Review of Eric Calderwood, Colonial al-Andalus: Spain and the Making of Moroccan Culture

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políticos que siguen haciendo juicios de valor xenófobos y defendiendo políticas lingüísticas discriminatorias que solo aceptan la lengua inglesa. Además, la autora señala que las concesiones a los hispanohablantes nunca han sido automáticas, sino que han tenido que ser peleadas en el terreno político, lo que nos lleva de nuevo a esa percepción del español como lengua extranjera en los EE. UU., que siempre ha cercenado las iniciativas a favor del bilingüismo.

Destacamos, por último, el hecho de que este estudio aparece en un momento oportuno, pues el simple hecho de hablar español públicamente en Estados Unidos ha sido cuestionado recientemente por algunos políticos estadounidenses. No es tiempo de retroceder y volver a caer en los mismos errores del pasado.

En suma, con este título la profesora Lozano hace una valiosa aportación al estudio de la historia de los hispanohablantes en el sur de los Estados Unidos, analizando su contexto político y social. La autora ha demostrado con este trabajo tan revelador que se pueden abrir nuevos caminos dentro de esa fructífera vía, aún poco investigada.

Manuel del Campo
Cambridge University


During the second half of the nineteenth century, the literary revival of Muslim Iberia became a major discursive element of Spain’s imperial turn toward Morocco. By the middle of the twentieth, memory of Al-Andalus was a touchstone of Moroccan nationalism, and, by extension, the anti-colonial aspirations of much of the Muslim world. Yet, as Eric Calderwood ably demonstrates, the modern Spanish and Moroccan appropriations of Andalusi heritage were not competing claims, but instead constituted a single integrated process of cultural history. This illuminating story has found an expert narrator in Calderwood, whose learned critiques of a range of Spanish and Arabic texts reveal considerable interconnection across literary and aesthetic cultures.

Calderwood’s central thesis is that the discourse of Andalusi heritage cultivated by contemporary Moroccan nationalists is the direct product of colonial encounter with Spain. Scholars have explored how Romantic reconstructions of Al-Andalus served as a resource for Spanish colonialism and later developed into a symbol of cultural achievement and religious tolerance, but the active participation of Moroccan writers in this process has remained outside Hispanists’ purview. Calderwood’s innovation is to place Spanish and Arabic authors side by side,
implying a collective effort to construct a shared past in order to become mutually intelligible in the present. Beginning with Pedro Antonio de Alarcón, the correspondent whose diary of Spain’s invasion of Morocco in 1859-60 became the seminal text of Spanish Romantic imperialism, Spanish writers discovered Granada’s Muslim past in modern Tetouan. Alarcón’s work serves up large doses of textbook Orientalism, as scholars have previously noted, but Calderwood also identifies a self-reflectiveness in which the author constructs Moroccans as alter-egos to the Spanish, or at least part of the same “family tree with roots in Muslim Granada and with branches that stretch from Spain to Morocco” (45). Alarcón’s Reconquista triumphalism also conveys a spirit of fraternity with its target, an ambiguity that itself prefigured the Africanismo of figures like Joaquin Costa. A somewhat different version emerges in the Andalucismo of Blas Infante, whom Calderwood depicts as foil to the purity-obsessed Catalanism of Enric Prat de la Riba, compressing the concepts of Andalucia, Al-Andalus, and Morocco into a transhistorical home to all comers—multiculturalism avant la lettre.

Like their Spanish counterparts, Moroccan writers also turned to Al-Andalus as a tool for making sense of the intensifying encounter with their neighbors across the Strait of Gibraltar. Although Calderwood’s major examples reside in the twentieth century, the poetry of Mufaddal Afaylal indicates a revival of Al-Andalus already underway before the 1859 war. To demonstrate how the Tetouanese writer looked to the past to understand Spaniards, Calderwood displays his virtuosity as a comparatist, analyzing Afaylal’s many references to Andalusi poets and use of literary conventions typical of medieval Andalusi genres. As a historian without Arabic language skills, I have no standing to evaluate the philological merit of this “thick reading” of Afaylal’s 1861 elegy to Tetouan, but Calderwood’s patient contextualization of his methodological choices in the broader cultural history makes a fine advertisement for interdisciplinarity.

The period 1936-1956 saw the most concerted promotion of the concept of Hispano-Arab civilization—a product of the Spanish Civil War and the Franco movement’s effort to win over colonial subjects and to cultivate a version of Moroccan nationalism compatible with its political goals. Calderwood may underestimate the importance of Hispano-Muslim studies prior to this period, particularly among Spanish intellectuals, but he is certainly justified in dedicating three central chapters to Franco-era collaborations. The first of these chapters deals with Ahmad al-Rahuni’s narrative of the 1937 Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca carried out under Franco’s sponsorship. Al-Rahuni’s account, which was later published in Spanish by the Francisco Franco Institute under the title Journey to Mecca, gives an idea of what Francoism would “sound like if it spoke Arabic and converted to Islam” (145): peppered with the motifs and references of the traditional Hajj narrative, the tract also conveys a finely tuned propagandistic message emphasizing the shared legacies of Al-Andalus uniting God-fearing Spaniards and Moroccans.
in a battle against atheism. From there, Calderwood explores active efforts by the Franco regime to cultivate Hispano-Arab culture, a deliberately imprecise concept that could have religious or ethno-cultural meaning depending on context. The regime also assumed patronage of the Tetouan School of Art and the Hasani Institute for Moroccan Music, where Spanish masters like the painter Mariano Bertuchi taught Moroccan students and popularized the belief that Morocco’s artistic and musical traditions originated in Al-Andalus.

The book closes with the transformation of Andalusi heritage from a discourse of colonial collaboration into a theme of anti-colonial nationalism. Calderwood traces this transformation to the writings of the Lebanese Druze prince Shakib Arslan, whose writings of the 1930s popularized the association of Al-Andalus with the notion of “lost paradise” (266)—not Hispano-Arab patrimony at all, but a golden age of Islamic history with potential to inspire all Muslim peoples to rise again. Since independence, Calderwood notes in his epilogue, Moroccan nationalists and particularly the monarchy have asserted their claim on Andalusi patrimony, as evidenced by the numerous references to Granada’s Alhambra in Moroccan public architecture since 1960, including the Muhammad V mausoleum in Rabat.

For students of Moroccan nationalism, it is instructive that Spanish colonial culture played a key role in a process usually understood in relation to French imperialism. Logically enough, Andalusi heritage is associated most closely with the north—especially Tetouan, whose nickname, “the daughter of Granada”, was the creation of Moroccan nationalists of the independence generation. It was also in the north where Moroccan nationalism encountered the most determined resistance from Berber tribes of the Rif. Calderwood observes that Al-Andalus provided a kind of antidote to divisive French policies such as notorious Berber dahir of 1930, but he might also have considered its meaning with respect to persistent ethnic tension in the former Spanish sector. Two of the book’s other central claims, namely that the Hispano-Moroccan case does not conform to Edward Said’s standard Orientalist paradigm and that Moroccan nationalists engaged in sincere collaboration with the Franco regime, are not as surprising as the author frequently asserts, in light of considerable historiography on Africánismo and of what is known about European fascism in the Arab world more generally. This is not to say that Calderwood’s work is not a major contribution to these literatures. It is a skillful example of textual criticism in historical and institutional context and should be of significant interest to historians of modern Spain and Morocco as well as those interested in modern representations of the medieval world.

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