

# Lesson 3 Muslim Rule in Spain

## MAIN IDEAS

**Government** The Umayyads created a strong Muslim kingdom, al-Andalus, on the Iberian Peninsula.

**Geography** Córdoba, the capital of al-Andalus, became a thriving economic and cultural center under the Umayyads.

**Culture** Al-Andalus enjoyed a flowering of culture and learning in the 1000s and 1100s.

---

## The Return of the Umayyads

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** How did the Umayyads create a strong Muslim kingdom on the Iberian Peninsula?

### Uniting Muslim Spain

- Abd al-Rahman was the only Umayyad to escape Abbasid massacre in 750
- Abd al-Rahman fled to Spain, found a divided land; he united warring factions
- In 756, made himself emir of **al-Andalus**—Muslim Spain; **Córdoba**—capital city
- He attacked ruling factions, defeated them

### Defending Muslim Spain

- Umayyad loyalists from Abbasid lands joined Abd al-Rahman
  - his army, government gained strength and power
- Despite rebellions, al-Andalus still united when al-Rahman died in 788

### A Great Leader

- **Abd al-Rahman III** became eighth emir of al-Andalus in 912
  - built standing army to stop Christian, Muslim rebel groups
  - many in army were foreign **mercenaries**—soldiers paid to fight
- Abd al-Rahman III stopped Christian, North African invaders
- Declared himself caliph of Córdoba in 929

## REVIEW QUESTION

What changes did the Umayyads bring to Spain?

---

# The Glory of Córdoba

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** What was the basis for Córdoba's greatness under the Umayyads?

## A City of Wonders

- By 1000, Córdoba largest city in Western Europe (500,000 people)
  - paved, lamp-lit streets
  - public gardens
  - advanced water system

## An Economic Center

- Córdoba had prosperous trade economy
  - silk, carpets, paper, weapons, crystal
- Farming flourished in countryside; water wheels, irrigated fields
  - rice, figs, fruits, cotton, olives sold at 4,000 Córdoba markets

## A Great Cultural Center

- Major learning center; 70 libraries, the largest with 400,000 books
- Muslim scholars translated books into Latin
  - books made their way to Europe, widely read by Christians
- Córdoba's caliphs lured Baghdad's scholars to al-Andalus

## REVIEW QUESTION

Why was Córdoba a great city during Umayyad rule?

---

## A Golden Age in the West

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** What cultural developments took place in al-Andalus in the 1000s and 1100s?

### Mathematics, Astronomy, and Geography

- Al-Andalus scholars made great advances on earlier discoveries
- Mathematicians created calendars, tables for sun and planet locations
- Astronomers built instruments for viewing sky
  - constructed planetarium with moving model planets
- In 1154, al-Idrisi wrote geographic encyclopedia of world with 70 maps

### Medicine and Philosophy

- Al-Andalus doctors borrowed heavily from Baghdad scholars
- Wrote about diseases, treatments, diet, doctor-patient relationship
- Al-Zahrawi considered greatest doctor of the time
  - published 30-volume medical encyclopedia in late 900s
  - covered dentistry, medicines, surgery, even raising children
- Ibn Rushd was doctor, philosopher; wrote studies of Plato, Aristotle

### A Golden Age for Jews

- Before Umayyad rule, Spanish Jews often were persecuted
- Became government officers, advisors, doctors to Umayyad caliphs
  - helped broker peace treaties with Christian kingdoms
- Sephardic—Spanish-Jewish—culture flourished
  - had own language (Ladino)
- Jews persecuted in Christian lands flocked to al-Andalus

### A Great Scholar

- Maimonides, born in 1135 in Córdoba, was influential Jewish scholar
  - fled persecution by North African Almohad Muslims
  - settled in Cairo, became known as great writer, doctor, philosopher
- Best known work, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, published in 1190
  - showed religion could be supported by philosophy
  - influenced both Muslim and Christian thinkers

## The Decline of Al-Andalus

- By early 1200s, al-Andalus began breaking apart
  - Muslim factions fought for control
- Christian forces attacked from north, controlling Córdoba by 1240
- Over next 250 years, Christians regained control of Iberian Peninsula

### REVIEW QUESTION

What contributions to learning did scholars of al-Andalus make?

### Lesson Summary

- The Umayyad dynasty that was driven out of Baghdad established the kingdom of al-Andalus on the Iberian Peninsula.
- Córdoba became a major city under Umayyad rule.
- Culture flourished in al-Andalus in the 1000s and 1100s.

### Why It Matters Now . . .

Al-Andalus served as a meeting place for the cultures of Southwest Asia, North Africa, and Europe. Europeans regained knowledge of Greek and Roman civilizations through Muslim scholars.