THE DEPENDENT EMIRATE.

In 711, there was a civil war in the Visigoth kingdom on the Iberian Peninsula between Roderick and the family of Witiza, a former king. Witiza's family asked the Muslims in North Africa for help. The governor of this región, Musa and his general Tariq, took their troops to the Peninsula and defeated Roderick at the Battle of Guadalete. However, Musa and Tariq did not give power back to the Visigoths. Instead their armies occupied most of the Iberian Peninsula. They met with little resistance from the Visigoths. The Muslims /ˈmʊzlɪmz/ conquered nearly all the Peninsula, except for the north-west. They called the territories in their power Al-Andalus. AI-Andalus was ruled by an emir or governor, under the Ummayad Caliphate of Damascus. Cordoba became the capital of the Emirate.

THE INDEPENDENT EMIRATE

In 750, the Ummayad family was assassinated, but one of its members, Abd-alRahman, managed to escape. He reached the Iberian Peninsula (Almuñécar), where he took power. In 756, he became Emir of Cordoba with the name Abd-al-Rahman I. As independent emirs, the rulers of Al-Andalus no longer obeyed the Caliph, although they recognised his religious authority.

THE CALIPHATE OF CORDOBA

Abd-al-Rahman III inherited the throne in 912. In 929, he became Caliph, the political and religious leader. The Caliph governed with the hayib, or prime minister, and visirs, or ministers. Walis, or governors, controlled the provinces. In 976, Hisham II became Caliph. As he was only eleven years old, the general AI-Mansur led the government. To obtain money and prisoners, he carried out more than fifty raids against the Christian kingdoms in the north. The Caliphate of Cordoba was the most brilliant period of AI-Andalus.

WHAT WERE THE MUSLIM KINGDOMS?

THE TAIFAS In 1031, the Caliphate was divided into taifas, or small kingdoms, such as Seville, Toledo, Badajoz and Zaragoza. The taifas were constantly attacked by Christians from the north. To avoid attack, the taifas paid taxes called parias to the Christian kings. The military strength of the Christian kingdoms grew, and in 1085, Toledo fell into Christian hands. The Muslims asked for help from the Almoravids, who were Berber warriors from North Africa.

ALMORAVIDS AND ALMOHADS (african empires)

The Almoravids went to Iberia to stop the Christian advance. They reunited Al-Andalus. In 1147, the Almohads, who were also Berbers, came to power. The Almohads continued the fight against the Christian kingdoms. The Christian armies united and defeated the Almohads at the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212. After this defeat, the Almohad Empire disintegrated and the Christians conquered almost all of AI-Andalus.

THE NASRID KINGDOM OF GRANADA

The kingdom of Granada became the last Muslim territory on the Iberian Peninsula. It covered the provinces of Malaga, Almeria, Granada and the eastern part of Cadiz. It was governed by the Nasr family. The Nasrid kingdom was very weak. For almost two and a half centuries, it was the vassal of Castile. The rulers of Granada had to pay taxes to the Castilian kings, and help them in time of war. Finally, the kingdom became Christian when it fell to the Catholic Monarchs in 1492.