earliest youth he was inspired with the thought that he was destined to rule. His ability and the favour of Al-Ḥakam’s favourite wife, Sobh, combined to bring about his speedy advance, and by the time of the caliph’s death he held a high office in the court. Al-Ḥakam had done all in his power to secure the succession of his son by Sobh, Hishám, a boy of ten years of age. But the chief eunuchs, dreading the influence which a minority would give to Moṣhafí, the *ḥájib* or chief minister, sought to give the crown to Moghíra, a brother of Al-Ḥakam. With the help of Ibn-abí-'Ámir, Moṣhafí defeated the plot; Moghíra was put to death, and Hishám succeeded to his father’s throne. But he never really ruled. Ibn-abi-'Ámir, still aided by Sobh, whose lover he was popularly supposed to be, gradu­ally rose to absolute power. Moṣhafí, a man of little real ability, was charged with peculation and deposed, and his younger rival was appointed *ḥájib* in his place. To free himself from all danger from the mob at Cordova, the all- powerful minister transferred the government and the court to Zahrá, which he built for the purpose. There the young caliph was immured in a magnificent palace, and was carefully secluded from all contact with public affairs. His education was purposely neglected, and he never made the slightest effort to free himself from his gilded imprisonment. To remove all obstacles to his authority, Ibn-abí-'Ámir reorganized the army. He filled the ranks with Moors from Africa and with Spaniards from Leon, Castile, and Navarre, whom he bound to his cause by lavish generosity. The old tribal distinctions among the Arabs, so long the source of jealousy and quarrels, he completely disregarded in the forming of regiments, and thus completed the work of assimilation which 'Abd al-Raḥmán III. had commenced. Though trained to the study of the law and experienced only in civil affairs, he speedily mastered the art of war and con­ciliated the popular favour by victories such as no caliph had ever won. In 981 he defeated Ramiro III. and his allies in a pitched battle, took Zamora and Simancas, and was only prevented by a storm from capturing Leon. On his return he assumed the name of Almanṣór (victorious by the help of God), by which he is usually known in history. Bermudo II., whom the nobles of Leon raised to the throne in place of the defeated Ramiro, could only secure himself by paying tribute to the ruler of Cordova. In 985 Almanṣór invaded Catalonia, which had hitherto been respected as a Frankish fief, drove the count Borrel into exile, and took and sacked Barcelona. When Bermudo II. sought to free himself from the harsh conditions that had been imposed upon him and drove the Moslem troops from his kingdom, Almanṣór took a terrible revenge. In 987 he stormed Coimbra and razed it to the ground. In the next year he advanced into the heart of the kingdom. Leaving Zamora, where Bermudo awaited him, on one side, he marched against the city of Leon, and took it after an obstinate resistance. The fortifications were utterly destroyed, with the exception of one gate, which was left to commemorate the victor’s triumph. Zamora was then attacked, and Bermudo fled to his northern territories, which were all that were left to him.

In spite of these successes Almanṣór had to face more than one conspiracy on the part of those who were jealous of his pre-eminence. The most formidable of these was fomented by his former patroness, Sobh, who found her­self more and more thrust into the background. She succeeded in gaining over her son, but Almanṣór soon recovered his ascendency over the feeble caliph, from whom he extorted a document transferring all powers to himself. A refusal of Bermudo II. to continue the payment of tribute led to the last and most famous of his campaigns,

in which he took Compostella and carried off the gates and bells from the shrine of St James, the patron saint of the Christians. At the same time his generals were gaining victories in Mauretania, and his power was almost equally dreaded on both sides of the straits. His death in 1002 deprived the Spanish Moslems of the greatest ruler and warrior, considering his origin, that their race had pro­duced. His campaigns against the Christians, which are reckoned by the Arab historians as more than fifty, were almost uniformly successful. Three capitals—Leon, Pam­plona, and Barcelona—had been conquered by him. His home administration was as successful as his generalship, and much of his attention was devoted to the construction of roads and bridges, so as to facilitate communication between all parts of Spain. He was a zealous, if not an intelligent, patron of literature, but his real interests were always practical. Finding that he was suspected by the people of a laxness in religious belief, he did not hesitate to prove his orthodoxy by an act of politic vandalism. Taking the chief '*ulemá* into the library of Al-Ḥakam II., he begged them to collect all the books on philosophy, astronomy, and other prohibited sciences; and when they had completed their task he ordered the condemned books to be burnt on a vast pile.

Almanṣór had been absolute in everything but name. He had desired at one time to take the final step and to supersede the incapable Hishám II. in the caliphate, but he dreaded the inveterate attachment of the people to the Omayyad dynasty. He had, however, taken steps to secure the continuance of his family in power. His son, 'Abd al-Melik Możaffar succeeded to the office of *ḥájib,* and ruled with the same authority and success as his father. But the position was really untenable. An hereditary monarchy is intelligible, but an hereditary line of chief ministers is not. The early death of 'Abd al-Melik (1008) gave the government to the weaker hands of his brother 'Abd al-Raḥmán. The latter was hated by the Moham­medan clergy, partly because he indulged in the use of wine, and partly because his mother had been born a Christian. She was the daughter of a Sancho, either the king of Navarre or the count of Castile, and her son was nicknamed Sanchol, or the little Sancho. The Amirids were not popular. Their exaltation irritated, not only the families that claimed a higher rank by birth, but also those who thought themselves their equals. Without having any actual grievance to complain of, the people vaguely desired a change of rulers. It was easy under the circumstances to effect a revolution. When Sanchol returned from a campaign against Leon in 1009 he found that his power had been completely overthrown. Moham­med, a great-grandson of 'Abd al-Raḥmán III., had headed an insurrection in the capital and had gained possession of the caliph’s person. Sanchol was put to death, and the magnificent palace which his father had erected at Zahrá was razed to the ground. The Amirids fell, and with them ended the grand period in the history of Moslem Spain.

Mohammed was not long content with the office of *ḥájib.* Scrupling to kill the unfortunate Hishám, who had never made any opposition to the acts that had been com­mitted in his name, he closely imprisoned him, and buried the corpse of a Christian who bore a strong personal resemblance to the caliph. Mohammed was now raised to the caliphate, and assumed the title of Al-Mahdí (guided by God). But his reign was not destined to be long or un­troubled. He had been raised to power by a combination of orthodox Moslems, of the so-called “ Slavs ” (foreign slaves serving in the royal harem and in the army of the caliph) and of Berbers, and he alienated each in turn. The Berbers, who formed an important part of the army, were the first to revolt. Raising the standard of Solei­