It is related that Abú Ghálib,<sup>23</sup> the philologist, having  
“ once written a very fine work, Mujáhid Al-’ámirí, who was then king of  
“ Denia, sent him as a present one thousand dinárs, a horse, and a rich suit  
“ of dress, requesting him at the same time to say that the work had been  
“ written by his orders.<sup>24</sup> This, however, Abú Ghálib refused to do, and, sending  
“ back the present, he gave the following answer—‘ This book I wrote merely  
“ for the use of the public, and in order that my name might be handed down  
“ to posterity; were I to put at the head of it any other name but mine, all

“ the honour would be his. No, I will not consent to it.’ When this answer  
 “ was brought to Mujáhid, instead of being offended, he was much gratified and  
 “ astonished to see the high temper of his soul, and his courage and determination ;  
 “ he returned him the presents, and said—‘ he might at any rate have mentioned  
 “ me in his book ; this is a thing happening every day ; however, I shall not insist  
 “ any longer.’

“ But it being a notorious fact that all the kings of Andalus known by the name  
 “ of ‘ Kings of small states ’ vied with each other in filling their capitals with  
 “ learned men and poets, and encouraging by their unusual profuseness all the  
 “ branches of literature, I shall not stop to detail their actions. I shall merely  
 “ remind thee of the princes of the illustrious dynasty of the Bení 'Abbád, with  
 “ whom, as God Almighty has said in his Korán, reside fruit, palm, and pome-  
 “ granate, under whose reign every day was a solemn festivity, and who showed  
 “ a greater passion for literature than was ever shown by the Bení Hamdán in  
 “ Aleppo,<sup>25</sup> and who became, together with their sons, relatives and Wizírs, the centre  
 “ of eloquence both in prose and in verse, labouring assiduously and unanimously  
 “ in the various departments of science ; who left behind them brilliant traces, and  
 “ everlasting fame, and whose history abounds in generous actions and noble deeds  
 “ that will last through succeeding ages, and live for ever in the memory of man.  
 “ And if what I advance be not true, by Allah, do tell me the names of countrymen  
 “ of yours who have distinguished themselves in any path whatever before the  
 “ establishment of the present Muhadite dynasty. Dost thou mean Sakmút the  
 “ Hájjib,<sup>26</sup> or Sáleh Al-baraghwáttí ?<sup>27</sup> or perhaps Yúsef Ibn Tashfín, who, if he  
 “ acquired any fame, owed it merely to his connexion with Ibn 'Abbád, who, being  
 “ the centre of the poets of his time, and the target to which they directed their  
 “ praises and their verses, whenever they treated about him the name of Yúsef was  
 “ necessarily introduced ; otherwise, I ask you, would he have been known, an  
 “ ignorant and rude Beydawí as he was ? and if not, I will relate to thee the words  
 “ which they attribute to him. They say that Al-mu'atamed Ibn 'Abbád asked  
 “ Yúsef once, ‘ O Prince of the Moslems ! dost thou know what these poets say ?’  
 “ ‘ No, by my soul,’ said Yúsef, ‘ unless it be that they ask for bread.’ But what  
 “ I am going to state proves still more his ignorance : when Yúsef, some time after  
 “ this, parted from Al-mu'atamed, and retired to his capital in Africa, the latter  
 “ wrote him an epistle, in which was the following distich :

‘ Thou art gone, and my sides shake for want of thee, and the water of our  
 ‘ desert has dried up.

‘ Thy departure has changed our days into nights, the obscurity of which  
 ‘ only thy presence can dissipate.’<sup>28</sup>

“ When these verses were read to Yúsef, he exclaimed, ‘ What does he ask for ?  
 “ Does he not say he wants us to send him black and white slave girls ? ’

“ ‘ No, O master ! ’ replied the reader ; ‘ he only means to say that his night  
 “ becomes a day at the approach of the Prince of the Moslems ; since the nights  
 “ spent in pleasure are called *white*, and those passed in affliction and sorrow *black*.  
 “ Thus he expects that with thy return day will again dawn for him.’ ‘ Very well,’  
 “ replied Yúsef, ‘ answer him that our tears are dropping for his sake, and that *our*  
 “ *heads* are aching for love of him.’ Such was Yúsef’s answer ; and would to God  
 “ that Al-’abbás Ibnu-l-ahkáf<sup>29</sup> were living, in order that he might have learnt  
 “ from him to show tenderness of love.

“ But to proceed,—since thou hast dared to dispute with us the superiority in  
 “ the sciences, tell me, has thy country ever produced a theologian like ‘Abdu-  
 “ l-málik Ibn Habíb, whose decisions are in force to this day ? or like Abú-l-  
 “ walíd Al-bájí ? or like Abú Bekr Ibnu-l-’arabí ? or like Abú-l-walíd Ibn Roshd,  
 “ the elder ? or like Abú-l-walíd Ibn Roshd, the younger, his son,<sup>30</sup>—all of whom  
 “ were the shining luminaries of faith, and the bright torches of the religious  
 “ observances instituted by our holy prophet ? Canst thou bring forward in the  
 “ science of traditions men like Abú Mohammed Ibn Hazm,<sup>31</sup> who adhered strictly  
 “ to his principles of austerity and devotion in the midst of honours and riches,  
 “ and while filling the high situation of Wizír, and who showed himself more  
 “ ambitious of literary fame than of any other, and who said, when he heard that  
 “ his books had been consumed by fire—

‘ Do not speak to me of burnt vellum and paper ; do not lament the  
 ‘ information contained in them, and destined for mankind.

‘ For if the books are burnt, their contents are not so ; since they are  
 ‘ still alive in my head.’<sup>32</sup>

“ Canst thou point out men of the merit of Abú ‘Amru Ibn ‘Abdi-l-barr, the  
 “ author of the *Al-istidhkár* (recollections) and *At-tamhíd*, (the book of levelling) ?  
 “ or like Abú Bekr Ibnu-l-haddád, who is justly called the Háfedh of Andalus under  
 “ the present dynasty ? Has thy country ever given birth to men equal to Ibnu  
 “ Sídah,<sup>33</sup> the author of the book entitled ‘ foundations of language,’ and the  
 “ book of nouns, of whom if it be true that he was deprived of the organ of sight,  
 “ it is no less true that his intelligence and acuteness were unbounded ? Has  
 “ Africa produced grammarians like Abú Mohammed Ibnu-s-seyd, or works that  
 “ can be compared to his ? or like Ibnu-t-taráwah, or like Abú ‘Alí Ash-shalúbín,  
 “ who is one of the most eminent men of the present day, and whose reputation  
 “ has spread far and wide over the East and West ? Where are those that can be  
 “ compared to Ibnu-l-bajeh for their acquirements in the science of music and  
 “ philosophy ? What king of Africa canst thou oppose to Al-muktadir Ibn Húd,

" Sultán of Saragossa,<sup>34</sup> who was a real prodigy of nature in astrology, geometry,  
 " and natural philosophy? Canst thou produce in medicine men of the merit of  
 " Ibnu Tofayl, the author of the epistle of Hiyyi Ibn Yokttan,<sup>35</sup> and well known  
 " also by his labours in geometry and natural philosophy? or like the Bení Zohr,  
 " first Abú-l-'olá, then his son 'Abdu-l-málik, then his son Abú Bekr, all three in  
 " succession?<sup>36</sup> Name to me historians like Ibnu-Hayyán, the author of the  
 " *Al-matín*<sup>37</sup> and *Al-moktabis*, or philologists and literati like 'Abú 'Amer Ibn  
 " 'Abdu-r-rabbihi,<sup>38</sup> the author of the *Al-'ikd*; or men that have exerted themselves  
 " more in preserving and transmitting to posterity the traditions, events, and  
 " advantages of their respective countries than Ibnu Besám, the author of the  
 " *Ad-dakhírah*: certainly thou art not able to do so; but even supposing it  
 " granted, that thou couldst produce one like them, would he not look like a  
 " treasure in an empty house? Canst thou boast of eloquent poets like Al-fat'h  
 " Ibn 'Obeyd-illah, of whom people used to say, that if he praised, the object of  
 " his praises rose in estimation; and on the contrary, if he reviled, he abased him  
 " against whom his attacks were directed, the proofs of which abound in his  
 " *Al-kaldýid*,<sup>39</sup> a work to which I refer thee? What shall I say of Ibn Abí-l-Khassál  
 " and his *Tarsíláh*?<sup>40</sup> What of Abú-l-hasan Sahl Ibn Málik,<sup>41</sup> who is one of our  
 " most eminent preachers of the present day?  
 " Have you a poet like the Sultán Al-mu'atamed Ibn 'Abbád, when he said  
 " respecting his father—

' The general on the morning of battle awakes thousands; after which he  
 ' himself goes to sleep; certainly he is not to be blamed.

' He has a hand which the proudest men kiss; were it not for the dew of  
 ' generosity which flows from it, we should think it to be the stone at  
 ' Mekkah.'<sup>42</sup>

" Have you a king who wrote on the various departments of science, and all and  
 " every one of the branches of literature, a work composed of one hundred volumes?  
 " I can then point out to thee Al-modhdhafer Ibn Al-afttas, king of Badajoz, whom  
 " neither the wars that raged in his time, nor the grave duties of the state, deterred  
 " from cultivating the sciences with the greatest ardour.

" Canst thou name to me Wizírs like Ibnu 'Ammár,<sup>43</sup> who wrote that famous  
 " ode without a rival in its kind, and the melody of which is sweeter to the ear  
 " than news of the arrival of a beloved object, and which begins thus:

' Thou madest thy spear flourish from amidst the heads of their greatest  
 ' kings, when thou sawest the branches of the trees pining for the blossom;

' Thou didst stain thy breast-plate in the blood of their bravest warriors,  
 ' when thou sawest the fair decked with crimson robes.'<sup>44</sup>