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Review of Patricia Hertel, *The Crescent Remembered: Islam and Nationalism in the Iberian Peninsula*

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Patricia Hertel, *The Crescent Remembered: Islam and Nationalism in the Iberian Peninsula*. Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2015. x, 223 pp.

Patricia Hertel's *The Crescent Remembered* is a noteworthy addition to our understanding of Islam in Modern Europe. Hertel's monograph offers a compelling journey into the narratives about Islam that informed Spanish and Portuguese academics, politicians, teachers, and folklore participants. Hertel begins with how the Middle Ages were portrayed in nineteenth and twentieth century historiography. Then looks at Islam as an object of research by studying how Arab studies came to exist and how Arabists negotiated their influence in academia. Hertel's third chapter analyzes Islam as a "colonial other" by looking at how the Iberian dictatorships embraced a seemingly fraternal position towards Islam in order to strategically legitimize the use of Muslim soldiers during the Spanish Civil War, a Spanish diplomatic effort to reach Muslim countries in the Francoist period, and a narrative to incorporate Muslims into the Portuguese colonial project. Hertel's fourth chapter looks at how textbooks have portrayed Islam and her final chapter assesses the role of folkloric festivals, such as Spain's Festival of Moors and Christians, in reproducing narratives and inventing traditions that exclude Spanish Islam from the national imaginary.

Hertel seeks to demonstrate "how the European encounter with Islam has been held onto in collective memories and historical interpretation, and how the contours of Ourselves were determined via an Other which existed primarily in the imagination" (151). For this purpose, the first and third chapters work better to sustain Hertel's argument. In the first chapter, "Islam as a Historical Enemy: The Middle Ages as Portrayed in the Historiography", Hertel highlights Modesto Lafuente y Zamalloa's ambivalent relation, a mix of aversion and fascination, to medieval Spanish Islam and Rafael Altamira y Crevea's focus on Islam as a great civilization rather than an antagonist religion in order to substantiate that Spanish interpretations of Islam have been multiple and conflicting and should not be reduced to perhaps the most long-lived and influential position of excluding Islam from Spanish historiography defended by Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo and embraced by the Spanish Catholic Church. In these chapters, Hertel also shows how Portugal did not follow the same pattern as Spain and did not define its national identity in opposition to Islam, but rather in opposition to Spain (a closer and more threatening enemy) and later on in relation to the Portuguese Empire.

The material discussed in chapter two could perhaps have been better connected to the argument by incorporating the views of Arabists into the larger historiographic debate discussed in chapter one and by creating a separate chapter for architecture, national monuments, and commemorations (dealt with in chapter 2 and 4). An introduction that clearly stated Hertel's overall argument and sub-arguments and justified why the book does not cover the democratic period that followed Francoist Spain and the Portuguese Estado Novo could have helped the reader navigate the multiple thematic and chronological meanders. I was fascinated to read Hertel's chapter five on the Festival of Moors and Christians and wished that the 2015 English translation of *The Crescent Remembered* (originally published in German in 2012) had appeared a year earlier, when I was finishing my own work on the same topic. We both

consider the festival of Moors and Christians an example of Eric Hobsbawm's invention of tradition and discuss some of the same mechanisms of transposition of whatever enemies Spain had at the time into the Moorish side of the festival (what I called Moorification). Hertel, however, accepts anthropologist Max Harris' thesis that the festival is in essence a battle between secular and religious forces in which the "Moors" are merely imaginary antagonists, something difficult to maintain when looking at the democratic period.

One of the noteworthy contributions of Hertel's monograph is her explicit comparative approach that, as the Sussex Studies in Spanish History's editor Nigel Townson highlights, seeks to "delineate the similarities and convergences of nation-building in both Spain and Portugal". With a consistent thematic and, whenever warranted, chronologic analysis of both Spain and Portugal, Hertel offers a didactic antidote against *ombligismo*, borrowing writer Juan Goytisolo's term, and against a tendency towards universalizing the Spanish anti-Islamic Catholic narrative. Writing a comparative study is, however, thorny. Hertel convincingly justifies why comparing the function of Islam in the development of Spanish and Portuguese national narratives is fruitful and necessary. The structure chosen for the monograph, however, undermines her comparative efforts. Every chapter is divided into two separate case studies, first a longer section on Spain, then a shorter section on Portugal. The various lengths are justified by the divergent importance Islam had in each country and the differing complexity of each case. What weakens the comparative value of the monograph is that both case studies are only brought together in a true comparative manner in brief sections at the end of each chapter (16 out of 120 pages of chapter text). These comparative sections are so insightful that I wished the author would have found a way to organize the whole monograph in this fashion.

Hertel's decision to connect Islam with memory, commemoration, and nationalism in its broader understanding is fully warranted, but only those who read German will be able to trace and fully benefit from the theoretical sources on nationalism the monograph relies on. Nationalism in the Iberian Peninsula has long been established to encompass nationalist movements other than Castilian and Portuguese, but Hertel's volume only dedicates a two page section to Basque nationalism and Islam and only mentions Catalonia sporadically. Considering that the Catalan "nation" also emerged in its own conquest against Islam, I think a three-way comparison between Portugal, Catalan, and Castilian narratives of inclusion and exclusion of Muslim Iberians would have been a good addition to the monograph.

The Crescent Remembered is a necessary starting point for comparativists, historians, and scholars of Islam in Spain and Europe that wish to incorporate Portugal into their work. Hertel helps us avoid the pitfalls of universalizing anti-Islam exclusionary narratives by offering a comprehensive and exhaustive analysis of the various positions held in three different periods. First, "a phase in which historical narratives were formed" in the late nineteenth century; second, a phase in which "such concepts became more widespread in Spain and were marginalized in Portugal" (first third of twentieth century); and then a phase "during which older negative stereotypes were partially revised" (between World War II and the end of the dictatorships). This revision, however, does not undermine the dominant narrative of Spain as "Catholic" and Portugal as "Grand".

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