



AL-ANDALÚS

The great Andalusian legacy

Al-Andalus, a territory of the Iberian Peninsula that was found under Muslim rule and extended between 711 and 1492. In its beginnings, in the 8th century, it occupied a large part of the Peninsula and even crossed the Pyrenees, and then experienced a progressive decline. Vera belonged to the Nasrid kingdom until the Christian conquest in 1488. Finally, the Nasrid emirate disappeared completely at the time of the Reconquest of Granada in 1492.

Almost eight centuries of the history of al-Andalus on the Iberian Peninsula have shaped a heritage that forms part of the hallmarks of Spanish culture, Mediterranean and European. Its legacy includes architecture, gastronomy, science, craftsmanship, routes, language, customs, music and a long etcetera of impressions that live on in the daily life of Andalusia.






AL-ANDALÚS

Society and policy

In al-Andalus, Muslims, Jews and Christians lived side by side. This coexistence was possible thanks to the fact that each was able to maintain their customs and beliefs. The social differences were not determined by ethnic reasons but mainly by religion.

Bayra: border and defensive city

From the 9th and 11th centuries until the 15th century, it formed part of al-Ándalus and played a fundamental role in the Emirate Nasrid. It was a vital enclave due to its strategic, economic, cultural and political importance. It served as border between the territories of Castilla (Murcia) and Granada and was a point of control and defence on the eastern border of the Nasrid Emirate. This position allowed to monitor and control the movements between the two territories, making it important for the security of the kingdom. It stood out for being a prosperous commercial centre.





THE ROUTES OF THE ANDALUSIAN LEGACY

The routes of the Andalusian legacy, or of al-Andalus, pass along those paths that were once laid out to communicate the Kingdom of Granada with the rest of Andalusia, Murcia and Portugal.





THE ARCHITECTURE -ALMERIA-

Andalusian architecture, or Islamic architecture from al-Ándalus, is an architectural style that flourished during the period of Muslim rule on the Iberian peninsula, from 711 to the end of the 15th century. Arab, Berber and Visigothic influences converged, resulting in a distinctive architectural style that reflected the richness cultural and technical sophistication of the period.

Alcazaba de Almería - The fortress occupies a total area of almost 2.5 ha and today consists of three enclosures, the first two of which are of Islamic origin while the third is a Christian castle.

Its construction dates back to the 10th century and is linked to the birth of the city, when the caliph Abd al-Rahman III ordered it to be walled, following an attack by the Fatimid fleet on the coast in 955.

Distinctive elements of Andalusian architecture are the horseshoe arches, interior courtyards, ornamental details, tile mosaics, cisterns, fountains and gardens. Distinctive elements were the horseshoe arches, interior courtyards, intricate ornamental details





ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Levante Almeriense

Teresa was an important town in the Levante Almeria at the time of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada, which was finally abandoned in 1569 by its last Moorish settlers at the time of the war of the Alpujarras. Located in Sierra Cabrera – Turre.

Mojácar La Vieja was inhabited between the VI-VII centuries A.D. and until the middle of the XIII century. This Monte Sacrum was supplied by one of the most impressive cisterns of preserved from the ancient kingdom of Granada.





ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Levante Almeriense

The Castle of HUÉRCAL-OVERA, a medieval construction which acquired its greatest prominence in the period Nasrid, with most of the buildings preserved dating from the 14th century.

LUBRÍN has preserved its urban layout of steep and narrow streets as an Andalusian imprint.





THE ARCHITECTURE

Levante Almeriense

BÉDAR. It was in the pact of Alcaraz (1243), with the infante Don Alfonso and in the name of his father: the king Fernando, when the land of Vera became part of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada and it was decided that its lands and that of Los Vélez would be integrated into the new kingdom of Granada. Qalqasandi cites the boundary markers of the new eastern border of the kingdom of Granada: Bayra and Almansura.

In 1247 the territory of the Nasrid kingdom was configured, composed of 3 coras or provinces: Rayya (Málaga), Elvira (Granada) and Bayyana (Almería). It is considered that the castle of Bédar could be one of the ones built (or repaired) during the reign of Muhammad V. Both Bédar and Serena had their own hisn (castle rocky), as well as several watchtowers that seem to have connected both castles and those on the periphery





THE SURPRISING PAINTINGS OF THE Balsa Alta (BASALTA).

Mural painting located in the old Moorish raft at the Balsa Alta ravine, at the foot of the Castle of Bédar. It dates from the medieval Islamic period (10th-12th centuries).

Water-resistant almagra paint was used, although this decoration was more appropriate for the plinths of room walls; it is not known why was used to decorate a water pool, and there are no documented cases similar to this in the Caliphate period, which makes a unique mural.

In the central part, there are three lines indicating the date: Friday, 25 May in the year 966 of the Christian calendar, in the time of the Umayyad Caliph al-Hakam II. The hypothesis that they were made by someone trained near the circle of the Umayyad 'Abd al-Rahman III is put forward (Barceló, Carmen, 2020). It could have been a family building. These paintings are currently in a state of neglect at.






HERITAGE

Veratense

In the 6th and 7th centuries, Baria moved from the present-day area of Villaricos to the hill of the Holy Spirit. During the period of the Caliphate of Córdoba the town of Bayra was administratively part of the Cora of Tudmir and in the 9th century it had an aljama mosque. In the 13th century was a frontier town at the forefront of the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada, walled and with a fortress.

BAYRA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE (Cerro del Espíritu Santo, Vera). Remains of the ancient city of Bayra, an Andalusian medina inhabited between the 10th and 16th centuries. The latest archaeological discoveries have found remains of the citadel, houses, silos, cisterns, walls and productive spaces that made up this fortified city. It disappeared after a devastating earthquake in 1518.





ANDALUSIAN CERAMICS

Andalusian pottery is the pottery produced in al-Andalus between the 8th and 15th centuries. The potteries of al-Andalus managed to combine the Mediterranean tradition with innovations from the Islamic East.

Almería was famous for its large kilns that allowed large-scale pottery production, useful both for architecture and everyday decoration.

Among the most emblematic techniques are:

- The cuerda seca, which allows the creation of complex geometric and floral designs with vivid colours that do not mix with each other during the firing process.
- Metallic lustre, developed during the caliphate of Córdoba, which adds an iridescent sheen to ceramics, making the pieces not only utilitarian but truly works of art.
- Lead glaze and the inlaying of precious metals demonstrate the influence of al-Andalus' commercial and cultural connections with other regions. The earliest remains of glazed pottery found in Europe were found at Pechina and date to the 9th century.






BAYRA CERAMICS

The excavations carried out at Cerro del Espíritu Santo have made it possible to document a ceramic assemblage linked to the medieval city of Bayra. The ceramic record recovered shows a notable typological and functional diversity. Forms and techniques typical of the Nasrid production can be identified alongside models associated with the Christian pottery after the conquest of 1488. This coexistence is particularly evident in the pottery from kitchen.

Among the most important imported products are the gilded wares decorated with metallic lustre, associated with the Valencian potteries of Paterna and Manises. These pieces, documented in contexts prior to 1518, allow precise dating and provide evidence of the integration of Bayra in long-distance commercial circuits.

Overall, the data point to a process of progressive cultural transition, visible through the transformations in the forms, techniques and uses of the pottery.
(Text:PRINMA)





AL-ÁNDALUS

Water

The Andalusian culture valued like few others the use of water, which optimised with great wisdom. Water was used as a source of irrigation for agriculture, as a decorative element or for poetic inspiration; a fundamental element both for architecture and for everyday life. It was used to the last drop and was supplied in mosques, cities, courtyards, baths and palaces such as the of the Alhambra in Granada or the Alcazaba in Almeria.

Known in the Andalusian period as Azacaya, it was originally a gallery, built by the first Arabs who populated Bayra (Cerro del Espíritu Santo). It irrigated the ravine of the Huertos, close to the hill. Each section of the gallery had a vent with holes in the walls with which could be lowered into the conduit for cleaning. The water obtained was mainly used, , for watering and supplying for the population. The surplus water, accumulated in the adjoining pond, was sold for irrigation purposes. (Text: Domingo Ortiz Soler).





ANDALUSIAN MUSIC

- **Andalusian Music:** Also known as Arabic-Andalusian, it is a style of Arabic music, which was popular in al-Andalus between the 9th and 15th centuries. Nowadays it is found in North Africa.

- The Islamic culture lived for more than seven centuries and left a great influence on the Iberian Peninsula, from the year 711, when the Arab presence began, until a century after 1492, the end of the last Nasrid kingdom of Granada.

- At the peak of the Caliphate of Córdoba and the kingdoms of Taifas, there was a great cultural influence in Christian Spain as well as in France and Italy, through Muslim and Jewish musicians.

- The poetic-musical flowering of Al-Andalus reached its peak in the form of Nuba (Nawba). Its creator was the Iraqi Ziryab ('Mirlo'), the most celebrated musician of the Arab West.

- At the Baghdad court of Harun al-Rasid (786-809), he won the favour of the caliph for his talent and virtuosity on the lute.

- After emigrating from Persia because of his jealous master, he settled in the Cordoba of Abd al-Rahman II (822-825).

- He founded a school of music, creating the lute, which became established both in Christian Spain and in North Africa, forming the primitive structure of the Nuba (Nawba).

- Nawba means 'turn' music performed for a lord in the form of a necklace, in which each bead is a song of different size and shape. A group of songs linked in movements, according to a rhythmic-metric structure, with the same "colour" its musical modality.





GASTRONOMY

Eight hundred years of Spanish-Muslim culinary tradition


The product of a cultural and gastronomic crossbreeding that fuses the Greco-Roman Mediterranean cuisine with that of the Eastern Islamic world. One of the most outstanding figures in Andalusian cuisine was Zyrab, poet, musician and gastronome born in Mosul (Iraq) who in the 9th century settled in Cordoba and introduced refined oriental customs into the Andalusian court of Abderraman III. He established that the dishes were to be served on leather tablecloths and established the menu in 3 separate moments: soup, main course and dessert.

The Murcian gastronome Ibn Razin al-Tuyibi, known for being the author of, *Fidalat al-Jiwan*, one of the few existing works on Andalusian cuisine, also stood out.

In Bayra, there was a type of food in the Andalusian tradition differentiated; in humble homes, meat was reserved only for religious festivals. In winter, semolina soups prevailed, and the most popular dish was a porridge of minced meat and wheat cooked in fat. Mashed lentils, mashed beans and chickpeas, and vegetable soups with spices were also common. They ate from earthenware bowls with wooden spoons. In summer they ate salads and cold hors d'oeuvres, spicy sauces and fruit from their gardens. Pickled fish was common throughout the year (Text: Domingo Ortiz Soler).

The upper class in Bayra copied refined customs from the East such as drinking from glass goblets. In winter they ate meat (lamb and kid) and *alcuzcuz*, a typical dish of semolina and meat from lamb, arrived at the beginning of the 13th century. Puff pastries filled with minced pigeon meat with almond paste, cheese cakes perfumed with rose water and fried almond cakes, were some of its most distinguished dishes.

All social classes cooked with lots of spices and consumed plenty of rice and fried foods stuffed with vegetables. The most popular dessert was the *almojábana*, a cold white cheese cake with cinnamon and honey. (Text: Domingo Ortiz Soler).





GASTRONOMY

Andalusian influence on veratense cuisine

Vera is a gastronomic culture marked by the history of al-Ándalus. The mark can be seen in the most traditional dishes that are currently cooked in the kitchens veratenses: el guiso de gurullos con conejo, las albóndigas en salsa, las torticas de avío, la olla de trigo, las gachas o los harapos, are good examples of this ancestral legacy.

The confectionery reveals this imprint in the everyday sweets of Vera: el arroz con leche y canela, los buñuelos fritos, los pestiños, el tocino de cielo, la leche frita, las torrijas con miel, etc. (Contents courtesy of the Regio Restaurant Mediterránea Gastrobar).





LANGUAGE

Festivals and Customs

Algarabía, the name given for centuries in Castile to the Arabic spoken in al-Andalus, was not simply one more language among the many that coexisted on the peninsula, but a vehicle of knowledge, sensitivity and everyday life that left a deep mark on Castilian. It is essential to understand the Arabic Andalusian as a mother tongue in order to unearth the Moorish that still dwells in the deepest Andalusian identity.

A way of looking at everyday life survives, also visible in linguistic turns of phrase and expressions that we still use today without noticing their Moorish origin. Andalusian toponymy is another of the great repositories of this heritage. Rivers such as the Guadalquivir (Al-wādī al-kabīr, "the great river"), mountains as Alpujarras (Al Busherat, "land of pastures"), urban enclaves as Guadix (Wadi Ash) or the city of Vera (Bayra) are palpable examples of how the Arabic language articulated our geography. (Historical texts by Miguel Ángel Martínez Pozo).

SOME CHRISTIAN FESTIVALS AND COSTUMES PRACTICED IN AL-ÁNDALUS

Feast of St. John

Feast of the Ansara .

Feast of Saint Mark

Festivity of the death of Father Adam.

In both the Andalusian and Christian periods, the Virgin Maria Madonna was venerated.

The placing on the lintel or centre of the main door of the house of a horseshoe with 7 holes as a symbol of good luck.



LANGUAGE

Words and expressions

Some words and expressions that come from Arabic:

-¡Alabín alabán alabín bon ban! ----- alla'ibínáyya ba'ád alla'ib bón bád ("players, come on, well done!").

Ajedrez ----- shatranj.

Almohada ----- al mihaddah.

Albañil ----- al bannā'.

Azafrán ----- al za'farān.

Alardear ----- derivación del sustantivo al'árđ.

Cifra ----- şífr, ooriginally meant "empty".

En balde ----- bāṭil.

Elixir ----- al'iksīr.

Fulano ----- fulān.

Gandúl ----- ğandúr.

Hazaña ----- ḥasanah.

Joroba ----- ḥadabah.

Sorbete ----- Šarbah.

Titiritero ----- Tiríd tirí.

PLACE NAMES

Almería ----- al-Meraya (watchtower, tower).

Albacete ----- al-Basit (plain).

Alcalá ----- al-qala`a (the castle).

Badajoz ----- Batalyaws.

Guadalajara ----- Wādī al-Ḥijārah (river).

Henares ----- An-Nahar.

Murcia ----- Mursiyah (dock).

An interesting arabism is the word **azafata**, which refers to the woman who attends to passengers on aeroplanes or at congresses, fairs, etc. In Muslim times, this name was used to designate the ladies-in-waiting who in a basket called **assafát** (basket or tray)

presented to the female royalty the dresses she was to wear and the jewellery she was to adorn herself with; and then in the same basket she collected them when she took them off and when undressed or changed clothes.




TRADE AND CURRENCIES

Al-Andalus was the only centre of commercial and cultural importance in Europe between the 8th and 11th centuries. Its products predominated in the incipient markets of northern Europe until the end of the 12th century. Its culture, received from East, was linked to the Greek world and reached a splendour that Christian Europe would only know from the 13th century onwards.

BAYRA was part of this commercial network during the Nasrid period and was known for its production and trade in pottery and other handicrafts. Ongoing excavations reveal that it also imported products, especially ceramics, which shows the importance of Bayra in the commercial sphere. Its market attracted traders from several regions, facilitating the exchange of goods, ideas and culture.

‘Souk’ by Yahya ibn Mahmud al-Wasiti. 13th century and image of a dinar minted in Denia (Alicante). Circa: 11th-13th c.


Trade was possible thanks to the existence of a universally accepted currency. At first, the Muslim limited themselves to using the existing coins in the conquered territories, which would be replaced by the Umayyad coinage at the end of the 7th century. The monetary system was based on three currencies: the dinar (gold), the dirham (silver and copper) and the felus (copper).





THE COINS

Their mark on Levante Almeriense

- 11-720 A.D. Muslim stamp on coin of Visigothic or Byzantine origin. Found in Bédar.
 - 1238-1492 AD. NAZARI KING OF GRANADA. 1/2 Dirham. Found at Serena (Bédar).
 - 1238-1492 AD. NAZARIN KINGDOM OF GRANADA. 1/2 Dirham, anonymous. Found at Serena (Bédar). Mint of Almería.
 - 1238-1492 AD. NAZARI KINGDOM OF GRANADA. 1/2 Almohad type Dirham. Located in Serena (Bédar).
 - Fleece dirham minted by the king of the Taifa of Almería AI-MUTASIM ABU YAHYA MUHAMMAD, known as Almotacín. Circa: 1052- 1091 AD. Located at Los Gallardos.
 - 1474 AD. NAZARIN KINGDOM OF GRANADA. Copper felus of Abū al-Hasan 'Ali ben Saad (Mulhacén), reference to the work of Medina no. 272. Located in Serena (Bédar).
 - Year 1038-1039. Abd Al-Aziz. Taifa of Almería annexed to the kingdom of Valencia. Reference is made to Al-Nasir at. Location: Los Gallardos.
 - Year 1041-1051. Man ben Muhammad ben Sumadih. Taifa of Almería. Location: Los Gallardos.
 - Year 1041-1051. Man ben Muhammad ben Sumadih. Taifa of Almería. Location: Los Gallardos.
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THE MÜNZER ROUTE POST-CHRISTIAN RECONQUEST

HIERONYMUS MÜNZER

He was born in Feldkirch, Austria between 1437 and 1447 and died in Nuremberg in 1508.

Geographer, astronomer and Doctor of Medicine from the University of Pavia (1479), practising in Nuremberg, from where he returned to Italy, fleeing from the plague epidemic of 1484. He contributed to the famous Nuremberg Chronicle by H. Schedel, with a map of Germany, and to the construction of the famous globe by the navigator Martin Behaim.

In 1494, Münzer, together with his friends N. Wolkenstein, G. Fischer, and A. Herwart, decided to get away from the plague and set out on a long voyage through Germany, Switzerland, France, Spain and Portugal. Hieronymus recorded this route in a chronicle entitled *Itinerarium sive peregrinatio per Hispaniam, Franciam et Alemaniam*, considered 'the most important account of travel in Spain during the Middle Ages'.

The journey through Spain lasted five months (September 1494 – February 1495). Some historians suggest that he may have been sent to Spain as a spy to gather information about the voyages of Columbus and the plans of the monarchy.

His itinerary through Almería lasted from 16th to 20th October 1494, starting in Vera with a brief description of Bayra after the Reconquest. Münzer was the first traveller to describe Almería, which had just been conquered by the Catholic Monarchs.






THE MÜNZER ROUTE PROVINCE OF ALMERIA

Since Müntzer arrived in Perpignan, and until he entered in the Kingdom of Granada, he travelled through many points of the peninsular geography, Figueras, Gerona, Barcelona, Poblet, Cherta, Tortosa, Villarreal, Valencia, Alcira, Játiva, Alicante, Elche, Orihuela, Murcia, Alhama and Lorca. He entered in the Kingdom of Granada via Vera, continued via Sorbas, Tabernas, Almeria and Fiñana, Guadix and La Peza.

MÜNZER ROUTE MAP IN THE PROVINCE OF ALMERÍA- Own elaboration.

From 22nd to 26th October he was in Granada, the city from which would leave on the 27th to go to Alhama. From there, passed through Vélez-Málaga, Málaga, Málaga, Osuna, Marchena, Mairena, Sevilla, Niebla and Sanlúcar. On the 12th of November, leaving behind the borders of the kingdom of Castilla and entering the territories of the kingdom of Portugal, he arrived at Serpa.






THE MÜNZER ROUTE LEVANTE ALMERIENSE – VERA

... We crossed the border of Castilla on the 16th of October and entered the kingdom of Granada. After a journey of nine leagues through a region of exuberant vegetation but without water and uninhabited, we arrived at Vera, the first place in that kingdom to be found on the road...

Münzer's impressions of Vera - Reconstruction of Bayra (Holy Spirit).

On a beautiful and fertile plain there is a mountain, on whose summit there is a famous castle; on the slope, and surrounded by the mountain, is the town, made up of some six hundred houses; but as it is on the frontier, once the Moors have been expelled, only Christians live there. Underneath the mountain and the village flow several fountains, with whose water the neighbourhood is supplied. The situation of Vera is really delightful; it is half a mile from the sea and a river flows through it which, although it is small, is sufficient to irrigate the area, as the land is very fertile; but most of the town is in ruins because, on throwing to the Saracens, the armies of King of Spain destroyed it all...





THE MÜNZER ROUTE LEVANTE ALMERIENSE – SORBAS

... we arrived at the small place of Sorbas, which is on a high mountain six leagues from Vera. In it there is no other than the Moors and so, having made our supply of water at a spring that gushes out at the foot of the mountain, we continued on despite the time, which was midday. By we saw the Moors in a tower, according to their custom, praying their prayers with great clamour...

Bridge of 'La Mora' (Medieval Islamic) and the remains of the old wall of the castle – Sorbas





THE NEO-MUDEJAR 'FEVER' (19TH-20TH C.)

The Neo-Mudejar and Neo-Arabic styles were artistic and architectural trends influenced by the Hispanic period Muslim (tiling, plasterwork, horseshoe arches...) that were also adopted in some buildings of the Levante Almeriense. From the construction of the Plaza de Toros de Madrid in 1874, the work of the architect Emilio Ayuso, the Neo-Mudejar style spread from Madrid to the rest of the country, with the construction of numerous buildings (public and private), until the first third of the century XX.

In Vera and Levante Almeriense, this style is still present in some of its buildings. It is considered as the only specifically Spanish style.





NEO-MUDÉJAR and NEO-ARABIC STYLE IN THE LEVANTE ALMERIENSE (I)

Plaza de Toros de Vera in neo-Mudejar style, the oldest in the province of Almería.

Palatial farmhouse of the 'Montoro' family - Vera





NEO-MUDÉJAR and NEO-ARABIC STYLE IN THE LEVANTE ALMERIENSE (II)

Façade of the future Civic Centre, former bourgeois house of Juan Antonio García García (ca. 1870). The interior of the house, contains neo-Mudejar decorative elements - VERA. Photos by Magda Navarro Arias.





NEO-MUDÉJAR and NEO-ARABIC STYLE IN THE LEVANTE ALMERIENSE (III)

Old 19th century house with a neo-Mudejar style façade - CUEVAS DEL ALMANZORA.

Poetic tribute to the Cortijo 'Califato' del Calguerín (newspaper 'Imparcial de Levante', 15/11/1913), written by the poet José María Martínez Álvarez de Sotomayor. On the right, photograph of the farmhouse that was owned by 'Ozmín el-Jarác', the poet's pseudonym, built in the first decade of the 20th century. The snapshot was taken by Helios García in the 1980s (20th century) Area: Calguerín - CUEVAS DEL ALMANZORA.





NEO-MUDÉJAR and NEO-ARABIC STYLE IN THE LEVANTE ALMERIENSE (IV)

An old Neo-Arabic style palace which was owned by Benigno Chávarri Salazar (1st Marquis of Chávarri) and later by the Garrigues-Walker family. Nowadays, is home to the Hotel Alegría - Mojácar Playa. Photograph above taken in the 1950s. XX.





NEO-ARABISM IN THE LITERATURE OF LEVANTE ALMERIA

In the 19th century and the first third of the 20th century, neo-Arabism emerged, a literary movement influenced by the Spanish-Muslim culture. It derives from the contemplative and, at the same time, travelling position of the European Romantic movement. In Levante Almeria several artists stand out who followed this literary tendency:





DOMINGO BADÍA i LEBLICH: “ALI-BEY”

Military man, spy, Arabist and adventurer. He acquired worldwide fame after the publication of books narrating his expeditions to the Islamic world at the beginning of the 19th century. He was one of the first writers to open a route to the Eastern world. He visited Morocco, Libya, Algeria, Egypt, Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, Syria and Arabia and even made a pilgrimage to Mecca. All this under a false identity, that of a Syrian prince by the name of Ali Bey el- Abassi, serving in his travels the government of Charles IV as a military man, spy and scientist. Subsequently, was under the orders of Emperor Napoleon, his brother Joseph Bonaparte and Louis XVIII of France.


At the age of 11 he arrived in Vera (1778). His father, Pedro Badía, was appointed Accountant and War Commissioner of the party of this town. Domingo was educated in the enlightenment influenced by the Real Sociedad Patriótica de Amigos del País of Vera.

At the age of 16, he took up the position of War Accountant and had access to the great library of the great man, Pedro Berruezo Caparrós, and was nourished by books such as *Viaje a Arabia* by Carsten Niebuhr. He became a great scholar of the Moorish traditions that were touring the area of the Lower Almanzora; the Hispano-Muslim culture enveloped him in such a way that it led to the birth of Ali Bey. In 1791, he married the Veratense María Lucía Berruezo Campoy and in 1794 he moved to Córdoba as Administrador de la Real Renta del Tabaco.

(Historical texts: Blog de los Berruezo).

In 1814 his work *Travels of Ali Bey in Africa and Asia* was published in France, recording his travels in the Arab world between 1803 and 1807, which spread throughout Europe.

In 1818, after changing his old name to from Ḥājj 'Alī Abu 'Uthmān he went to Damascus, left Paris under this pseudonym but was discovered by the British secret services, who poisoned him, and died in Damascus in 1818.






JOSE MARÍA MARTÍNEZ ÁLVAREZ DE SOTOMAYOR

(Cuevas del Almanzora, 1880 - Cuevas del Almanzora, 1947). Poet, playwright and teacher. He devoted his literary talent to poetry and to theatre. He was influenced by the cultural traditions and the natural landscape of his homeland, which is reflected in his literary work.

He is mainly associated with modernism and the generation of poets who sought to renew Spanish poetry at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th.

'Mi terrera', first book of verses published. The theme revolves around the imaginary Caliphate of 'Ozmín el Jaráx'.

The reading of the main works of Arabic literature, and of the most important books about the predominance of Islamic culture in Spain, deeply impressed the poet's warm imagination to the point of characterising himself as Sultan Ozmín el Jaráx, owner and lord of the caliphate of the same name, which he had built on his estate in Calguerín, around 1900. The poet lived for a year in the Calle Mayor in Vera.





THE LEGEND OF THE MIRACLE STONE THE RED STONE OF BAYRA

A Moorish woman from Vera, called Neila, fell madly in love with a Christian warrior called Pedro de Guzman, who was Alcayde Mayor of the Alhambra. They saw each other frequently and sat on a white stone located on the slope of Bayra (Holy Spirit). Every time the warrior said goodbye to return to his castle, she would cry on that stone.

One day, Neila waited for her lover sitting on the stone but Pedro did not appear. When the sunset came and, desperate for his absence, she got up, crying disconsolately, and screamed in terror when she saw that her clothes were stained with blood. She noticed that the stone had become wet and had turned a reddish color like her tears of blood. Neila returned to Vera horrified and there told her that her lover had been killed by the Moors of Granada.

Since that fateful news, and until her death, Neila cried daily on the red stone and it always appeared wet.

From then on, when the young men of Vera went to war, the brides visited the stone and, if it became wet when they cried, it was certain that their boyfriends had died.

Legend found and rescued by the historical researcher Magda Navarro Arias, extracted from the newspaper "La Crónica Meridional", August 27, 1924. Article "Tradiciones Almerienses" published by the historian and archaeologist Joaquín Santisteban y Delgado. In 1904, Joaquín made an expedition to Vera and the driver of the vehicle in which he was traveling showed him a red stone at the foot of the "Espíritu Santo" hill at the entrance of Vera and told him this romantic legend.

