

# TRACING THE FOOTSTEPS OF TARIQ IBN ZIYAD PART 11

*In the April edition, we read about Moorish General leader, Tariq Ibn Ziyad leading an army of 700 Berber Moors, Saracens and Arabs from North African city of Tangier across to straits of Gibraltar. As promised here we present you with the part 11 of fabulous journey. (Please refer to last edition of ITM magazine for full contents of journey)*

By: Nadia Shabir

Shrine of lady of Europe



Gibraltar – جبل طارق

Welcome to Jebel Tariq, one of the last remaining colonies of Britain located near the southernmost tip of the Iberian Peninsula, sharing a border with Spain to the north. The peninsula is separated from Africa by twenty miles of water and is dominated by a 1400 feet high of majestic Rock of Tariq.

Through the history, Gibraltar has been a point of strategic importance and symbolism. Many battles have been fought here for ownership. The name Gibraltar is derived from Arabic word, Jebel Tariq meaning Tariq's mountain. It was here in Gibraltar that historical battle of Guadelete was fought allowing

Tariq's forces to establish a base prior to their advance into Spain.

After the signing of inconsequential treaty between the Muslims and the 'Count Julian of Cueta', Muslim armies landed in Gibraltar. According to T.B. Irving "There ships were the same four which



Cable Car - Gibraltar



Rock of Gibraltar Barbary Macaque



Count Julian had furnished the previous year, and to ferry over this large army, they made repeated trips across the Straits. It was a task force whose objective was to establish a bridgehead for a much larger invasion the next

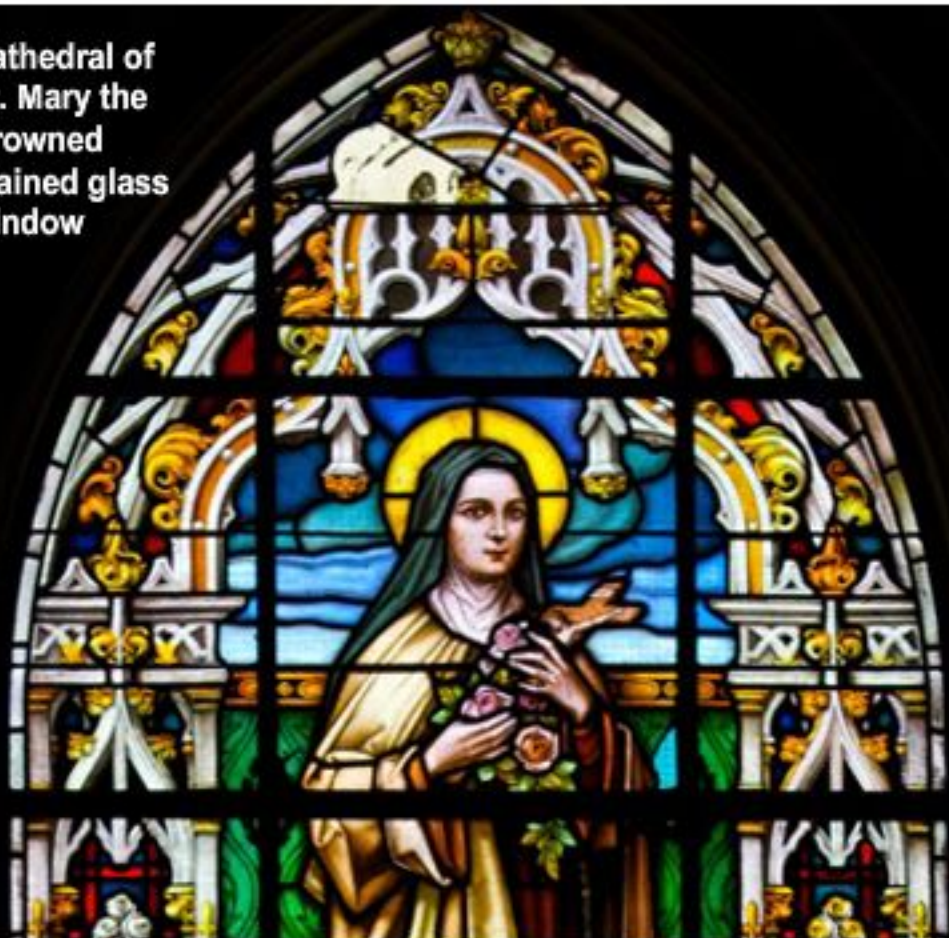
year." Angus Macnab mentions in his famous book 'Spain under the Crescent Moon' Upon landing the first squadron seized the Rock of Gibraltar, a forte on a nearby mountain (Mons Calpe), it was first called the 'Mount of entry' – or the

"Mount of Conquest" – (Jabal al-Fatah), but soon afterwards it came to be called the "Mount of Tariq", Jabal Tariq (جبل طارق) now called Gibraltar. Furthermore, 17th century Muslim historian Al-Maggari states that upon landing, Tariq burned his ships and addressed his troops in one of the most famous sermons in Muslim history on 18 July 711, at the Janda

Lagoon by Barbate River:

"My men, whither can you flee? Behind you lies the sea and before you the foe. You possess only your courage and constancy, for you are present in this country poorer than orphans before a greedy guardian's table. It will be easy to turn on him if you will but risk death for one instant."

**Cathedral of  
St. Mary the  
Crowned  
stained glass  
window**



## Monkeys



On 19th of July, 711, 90,000 Spaniards, under Roderick, and 12,000 Muslims under Tariq's leadership came face to face on the banks of Guadalete, a river whose waters goes through the plain of Sidonia, in which the battle was fought. It was one of the most decisive battles fought in the world's history, for it gave the Iberian Peninsula for eight hundred

years to Arab domination. According to Angus Macnab, 'In the great battle of Guadalete, the Christians outnumbered the Muslims by four to one; but they were a rabble, against a splendid military force with superb cavalry, and after two days fighting' they were totally defeated with Rodrick himself perishing in the battle'. Angus Macnab further avers that

after the defeat at Battle of Guadalete 'terror spread north like a forest fire' but Tariq's forces did not destroy Spain, nor did they attempt to suppress the Christian religion. The conquest was mild and munificent as a foreign invasion can plausibly be.

### In Gibraltar

Travel through Gibraltar and pay homage to Tariq Ibn Ziyad, where centuries later his name continues

to hold, the rock that was once his mountain stands there proudly, bearing his name forever, Jebel Tariq.

There are few landmarks in Europe as significant as Rock of Gibraltar. It has attracted people from all over the world for centuries. Start your day with a visit to the famous Rock of Tariq, an undeniable testimony to Tariq's influence and presence in southern Spain, from where you can admire the splendid views of Africa and the spectacular



**The stage inside St. Michael's Cave**

Nuns well Gibraltar

St Mary Cathedral



cliffs. There are so many places to visit on the rock that it is recommended to take a taxi or shuttle bus that allows you to explore and see some of most interesting landmarks. Alternatively you can arrange with your taxi guide to arrange a visit to upper rock nature reserve on the Gable car, which you can take from Alameda Grand Parade. End you day with time for you to relax at the

beaches and cafes at sea side resort, and if you wish you could go rock climbing or visit the Europe's only free-ranging monkeys and Saint Michael's cave.

Spend next day visiting other popular Moorish venues dating back from Almohad period. Sultan Abou Hassan of Morocco recaptured the Rock and undertook

a construction of the entire city in 1330 A.D, from his time there is still a surprising amount to be seen; such as 14th century Moorish baths, Moorish castle from 1333 A.D., the formal land gate, the Nuns well and shrine of Our Lady of Europa. Located at the Southern part of the Rock of Gibraltar at Europa point, next to Nuns Well is an impressive Islamic monument, Ibrahim al-Ibrahim

Mosque, built by King Fahd bin Abdulaziz al-Saud. The mosque was opened to 7% of Muslim population of Gibraltar in 1997 and has become a focal point for all year around Islamic gatherings. The mosque was a gift from the King and in evening a call to prayer can be heard. Also see the walls of Gibraltar built first by Moors around entire inner city area.

Visit other more well known sites



**Beaches - Gibraltar**

**Moorish castle**



Moorish Castle



Mosque at night



like Jumpers Bastion King's Landport gate line wall and Southport Gates. Also see the Shrine of our lady of Europe, where once a famous Moorish mosque stood. Walk towards Cathedral of St. Mary the Crowned on Main Street which was built on the site of former great Mosque from Almohad Dynasty in the 12th Century.

### **Ecija**

Tariq then marched to Ecija, a city in the province of modern day Seville, where the insurgents and locals gave battle in the nearby plains. Irving states that Tariq pitched his camps four miles from the town on the Genil River banks near a spring called Tariq's Spring by Arab writers. The fiercest battle

of the entire campaign was fought here, both sides clashed hence resulting in heavy losses for Muslims. This attrition ended with Ecija being yielded to Tariq's troops. In Ecija, Tariq received a message from Musa Ibn Nasir to halt his further advances. Tariq and his council of war's contrary

decision to continue ahead had many ramifications for Tariq as later he was suspended by Musa for his disobedience.

A short stop in Ecija will provide you with an opportunity to visit city's churches, convents and an Arab fortress....

*To be continued next month.*

Rock of Gibraltar

