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AXARQUÍA

TALES AND LEGENDS

TOURIST GUIDE FOR THE AXARQUIA · COSTA DEL SOL

TALES

LOCAL PERSONALITIES

LEGENDS

NAME OF INHABITANTS



INDEX

Alcaucín	6	La Viñuela	42
Alfarnate	8	Macharaviaya	44
Alfarnatejo	10	Moclinejo	46
Algarrobo	12	Nerja	48
Almáchar	14	Periana	50
Árchez	16	Rincón de la Victoria	52
Arenas	18	Riogordo	54
Benamargosa	20	Salares	56
Benamocarra	22	Sayalonga	58
Canillas de Aceituno	24	Sedella	60
Canillas de Albaida	26	Torrox	62
Colmenar	28	Totalán	64
Comares	30	Vélez-Málaga	66
Cómpeta	32	Index of Personalities and home towns	68
Cútar	34	Plan for Developing the Axarquia Tourist Product	70
El Borge	36		
Frigiliana	38		
Iznate	40		

INTRODUCTION

Since time immemorial, man has surrounded himself with myths and legends in order to, in a more or less precise way, explain the mystery of his own existence and of the origin of the world, in the case of myths, or to add a certain dose of fantasy to events and even characters of which there is some documentary evidence, in the case of legends.

The district of the Axarquía, an area which travelers had to go through when travelling between the coast and the interior of Andalusia since prehistoric times, is rich in this type of stories, stories that have reached us via an oral tradition and are therefore subject to successive modifications so as to adapt them to a specific historical moment. Thus, skirmishes between Moors and Christians until the final expulsion of the former by Philip III in 1609 have resulted in interesting stories about secret passages and the moving around of treasure. When the area was converted to Christianity, the supernatural powers of some religious figures and statures have also lead

to the coining of beautiful stories and, naturally, the banditry phenomenon has been an endless source of information for charming stories.

The brief descriptions in this publication bring together not only the legends that are still alive in popular heritage, but also those traditions of an uncertain origin which until recently have been an everyday practice in the Axarquía.

This selection of accounts which over recent centuries have gone from mouth to mouth in the towns of the Axarquía, aim to inform the visitor of aspects which are only known to the inhabitants of the area and, why not, to show how, starting from facts of which we are not totally sure, they have been able to turn into a story and turn that slight reality into serious and passionate stories which, as in many other places, can be a source of inspiration for literature.

ALCAUCÍN

The name Alcaucín comes from the Arabic “alqausin”, meaning “the bows”, probably because the farmstead at Alcaucín was known for the making of bows and arrows. But the legend gives it the privilege of being one of the first areas in the region to be inhabited by man. This has been documented by the excavations carried out in Boquete de Zafarraya (Boquete Gap) where extremely important archeological remains, such as pottery dating from different periods and a Neanderthal jaw, have been uncovered.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:

Alcaucinenos.

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES:

Manuel Cañizares Martín was an interesting personality in Alcaucín; he was a captain was formed part of the troops called “the last of the Philippines”.

Among its legends there is one that tells of when, following the Council of Elvira, that took place in Granada, Saint Patrick who at the time was bishop of the church in Málaga, visited the city of Zalia, a town that had sprung up around Zalia Castle in the district of Alcaucín, for a second time with the aim of convert the inhabitants to Christianity, something he had been unable to do the first time round. However, he was also unsuccessful on his second visit and so, downhearted, he left the town and headed back to Málaga. The story goes that, that night, cracks began to appear in the ground and vipers started to come out and bite the inhabitants to death; this forced the people to leave the town which from that time has been uninhabited. This is how the terrible biblical god punished the unbelieving people of Zalia.

The inhabitants fled for their lives and sought to settle in nearby places, reaching Alcaucín, Periana, Canillas de Aceituno and La Vinuela.



Another well-known legend refers to the construction by the Arabs of Zalía Castle with its double walled ring, which would later become one of the prisons which would house the Moorish heroes during the revolts and uprisings of 1569.

The story goes that the last kinglet gave the order to hide the wealth that had been amassed deep in the castle so that they would not be lost in the face of the imminent conquest.

ALFARNATE

The name Alfarnate comes from the Arabic word “al-farnat” meaning flour mill.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:

Alfarnatenos. Nickname: palancos.

INTERESTING STORIES

One of the interesting things in this town is the tradition that lovers followed during Midsummer Night. The idea was to pull off two fig leaves – one with stalk on as a symbol of the man and the other one without it as a symbol of the woman – and leave them out all night somewhere out in the fields. If, at daybreak, the leaves that had been left joined by the stalk appeared stiff this meant that the couple were in love; however, if they were not stiff, then they were not in love. Stemming from the nocturnal escapades linked to this rite related to love, there is a saying in the town that says that if a girl is out during Midsummer Night, in June, with her boyfriend then she will be having a child in March.

The most significant legends are related to banditry. One of the many rumors or legends about the bandits that moved around the area and sought refuge around Alfarnate tells the story of José María El Tempranillo, one of the best known bandits of the time, who, during one of his visits to Venta Alfarnate, went up to a table where some people were quietly eating from the same pot and asked if he could join them. The locals said he could not under the pretext that they did not have a spoon to lend him.

El Tempranillo, who did not like that excuse, took out a piece of bread from his bag and made it into a spoon. Having overcome the only obstacle, he started to eat with them. Once the pot had been emptied, El Tempranillo said: as we have finished the food in the pot, let us now eat the spoons.

He quickly ate his spoon made of bread and forced the other men to bite theirs, which we presume were made of wood.

At the time when banditry was at its highest, the famous horseman El Rojo was arrested there; he was one of the seven boys of Écija and therefore a friend of El Tragabuches, the bullfighter-bandit from Ronda. The story goes that in the loneliness of the cell, while he was waiting to be taken to prison, el Rojo sang this fandango: A woman led to my first downfall, as all man's downfall is caused by a woman.

Venta Alfarnate, which dates from 1690, due to its strategic situation between the interior and the coast, was the place where horses were changed and this led to it being a place of refuge for bandits.

It is known that one of the rooms was set up as a cell and that the bandit Luis Candela spent a night there, as confirmed by an inscription there. Another well-known bandit called El Bizco de El Borge was a regular visitor when he went there to meet his lover, a married woman.



ALFARNATEJO

Its name is a diminutive of the word “al-farnat”, which is also the source of Alfarate, meaning flour mill.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:

Alfarnatejones. Nick-name: tejones



The proximity of both towns, Alfarnate and Alfarnatejo, means that they share some events, stories and legends like, for example, the one that follows.

A legend suggests that the origin of the nick-names of Alfarate (palancos) and Alfarnatejo (tejones) is based more on legend than on historical reality. According to tradition, following heavy rain, a huge rock fell across the only road that linked the two towns, blocking it. To clear it, the people from Alfarnate decided to go with tools and sticks to use them as leverage, and the people from Alfaratejo took picks and spades with the aim of digging the ground and force the rock to roll down the mountain. The latter method was the most effective one as the rock, in fact, fell as a result of its own weight down the valley where it still remains, allegedly.

There is a tradition that says that when a young man wanted to start seeing a girl of marriageable age, which was commonly known as talking to a girl, he had to look for a stick or rough walking stick and walk

with it at night to the door of the house where the girl lived. Naturally, the girl knew the boy who left the stick outside her door that night; now she had to decide what to do with the stick. If she didn't quite like the young man or he wasn't a good match, the girl left the stick outside; on the other hand, if it was a good marriage and the girl loved him, she took the stick and took it into the house which meant the family approved of the start of the relationship.

Once the initial stick in, stick out phase was successfully over and after going out for a time, the girl confirmed the date of the wedding, bought the tufts of wool needed to make the mattress and to start another tradition, the stripping down, a rite followed by the whole community. The tufts were washed to remove the smell and dirt, the custom being that early in the morning the girl would go to Fuente del Conejo (Rabbit's Fountain) to wash them and, once they were dry, all the single people met in the girl's house to start the stripping down (taking out all impurities, thorns, etc.). This lasted between ten

and fifteen days and became focus for festive meetings which boys and girls were not allowed to go to as the older ones told risqué jokes and stories.

Alfarnate has its own legend of a hidden treasure, as is the case with most of the towns with an Arab past. This legend has recently been updated with the arrival of foreigners from North Africa looking for a treasure following a map talking of Tajo de la Gomera (Gómer Drop) with measurements in yards from a stone which had a horse-shoe nailed to it.

ALGARROBO

Its name comes from the Arab word “al-karat”.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:
Algarrobenos.

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES:

A personality worth mentioning is **Enrique Ramos Ramos** who was born in 1890 and died in exile in 1958. He participated decisively in the setting up of the Second Republic. He was President of the Council of Ministers in all the cabinets presided by Manuel Azana. He was President of the National Tourist Board and Minister for Employment, Health and Social Security and later Chancellor of the Exchequer in Casares Quiroga’s government.

The heroic defense by its inhabitants during the French invasion, as a result of the bravery and astuteness of its guerrillas, gave rise to a legend. The story goes – and in this case there might be an element of truth, still to be confirmed – that one of these bands made up mainly of men from Algarrobo and lead by a certain Segovia ambushed and killed an unknown number of French soldiers.

The French commanding officer’s reaction was swift. He blamed the whole town for the death of the invaders, as the members of the band came from the town and were protected by it, and therefore he decided that Algarrobo, as a taunt to the neighbouring towns, should be reduced to ashes and its inhabitants annihilated. The mayor asked for clemency and for the sentence to be delayed until the French governor in Málaga was notified of the case, hoping that he would be merciful and forgive them.

The commanding officer accepted this and calculated the time it would take a man to go and to return from Málaga, as well as carry out the task, and took off some hours to avoid the mission from succeeding, and that was the time the town was given to save itself from destruction. Time was not on the side of the desperate townsfolk and to gain time it was decided to give one of the best horses to one of the best horsemen in the town who, by running the animal to the ground in his desperate ride, arrived in time with the letter with the reprieve which saved the town of Algarrobo.

The fascination of legends for underground passages is clear in Algarrobo, as there is a story that says there is one of these passages between the fortress of the town and Bentomiz Castle, built – most certainly – so as to carry supplies from one place to the other without having to go out to open ground during sieges. The tunnel has not been found but the legend continues.



ALMÁCHAR

Its name comes from the Arab words “maysar” or “machar”, meaning meadow or pasture. There are those who also interpret the Arab word “al machar” as farmhouse. Just like the other towns in the area, it was inhabited during the Arab occupation.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:

Almacharenos.

One of the interesting things of this town is the peculiar way the young men had of asking for the hand in marriage or to start courting. Protocol demanded that a woman belonging to the young man’s family acted as ambassador, going to the house of the young girl in order to tell the father the good news that her relative wanted to marry his daughter and to arrange a date for the visit of the future boyfriend. When the day arrived, the young man, dressed for the occasion, went to the young girl’s house and in front of the future father-in-law he recited the long list of his good and noble intentions. Once this was over, it was the father

who gave a long sermon on his daughter’s numerous, unblemished virtues and spoke of all that the suitor had to achieve if he wanted his consent. If the girl accepted the commitment, the suitor had to go and visit her every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday.

A legend which is part of the town's history tells of when some sailors who were in the midst of a great storm, after their ship had sunk and very near to death, started to plea for help and immediately they saw an image of Christ with a green band, who they implored to save them from the tragic situation they were in. The Christ of the Green Band, answering their pleas, gave them a plank of wood on the water which they were able to hold on to and therefore save their lives. The sailors looked for the statue of Christ in all the towns until they found it in Almáchar; in thanksgiving the sailors gifted it with two silver lamps.

Another legend talks about a fabulous treasure which the Moors buried, as they fled from the Christian invasion, in a cave near to the river Almáchar which crosses the low ridge of the town. Even today, people who like legends about treasures, look for the cave entrance which, allegedly, has been blocked by the accumulation of sand over time. The legend which has been passed from generation to generation, is still alive in Almáchar. .



ÁRCHEZ

The town's name appears in chronicles and writings of the period of the Christian conquest as "alconche" which comes from the Arab word "al-cocer" meaning "small palace".

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:
Archeros.



A legend is based on the relief that a lizard left as it fell during the casting of one of the bells destined to be placed in the Mudejar belfry. This bell is inscribed with the following legend: "I was made by Ramon Rivas, when Ildefonso Tomé y García was priest and Antonio García Azuaya was mayor. 1876".

The picture of the lizard, imprisoned in the metal and consequently immortalized in bronze, gave rise to the legend that goes with the bell. The story goes that any young man who cannot find a partner can overcome his bachelorhood if he goes up to the bell and kisses the frightening reptile. Sometimes once is enough and other times he will have to repeat the process until his wish is granted.

The legends about the treasure of the flour mills is situated in the course of the river Turvilla through Árchez, where one can find the remains of three old flour mills which are practically in ruins; well, shortly after the last one was abandoned at the start

of last century, a local bought it and when he lifted a huge boulder from one of the walls he saw a small earthenware jug full of gold and silver coins. This discovery encouraged some of the locals in times of shortage to go down to the river and, around the ruins of the mills, to start lifting and moving the gig rocks which formed part of the structure of the old mills, in the hope of finding new treasures.

In the area around the ravine near Arroyo Luis (Luis Stream), there is a well next to the stream, nearly hidden between the rocks, which is attributed with the following legend: When the Moors were being expelled from Archez, a Moorish woman, outwitting all the checkpoints, managed to escape and hide in the depth of the well, as a result of which people thought she had disappeared. The unfortunate Moorish woman lived for years in the well in terrible conditions, having to submerge under the dark waters of the narrow space to avoid detection every time she felt that someone was near the parapet.

However, one night when she was looking for food, which included herbs, fruit and even roots, the young girl was discovered and taken to the town square where in front of the church and the priest, crying and lamenting herself, the woman asked for clemency and pity and promised to follow the Christian faith. The woman, weakened and worn out by her long reclusion in such an inhospitable place, could see the end of her life approach and she asked to be allowed to end her days where she had been born so as to be buried next to her ancestors. The whole town, tasking pity because of the terrible story, begged forgiveness for the unfortunate woman and they offered to look after her until her last wish was fulfilled.

This is the story which has been transmitted from generation to generation concerning the legend of the Pozanco de la Mora (Pool of the Moorish Woman).

ARENAS

The name Arenas comes from “El Arenal” (Sandy Spot) in reference to the deposits of sand and gravel which the river leaves behind as it passes the old farm house.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:

Areneros.

The legend of the capture of Bentomiz Castle is part of a past that is closely linked to the struggle between Moors and Christians. An oral tradition that comes down for generations since the end of the XV century that, in the absence of sufficient troops to expel the Moors, the Christians worked out an ingenious plan to achieve this and working at night they tied lanterns to the goats and sheep, making them look like a great army. When the defenders saw such an enormous and shining army approach, enlarged by all sorts of noises, they felt their position was untenable and opted to flee, leaving the castle in Christian hands.

The legend continues and says that all the treasures and precious metals discovered in the fortress were melted down to make a bell. But, when around 1570 the times became difficult with the revolts of the Moors disrupting peace in the estates, it was decided to bury the bell within the fortress so as to protect it from being taken. The place and the form were so carefully kept that it has never since been found. Such

a treasure overcame the locals' imagination and it is said that there are still some who go round with picks and spades in case they hear the clapper.

The Fountain of Love, a legend surrounding a fountain in a small district of Arenas, called Daimalos, says that during the Moorish period there lived in the farm a young girl who could see her vigor disappear without finding a suitor, and frightened of becoming a spinster, she asked the advice of an important person in the neighboring Sayalonga. The wise old man advised the young girl that she should go to the fountain to drink its water several times a day. She did as she was told and, soon, she found love. The young girl, blissful, told her friends what had happened and the legend was born: whoever drinks the water from the fountain in Dimalos will find love.



BENAMARGOSA

As far the name Benamargosa is concerned it is worth mentioning that it is Arabic in origin although its meaning has yet to be deciphered.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:

It is worth saying that its inhabitants should be called “benamargonesenos”, but the locals and the people from the area tend to use the term “mangurrinos”.

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES:

José Pinto y Palacios, better known as “El Cura Pinto” (The Blotchy Priest), who stands out as a result of the help he gave the army and the guerillas in keeping up the resistance to the French occupation putting the church’s property at the disposal of the resistance.

José Beltrán Ortega was known as “Nino de Velez” (the Velez Kid). He was born in Benamargosa on the 9 April, 1906. He spent his childhood and youth in the Velez district of Triana and died in Vélez-Málaga on the 27 December, 1975.

A lover of flamenco singing since he was a child he created a personal style. He sang in the most important cafés and theatres of the time. He is the writer of many Málaga tunes, amongst others this one which goes:

CALETA AND EL LIMONAR, / LONG LIVE MÁLAGA WITH
CALETA AND EL LIMONAR, / ITS PARK COVERED IN FLOWERS
NEAR THE SEA SHORE, / WHERE LOVE IS BORN.

Talked about in history and in legends, smuggling became especially interesting, resulting from the anecdotes and imaginative speculations which it gave rise to.

The number of locals involved in the comings and goings involved in smuggling and the volume of goods coming in from Gibraltar meant that Benamargosa, at the end of the XIX century, became known, not only in Málaga but also in the rest of Andalusia, as Little Gibraltar. Its fame is reflected in a ballad sung by a woman from Ubrique:

LONG LIVE MY TOWN, GENTLEMEN/ I'M FROM BENAMARGOSA
WHERE CIGARETTES ARE SOLD/ LIKE ANYTHING ELSE.

This trade gave rise to the famed skill that the men of the town had for going along paths and passes to avoid being found by the feared Guardia Civil as they went from Gibraltar with their horses laden with prized merchandise.



BENAMOCARRA

The name Benamocarra comes from “Banu Mukarram”, the sons of Mukaramm, the name of the Berber tribe that founded the town.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:

Benamocarrenos.

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES:

Eduardo Ocón y Rivas, born on the 12 January, 1833. A musician who obtained the highest prizes and decorations. He died of pneumonia in the tower of Málaga Cathedral on the 28 February, 1901.

José Manuel Lucena Gordo, born in 1902 and died in 1983 in Benamocarra. He is remembered as the country poet, the name of one of the streets of his town.

The old people tell of a miracle in the form of a legend. It is thought that towards the end of the XVIII or beginning of the XIX century, a cholera epidemic broke out in the area and soon after the illness came to the town spreading among the inhabitants. Human efforts were insufficient to stop the terrible epidemic so it was decided that to go to Torre del Mar to bring the statue of a Christ, reputed to be miraculous. This was done and once the statue of Christ was taken to the town, it was taken in procession through the streets, while windows and doors were opened as it went by to purify the homes.

Next day, they took the statue out of the church and started to take it back, but when they reached the outskirts of the town, the statue became so heavy that it was not possible to continue. This was seen as a miracle and a holy sign as the statue became lighter as it was taken back into the town.

The epidemic suddenly subsided and the statue of Christ that had shown an interesting staying in Benamocarra was given the name of the Health,; it was acclaimed as patron saint and, so people would remember the miracle, a small chapel was built on the spot were it became impossible to continue carrying the statue and this is now called The Little Saint.

People in the area know of a legend of the treasure which the Moors buried in the farmstead in Luchena, the few remains of which are to be found almost at the entrance to the town, although it is in the municipal district of Vélez-Málaga. It is believed that the Moors decided to bury the treasures when they fled at the time when the city and the surrounding towns were about to fall, and naturally they have yet to be found.



CANILLAS DE ACEITUNO

The meaning of the name of Canillas de Aceituno alluding to its numerous olive groves is the generally accepted one. However, the fact that the Moors had an important business in this town making and selling silk for over eight centuries gives rise to the theory that CANILLAS refers to “the small cane where the weavers wind the silk or thread to later put in the shuttle”, and that on the other hand ACEITUNÍ is “a very rich oriental cloth”. The importance of this production meant that the Moors themselves called the silk they made AL-ZAYTÚN. All this would lead one to believe that silk production in Canillas de Aceituno was more than just a cottage industry.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:

Canilleros.

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES:

The most famous and colorful personality according to legend is **Andrés Xorairán**, better known as El Salteador de Canillas de Aceituno (the Highwayman of

Canillas de Aceituno). He was an excitable man who led some of the better known events of the Moorish revolts in 1569. He attacked convoys and towns and cities in the area.

Antonio de Canillas. Antonio Jiménez González, was born in 1929. Born in Canillas de Aceituna and one of its Favorite Sons, he is seen as the veteran of the flamenco singers of Málaga. He has singing flamenco for over forty years and has been awarded numerous national flamenco prizes. He is in possession of La Lámpara Minera del VI Concurso de Cante de las Minas de la Unión in Murcia (The Miner’s Lamp Trophy of the IV Song Festival of Murcia). He is a great singer of “saetas” (sacred songs in the flamenco style) and he is credited with the creation of the Málaga saeta. He sings the different flamenco styles in a masterly way. His contribution to **Rito y geografía del Cante, Magna Antología del Cante Flamenco, Cultura Jonda y Sabor a Málaga (an Anthology of Flamenco Singing)** are considered important by flamenco fans.

Over the years, his singing has improved and he has managed to maintain his registers in his characteristic clear and splendid way. This acclaimed singer's dignity and ability have been important for the success of the show "Paisanos", a production that opened during the I Edición del Festival 'Malaga en Flamenco' (I Malaga Flamenco Festival) organized by the Málaga Provincial Government.

According to stories, a Moor called Al Muezzín, who helped the inhabitants of the Alpujarra during the famous revolt in the XVI century, arrived in Canillas looking for his wife, who was at the time the slave of a Christian. Al Muezzín led the rising in Canillas de Aceituno and some of his men, encouraged by the cause, killed eight Christians who they found in an inn. The judge of Vélez, informed of the fact, imprisoned an indeterminate number of Moors who were tortured and stripped of their property; as a result the uprising spread. Once this was put down, the Moors were expelled from the town and the castle was destroyed

on the orders of Phillip II.

As part of the legend, people talk of the story, transmitted by word of mouth from parents to children, that explains how the statue of the Virgen de la Cabeza (Virgin of the Head), patron saint of Canillas de Aceituno, was made in Antioch by Saint Luke the evangelist, carved from the face of the Virgin who he had known personally in Palestine. The statue was taken by Saint Peter on his visit to Andújar in the year 50 AD. It was hidden up in the mountains for nearly 500 years during the Moorish occupation and was later found; following this a sanctuary which bears its name was built on the spot where it was found and a replica is venerated.



CANILLAS DE ALBAIDA

Its name comes from the Arabic and means the white one.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:
Canilleros.

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES:

José Marín Ortega, also known as El Miguinas, who lacked any literary training but still managed to write many poems and ballads. He was born in the town in 1923 and died in 1956.

Félix Lomas Martín, was born in 1845 and was a famous judge who created the College of Lawyers and the Scientific-Literary Academy in Vélez-Málaga. He was a member of the provincial assembly and later in Parliament; he achieved important improvements in Vélez-Málaga and in the area.



According to legend, there is in the shrine of Santa Ana, the oldest and highest part of the town, a tunnel which has yet to be discovered and which leads from the shrine or somewhere nearby to the river Turvilla. This gallery was excavated using picks and spades by Christian prisoners to be used by the Moors to obtain water. The tunnel led to a place near the river, opposite the shrine, an estate called el Allaná, where twenty meters up on the rocky outcrop people can see shapes on the rock which remind them of the sign of doors standing out and which according to folklore were blocked up.

Folklore and legend state that in the year of the great earthquake of 1884, on Christmas Eve, the earth shook causing terror and destruction in many towns on both sides of Sierra Tejada. The inhabitants of Canillas de Albaida, on learning of the way their neighbors were killed, ran terrified to seek protection from the Virgen del Rosario (Virgin of the Rosary) and decided to take it out in procession through the streets of the town. The

old people who lived through this told their children and grandchildren that the tremors stopped when the procession went by, taking it to mean that this was due to the Virgin's protection. In thanksgiving, the people named the Virgin of the Rosary as protector and patron saint of the town. From that day on, on the saint's day, the Virgin is taken in procession through the town.

COLMENAR

The name originates from the great number of beehives in one of the farms, where the present town originated during the Christian Reconquista.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:

Colmenarenos.

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES:

Gonzalo Fernández de Coalla, was the son of the ex-mayor of Comares, a knight of Santiago and alderman of the city of Málaga in 1542. He created the primogeniture of Auta in Málaga.

Baltasar de la Peña y Avilés, was a master canon in the cathedral of Málaga and later became bishop of Ávila. He died in 1704.

Once again, the legend talks about sailors and shipwrecks. There is in Colmenar a legend that says that around 1700 nine sailors from the Canary Islands who were sailing opposite the coast of Málaga were surprised by a furious storm; when they could not control the ship they were in they commended themselves to the Virgen de la Candelaria (Virgin of Candlemas), and promised to pay for the costs of a shrine up on the hills they could see in the distance.

The rescue of the sailors from the Canaries was seen as a miracle and they kept their promise; they built a shrine to the Virgin of Candlemas, patron saint of the Canary Islands, on the hills they saw in the distance. Although the dates do not match, as the shrine was built in the XVI century, the chapel was renovated in 1719 with a vault, decorations and maritime themes typical of the period.



COMARES

Its name comes from the Arabic “hisn qumarich” meaning castle up the hill.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:
Comarenos.



There are two legends or stories that deal with the link between the French bishop and confessor Saint Hilary of Poitiers (315-368) and the inhabitants of Comares. The first one talks about the uprising by a group of Mozarabs in January, 1442 due to the way they were treated under Muslim laws. Since the events coincided with the feast of Saint Hilary and that the clash occurred around his estates, he was named patron saint in memory of those Christians who in his name went out to defend their rights.

The other version tells of those times when the town feared the arrival of the plague which was already affecting other neighboring towns, people asked the saint for help and protection; when the plague did not arrive, the people, in gratitude, gave him the title of protector and patron saint..

As in other places in the district, there is another popular legend in Comares which credits the building of the chapel of the Rosary (currently the Sacristy) to

a sailor who, when he was about to be shipwrecked off the coast of Torre del Mar, promised that if he survived, he would ask for a chapel to be built in the first church he saw; this turned out to be the church in Comares, despite being far away. Once the sailor came ashore, and thankful for the help, he set about helping with the cost of the chapel.

Traditions repeat themselves and as in other towns of the area, especially in the aforementioned Alfaratejo, Comares also has the tradition of washing the wool. The young lovers who were about to marry would take the tufts of wool and wash them in the river Cueva so they would be nice and loose. The days following this were ideal for getting together and have a good time singing songs and telling jokes which were usually risqué.

A historical tradition tells of the time when this Moorish town capitulated to King Ferdinand and many Muslim families decided to leave in fear of reprisals.

Before the people left, it was decided to bring in families from the interior of the Iberian Peninsula in 1490. The thirty Moorish families that stayed behind, to avoid any problems, decided to convert to Christianity and to be baptized and receive pardon; this happened on the corner of a street now known as calle del Perdón (Pardon Street). Since those days, in remembrance of this, after the three bells that call the faithful to mass, there are another thirty in memory of the families that were baptized and gained pardon. Even today, this tradition is repeated on the first Sunday of December in remembrance of that ancient tradition.

CÓMPETA

It is assumed that the origin of the name comes from the Hispanization of the Latin word “compita” which means crossroads..

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:
Competenos.

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES:

Plácido Ávila Reina. He was born in Cómpeeta on the 24 November 1872. He was a follower and later a friend of Mariano Belliure. He made a number of statues of the Crucified Christ and became Head of Art in Ávila's secondary y school.

Aurelio Cabra Fernández. He was born in Cómpeeta on the 16 January 1915. He was a Lecturer of Chemistry at the Complutense University in Madrid. In 1942 hi joined CAMPSA as a chemist and later worked in the Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Pantaleón Romero Ruíz. He was born in Cómpeeta on the 28 February 1855. He was appointed a Captain in the Army Chaplaincy be the Queen Regent, Maria Cristina. He was army chaplain of the Tarifa Rifles Battalion in Cuba. He reached the rank of Chaplain Lieutenant General and died in Madrid in 1934 and was buried in the Church of San Isodro.

According to legend, in April 1569, a Moor arrived on the way to Canillas de Aceituno to rescue his wife who was being held as a slave by an old Christian. In Cómpeeta he informed people of the success of the uprising in the Alpujarra region and of the help expected from abroad. The people rose, lead by Martín Alguacil and they were joined by Moors from the Bentomiz Mountains. Apparently, Martín Alguacil claimed to be loyal to the crown and an excellent convert, so he enjoyed a good reputation with the Vélez authorities.

As a result, Sheriff Arévalo de Zuaro called him so he might placate the towns up in Bentomiz. Alguacil, thinking he was about to be arrested and executed, refused to go. He brought together all the rebels from the Bentomiz Mountains in the square in Cómpeeta and urged them to fight for freedom and for the love of their land. As a result, he was appointed sovereign of Bentomiz.

There were at the time in Cómpeeta, among the 572 inhabitants, 143 Moors and 3 old Christians. The latter hid in the Curch tower when they saw the arrival of armed foreigners in the town. Martín Alguacil made his people go round the tower time and again, dressed and armed differently each time, to make the refugees think that the number of rebels was greater than it really was.



CÚTAR

Its name comes from the Arabic word “hisn aqut” meaning acute castle.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:
Cutarenos.



Everyone in Cútar talks about a terrifying legend. The subject is the cry of the bird of death. Fear and terror grips anyone who is out at night and hears the cry of the bird of death. The people say that, in the cold of the night, around Cútar, a light appears, beautiful and radiant phosphorescence that attracts anyone who looks at it: it is the light of the bird of death. If the person who sees it, drawn by its irresistible attraction, gets too near, he will hear the piercing cry of the bird of death and a horrifying cold feeling will run through his body; he will be stricken with terror, will exhale his last breath and will disappear. Many people claim that the tradition says that over the centuries the number of disappeared persons has gone up, along with those that have been found dead; in total they number over one hundred. The advice is that anyone who sees the attractive light should flee without looking back.

Something of great interest is the water fountain which is situated to the south of the town, next to the road that runs along the town, and which is in a perfect

state and is still used. It is covered by a simple square construction which makes it unique in the province of Málaga. It was built in Arab times and is known in the Survey of 1571 as “aina alcaharia” (the fountain of the farmstead).

Another interesting thing we find in this same survey of 1571 is the phrase that says: “ if any Moor has a sexual relationship with any Christian woman, he should die for it...” With phrases like these, it does not seem that there was much tolerance during the idealized period of Moorish domination.

EL BORGE

Its name comes from the Arabic “al-burch” meaning tower or bastion.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:
Borgenos.

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES:

Martín Vázquez Ciruela, one of the most illustrious theologians of the XVII century.

Luis Muñoz García, was better known as El Bizco del Borge, who was a famous bandit renowned for being blood-thirsty and heartless, capable of extreme cruelty, and one of the most ferocious bandits ever according to the Guardia Civil. He was born in 1837 and died in Cortijo Grande de Lucena (Córdoba) at the hands of the Guardia Civil in 1889.

The legend repeats itself and there is a story in El Borge of how the people from a neighboring town decided to take the statue of the patron saint, Saint Gabriel. The men charged with the mission reached the church and, under the cover of night, they went in and tried to steal the statue; they were unable to do this as the statue of the saint became so heavy that they were unable to move it from its pedestal. Frustrated, they had to leave the town in the knowledge that there was little they could do against it while it counted with the protection of the Holy Archangel.

Another legend refers to the name of the mountain Saint Pitar which is in the jurisdiction of Málaga, but borders with El Borge. Apparently there lived on its summit a Muslim saint who summoned the faithful to prayer every day using a large shell; when people heard him they would shout: “the saint is whistling”. This legend has a more historical basis, since the name of the mountain, according to several studies, is the Arabic form of the Mozarabic form Sanctu Petru

(Saint Peter), which then became Santo Pitar.

A tradition now in disuse, for obvious reasons, is the way lads and lasses would declare their love to each other in order to formalize their relations, both in El Borge and in Cútar. This would take place in El Borge on Easter Sunday and on Christmas Day in Cútar, where the same tradition was followed. The idea was that the lads who wanted to ask for the hand of a girl in marriage would wait at the door of the church at the end of mass. The young girls of marriageable age came out with their mothers or aunts, one by one, and when a lad saw the girl he liked he would go up and, without a word, a warning shot was fired a meter from her feet and then he left immediately. That night he would go to his beloved's house and if next to the table there were two empty chairs side by side, this meant that the family approved of the betrothal; in this case the lad and the girl would sit at the table and the relationship was official. If the lad did not see the aforementioned chairs, then it meant the family did not approve.

What a disappointment!.



FRIGILIANA

Its name comes from the Latin “Frexinius” which corresponds to the name of a Roman personality..

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:
Frigilianenses.

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES:

Hernando el Darra, a Moorish leader and rebel who supposedly died in the bloody battle of Penon de Frigiliana in 1569.

Liborio Apolinar Acosta de la Torre. He was born in 1836 and was a Sawyer, a journalist, a writer and a biographer. Member of a College in Madrid, he was Master of his University and canon of the Cathedral. He died in Alcalá de Henares in 1890.

Monte Pinto has a tradition that has become a legend. The story goes that when a sailor called Francisco Pinto, on his way from Verona to Cadiz at the end of the XV century, was sailing off Nerja, the sea became rough and tossed his boat about like a shell. Frightened of losing his possessions and his own life, the sailor implored divine intervention and promised that, if he came out alive from that infernal storm, he would build a cross on the summit of the mountain he could see in the distance. His prayers were answered and once on land safe and sound, at the end of his voyage, he returned to the summit he had seen in those terrible moments and fulfilled his promise and built a cross and a vaulted niche.

It is traditional to go up to the niche at the foot of the cross with a bucket of whitewash and the necessary tools and paint it, either to ask for a wish or in thanks after it is granted.

A legend concerning the martyrdom of Saint Basilisa and Saint Epeneto has been proved true following the discovery of chronicles, based on an oral tradition, which relate that during the Roman domination and the persecution of Christians, Saint Basilisa and possibly also the bishop Saint Epeneto were martyred in the town.

There is a legend of a treasure, as in so many other places, linked to Moorish treasures and secret passages. It talks about the existence of a passage or tunnel, naturally undiscovered, which links Lizar Castle on the rock that dominates the town and the Turret of Dona Maria- a dead-end street opposite the Town Hall- or the surrounding area.



IZNATE

Its name comes from the Arabic “hisnat” or “hins-
auta” which could be translated to Spanish as castle
or castles.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:

Iznatenos.

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES:

One of its famous personalities, **Juan José Villaluenga
y Marfil** was president of the court in Quito at the end
of the XVIII century. A portrait (a rolled canvas) of this
illustrious person is kept in the Convent Museum of
the Descalzas in Antequera.



A legend claims that the famous leader Omar Ben Hafsun, who was so talked about at the time of the Caliphate in Córdoba, was born in Iznate. Up to now these are only conjectures in spite of the claim by the famous Arab scholar Dozy, who maintains the theory that the birthplace of the Muslim leader was Iznate, although other sources insist that this leader was born in Parauta, in the mountains of Ronda.

It is interesting to note a unique historical characteristic about this town which is that it enjoyed the privilege of “behetría”. This meant that, because it completely owned its lands, the people had the right to elect whoever they wanted as lord to defend them or support them in time of need. As a result, the obligation to swear allegiance to a Christian lord years later must have been very difficult.

LA VIÑUELA

The name La Vinuela refers to small vineyards belonging to an old inn, currently Bar La Plaza, which existed on the Vélez-Málaga Highroad to Granada, a place which at the beginning of the XVII century was known as La Vinuela.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:

Vinoleros.

One of the traditions it still maintains is the festival of the raisin, celebrated at the end of the harvesting of one of the fruits on which the town's economy is based. The Virgen de las Angustias (the Virgin of Anguish), patron saint of the town, is taken from the church where it has been for months, waiting to be taken to the shrine. A joyful procession accompanies the statue. At the beginning, when most of the people of the town took part in the harvesting and laying out of the raisins, it was traditional to stop the harvesting of grapes so that people could come together and participate in the festivity. Naturally, all that remains today is the token celebration, in commemoration of times past, as a tradition that gives visitors the chance to taste a glass of the first must, raisins and local wines.



MACHARAVIAYA

It name comes from the phonetic transcription of “marcher ibn Yahya” meaning Yahya’s son’s farm.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:
Macharatungos.

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES:

José Gálvez y Gallardo, a man who was close to King Charles III, who was minister for the Indies. In America he founded the city that bears his name, Galveston, in the state of Texas and on his return he was named a Knight of the Order of Charles III, Marquis of Sonora and secretary of the Council of the Indies. His social position enabled his brothers and nephews to have important posts. Matias was viceroy in Mexico and Miguel was Spanish ambassador in Russia; his nephew Bernardo was governor of Louisiana, captain general in Cuba and viceroy in Mexico.

Salvador Rueda was born on the 2 December, 1857 in Benaque, a district of Macharaviaya. As a poet he was considered the precursor of Spanish Modernism. In 1910 he was acclaimed poet of the Spanish world in the Philippines and in Havana. He died in Malaga in 1933.



There is a legend about the flooring of the church, related to the wealthy Gálvez family. This family's political and financial power led to some exaggerations which with time became legendary, as, for example, the story that tells how the noble family at the time of laying the flooring in the church decided it should be done using coins instead of the customary tiles. When Charles III heard about this, he forbade it as he did not want the faithful to step on his image; if the coins were placed face-up his effigy would be trampled on and if they were laid face-down then it would be the Emblem of Spain that would be trampled. In order to solve the problem he suggested the coins should be laid down on their side, but apparently this proved too expensive.

Another legend linked to this family's fortune states that in the church there is a hidden treasure, as a surplus in order to rebuild the church in case it were demolished. This treasure has not been found to date.

An interesting fact is the creation in Macharaviaya of the Real Fábrica de Naipes (Royal Cards Factory), nearly a century before Heraclio Fournier founded his famous factory in Vitoria in 1868. This was one of the many privileges granted by the Gálvez family to its home town. This factory which was founded in 1775 managed to produce 30,000 packs of cards a year. As a result, all the cards reaching America before 1815 came from Macharaviaya due to the exclusive contract signed by the owners with the Indies, as shown on the pack's suit of golden coins.

MOCLINEJO

The origin of the name is unclear. It appears in XV and XVI century chronicles as Moclinatum, Molinete, Moclinete, Mohinete or Molinillo. Some have wanted to link it to the Arab words "hins al muklin" which strangely means the two-eyed fortress..

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:
Moclinejenses.

An important historical event took place in these lands some years before the conquest of Málaga. A Christian army of 2,700 horseman and 1,000 foot soldiers under Alonso Aguilar reached Moclinejo in March 1483; immediately its inhabitants got their belongings and fled to safety in the caves and in the castle. When it did not find any booty in the town or the nearby farms, the enraged Christian army set fire to the farms and to the farmstead in Moclinejo.

The response from the Muslims after this ferocious action was instant; they left the castle and the caves and from the heights they threw many rocks and arrows which defeated the Christian army and forced it to flee, having sustained heavy losses. In memory of this huge defeat there is a ravine that even today is called Hoya de los Muertos (Valley of the Dead).



NERJA

Its name comes from the Arabic “narixa, naricha or narija”, which is Pre-Roman, and although not all together clear, could mean plentiful spring.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:

Nerjenos.

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES:

Hisio Francisco Centurión, an army colonel and viceroy of the states of Colombia who lived between the XVIII an XIX centuries.



A legend called La Fuente de la Doncella (the Maiden’s Fountain) tells that next to a place known as the Tetuán estate, near the Burriana beach, there was a fountain where a young girl used to drink as it offered relief against an illness she had been suffering since childhood. On the way there and back she used to come across a handsome young man who also went to the fountain to enjoy the water. After some time their friendship turned into love, and although the handsome man asked her to marry him, she, aware of her illness, did not accept his proposal. This did not prove to be an obstacle for the young man to remain faithful till death and the story has been idealized as a legend of pure love linked to the fountain since the XVI century.

Another legend, this time about the Cuesta del Barranco de Melí (Hill of Melí’s Ravine), between the districts of Nerja, Frigiliana and Torrox, talks about the Moor called Melí, a Muslim who supposedly lived in the area, around the IX century. One of the many things that this curious character would do was to hide in the

estates and, according to legend, frighten everyone who passed by, pretending to be a bloodthirsty bandit. What with one thing and another, Melí the Moor, who kept all the town folk amused, ended up converting to Christianity; this curious character was so famous in the area that the ravine or hill were named after Melí the Moor.

The traditional celebration of the feast of San Anton, patron saint of animals, is a popular tradition in all the towns of the region, but it is perhaps in Maro, a district of Nerja, where this custom has greatest significance. In mid-January, people celebrated in the aforementioned district the feast of San Anton; in his honor, everyone who owned an animal would light bonfires at midnight so that the saint would protect their animals over the whole year, otherwise they would get ill or die.

Today, these festivities, of which there is documentary evidence since the XVII century, are celebrated with traditional bonfires known here as lights. Mass is

celebrated on the 17th and then the band and the street party mark the opening the festivities. In days gone by, four months before this, a piglet was let loose through the streets of Maro –San Anton is represented with a hog at his feet- and was fed by all the townsfolk as it ran loose; the understanding was that this was San Anton's hog which would be auctioned on the feast of the patron saint. This is the source of the saying which says that when a family had a boy who was abandoned or spent all day out in the street, it was said: "you look like San Anton's hog".

PERIANA

The origin of the name is somewhere between history and legend. The story goes that there two families were litigating as they each wanted their surname – one was Pereiro and the other was Santana- to be used for the name of the town. As the quarrels became more serious, it was decided that neither one nor the other should be used, but a mixture of both, and hence the name Periana. Nonetheless, there are those who claim that the ending in “ana” is a late Roman place name meaning town or farm..

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:
Perianeses.

There is a legend about an imprisoned Christian woman, whose cries were heard purely by chance by a Muslim who was walking around the walls of the mosque, near which was the room where the beautiful Christian had been imprisoned. Since the moment when they first looked at each other across the ditch which separated them they fell in love; they would subsequently use the cover of dark for their secret meetings.

Ahmed’s family, who discovered their son’s relationship, decided that the prisoner, Sara, should be sent away to put an end to this. When Ahmed heard of this plan, could not see another way out than to flee. Early one morning, before the father’s plan could be put in place, the lovers fled but they were mercilessly hunted down and rather than see themselves captured, they sealed their love in perpetuity by throwing themselves from the hill of Marchamonas, where their bodies fell into the void but their souls flew freely to the land of eternal love.

The locals claim that during winter nights when the wind blows strongest, you can hear murmurs of love in the air, showing that they are still in love.

There are other legends about a holm oak situated in the outskirts of the town, on the road to Riogordo. People say that this holm oak had supernatural powers when, after midnight, strange things would happen to anyone who walked nearby. Some said that the holm oak was bewitched and others blamed the events on a book of witchcraft that was bound using the bark of a tree, which a local witch used as she pleased. Be that as it may, the strange events ceased when the book disappeared, something that nobody can find an explanation for.



RINCÓN DE LA VICTORIA

There are different theories concerning the origin of its name; the most likely is the one that claims that it is due to the fact that the lands had once belonged to the Frailes Mínimos de la Victoria (Friars of Victoria).

NAME OF ITS INHABITANT:

Rinconeros

Legends of the Cueva del Higuerón (Cave of the Fig Tree)

According to contrasting studies, the goddess Noctiluca has a sanctuary with an altar in the Cave of the fig tree. This altar which had been naturally sculpted inside the cave represented a waxing half moon over which there is a stone formation with a full moon in the centre. Noctiluca, the goddess of fertility, life and death, was adored by the Phoenicians and their coins which were minted in Málaga had an altar and other forms similar to the one in the cave on the reverse.

A book written by Cecilio García de la Lena, at the end of the XVIII century claims that Marco Licinio Craso (115-53 BC) hid in the Cave of the Fig Tree as he fled following his father's assassination, which is why one of the caves bears his name.

Another legend talks about the Cueva del Tesoro (Treasure Cave), which is the same one as the Cave of

the Fig tree and is included in Manuel Laza Palacio's book "El Tesoro de cinco los reyes" (The treasure of the five kings), which describes how, before fleeing, five Hammudi kings buried a fantastic treasure somewhere in the cave. It should be mentioned that Manuel Laza Palacio found six XII century golden dinars when he was carrying out a study of this cave in the mid-50s. A second version states that the treasure was sent from Oran by the Caliph Texuflin Ben Ali, an Almoravid king who reached the coast of Malaga fleeing from an uprising in which he would surely have perished.

Once again, history intertwines with legend and the Treasure Cave acquires another name, Cueva del Suizo (The Cave of the Swiss), since it was Antonio de la Nari, a Swiss noble who has formed part of the Swiss guard who, after buying the cave in the middle of the XIX century, explored it for twenty years; he died in it when buried by a dynamite charge which he had placed in order to open or discover new galleries. Since that unlucky day in 1847 he has formed part of the history

and legend of the cave. A rumor immediately went round that the tormented soul of the unfortunate Swiss wandered sporadically through the ravines coming out to scare those who saw him.



RIOGORDO

This town's name refers to the river's heavy water. It is not normal for a town to take its name from the river, rather the contrary, but in this case, due to the dependence of the town on the river, it took its name from it.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:
Riogordenos.

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES:

Monseñor Francisco Núñez Aguilar, Papal prelate in Rosario in Argentina.

José A. Muñoz Sánchez, who is better known as El Cura de Riogordo (the Priest of Riogordo). He owes his fame to his ability to combine his religious obligations with his military ones. He stood out due to his skill and talent against the French troops in 1812.



A legend full of religious significance claims that during the transfer of the Statue of Nuestro Padre Jesus Nazareno (Jesus of Nazareth) from Antequera to Vélez-Málaga, the men carrying it decided to stop for the night in Riogordo. They thought that, being something sacred, the best thing would be to leave the statue that night in the shrine of Saint Sebastian. When they decided to continue on their way the next morning, they found that, to their surprise, it was impossible to lift the statue as something supernatural kept it fixed to the ground. Moving it from the place where it was proved fruitless, even with the help of other men. It was clear that Jesus had shown his wish to stay in this town. As a result of this extraordinary event, the shrine took the name of Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno. From then on there is great devotion to it.

An interesting tradition was practiced in this town when courting. According to the older folk, if a young man liked a young girl and wanted to formalize the relationship he had to go to her house and, unannounced, sit on a

chair. This had to be repeated over three consecutive days. If on the third day the young girl did not come out to meet him then it was understood that either she or her family were not interested in him; on the other hand, if she liked him she went out to meet him, which meant that the relationship had started and they were courting.

SALARES

Its name probably comes from the salt deposits that existed in Roman times, a place which was known in those days as Salaria Bastitanorum.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:

Salarenos.

The fountain of Albarrá, situated to the south of the town after the convergence of the rivers Salares and Sedella, soon became a legend as in winter its waters are hot and in summer they are invigoratingly fresh. This feature meant that many young people met there in summer to take the waters or to fill the pitchers or jugs; it soon became an ideal place for starting courtship.

Of all its traditions, one is remembered which consisted in the sorcery surrounding Midsummer Night. The idea was that people went to the fountains, especially that of Albarrá, rivers and streams and before they were surprised by sunrise, wash their face; once this had been done, the women had to get a cress branch –a medicinal and aromatic plant that grows near water- and hang it from their chest. As a result, love and happiness were protected for the rest of the year. This tradition is still alive and practiced by most of the people who like the rites and customs associated to the magical night of San Juan (Midsummer Night).

Another tradition is celebrated on the eve of All Saints. There is a very ancient custom in Salares called “santo mortero”, a night of spirits and elves when the children visited the neighbors’ houses asking for seasonal fruit as gifts. The lovely fruit collected would be eaten when they met in groups to celebrate the day. This tradition is maintained today with some modifications due to influences from America. In spite of these changes, the children continue visiting their neighbors, and the night is still shrouded in the will-o’-the-wisp in the cemeteries and in the legends and rites pertaining to the stories of souls, whether they are lost ones or those that have reached their final resting place.



SAYALONGA

The origin of its name is still unknown. Although the town's origin is Arabic, no one knows exactly when it was inhabited.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:

Sayalanguinos.

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES:

Alí ibn Ahmd ibn Muhammad Al-Hasní, was a poet born in Batarxis, in the district of Sayalonga at the start of the XIV century. He was the author of a history of the holy city of Mecca and of the governors of Muslim Málaga.

Bismal, born in the district of Sayalonga, in Curumbela, and king of Málaga was a learned monarch and great lover of the arts. The construction of the Alcazaba was finished during his reign.

Legend has it that the Cid, on one of his visits to the area, on his way through Sayalonga, drank from the fountain which today, in memory of that event, bears his name: Fuente del Cid (the Fountain of the Cid).

There is something of a legend in the amazing event surrounding the appearance in the mid-XIX century of the statue of the Virgen del Rosario (Virgin of the Rosary), patron saint of the town, covered in sea water and scattered with scales and seaweed. Days later, some fishermen told the excited inhabitants how, when they were fishing, when night came, the sea became rough and wild, the boat was tossed about by the waves and the sailors lost their bearings; as a result they feared the worse. In the midst of the storm, they started to pray and, instantly, they saw to their amazement how a Virgin rose up from the sea and guided them to the coast.

On hearing the story the inhabitants understood why several days earlier the statue of the Virgin had

appeared in the town, with traces of scales and seaweed. The sailors were taken by the crowds to the church and as soon as they saw it they recognized it; they knelt in front and prayed with devotion and thanksgiving.

Among the interesting things, people remember that during the first decades of last century, as there was no doctor, means of transport or sufficient money in the town, its inhabitants decided to treat some of the illnesses that ailed them with a great dose of imagination and went back to remedies their ancestors had used. Some of those remedies have been recovered in the interest of maintaining traditions.

Possibly one of the most interesting and surprising remedies used was the one used to treat jaundice. The patient had to go to the river and, for half an hour, had to concentrate on the water, follow its course with his eyes and think of nothing else. If he was not cured, they claimed that the relief felt was very considerable.



SEDELLA

Its name possibly comes from the Latin word “sedilla” which in Lower Roman meant rural settlement.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:
Sedellanos.



Among its legends, Sedella has a great number of tales about the events that have already been discussed, such as those that refer to hidden treasures which have still to appear, goats and other animals with torches on their horns to give the idea that a great army was besieging the Arab fortress at night, hidden passages which link strategic areas, etc. One of them is certainly ingenious; it is the one that talks about the name of the town.

According to this story, when they went to Isabel la Católica to give her the news of the town and of a battle that had taken place near the town (probably the legend refers to a clash between the Muslims headed by El Zagal and the Christian troops, which gave rise to the name of the arroyo de Matanza), before the messenger finished the queen stopped him and said: Sé de ella (I know about it). This version has little historical backing but it lends itself to the legend of the name of Sedella

A rather macabre legend tells the story of Moreno Arce, better known as Morenito (Swarthy), who was born and lived in the town towards the end of the XVI century. This quarrelsome and swaggering young man was known for his misdemeanors. The story goes that one lunch time he heard the foreman of a gang of reapers insult his father. The impetuous young man, without a word, jumped on the foreman, cut off his ear and sitting on him, already earless, he finished his meal. Reported by one of his cousins for all his crimes and his demeanors, he was discovered in a cave, was executed, then quartered, and as an example to the town his members were scattered on the access road to the town. As a result the road was named by stretches, according to the part of the accused that had been placed there, in other words: stretch of the head, stretch of the leg, stretch of the arm, etc.

An interesting tradition is the one related to Palm Sunday, widely accepted in Christendom, which suggests that believers should wear new clothes or

something new on that day, no matter what. In Sedella this tradition takes on another peculiar dimension as it is suggested that inhabitants did not wash as anyone who did could run the risk that hands could develop a disease and could catch verrucas.

TORROX

Some historians associate Torrox with Hisn Turrus, the place where, in 914, Abderraman III's troops defeated those of Omar Ibn Hafsun, the Mulad rebel who had tried to bring down the Caliphate in Cordoba.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:

Torrocenos.

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES:

Almazor Abo-Amir Muhammad Ben Abi Amer, who was better known as Almazor and was given the nickname El Victorioso (The Victor) was born in Torrox in 939, according to some historians in the Castle in the town. Among other duties, he was the Cadi of Sevilla and commander-in-chief of the army. He died in Medinaceli in 1002.

According to the legend of the Puente de las Animas (the Bridge of Souls), on All Saints' Day, along the Arab bridge the crosses the river at the entrance of the town along the Nerja road, the spirits appear carrying torches in procession on their way to the convent, at about midnight. This is reason enough for the bridge to be called the Bridge of Souls.



There is a traditional and legendary rite that is still followed by people in love who are uncertain about their future. The idea is to fill a bowl with water into which the man throws a pin and then the woman throws another. The pins must be left all night in the water and then next morning the couple go to see if the ends have joined, meaning they are blessed with good luck and their love will prosper; If on the other hand the pins remain apart it is obvious their relationship will not prosper. But beware: some cheats will magnetize the pins so the result will go their way. However, we must not kid ourselves; this is not a wise move..

TOTALÁN

There is a theory about the origin of the name of the town which claims that “totalán” means “pastry” in Arabic.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:

Totalanenos or totalenos.

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES:

Antonio Molina was a very famous post-Spanish Civil War flamenco singer, who sang ballads or light music. Although he was born in Málaga, people from this town feel he belongs there as he spent his infancy in the town and his parents came from Totalán.

Enrique Castillo, a famous flamenco singer, is one of the most outstanding ones from the province of Malaga. He obtained 17 awards in different styles of flamenco singing and another 14 in “saetas” in contests.

Manuel Vertedor was a escaped convict from the prison in Cartagena who joined El Bizco de El Borge’s band. He was killed at the hands of the Guardia Civil in 1887.

There is a belief, which people take as a legend, that in a place called Cerro de la Corona (Hill of the Crown), which was popularly known as Tumba del Moro (Moor’s Tomb), there exists the tomb of a Moorish leader. The legend continues in spite of the fact that in 1995 a group of school children discovered a Neolithic passage corresponding to a dolmen, contemporary to those in Antequera, where they found human bones which are 4,000 years old. In spite of this discovery, people still believe in the ancient legend of the moor’s tomb and of the possible treasure which was buried with the leader.

An interesting matter is covered in some documents which talk about the existence of various country houses in the area called Tortela, Tortila and Totalán; this brings us back the theory that the famous and typical Andalusí pastries were made in some of these places but up to now no trace has been found of this craft.



VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA

It is believed its name comes from the Latin “vallis” which became “balish” in Arabic and which could mean valley. Another theory believes it could derive from the word “waid” or “daliz” which means a settlement on a rock or a fortified rock in Arabic. In either case, in Spanish it became Vélez and later Málaga was added.

NAME OF ITS INHABITANTS:

Velenos.

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES:

Mohamed den Ahmed ben Daud Abu Abdallah, (1238-1312) was known as Aben Alkhamad. He wrote a theological and canonical treatise called “Suficiente” (“Enough”) which made him famous.

Antonio Ortega Escalona, also known as Juan Brea. He was a famous flamenco singer born in 1884 and created the “bandolá”. He died in Málaga in 1918.

María Zambrano Alarcón, the most important thinker and philosopher in recent Spanish history. She was

born in the town in 1904. She was a pupil of Ortega y Gasset, went into exile during the Civil War and returned in 1984. Among others, she was awarded the Principe de Asturias Prize and the Cervantes Prize. She died in Vélez-Málaga in 1984.

Evaristo Guerra Zamora, was born in Vélez-Málaga on the 5 September, 1942 and since his childhood he felt an urge to paint everything he saw around him. When he was ten he set up his first artist’s studio in the attic of his home in Vélez. He painted his first oil painting at the age of twelve, “Vista de Benamocarra” (A view of Benamocarra). In 1956 he began to study in an art school in Vélez which was run by the famous Granada watercolorist Juan Morcillo; this is when he learnt the first rudiments of his painting skill and created numerous drawings and paintings in his studio until 1960. In September 1961 he held his first individual exhibition in the Caja de Ahorros Provincial in Vélez-Málaga. Since then he has organized countless national and international exhibitions and established himself as one of the most important Naïf art painters in Spain.

There are many legends about the origins of the city, one of which, starting from the base that the original town was situated in the estuary of the river Vélez, as it really was, explains why the location changed to the interior. On the 31 July, 365, there was a strong earthquake accompanied by tidal waves which totally destroyed the city; before repairing the ruins, the inhabitants decided to move the town to a safer location which turned out to be the hill on which the fortress was later built.

Another legend claims that the apostle Saint Peter was the founder of the ancient shrine of the town, Saint Mary, which would become the Episcopal seat between the I and III centuries and mentions that Saint Epetenoa disciple of Saint Peter, was martyred on the “cerro de los Remedios” (hill of Remedies) which is the present site of the shrine of the patron saint.

The origin of the patron saint also has a legend attached to it. It is said that a shepherd found a statue of the Virgin Mary on the hill where the shrine presently

stands, but that he mistook the statue for a doll and so picked it up to give to his daughter. On the way home, the shepherd lost the doll but found it again some days later in the same place. The man tried to take the doll home on several occasions, and every time the same thing happened: the doll appeared in the place where he had found it. So believing this to be supernatural event, works soon started to build the shrine on the spot which the state never wanted to leave.

It is a historical fact that Miguel de Cervantes, the writer, lived in Vélez-Málaga as a tax-collector in 1594, living in a house which still stands and that the city is mentioned in “El Quijote” in chapter 41. Before that he had been Royal Collector in Álora between 1587 and 1593.

INDEX OF NAMES AND PLACES

NAME	TOWN	PAGE
Alí ibm Ahmd ibn Muhammad Al-Hasn�	Sayalonga	58
Almanzor Abo-Amir Muhammad Ben Abi Mer	Torrox	62
Antonio de Canillas	Canillas de Aceituno	24
Antonio Molina	Total�n	64
Antonio Ortega Escalona	V�lez-M�laga	66
Avelino Aurelio Ramos Acosta	C�mpeta	32
Baltasar de la Pe�a y Avil�s	Colmenar	28
Eduardo Oc�n y Rivas	Benamocarra	22
Enrique Castillo	Total�n	64
Enrique Ramos Ramos	Algarrobo	12
Evaristo Guerra Zamora	V�lez-M�laga	66
F�lix Lomas Mart�n	Canillas de Albaida	26
Gonzalo Fern�ndez de Coalla	Colmenar	28
Hernando el Darra	Frigiliana	38
Hisio Francisco Centuri�n	Nerja	48
Jos� A. Mu�oz S�nchez	Riogordo	54
Jos� Manuel Lucena Gordo	Benamocarra	22
Jos� Beltr�n Ortega	Benamargosa	20
Jos� G�lvez y Gallardo	Macharaviaya	44

José Marín Ortega	Canillas de Albaida	26
José Pinto y Palacios	Benamargosa	20
Juan José Villaluenga y Marfil	Iznate	40
Liborio Apolinar Acosta de la Torre	Frigiliana	38
Luis Muñoz García	El Borge	36
Manuel Cañizares Martín	Alcaucín	6
Manuel Vertedor	Totalán	64
María Zambrano Alarcón	Vélez-Málaga	66
Martín Vázquez Ciruela	El Borge	36
Mohamed den Ahmed ben Daud Abu Abdallah	Vélez-Málaga	66
Monseñor Francisco Núñez Aguilar	Riogordo	54
Salvador Rueda	Macharaviaya	44



PLAN TO REVITALIZE THE AXARQUIA TOURIST PRODUCT

A Plan to Revitalize a Tourist Product is a series of long-term measures for tourist destinations with the aim of accelerating economic growth and ensuring the sustainability of the area's natural resources.

The Plan to Revitalize the Axarquía Tourist Product (PDAX) has a total public budget of 4,155,000 euros, to be completed in four years. The project is being funded equally by the three government departments involved: State Secretariat of Tourism of the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade, Department of Tourism, Trade and Sport of the Andalusian Regional Government and the Málaga Provincial government. These three departments, together with the Association for the Promotion of tourism in the Axarquía (APTA) and the Centre for Rural Development of the Axarquía signed the Cooperation Agreement in 2006 and make up the Monitoring Commission. The Plan started in September 2006 and it is managed by the Tourist Planning Department of the Tourism Section of Territorial Development and Promotion of the Málaga Provincial Government which is therefore the department responsible for carrying out and justifying the measures.

The geographical limits of the PDAX include the 27 towns in the interior of the district: **Alcaucín, Alfarnate, Alfarnatejo, Algarrobo, Almáchar, Árchez, Arenas, Benamargosa, Benamocarra, Canillas de Aceituno, Canillas de Albaída, Colmenar, Comares, Competa, Cútar, El Borge, Frigiliana, Iznate, Macharaviaya, Moclinejo, Periana, Riogordo, Salares, Sayalonga, Sedella, Totalán y La Viñuela.**

The following are the measures included in the Plan:

LINE 1: MUNICIPAL UNITS FOR TOURIST INFORMATION (UMIT)

- Creation and equipping of the UMITs.
- Provision of UMITs (Canillas de Aceituno).
- Provision of UMITs (Riogordo).
- Provision of UMITs (Totalán).
- Provision of the Visitors' Centre for the Axarquía- La Viñuela Reservoir.

LINE 2: ENHANCEMENT OF TOURIST RESOURCES

- Acquisition of racks for tourist brochures (Axarquía).
- Virtual reconstruction of the historical fortifications in the Axarquía (Zalía Castle in Alcaucín, Bentomiz Castle in Arenas and Comares Castle).
- Main Plan for the creation and improvement of accessible tourist itineraries in the Axarquía.
- Guide for the design, production and marketing of tourist souvenirs of the Axarquía.
- Recipe book of the Axarquía.
- Design and production of a digital information and map system about itineraries, resources and tourist services in the Axarquía.
- Information sessions of the PDAX-Axarquía.
- Climbing routes in the Upper Axarquía (Comares).
- Honey Museum of Málaga (Colmenar).
- Consulting and technical assistance study to adapt the Baths of Vilo as a tourist product (Periana).
- Refurbishment of the Baths of Vilo (Periana).
- Visitors' Centre for the Axarquía (La Vunuela).
- Museum of Gastronomic Festivities of the Axarquía (Sedella).
- Extension of contents in the Galvez Museum (Macharaviaya).
- Restyling of the El Alcazar Recreational Area (Alcaucín).
- Restyling of the El Río Recreational Area (Alcaucín).
- Museum of Monfi (Cutar).
- Fitting and improvements of the Church of Saint Jacinto (Macharaviaya).
- Fitting and improvement of the church in the Galvez Mausoleum (Macharaviaya).
- Fitting and improvement of the birthplace of Salvador Rueda (Macharaviaya).
- Fitting and improvement of the Church of Benaque (Macharaviaya).
- Covered wooden bins in the tourist routes of the Axarquía.
- Enhancement of the Mudejar Route.
- Enhancement of the Route of the Sun and Wine.
- Enhancement of the Route of Oil and the Mountains.
- Enhancement of the Route of the Sol and Avocado Pear.

- Enhancement of the Route of the Raisin.
- Extension of the Moorish Museum (Sayalonga).
- Museum of Art and Customs (Competa).
- Beautification of the Walk of Health.
- Refurbishment of the eastern entrance into Iznate.
- Fitting of the municipal ornithological-botanic park in El Borge.
- Extension of the Archeological Museum in Frigiliana.
- Adaptation of itineraries for improved access: Path of the Fountain (La Vinuela).
- Adaptating of itineraries for improved access: Route of the River and the Mills (Archez).
- Adaptation of itineraries for improved access: Route of the Mountain (Salares).
- Jacobean Route of the Axarquía.
- Adaptation of the El Ejido city park (Alfarnate).
- Landscaping of the La Erilla Park (Alfarnate).
- Guide-book of trees and green zones (Alfarnate).
- Refurbishment of the Southern entrance (Alfarnatejo).
- Fitting of the El Chorro Fountain (Moclinejo).
- Fitting of Avenida Almachar (Moclinejo).

- Beautification of "El Valdes" (Moclinejo).
- Touristic Mural on "The Crossing of Riogordo" (Riogordo).
- Exterior lighting of historical buildings of the Town Hall (Riogordo).
- Fitting of recreational area on the Mudejar Route (Arenas).
- Beautification of the square in Calle Arroyo, in Salares.
- Exterior lighting of the Shrine of Saint Anne, in Alfarnate.

LINE 3: SIGNPOSTING

- Complete signposting of the District of the Axarquía.
- Signposting of the Mudejar Route.
- Signposting of the Route of the Sun and Wine.
- Signposting of the Route of the Oil and Mountains.
- Signposting of the route of the Sun and Avocado Pear.
- Signposting of the Route of the Raisin.

LINE 4: QUALITY TRAINING AND COURSES

- Implementation of an Approximation Model for Tourist Quality in economic and public service subsectors in the

District of the Axarquía.

- Audit for the Evaluation of the Approximation Model for Tourist Quality.
- Technical workshop to present the "Guide for the design, production and marketing of tourist souvenirs of the Axarquía".

LINE 5: CONSULTANCIES

- Study for the recovery and viability of the Velez-Zafarraya Green Path.
- Study to promote the adaptation of the Sierra Tejeda, Almirajara and Alhama Nature Reserve to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, and a studio that will develop active and nature tourism in the Axarquía.
- Participative analysis of the tourist sector in the area of the Axarquía.
- Technical assistance to compile promotional material for the Axarquía.

LINE 6: MANAGEMENT AND PROMOTION

- Production of tourist brochure-maps.
- Production of tourist Routes in the Axarquía.

- Guide book of tourist resources of the Axarquía.
- Management and promotion.

Details of measures can be consulted on:

www.axarquiastadelsol.es

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TALES AND LEGENDS

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