



INTRODUCTION TO THE PERFUME ROADS 2025



Learn why Spain's contribution to perfume heritage is important.

We are all, creating the perfume history of tomorrow that will be transmitted to many future generations to come.

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WHY SPAIN PERFUME HERITAGE IS IMPORTANT ?

- **AL ANDALOUS, HAROUN AL RASHID AND CORDOBA**

From 8th to 15th Centuries, The Islamic presence in the Iberian Peninsula bringing the culture of flowers and the technics of distillation and the art of perfumery in the region.

- **SPAIN PIVOTAL ROLE IN GLOBAL TRADE**

From 15th to 17th Centuries, Spain became one of the main supply channels for perfumery products

- **SPANISH ORIGIN IN SCENTED LEATHER**

The tradition of perfuming leather began in Spain during the Middle Ages and flourished during the Renaissance.

AL ANDALOUS, HAROUN AL RASHID AND CORDOBA



AL-ANDALOUS

In 711 CE, Muslims swiftly conquered most of the region, establishing control over a large part of what would become Al-Andalus.

HAROUN AL-RASHID

By the time Haroun Al-Rashid began his rule in Bagdad, the Umayyad dynasty had already been overthrown by the Abbasids in a revolution known as the Abbasid Revolution in 750 CE.

CÓRDOBA

After this, those Umayyads who escape established their own rule in Spain, with Córdoba as the capital, thus continuing the Islamic presence in the region.

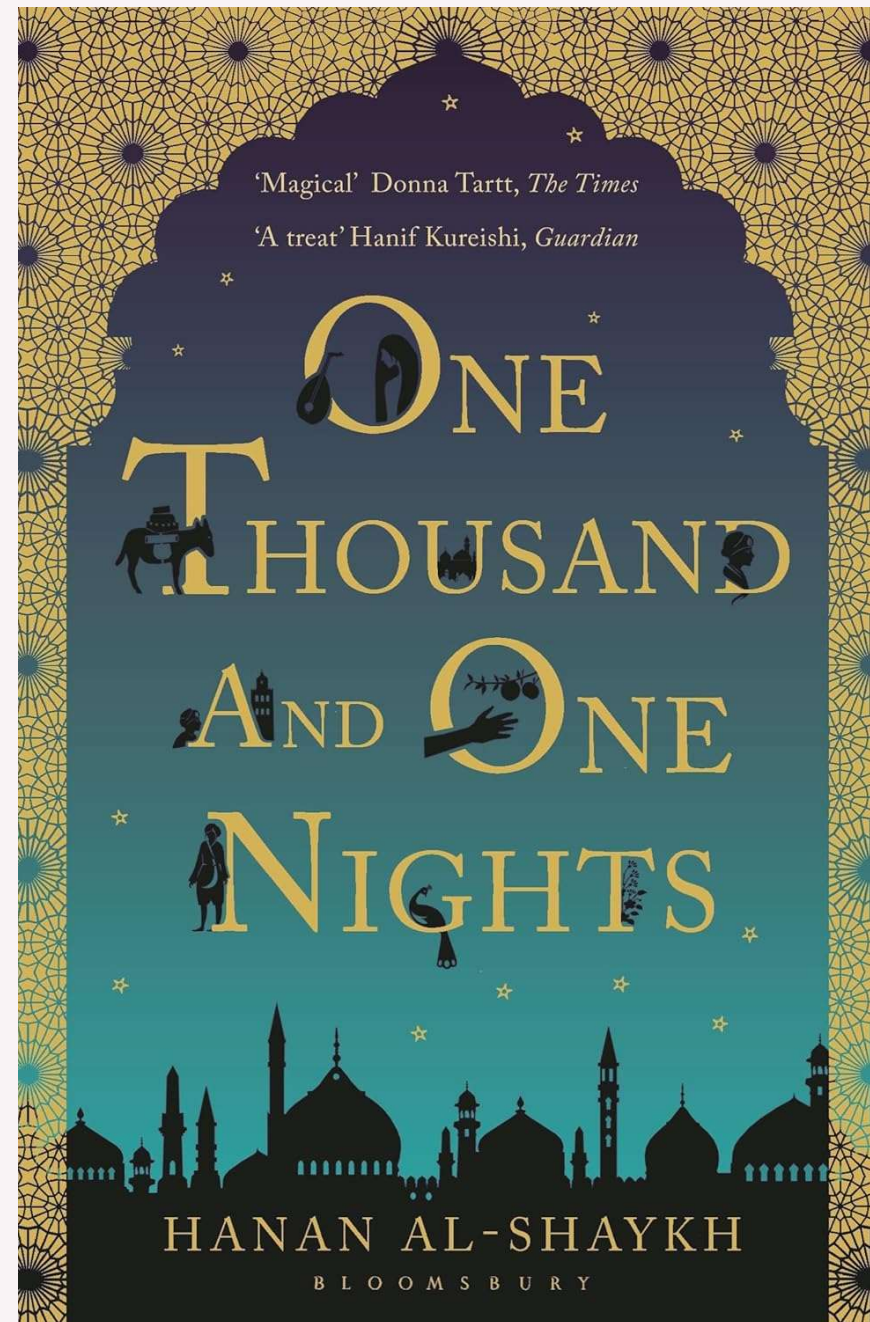


HAROUN AL-RACHID

Haroun al-Rashid was the fifth caliph of the Abbasid dynasty, ruling from 786 to 809 AD. During and after its reign, Córdoba became renowned for its advancements in various fields, including medicine, alchemy, **culture of flowers, distillation and art of making perfumes**. It was also marked by **architectural achievements**, such as the Great Mosque of Córdoba.

"One Thousand and One Nights" (or "Arabian Nights") was completed during his time, though it is a compilation of tales from various sources.

This period saw extensive trade in luxury items, including perfumes and essential oils. Arab merchants were known for their high-quality fragrances, which would find their way into Spain through the Perfume Roads.



SPAIN, A CENTRE FOR CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE

The Arabs brought with them advanced knowledge, new ingredients and techniques, influencing the European approach to perfumery.

They brought with them the art of perfume and the science of perfumery, the culture of flowers and raw material for perfumery. This period saw advancements in the methods of extracting and blending fragrances.

While Haroun al-Rashid may not have travelled to Spain himself, his reign contributed to the cultural and economic exchanges that facilitated the introduction and evolution of perfumery in the region, influencing both local practices and later European traditions.

Perfumes became a status symbol within Spanish and later European courts, much as they had been in the Islamic world. The use of elaborate fragrances reflected wealth and sophistication, and this cultural aspect can trace some of its roots back to the interactions during Haroun al-Rashid's reign.

The Islamic presence in the Iberian Peninsula lasted from 8th to 15th Century, a period of nearly 800 years significantly influencing the culture, architecture, language and science of the region.

SPAIN PIVOTAL ROLE IN GLOBAL TRADE



LISBON REPLACING VENICE MONOPOLY ON THE PERFUME ROADS

- **Sea Roads replacing Land Roads – Direct Sea Roads to Asia and Africa**

The 15th, 16th, 17th and the first part of the 18th Centuries were marked by intense traffic on the Eastern Seas where Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, English and French were competing for raw materials.

- **Portugal Tremendous Naval Power**

- Superior navigational techniques and shipbuilding technologies

Such as the use of the caravel, which allowed them to undertake longer sea voyages safely.

- The Portuguese were excellent navigators

- **Cheaper and Larger quantities of Raw Material**

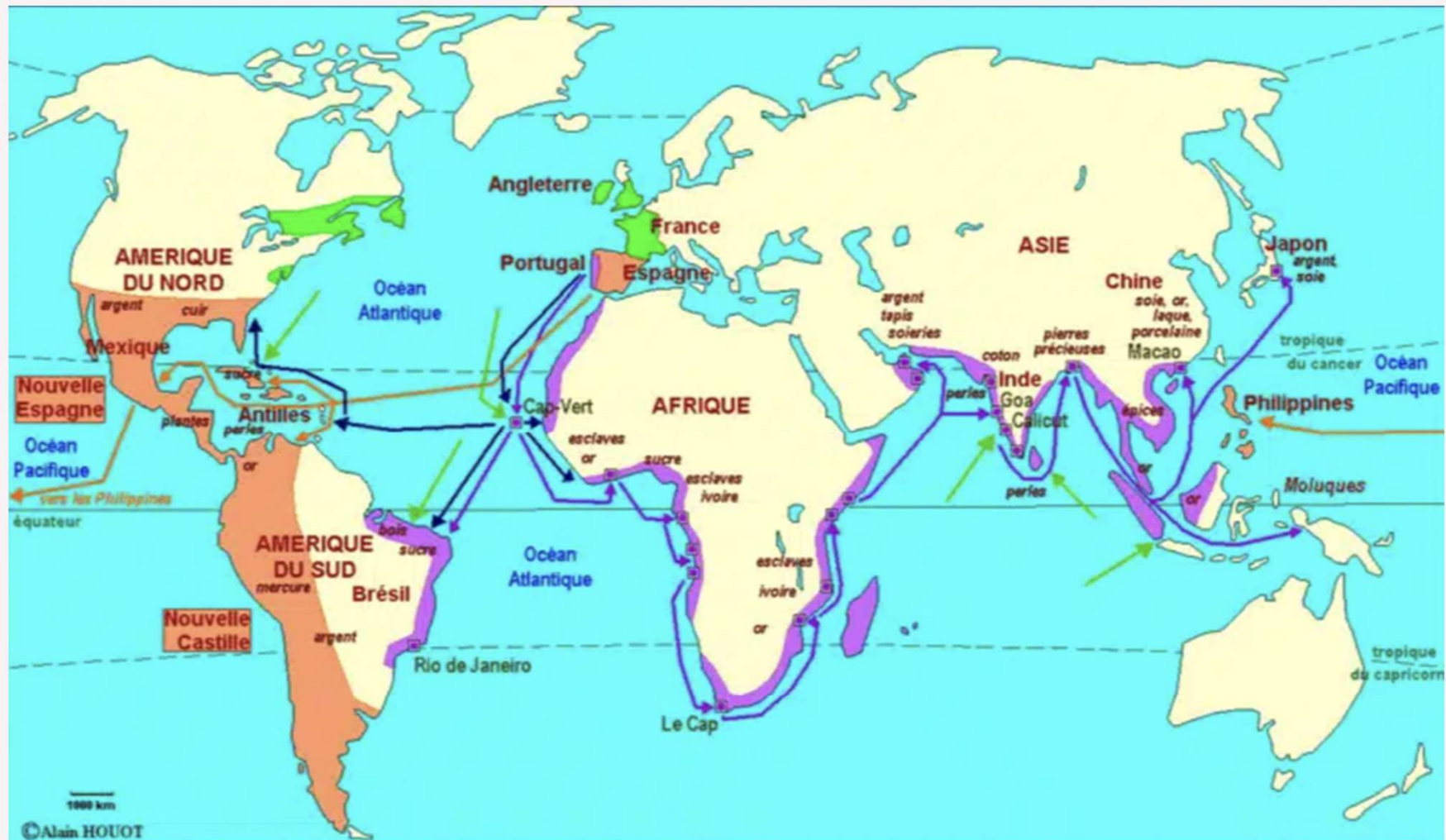
- The landmark journey of Vasco da Gama in 1497-1498 around the Cape of Good Hope to India was pivotal. This sea route allowed the Portuguese to access the rich spice markets of Asia directly, bypassing overland trade routes dominated by Venetian and Middle Eastern merchants.

- Places like Goa, Malacca, and Hormuz became key centres for controlling the spice trade.

SPAIN TAKING CONTROL OF THE PERFUME ROADS

- **1580** - The incompetence of Portuguese monarchs led Spain to militarily occupy Portugal and Spain took control of Portugal overseas colonies and their trade.
- **From 1580 till 1640** a period called the **Iberian Union**, **Philip II of Spain became the King of Portugal**, allowing the Spanish Crown to control and benefit from raw material in provenance of a vast colonial empire, which included territories in Africa, Asia and the Americas.
Spain used dynastic marriages and diplomacy to strengthen its trade networks and stabilize its trade interests across Europe, insuring a steady flow of goods.

Spanish explorers brought back exotic spices and botanicals from the New World and the East Indies, which enriched the European perfume palette. This exchange led to the introduction of new scents and materials that were incorporated into European perfumes.



First Spanish and Portuguese Empires XV-XVII Centuries:

Orange: Spanish Empire

Violet: Portuguese Empire

Green: French and English Possessions.

SPANISH ORIGIN IN SCENTED LEATHER



The tradition of perfuming leather began in Spain during the Middle Ages and flourished during the Renaissance.

The Spanish developed techniques for incorporating aromatic oils for scenting leather.

The tradition of incorporating scent into leather, particularly gloves, emerged as a luxurious practice amongst the aristocratic class in Spain.

The Renaissance Influence

- **Catherine de Medici and Henry II**
The 16th century marked a pivotal moment for scented leather, particularly with the influence of Catherine de Medici. Who brought in France the tradition of perfumed gloves. This not only popularized Spanish leather across France but also triggered a fashion trend that spread throughout Europe.
- **The aristocracy** soon began to differentiate themselves through their use of scented gloves, leading to an explosion of demand for Spanish skins, which were praised for their quality and fragrance.



The Court of Louis XIII and the Legacy of Anne d'Autriche

Anne d'Autriche's mother Maria Anna of Bavaria was the sister of the Queen Maria Anna of Spain. She reintroduced the tradition of perfumed gloves to the French court in the 17th Century, along with the science of floral cultivation and the art of distillation.

Anne's presence at French court not only extended the reach of Spanish leather but also solidified the perception of perfume as an essential accessory for both men and women. The enchanting fragrances infused in gloves, hair, garments and leather furniture allowed the aristocracy to showcase their status while indulging in the sensory pleasures of scent at the court.

To scent the castle rooms, she introduced to France small cages containing little birds made of scented pastes called "Oiselets de Chypre" (Little Birds of Cyprus). Louis XIII recommended them to purify the atmosphere and as protection from epidemics.

Scented skins were prohibitively expensive, but they were very fashionable and there were plenty of recipes for perfuming them. It was not so much by taste they were perfumed, but by necessity, the skin was often badly tanned, and their odor was unbearable.

To get rid of the odor, strong and long-lasting essences were required or powerful perfumes .

It was the fashion of Spanish skins, and everything was perfumed from four-poster beds, fans, books and even pets.

With her death, Anne did not leave behind any less than 350 pairs of gloves.

Each of them was scented with different fragrances.

As the taste for scented gloves and leather products grew, it is only in the 17th century perfumers in Grasse began to cultivate flowers specifically for the purpose of fragrance. The region's climate and soil proved conducive to the growth of various aromatic plants, such as jasmine, roses, and lavender. Under her influence, Louis XIII, introduced the title of "Master Glovemaking-Perfumer" in 1614 for a true corporation and statutes approved by the Provence Parliament in 1729, this new corporation gradually detached from tannery and finally stopped in 1759.



We are all, creating the perfume history of tomorrow that will be transmitted to many future generations to come.

The history continues today

with Beauty Cluster and the work done by Ivan Borrego Valverde and its wonderful team during all these years.





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