

1911 Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume 17 — Mansūr



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MANŞŪR (Arab. “victorious”), a surname (*laqab*) assumed by a large number of Mahommedan princes. The best known are: (1) ABŪ JA’FAR IBN MAHOMMED, second caliph of the Abbasid house, who reigned A.D. 754–775 (see [CALIPHATE](#): § C, §2); (2) ABŪ TĀHIR ISMA’IL IBN AL-QĀIM, the third Fatimite caliph of Africa (946-953) (see [FATIMITES](#)); (3) ABŪ YŪSUF YA ‘QŪB IBN YŪSUF, often described as Jacob Almanzor, of the Moorish dynasty of the Almohades, conqueror of Alfonso III. in the battle of Alarcos (1195); (4) IBN ABĪ ‘ĀMIR MAHOMMED, commonly called Almanzor by European writers, of an ancient but not illustrious Arab family, which had its seat at Torrox near Algeciras. The last-named was born A.D. 939, and began life as a lawyer at Cordova. In 967 he obtained a place at the court of Ḥakam II., the Andalusian caliph, and by an unusual combination of the talents of a courtier with administrative ability rapidly rose to distinction, enjoying the powerful support of Şubḥ, the favourite of the caliph and mother of his heir Hishām. The death of Ḥakam (976) and the accession of a minor gave fresh scope to his genius, and in 978 he became chief minister. The weak young caliph was absorbed in exercises of piety, but at first Manşūr had to share the power with his father-in-law Ghālib, the best general of Andalusia, and with the mother of Hishām. At last a rupture took place between the two ministers. Ghālib professed himself the champion of the caliph and called in the aid of the Christians of Leon; but Manşūr, anticipating the struggle, had long before remodelled the army and secured

its support. Ghālib fell in battle (981); a victorious campaign chastised the Leonese; and on his return to Cordova the victor assumed his regal surname of *al-Manṣūr billah*, and became practically sovereign of Andalusia. The caliph was a mere prisoner of state, and Manṣūr ultimately assumed the title as well as the prerogatives of king (996). Unscrupulous in the means by which he rose to power, he wielded the sovereignty nobly. His strict justice and enlightened administration were not less notable than the military prowess by which he is best known. His arms were the terror of the Christians, and raised the Moslem power in Spain to a pitch it had never before attained. In Africa his armies were for a time hard pressed by the revolt of Zīrī, viceroy of Mauretania, but before his death this enemy had also fallen. Mansūr died at Medinaceli on the 10th of August 1002, and was succeeded by his son Mozaffar.

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