

Madrid

A city built in Spain by Muslims

Madrid-Dr. Kadhim Shamhood Tahir

The emir Mohammad I bin Abdul-Rahman II built Madrid in 855. It is now the capital of Spain and a centre of science and commerce. According to the Spanish historian Marry Isabel, Madrid was Arab in origin and not Greek as stated by some Western historians during the 18th and 19th centuries. The Orientalist Levy-Provencal referred to a text by the Andalusian historian, Al- Himyari who describes Madrid and its founder Prince Mohammad I. Modern diggings and archaeology have confirmed the Arab origin of Madrid beyond doubt.

Madrid was one of the best defended cities in Medieval times with camps and forts. There also other less powerful military cities connected to Madrid. They were used as observation centres guarding the way to Toledo. These towers and forts are still standing today. They were renovated and rebuilt by the Municipality of Madrid and became tourist attractions.

Madrid was situated on a well defended hill and made up of two parts:

1- Alcazaba (or what is known today as "Almudaina", the name which has now been bestowed on the "La virgin de la Mudaina" Church). Alcazaba was fenced with a wall, with many gates, and included the palace, a mosque and other military and managerial offices.

2- Almadina is to the south of Alcazaba with a wall built by Caliph Abdul-

Rahman III after the town was destroyed by fire. This part encompasses Islamic traditional life and includes markets, crafts, schools, baths and other facilities.

3- The city, with its streets and houses, grew naturally and without planning. This can be seen from the roads which lead from one to another, only to finish in a dead end. Such architecture was common place in medieval times, as can be seen in old Spanish towns, such as Toledo and some parts of Madrid. It can also be seen in the cities of North Africa, for example Fez, and the old quarters in Damascus near the Amawi mosque.

Although Madrid has not stopped expanding, there are places and buildings that still tell the history of the Islamic past. The Almudaina has not seen major changes until the 19th century, except for the northern part. The southern part of Almudaina is a

crowded residential area that is still surrounded by a wall. Some parts of this wall, which extends to 120 m, have been repaired, as in the La Cuesta de Vega. The opposite square has been named "Prince Mohammad I", after the founder of Madrid. The artist Wyngaerde depicted Madrid in 1560 and you can see the wall, towers, gates and the Royal Palace as well as the surrounding hills.

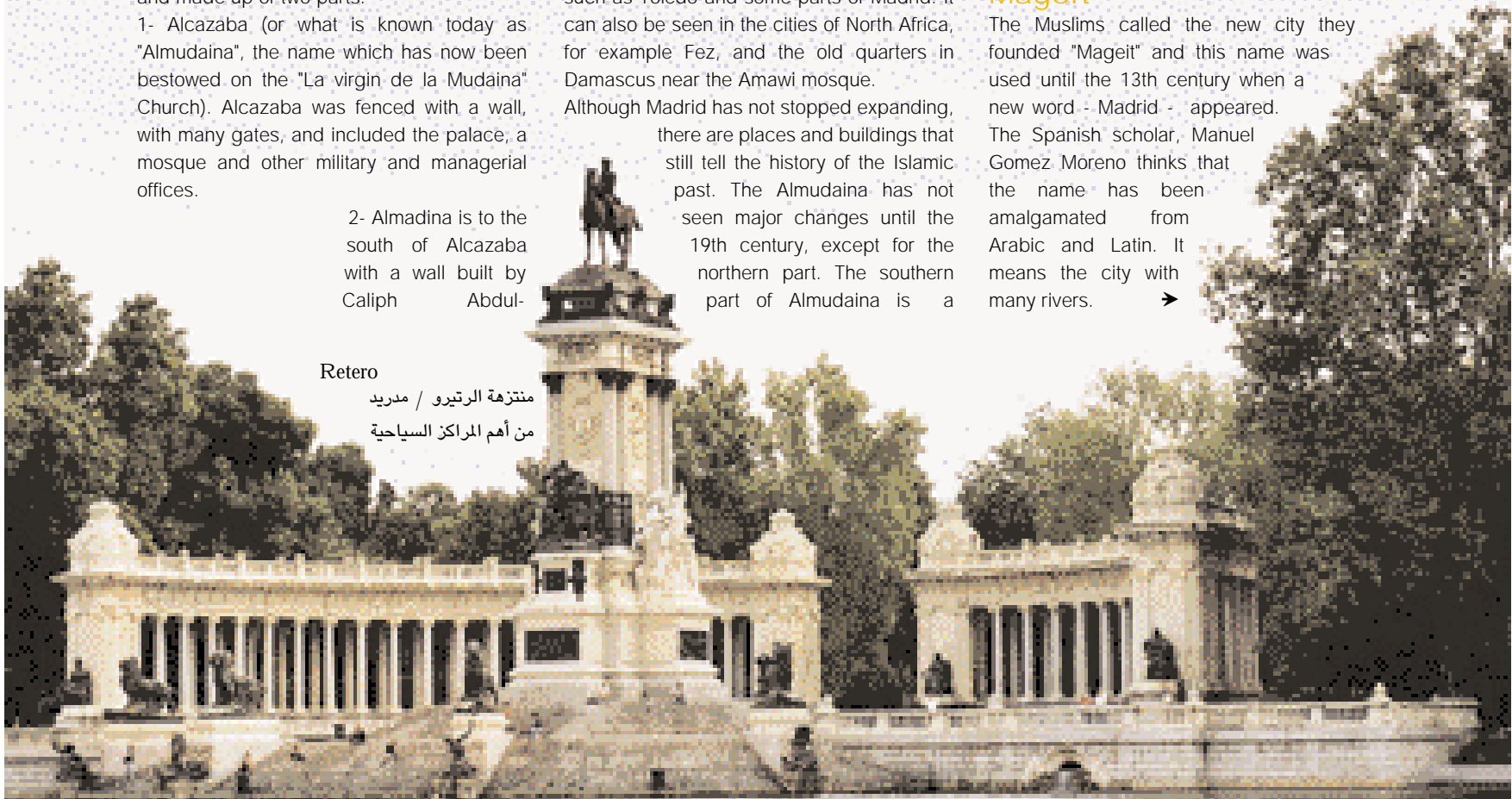
Mageit

The Muslims called the new city they founded "Mageit" and this name was used until the 13th century when a new word - Madrid - appeared.

The Spanish scholar, Manuel Gomez Moreno thinks that the name has been amalgamated from Arabic and Latin. It means the city with many rivers. ➔

Retero

منتزهة الريترو / مدريد
من أهم المراكز السياحية



Islamic Heritage



Madrid in 1560 as painted by Wyngaerde

مدريد سنة ١٥٦٠ للمصور واينجاردي، ويظهر السور العربي لا زال على حالته الأصلية. كما يظهر على الجهة اليسرى القصر العربي الذي تحول إلى بلاط ملكي للنصارى



Palacio Real

القصر الملكي - وكان قصراً عربياً أيام حكم المسلمين - مدريد

The early converts "Mozarabe" used to speak "Romance", a mixture of Arabic and Latin. The language was common in both the Islamic and Christian kingdoms, especially neighbouring ones with mutual cultural influences.

Arabic names have been corrupted by the Spanish so badly it is difficult to trace their origins despite the hard work of scholars. But there are hundreds of Arabic words in the Spanish language, still pronounced in the Arabic way, such as Sucyna, a village near Castiun, Zaide in Zaragoza and many others. There are mixed names from Arabic and Latin, such as VillaNazar in Zamora. It is made up of Villa, a town, and Nazar, the Arabic name. Some of the main tourist attractions of Old Madrid are:

1- Plaza Mayor, situated outside the old Arab wall. It was a cattle and agricultural market during Islamic times and a commercial centre during the Christian era.

After many modifications, the square, now has 11 exits, seven arches, an underground car park and a copper statue of King Phillip III. It is the place for national and religious celebrations, surrounded by coffee shops and markets for authentic Madrid crafts.

2- The National Museum, which contains a large collection of Andalusian heritage, mostly from the 9th and 10th centuries. It is made up of pottery of different shapes and uses and decorated with Arabic writings. There are also ivory boxes for jewellery, decorated with human and animal figures.

3- The War Museum, with a hall in the same style as Alhambra. It was opened to the public by King Alfonso XIII. It displays Andalusian heritage, such as the cloths and tools of King Abdullah the Small, the last of the kings of Granada.

4- Prado Museum, built in 1785 in the classical style and considered one of the

largest museums in the world. It has works up to the 19th century, such as those of Velázquez, Goya, Rembrandt, Da Vinci, Anglo and others.

5- The Royal Palace, it was an Arab palace when Madrid was founded. It is a fort from the outside with a court on the inside, which was expanded in 1551. It was destroyed completely by fire in 1734 and a new palace was built on its ruins by the architect Batista who designed it in the style of the renaissance.. It is now a major attraction for scholars and tourists.

6- The Retero Garden, founded in 1632. Two buildings were added in the 19th century and they are now the centre of cultural activities. They also house international art shows. Beside these two buildings there is an artificial lake and a Roman monument made of columns and statues. It is now considered one of the most important tourism centres in Madrid. ■